

4. International Cooperation

GDCh is strongly involved in a variety of international co-operations with its sister societies as well as other related organizations.

(1) Promotion of internationally-cooperative research/education programs

Activities along these lines are gaining momentum in Europe mainly through the "Chairmen of the European Research Councils' Chemistry Committees (CERC3)". This organization comprises representatives of 15 national research councils in the EU member countries plus Switzerland which have responsibility for funding research and related postgraduate training in basic chemistry. Recent activities include the TransNat initiative which provides a framework for the CERC3 research councils to align some of their resources into projects carried out by collaborating international research groups and the ERA-NET Chemistry project. ERA-Chemistry, which is coordinated by the German Research Foundation (DFG) in close collaboration with its French and Dutch partner councils CNRS and NWO aims at establishing the cadre of a bottom-up European research area in chemistry by developing joint processing and evaluation schemes for transnational research proposals, by ascertaining innovative research fields particularly suitable for transnational research efforts and by implementing durable bottom-up joint European research programs with a minimum of bureaucracy. Through our close and very good connections to the DFG and the responsible program directors the GDCh is actively but informally involved in these activities. An extension to non-European countries, in particular to the US and Japan is planned.

(2) Active exchanges of students and young researchers

International interaction and collaboration are essential factors for the development of our science. Therefore it is important to create opportunities for the students to study and work under international conditions. Several programs of the European Union like Socrates and Erasmus support the exchange of students and young scientists in the European area. In Germany the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) offers many programs for the mobility of students. The GDCh sees a growing interest of German chemistry students and graduates to spend a period abroad (Europe, USA, Japan). And we have an increasing number of students and graduates from different countries studying at German universities, but the number could be higher. In particular this applies to students from the US. For this reason the GDCh started in cooperation with the German Academic Exchange Service a new program called Research Internships in Chemistry for Undergraduates (RICH). It gives US undergraduates the opportunity to apply for a two or three months research internship at



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a German university. During his/her stay the student will cooperate with doctoral students and assist them in their experimental work.

Another program of the GDCh and the Northeastern Section of ACS are the Student Exchange Tours sponsored by both societies. The aim of this program is to bring together young graduates and support the international networking. Up to now four such tours have been organized, two with German students visiting Boston and two with American students visiting Aachen and Munich and Dresden, respectively.

A program for young scientists (age under 40) is the German American Frontiers of Chemistry conference (GAFOC). The initiative of ACS and GDCh presented in this initiative is designed to foster the interaction of young scientists. At the GAFOC conferences 40 young scientists from each Germany and the US are invited. The conferences offer outstanding young chemists a platform to establish contacts to scientists working on other subareas of their discipline as well as beyond their own area of training. The first GAFOC symposium took place in 2000 in Germany, the second followed in 2002 in Durham NH, USA. GAFOC III will be in Seon, Germany in July 2004. GAFOC has turned out to be a highly successful and outstanding event.

Last year the GDCh and the RSC initiated the first European Postgraduate Industry Study Tour. This study tour organized jointly by RSC and GDCh, offered a unique opportunity to PhD students from both countries to visit and network with leading chemical and pharmaceutical companies in the UK and Germany. Both societies wish to go on with this program and support the exchange of ideas across the borders and to point out ways for international careers for young scientists.

Our societies should work for an increase of mobility and international exchange and they should supply graduates and young scientists with all information on opportunities for studying abroad. The student exchange should not stop at the European boarder, but should also include other continents. The European research area is rapidly getting more attractive for young researchers from inside and outside Europe. Probably we will see an increasing number of students, graduates and postdocs coming for a period of their education to Europe. The language problem should no longer exist. More and more German universities offer courses in English and Master or PhD theses can also be submitted in English. All leading scientific journals from the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker and other European chemical societies are published in English. During their education the students in our

countries should become prepared to cope with the international situation of our industries, and this is done best by having spent some time in an other country.

(3) Sharing information on scientific activities

We have recently started a close collaboration between the membership journals of RSC ("*Chemistry World*") and GDCh ("*Nachrichten aus der Chemie*") in which articles on certain key topics are published jointly in both journals (up to now two such special reports appeared: "Nanotechnology" and "The pharmaceutical challenge"). We should increase the exchange of information through our respective membership journals.

(4) Interaction with regional and global organizations

Within Europe there are strong ties with many chemical societies, in particular with the other European C-6 societies but also with societies in Central and Eastern Europe. The European umbrella organization for chemical societies is the Federation of European Chemical Societies and Professional Institutions (FECS) which currently has 50 member organizations representing (nominally) some 200,000 chemists all across Europe. Right now FECS is in the middle of a severe restructuring process in order to transform it into a strong organization, fit for the challenges of the future.

An important other facet of European cooperation among chemical societies is the Editorial Union of Chemical Societies (EUChemSoc), the umbrella organization of the up to 14 owner societies including GDCh of the European chemistry journals *Chemistry - A European Journal*, *European Journal of Inorganic Chemistry*, *European Journal of Organic Chemistry*, *ChemPhysChem*, and *ChemBioChem* published by Wiley-VCH. Similar European initiatives in the publication area are *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry* which is co-owned by SFC, GDCh, RSEQ, and SEQA (the Spanish Society of Analytical Chemistry) and is published by Springer-Verlag and the RSC journal *Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys.* which is owned by 12 European chemical societies and the Israel Chemical Society.

GDCh is running the secretariat of the German NAO to IUPAC (Deutscher Zentralausschuß für Chemie) whose members are six learned societies including GDCh and the German Chemical Industry Association. However, we see an only limited interest of our members in the activities of IUPAC. In particular this applies to the chemical industry where it gets more and more difficult to convince those German chemical companies which are IUPAC company associates to retain that status.