



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Industrial Alliances: Joint action for a green and digital Europe

Summary



EU Clusters Talks
25 October 2023, 8:30 – 10:00 CET

An initiative of the European Union





Industrial Alliances: Joint action for a green and digital Europe

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 25 October 2023, 8:30 – 10:00 CET, to learn about the work of these initiatives and discuss how clusters can get involved.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Zivile Kropaite

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Introduction to the Industrial Alliances
Szilvia Szekely, DG GROW, European Commission
3. European Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge and Cloud
Aleksandra Częścik, DG CNECT, European Commission
4. European Battery Alliance
Matilda Axelson, DG GROW, European Commission
5. Alliance for Zero-Emission Aviation
Jean-Pierre Lentz, DG DEFIS, European Commission
6. Renewable and Low-Carbon Fuels Value Chain Industrial Alliance
Michal Kubicki, DG MOVE, European Commission
7. Circular Plastics Alliance
Laure Baillargeon, DG GROW, European Commission
8. Q&A
9. Funding opportunities
Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Key messages

- The industrial alliances are platforms to gather a diverse range of stakeholders from specific industries and their corresponding value chain.
- The primary role of these alliances is to fortify specific markets by identifying needs, barriers, and potential solutions.
- Each alliance has specific objectives, but they all aim at achieving industrial policy goals.
- Clusters can become engaged in the alliances and contribute to their objectives by bringing their visions for the value chains.



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Zivile Kropaite, the following news item were presented:

1. Invitation to contribute to the [public consultation](#) on reporting requirements for businesses and Member States to reduce administrative burden until end of November.
2. Commission sets out immediate actions to support the [European wind power industry](#).
3. Invitation to attend the [Ukraine Green Recovery Conference](#) from 28-1 December in Vilnius, Lithuania.
4. The upcoming [Clusters meet Regions](#) events will take place in Germany, Romania, and Poland this November and December 2023. Registration is open.
5. Please answer the [feedback survey for ECCP users](#) until end of November.

2. Introduction to the Industrial Alliances

Szilvia Szekely, DG GROW, European Commission

Szilvia Szekely gave an overview of the objectives of the industrial alliances, which have been initiated over the past 5-6 years. The alliances serve as a platform to gather a diverse range of stakeholders from specific industries and their corresponding value chains. Their membership spans both the public and private sectors. Within the private sector, these alliances include major industry players, as well as a significant proportion of micro, small, and mid-cap businesses. Eight of them are active, the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies is not active yet.

The primary role of these alliances is to fortify specific markets by identifying needs, barriers, and potential solutions. They also pinpoint investment opportunities and are instrumental in preparing viable investment project pipelines. This aids in the formation of integrated value chains throughout Europe and help achieving industrial policy goals.

Szilvia Szekely explained that the development stage of each alliance varies based on its inception date. While some have made considerable progress towards their objectives, newer ones are still in the nascent stages. For interested parties, a dedicated [webpage](#) offers a comprehensive overview and more detailed information on each alliance.

3. European Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge and Cloud

Aleksandra Cząćcik, DG CNECT, European Commission

The primary aim of the Alliance for Industrial Data, Edging Cloud is to form a stakeholder platform to strengthen the EU's industrial position in next generation cloud and edge infrastructure and services to serve the needs of processing (highly) sensitive data. This aligns with EU's Digital Decade targets, which includes establishing 10,000 climate-neutral and secure edge nodes across the EU and achieving a 75% business usage of cloud solutions by 2030. Aleksandra Cząćcik explained that there has been noted lack of networking in the industry, which is why the alliance was born.



The alliance seeks to bridge the gap between the private and public sectors, fostering dialogue and opening avenues for potential investments. While the alliance doesn't provide investments directly, it creates opportunities for synergies and collaborations between sectors. The goals are to leverage investments, create synergies, and provide expertise, standards, and requirements. This knowledge exchange is invaluable for the alliance's daily operations and its various work programs.

To date, the alliance has 53 industrial members and participation from all 27 EU member states. SMEs form the largest representation within the alliance. The alliance operates through three primary working groups: Cloud and Edge; Aeronautics, Security, and Defence; and Member States Cloud Cooperation. Beyond these groups, the Alliance Forum is held twice a year and serves as an additional platform for broader stakeholder engagement. Anyone interested in contributing to the alliance is welcome to engage in this forum.

4. European Battery Alliance

Matilda Axelson, DG GROW, European Commission

Matilda Axelson presented the oldest alliance and its progression over the years: the European Battery Alliance. It was initiated in 2017 when there was almost no large-scale battery production in Europe. The alliance was born to bolster this part of the value chain, support Europe's growing needs for battery storage, particularly for electric vehicles, and establish a complete, competitive, and sustainable battery value chain in the EU, with spillover effects over upstream and downstream industries. The alliance has received strong political backing since its inception.

The alliance is mainly active in three areas: research and innovation; skills, and so-called Important Project of Common European Interests (IPCEI). It gathers over 40 projects under Horizon 2020 and a Battery Partnership under Horizon Europe, an Erasmus+ Blueprint Skills Programme for Batteries, and two IPCEIs launched in 2019 and 2021.

The alliance brings together Member States, industry, Commission services, investors, and innovation actors. It is open to any entity that is a part of the European battery ecosystem, including participants from raw material suppliers to innovation and research centres. Together, they have created a European battery ecosystem. To give an example of the success, Matilda Axelson showed a map of ongoing and planned lithium battery cell factories in Europe.

The industrial network is managed by an external actor, EIT InnoEnergy. Interested parties can join the alliance by contacting EIT InnoEnergy through the EIT platform.

5. Alliance for Zero-Emission Aviation

Jean-Pierre Lentz, DG DEFIS, European Commission

Jean-Pierre Lentz introduced the Alliance for Zero-Emission Aviation, which was initiated by Commissioner Bretton the previous year. The alliance's primary goal is to prepare the aviation ecosystem for the integration of electric and hydrogen-powered aircraft. Thus, the alliance contributes



to maintaining a competitive and sustainable aviation sector, decarbonising intra-EU flights, and the emergence of a new sustainable regional air mobility offer.

This open platform gathers private and public stakeholders, namely aircraft manufacturers, airlines, energy producers, civil society, and public administration, to address the many existing barriers in a coordinated way. These barriers include aircraft technologies, standardisation, energy supply, infrastructure, and regulations. The aim is to create a roadmap that presents actionable recommendations and to promote investments in infrastructure, fuel production, and energy delivery at airports. While the aviation industry is progressing towards developing new power technologies, the timeline provided suggests these technologies being mainstream in roughly a decade. The alliance supports investments ensuring these new technologies find a market when ready.

Jean-Pierre Lentz explained that the initial phase of is devoted to analysing the challenges and gaps. By the following year, the roadmap is expected to be in place, allowing monitoring and progress tracking. The alliance has an open membership and a limited number of eligibility criteria. All actors willing to work together to prepare the market for commercial operations of electric and hydrogen aircraft are welcome.

6. Renewable and Low-Carbon Fuels Value Chain Industrial Alliance

Michal Kubicki, DG MOVE, European Commission

Starting his presentation, Michal Kubicki emphasised the importance of renewable energy sources and the expected evolution of drop-in fuels demand in road, aviation, and waterborne by 2050. The aim is to enable the decarbonisation of transport modes, especially in sectors like maritime and aviation. The sectors need to adopt available technologies that can work with current fleets and infrastructure. These technologies include sustainable biofuels (especially second-generation biofuels) and synthetic fuels. These fuels can be integrated into existing distribution networks and used by engines with minimal adaptations.

Michal Kubicki explained that the Renewable and Low-Carbon Fuels Value Chain Industrial was formed to build a value chain for the supply of these renewable fuels. It aims at tackling the lack of availability and affordability of renewable and low-carbon drop-in fuels for aviation and waterborne transport and at rapidly boosting the production, storage, and distribution capacity of these fuels.

This alliance brings together various stakeholders, from raw material suppliers to end-users. Currently, it counts with 23 members, with the door always open for new entrants. While the focus is primarily on European companies, the alliance acknowledges the global nature of the challenge and the need for global solutions. There are also members from other continents, showcasing its international reach. Clusters are invited to join and spread the word about the alliance.



7. Circular Plastics Alliance

Laure Baillargeon, DG GROW, European Commission

Since its inception in 2018, the Circular Plastics Alliance has played a pivotal role in aligning the objectives of the European plastic industry with the European Commission's plastic strategy, also introduced that year. The Circular Plastics Alliance was among the first few alliances instituted by the Commission. After nine months, the Circular Plastics Alliance declaration was signed, outlining all commitments and actions by its members. Now, five years since its establishment, the alliance has effectively met almost all its initial commitments.

The alliance has members from the entire plastics value chain, encompassing producers, processors, manufacturers of final products, and waste collection and recycling entities. It focuses primarily on recycling and the incorporation of recycled content into plastic products, covering the initial recyclability of plastics to their eventual collection, sorting, and reincorporation into the product cycle.

While the alliance remains active and its members are continuously engaging, its future endeavours are driven by goodwill rather than a prescriptive mandate. Current initiatives include the creation of a brochure detailing industrial sites open for visitation, especially by policymakers. This initiative aims to provide a real-world insight into the realm of plastic recycling. Another emerging focus area is chemical recycling of plastics, a multifaceted domain that promises significant advancements in plastic waste management. Moreover, the alliance is emphasising the importance of plastic waste collection and sorting, particularly in the packaging sector. As the alliance moves forward, it remains open to incorporating new activities that align with its foundational goal of promoting plastic recycling and the use of recycled content in Europe.

8. Q&A

Talking about the roles of the industrial alliances and how they contribute to the ecosystems, the speakers underline the membership of stakeholders of the full value chain in each alliance. The main purpose is to bring together all the players that are relevant to the value chain and determine a very targeted programme. Action plans mostly include identifying the needs that are relevant to that sector or to the development of that technology in the EU and set up the pipeline project.

The alliances offer an exchange between stakeholders that rarely occur, for example, between the maritime and aviation sectors. Thus, the alliances can bridge build bridges between sectors.

Clusters are eligible members in the alliances and can get active and engaged. They can demonstrate that they are part of the value chains that the alliances are aiming at building.



9. Funding opportunities

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann shared the following examples of funding opportunities:

1. [Industrial leadership in AI, Data and Robotics boosting competitiveness and the green transition \(AI Data and Robotics Partnership\)](#); deadline 19 March 2024
2. [Development of technical and business solutions to optimise the circularity, resilience, and sustainability of the European battery value chain \(Batt4EU Partnership\)](#); deadline 18 April 2024
3. [Online Info Session](#) on the I3 Instrument Call "Strand 2b Capacity Building in Less Developed Regions" on 23 November 2023
4. Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters; published on [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#)
5. Invitation to come to [upcoming C2Labs](#) in Lithuania to work on project proposals