



# Euro Chlor leads the way for a healthy industry future

Already as early as 1953, a Brussels based “Bureau International du Chlore” (BITC) is founded. It comprises the chlorine producers of the Benelux, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The main activities are statistics, safety issues, occupational health standards, environmental protection and manufacturing best practice.

In 1965, the BITC publishes its important reference document “Safety Measures for Chlorine Users”. Seven years later (1972), the BITC decides to structure its technical activities under the General Technical Committee. The first Technical Seminar on “Chlorine Handling and Safety” is organised in Paris.

In the mid-1980s our chlorine industry becomes under attack by a strong anti-chlorine movement led by environmental groups in Europe and the USA. Part of this world-wide anti-chlorine campaigning is based on dozens of “scientific reports” with dubiously imaginative titles like “The Need and Transition Planning for a Chlorine Phase out”, “Achieving Zero Dioxin: an Emergency Strategy for Dioxin Elimination” and even “A Chlorine Free Future – Not only Possible, but Happening”.

The slogans “Stop Chlorine” and “Chlorine Kills” are taken seriously by authority bodies in Europe, who initiate regulatory steps to prohibit or substitute “unnecessary organochlorines”. Symptomatic for that period and unthinkable nowadays is that European policy makers develop measures to regulate our chlorine products *without consulting the industry*.

The European and American chlorine industries take these threats very seriously. In 1988, senior management of leading chlorine producing companies in Europe conclude that an adequate response for the rising public concern about chlorine is called for. **In September 1989 this leads to the creation of a strong Euro Chlor with the objective to become the authoritative voice of the chlorine industry in Europe.**

In the early years of Euro Chlor’s existence, interest from European and national policy making bodies, scientific groups, press and environmental NGOs in chlorine chemistry industry issues grows rapidly. Euro Chlor takes this as an opportunity for effective dialogue. The Federation becomes visible and unavoidable.

Important events are the Ministerial Conferences of the Marine Conventions, in particular the OSPAR Convention. The chlorine industry contributes to these Conventions and participates in

public events, despite the hostility towards representatives of the industry.

Gradually the Euro Chlor organisation becomes more recognised and respected. Contributing to the changing views is the development of science based risk assessments of chlorinated chemicals and sharing this information in active dialogue with key influencers. These assessments enable the implementation of risk management controls. That leads to industry taking responsibility for this process and publicly reporting data on health, safety and environment even before the obligations under Responsible Care® become common practice.

Levels of credibility and acceptance increase amongst politicians, scientists and the media. Perception issues diminish and are replaced by more rational questions on chlorine related issues of public and political interest. Towards the end of the 20th century the concept of sustainability gains political recognition and Euro Chlor is one of the first organisations to publicly commit to a sustainability programme. The entire chlorine industry agrees on challenging but realistic sustainability goals and commits to measuring and publishing the progress on an annual basis. In a second phase of the sustainability programme this transparency in reporting progress is continued, whilst an initiative on reporting on the benefits of chlorine is also included. As such, the communication style changes from predominately defensive to making the public fully recognize the benefits of chlorine chemistry to society.

Many people have contributed to the success of Euro Chlor during its 25 years lifetime, most of whom are destined to be unsung heroes. **We want to express our sincere gratitude for their constructive and innovative contributions to our common Euro Chlor mission.** For those who are still active in the industry we shall honour them by building on their dedication by pursuing our core message that *a flourishing chlorine industry is not only compatible with a sustainable future but essential to it.*

**Andreas Amling**  
Outgoing Chairman  
Euro Chlor



**Thomas Wehlage**  
Incoming Chairman  
Euro Chlor

