



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Clusters4NEB: New European Bauhaus and Sustainable Construction

Summary



EU Clusters Talks
8 November 2023, 8:30 – 9:45 CET

An initiative of the European Union





Clusters4NEB: New European Bauhaus and Sustainable Construction

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 8 November, 8:30 – 9:45 CET, to discuss cluster approaches to sustainability in construction and learn about the current challenges and solutions.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Chris Burns

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. New European Bauhaus initiative
Vera Winthagen, Policy Officer, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission
3. Panel debate
Anna Rosenqvist, CEO, Interior Cluster Sweden
Jorge López Conde, architect, Clusters4NEB
Marta Krakowiak, Project Manager, ELCA European Lighting Cluster Alliance
Pauline Bruge, Project Manager, CAP Construction
4. Funding opportunities
Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Key messages

- The New European Bauhaus initiative is at the heart of the European Green Deal.
- The initiative aims to create a design and innovation ecosystem that addresses the challenges facing our society today, enable the green transition of our societies and economy, and bring tangible change on the ground to improve life of citizens.
- It gives a framework for activities in many sectors, including furniture or lighting.
- Clusters play a crucial role in advancing the New European Bauhaus initiative by fostering collaboration and innovation across various sectors.
- The digital product passport helps increase transparency and traceability in the production chain, ensuring that all components of a product are sustainably and fairly sourced.
- A key challenge is the need for awareness among small businesses and artisans about the principles of the European Bauhaus and how to implement them.



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Jennifer Baker, the following news item were presented:

1. Save the date for the next European Cluster Conference, which will take place in Brussels on 7-8 May 2024.
2. Invitation to [apply for the Cluster Booster Academy](#).
3. Updates on Eurocluster activities in the ECCP [news section](#).
4. [Public consultation](#) open until end of November 2023: Reporting requirements for businesses and Member States to reduce administrative burden
5. Register to attend the next [“Clusters meet Regions”](#) events.
6. [Feedback survey](#) for ECCP users

2. New European Bauhaus initiative

Vera Winthagen, Policy Officer, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission

Vera Winthagen presented the European Bauhaus initiative, emphasizing its role in shaping sustainable, inclusive, and aesthetically pleasing living environments. Initially inspired by Ursula von der Leyen's State of the Union speech three years ago, the initiative takes cues from the historical Bauhaus movement, which significantly influenced **architectural and environmental design**. The current focus is on utilizing the Bauhaus metaphor for change, integrating it into various European Commission programs to **foster an innovation ecosystem**. The initiative aims to create a design and innovation ecosystem that addresses the challenges facing our society today, enable the green transition of our societies and economy, and bring tangible change on the ground to improve life of citizens. The thematic axis is:

- Reconnecting to nature
- Regaining a sense of belonging
- Prioritising the places and people that need it the most
- The need for long term, life cycle thinking in the industrial ecosystem

To achieve these aims, it is critical to **work directly with citizens, NGOs, architects, and other stakeholders**. The European Commission developed different tool for this. Vera Winthagen presented the growing NEB Community, which as more than 660 official partners, 19 Members of the High-Level Round Table, 27 National Contact Points, and many so-called Friends. Then, she showcased numerous projects, like the transformation of neighbourhoods into circular and inclusive communities and social innovation in housing districts. The NEB Prizes award outstanding projects and will go into a new round in 2024. The prize shows that initiative extends beyond the built environment, including projects like recycling toys in Portugal and promoting systemic change. The [NEB Dashboard](#) offers an overview of interesting projects related to New European Bauhaus that are funded by Member States and regional



governments. The [New European Bauhaus Compass](#) is a guiding framework for decision and project makers wishing to apply the NEB principles and criteria to their activities. It will be tested through interactions with the NEB Community.

The European Commission itself is adapting its infrastructure to align with Bauhaus principles, as seen in the new building in Seville, designed with sustainability and local traditions in mind. Looking forward, the Commission plans a ten-year European Bauhaus mission focused on the built environment, circular construction, and empowering local communities to develop sustainable spaces. The goal is to accelerate progress in these areas, emphasizing research and innovation in construction. Additionally, New European Bauhaus plays a role in the **reconstruction efforts in Ukraine**, proposing innovative and sustainable rebuilding strategies.

3. Panel debate

The panellists present their current projects related to New European Bauhaus, discussed initiatives to foster sustainability and circularity, and spoke about challenges in the implementation of the concept.

Jorge López Conde emphasised the importance of integrating **diverse expertise and ideas** into the implementation of the New European Bauhaus initiative. He said that clusters play a crucial role in advancing the New European Bauhaus initiative by fostering collaboration and innovation across various sectors. They facilitate partnerships that bridge the gap between industry and society, supporting regional development through different policy approaches and pilot projects. These efforts are vital in constructing models and examples that align with the New Green Deal. To illustrate the impact of clusters on the ground, he provided an example of a project in the Netherlands: a house made entirely of biomaterials, showcasing bio-based construction as a tangible outcome of these collaborative efforts. All speakers agreed on the importance of **networking and collaboration** among clusters, especially in the context of the European Bauhaus and the Green Deal. They emphasised how clusters working with other clusters can lead to significant outcomes, including forming consortiums for joint projects and bids. Additionally, clusters can serve as an early warning system for individual companies, helping them stay informed and prepared for upcoming regulations and standards. This is particularly relevant for small companies that might not have the resources to stay updated with the fast-paced changes in regulations and market demands.

Anna Rosenqvist reflected on new insights and a sense of direction for the implementation of the New European Bauhaus initiative, particularly in the context of furniture and interior design. She found it challenging to find a clear positioning for furniture and interior design. The European Bauhaus, being at the heart of the Green Deal, has helped them see the bigger picture and find a place where their work fits into this broader context. She gave the example of the Nordic Blockchain Alliance (NBA) project, which emerged from the ECO design legislation leading to the concept of digital product passports. The focus is on creating **transparency and traceability** in the production chain, ensuring that all components of a product, like a piece of furniture, are sustainably and fairly sourced. The **digital product passport** concept requires suppliers to disclose detailed information about materials and production processes. This transparency allows consumers to understand the sustainability and ethical aspects of the products they purchase. However, challenges exist, particularly in integrating



technology with traditional industries like furniture manufacturing. There's a language and understanding gap between tech companies and furniture producers, creating difficulties in fully realizing the potential of initiatives like digital product passports.

Talking about the digital passport, the speakers focus on the ideas of authentication and the level of certifications like **BIM** (Building Information Modelling) and **ESG** (Environmental, Social, and Governance) funds, emphasizing how these are integral to changing lifestyles and construction practices. Pauline Bruge highlighted the **importance of guiding principles** like building passports for ensuring traceability of construction materials and promoting circularity. Another critical point raised is the need for **financial access to environmental assessment tools** for small companies or startups developing innovative materials. The cost of obtaining certifications and labels can be prohibitive for smaller entities, yet these certifications are essential for innovation and proving the sustainability of new materials. Anna Rosenqvist referenced the ESPR (European Sustainable Products Regulation) to search for more detailed information about regulations and requirements.

Marta Krakowiak made the connecting to the lighting industry, emphasizing that light, whether natural or artificial, indoors or outdoors, is essential for all activities. The European Bauhaus initiative has brought more attention to the **role of lighting** in enhancing living conditions, respecting nature and biodiversity, and supporting people with special needs to live in a safer, more inclusive environment. She introduced "Shape the Light," a new initiative promoted by their meta-cluster, which involves companies, designers, and artists in creating new indoor and outdoor lighting products that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also sustainable and inclusive. This project embodies the European Bauhaus's focus on combining beauty, sustainability, and inclusivity in design and products.

Pauline Bruge discussed how her organization enhances competitiveness and resilience in the construction industry. Cap Construction brings together a wide range of construction stakeholders, including architects, design offices, contractors, installers, and producers. By creating a platform for communication and collaboration, they facilitate the sharing of ideas and strategies across the construction value chain. One key project focuses on encouraging the digital transition within the industry. Specifically, they are working on **demystifying augmented and virtual reality technologies**, developing proof of concepts that align with the needs of companies. Another significant project addresses the need to **adapt buildings to evolving demographic needs**. This includes accommodating different family setups and the aging population. The project aims to find innovative solutions and develop guiding tools to make buildings more adaptable to these changing needs.

Closing the discussion, various challenges and potential solutions related to implementing the European Bauhaus initiative were addressed. One of the key challenges mentioned is the need for awareness among small businesses and artisans about the principles of the European Bauhaus and how to implement them. The lighting sector, for example, is already developing sustainable solutions, but there is a **push to incorporate sustainability more deeply**, especially in terms of materials and afterlife of products. Another significant challenge is related to **legislation**, particularly when dealing with cultural heritage sites and historic buildings. The strict regulations in place can sometimes hinder the implementation of sustainable and innovative lighting solutions. Working with policymakers to create more operational and practical regulations is seen as crucial. A third challenge is the **skills gap**. The speakers saw a need for professionals to be well-trained in BIM, circular principles, and other aspects of the green and digital transition. Current training programs may not provide enough depth in these areas. Additionally, the discussion touches on the role of laws in promoting sustainability.



While laws can standardize sustainable practices and push companies to comply, it is also important for companies to understand the value of sustainability beyond just legal compliance. Finally, the speakers recommend not forgetting about low-tech solutions and looking back at traditional building methods as inspiration for sustainable and cost-effective construction practices.

4. 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. [New European Bauhaus – Innovative solutions for greener and fairer ways of life through arts and culture, architecture and design for all](#); Deadline 7 February 2024.
2. [Proximity and social economy industrial ecosystem: boosting the digital transition of social economy enterprises and SMEs](#); Deadline 21 November 2023.
3. [Interreg Danube Region Programme: Second Call for Proposals](#); Deadline 29 March 2024.
4. Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters; published on [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#)