

A. Preamble

The work of the association for the preservation of the economic benefits of chromium trioxide and other chemicals in surface technology is based on decades of experience in the use of these substances. Mindful of the potential risk of using hazardous substances, the members are convinced that careful and sustainable handling of the substances can safely avoid this risk. Thus the social benefits of these substances, especially in surface technology and there especially in electroplating, will be preserved in the future.

The association emerged from an "Expert Consortium for the Authorisation of Chromium Trioxide and Chromic Acid", which was founded in 2011 following the inclusion of chromium trioxide in Annex 15 of the REACH Regulation.

With this in mind, the Association for the Protection of the Application and Use of Chromium Trioxide and Other Chemicals in Surface Technology (VECCO) adopts the following statutes:

B. Statutes

§1 Name. Domicile. Financial year

1. The association bears the name:

**Association for the preservation of use and enjoyment
of chromium trioxide and other chemicals in
of Surface Technology e.V. (VECCO)**

2. It has its seat in Memmingen and is to be entered in the register of associations. Its postal address shall be determined by the respective chairperson and shall be communicated by him/her to the Register Court notified.
3. The financial year shall be the calendar year.

§2 Purpose and tasks of the association

The purpose of the association is to preserve and further develop the benefits of the use of chromium trioxide and other chemicals in surface technology and especially in electroplating. In particular, the members of the association have set themselves the goal of increasing the approvals for the use of chemicals in accordance with the REACH Regulation in such a way that

and to ensure that the existence of the manufacturing companies is secured in the long term. In doing so, it sets itself at least the high standards of current legislation in the areas of sustainability, environmental protection, occupational safety and health. Resource conservation. The goals of current and future legislative regulations in this regard are actively supported, promoted and implemented together with authorities and politicians. designed in an expedient manner.

The association achieves its goals in particular through:

- Issue regular information to its members
- Information to the public
- Information to the policy
- Coordination of legal clarifications in case of legal issues, which concern the objectives of the association and thus of its members
- Implementation of optimal manufacturing processes by the members
- Collection and documentation of know-how by members
- Implementation of projects to expand the safe use of chromium trioxide; and
- Chromium(VI) compounds,
- Obtaining funding from the members for project implementation
- Cooperation with national and European authorities, political bodies and interest groups
- Promotion of cooperation between member companies on overarching issues such as resource efficiency, material efficiency, material and energy availability, political representation of interests and availability of skilled workers.

§3 **Association funds**

The funds of the Association may only be used for the purposes set out in the Articles of Association. In their capacity as members, the members shall not receive any benefits from the Association's funds. They shall have no claims to the Association's assets upon their resignation. No person may be favoured by expenses that are alien to the purposes of the Association or by disproportionately high remuneration.

Funding for individual projects shall - unless otherwise specified by the funding body - be provided to those members who are actively involved in the funded projects. participate. The basis is proof of effort.

If in the course of projects, in particular REACH approval projects, funds are required that exceed the available funds from the contributions, the Executive Board shall apply for a levy. This apportionment may be limited to individual members who, unlike the other members, are directly affected by a specific task.

The general meeting or the subset of the enterprises concerned shall decide on the apportionment. The vote can be taken by circular letter or circular email. A simple majority or the majority of positive responses received in writing or by email decides. Hardship towards small businesses is to be avoided.

The annual accounts shall be prepared by a tax consultant who is not a member of the Association.

§4
Position of the association

The association feels connected to the Zentralverband Oberflächentechnik e.V. (Central Association for Surface Technology) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Galvano- und Oberflächentechnik e. V. (German Society for Electroplating and Surface Technology) and strives for a lively exchange of experience with their members.

§5
Membership

1. Any natural or legal person who supports the aims of the association may become a member of the association.
2. Membership shall be effected by written declaration to the Association and written confirmation of membership by the Executive Committee. The Executive Board shall decide on the confirmation of membership by unanimous resolution. Membership shall commence with the payment of the fee set forth in the Annual fee. The full annual subscription is payable for the year of joining. Further details shall be regulated by the Rules of Contribution which, in accordance with § 6.1, shall be adopted by the Members' Assembly we adopted. New members who submit an application for admission to the Association shall pay the first payment will be made on the basis of an existing Hapoc dossier. The first payment will be made on the basis of an existing Hapoc dossier. annual membership fee, which is equal to 3 times the amount of their annual turnover per year.
3. The resignation of a member shall be effected by written declaration to the Executive Board with a notice period of three months to the end of a business year.
4. A member may be excluded by resolution of the Executive Board, before which the member shall be heard and which shall be communicated to the member in writing with reasons, if
 - a) it has harmed the association or otherwise seriously violated its interests, or
 - b) it fails to meet its obligations towards the association, in particular if it is more than four weeks in arrears, in whole or in part, with the payment of its membership fee despite a reminder.

The Executive Committee may, upon written application by the member, grant a reduction of up to 75% of the membership fee for a period of up to one year, provided that the member can credibly demonstrate that he/she is not financially able to pay the membership fee. The reduction may be subsequently revoked by the Executive Committee if the member has not made a verifiable and clearly increased personal contribution to the activities of the Association in the year in question. The discount cannot be extended in time. and shall not be repeated within five consecutive years for the same member; it shall not exceed 75 %.
 - c) it is objectively inactive in promoting the purpose of the association, in particular
 - he/she fails to attend two consecutive general meetings without excuse, whereby

the excuse does not need to be justified

- it does not actively participate in association projects or in association working groups for a period of twelve months, or it does not conduct its business as a whole or

ceases or disposes of its business activities connected with the purpose of the association

or

- d) it realises another important reason in its person.

The member may appeal against the exclusion decision of the Executive Committee to the General Assembly following the notification of the exclusion. The member shall be invited to the meeting and heard. This meeting decides with a simple majority of votes and finally about the complaint.

5. The Executive Committee may propose to the General Assembly of Members natural persons who have rendered outstanding services to the objectives and/or the Association for honorary membership. Likewise, the Executive Committee may propose to the The General Assembly may propose to the General Assembly to withdraw the honorary membership if the special merits of the member prove to be inaccurate or no longer given. The General Assembly shall decide by simple majority.
6. In addition to resignation and exclusion, the membership of natural persons also ends with death or loss of legal personality.
7. The Executive Committee may decide on the provisional admission of supporting members and negotiate a reduced fee. The next General Assembly shall make the final decision on membership and the amount of the fee. Sustaining members do not have a vote.

§6

Rights and duties of the members

1. The General Assembly of Members shall adopt a scale of fees which shall determine the amount of the annual fee. The Executive Committee shall decide on the due date and method of payment of the annual subscription.
2. Members have the right to be involved in all activities and to use the knowledge gained by the association for their own benefit, unless the general meeting decides otherwise. Findings from the work of the association shall be considered confidential and shall only be communicated within the association. Exceptions to the rule of confidentiality shall be decided by the General Assembly.
3. Honorary members are exempt from the association fee. They have the same rights and duties as ordinary members. They are expected to promote the aims and interests of the Association in a special way and also to represent them publicly.
4. All members are obliged to actively participate in the association in order to achieve the association's goals.

§7
Organs of the association

The organs of the association are:

- the general meeting
- the executive Board
- the advisory board
- the technical committees
- Auditor

§8
General Assembly

1. The supreme body is the General Assembly. It shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, unless the General Assembly appoints another chairperson. The chairman of the meeting shall appoint the keeper of the minutes. General meetings are not open to the public. Guests may be admitted by the general meeting.
2. The General Assembly sets the guidelines for the work of the Association and decides on issues of fundamental importance. The general meeting decides in particular on:
 - a) Election and deselection of the Executive Board and the Advisory Board
 - b) Confirmation or termination of expert committees
 - c) Consultation on the status and planning of the work
 - d) Approval of the economic and investment plan submitted by the Executive Board
 - e) Resolution on the annual financial statements
 - f) Acceptance of the Annual Report of the Executive Board
 - g) Discharge of the Executive Board and the Advisory Board
 - h) Discharge of the auditors
 - i) Adoption of the Contribution Rules
 - j) Decision on the assumption of new tasks or the withdrawal from tasks by the association
 - k) Amendments to the Statutes
 - l) Dissolution of the association
3. The General Assembly shall be convened by the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson in writing at least six weeks in advance, stating the agenda. It shall meet as often as necessary, usually once a year. Invitations shall be sent in text form, including electronic invitations (email etc.), to the address last notified to the Association. The invitation shall also be published on the Association's own website, if available.
4. An extraordinary general meeting shall also be held if at least 25% of the members request such a meeting in writing, stating the reasons.
demand. In this case, the meeting must take place no later than five weeks after

receipt of the request.

5. Any general meeting convened in due form and time shall constitute a quorum irrespective of the number of members present. This fact shall be pointed out in the invitation.
6. Resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority of votes unless a different majority is required by law or by these Statutes. Each member shall have one vote. Abstentions shall be deemed not to have been cast. Voting by proxy is possible and must be notified to the Executive Committee in writing before the beginning of the meeting.
7. It is possible to hold the general meeting virtually.
Details on this are regulated under "§ 8a Online - Assembly".
8. Minutes shall be taken of the resolutions and, to the extent necessary to understand how they were passed, also of the essential proceedings of the meeting. The minutes shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and the keeper of the minutes.
9. Every member has the right to submit motions to the general meeting. The motion shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Board at least 5 working days before the beginning of the General Assembly. The Executive Committee shall attach the motion to the agenda. The Executive Committee may vote on whether the motion should be dealt with.

§ 8a Online meeting

1. The general meeting may be held on the internet as an online meeting.
become.
2. The Executive Committee shall ensure that the online meeting is carried out in a technically flawless manner. It must be ensured that participation is possible with the usual programmes (web browser, e-mail client, conference software, etc.). The technical procedure chosen must ensure that the general meeting is traceable and cannot be falsified.
3. The invitation to the online meeting must, in addition to stating the agenda also contain the internet address (URL) and the access data (login data) to the online meeting. The manner of technical implementation shall be described in the invitation or on the website of the Association.
4. Communication during the online meeting shall take place exclusively within the of the pre-determined group of participants. All participants are identified beyond doubt at the beginning of the meeting.
5. Voting is possible within the framework of the online meeting. Voting shall be made using appropriate technical means and online forms.
6. Minutes shall also be taken of the online meeting, which, in addition to the

The minutes must also bear the signature of the chairperson of the meeting. The minutes shall be sent to all members after the conclusion of the online meeting.

7. In all other respects, the provisions on the general meeting in § 8 shall apply. Accordingly.

§9 **Board of Directors**

1. The Executive Board consists of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson (also Secretary) and the Treasurer. They form the Executive Board in the sense of § 26 BGB. Two members of the Executive Board shall jointly represent the Association.
2. The members of the Executive Board shall in principle work on an honorary basis. However, the General Assembly may, with a two-thirds majority, resolve to appoint one or more full-time members of the Executive Board who shall receive remuneration for their work, the amount of which shall be recommended by the Advisory Board beforehand. Every member is entitled to propose such a regulation.
3. Board members shall be elected for a term of two years. Re-election is permissible. They shall remain in office until the election of their respective successor, but for no longer than 6 months.
4. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held in person at least once a year; in addition, an online meeting shall be held at least every four weeks to ensure the rapid functioning of the Association. Minutes shall be taken of each meeting, confirmed in text form by the participants and sent to the members in text form within five working days (electronic forms shall also apply here).
5. Resolutions of the Executive Board shall be recorded separately in writing, signed by the Chairperson of the Executive Board and sent to the members in text form without delay.
6. The Executive Board shall adopt rules of procedure as necessary.

§ 10 **Advisory Board**

1. The Advisory Board shall consist of at least three and up to a maximum of five members of the Association.
their executive bodies or managing partners who have personally distinguished themselves through special commitment in the sector and related fields of interest. The members are elected by the General Assembly. Representations are not permitted.

2. In addition, the respective president of the Zentralverband Oberflächentechnik e.V. and the chairman of the board of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Galvano- und Oberflächentechnik e.V. have a permanent seat on the advisory board, but only act in an advisory capacity. They have no vote. Representations are not permitted.
3. The Advisory Board advises the Executive Board and the other bodies on the implementation of the Association's objectives. It has the right to request the Executive Board to convene an extraordinary General Assembly; the Advisory Board shall decide on this request unanimously. The Advisory Board also has the task of representing the Association's goals and interests together with the Executive Board vis-à-vis important bodies and institutions and to promote the Association's goals to the best of its ability.

§ 11 **Expert committees**

The specialised committees function as specialised operating units in which focal topics are dealt with. The work is carried out in a project-like manner, i.e. at the foundation of a technical committee, a project description must be drawn up showing at least the project objectives, the time schedule and anticipated costs.

The General Assembly shall decide on the establishment, maintenance and staffing as well as the dissolution of the specialised committees and their financial resources. Specialised committees may also be established and terminated by the Executive Committee for the time being. In doing so, the Executive Committee shall take into account §3. The next General Assembly shall decide on the continuation of the respective expert committee as well as on the future budget.

Expert committees can be formed spontaneously from the work of the association, but the requirements of paragraph 1 must be observed. Every member of the association has the right to participate in the expert committees. Participation of non-members of the Association, also of commissioned service providers, requires the written (also electronic) approval of the Executive Committee. The approval must be confirmed by the next general meeting. However, cooperation can already take place up to this point.

The expert committees report to the General Assembly; they inform the Executive Board regularly, at least 4 times a year, about their activities.

§ 11a **Cash audit**

The auditor shall have the task of auditing the following

- . whether income and expenditure are correctly accounted for
 - . legal regulations complied with
 - . Inventory kept

- . Annual accounts prepared by the tax adviser
- . Liquidity and financial/economic situation in order
- . Use of funds covered by the purpose of the association
- . the documents **are** complete.

The auditor shall exercise his office within the framework of due discretion.

He shall only be liable in the event of intent and gross negligence, otherwise he shall be liable to the association against-

on a claim for exemption. He is elected in rotation together with the Executive Board every elected for two years.

The auditor works on a voluntary basis. Necessary travel and accommodation expenses are to be paid by refund.

§12

Amendments to the Statutes and dissolution

The General Assembly shall decide on amendments to the Statutes, in particular on changes to the purpose of the Association and on dissolution, with a majority of three quarters of the votes cast. Proposals for amendments to the Statutes, changes of purpose and dissolution shall be indicated in the agenda stated in the invitation.

Amendments or additions to the Articles of Association required by the competent registration authority or by the tax office may be made by the Board of Directors and do not require any

Adoption of resolutions by the general meeting. They shall be communicated to the members with the next invitation to the general meeting at the latest.

In the event of dissolution, withdrawal of the Association's legal capacity or discontinuation of its tax-privileged purposes, all assets shall pass to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e.V. (German Research Foundation) with its registered office in Bonn, which shall use them exclusively and directly in accordance with their previous objectives and tasks as set out in § 2 of these Statutes.

§ 13

Data protection

Within the scope of membership administration, the following data is collected from members (surname, first name, company, registered office, address, email, turnover size, number of employees, trade register number, exposure data).

This data is processed and stored within the framework of membership.

The association shall only publish data of its members if the general meeting has passed a corresponding resolution and the member has not objected.

§ 14

Severability clause

Should any provision(s) of these Articles of Association be or become invalid, the invalid provision(s) shall be replaced by a provision(s) which comes closest to the purpose of these Articles of Association.