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NEWSLETTER

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From the editor

Welcome to the second edition of the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (EOCIC) newsletter. The aim of this publication is to provide a summary of the EOCIC's latest activities and of other cluster-related activities.

This edition provides a summary of the outcomes of a number of recent conferences discussing European, national and regional cluster policy. It also provides an update on upcoming cluster-related events.

One noteworthy event was the partnering event of European Cluster Partnerships on 25 October 2018 in Brussels, which brought together for the first time over 50 cluster partnerships funded under the COSME and H2020 programmes. The event attracted more than 100 participants. Participants shared their experiences, explored cooperation opportunities and discussed the best approaches to supporting SMEs and how to make partnering strategic and sustainable.

This issue of the newsletter also provides an update on the third European Cluster Policy Forum, which took place in Brussels on 15 November 2018. The event was attended by 19 representatives of 15 EU Member States to discuss how clusters and local/regional ecosystems can accelerate entrepreneurship, industrial modernisation and growth, and what policies can support this process. The 4th edition of the European Cluster Policy Forum just took place on 14 March 2019 in Brussels, which we will report upon in the next newsletter.

Finally, this newsletter looks at the launch of the first edition of the EU Cluster Weeks, an initiative that promotes national, regional and local cluster events throughout the European Union. This first edition runs since November last year still until the end of April 2019. This series of events is the perfect opportunity for stakeholders to express their needs and contribute to the shaping of future cluster initiatives, including Joint Cluster Initiatives under the forthcoming Single Market Programme of the European Commission.

The European Cluster Conference on 14-16 May 2019 will be the occasion, where rapporteurs will feed the results of events of the EU Cluster Weeks into the discussions with 400 expected participants. The key event under the Romanian EU Presidency will take place at the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, Romania.

So far, EOCIC has been very active in supporting industrial modernisation. We look forward to sharing with you new insights on our work in the next newsletter!

I hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter. My team and I are looking forward to meeting you at one (or more) of the upcoming cluster events in 2019.

Ulla Engelmann

Head of Unit

Advanced technologies, Clusters and Social economy
at the Directorate-General for Internal Market,
Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

EUROPEAN CLUSTER PARTNERSHIPS PARTNERING EVENT

On 25 October 2018, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) and the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (EOCIC) organised a European Cluster Partnerships event in Brussels. This was the first ever joint meeting for European Cluster Partnerships supported under the COSME and Horizon 2020 programmes that gathered more than 100 participants. The event was attended by representatives of the **45 European Strategic Cluster Partnerships** supported by COSME – comprising those for Going International (ESCP-4i), for smart specialisation investments (ESCP-S3) and cluster excellence projects – and the **13 INNOSUP-1 cluster projects** for new industrial value chains supported under Horizon2020.



The event was designed to foster space for joint discussion and sharing of ideas among the cluster partnership representatives around topics that are highly relevant for them, as well as to provide them with the last updates on EU Cluster Initiatives. Participants welcomed with **enthusiasm** the opportunity to network, identify potential synergies and gather best practices from other projects.

Ms. Ulla Engelmann, Head of Unit for Advanced technologies, Clusters and Social economy at the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, opened the discussion with a presentation giving an outlook for the future approach on

Joint Clusters Initiatives. She also handed over the partnership certificates to **9 new ESCP-S3 and the 2 new ESCP-4i** focussed on defence and security related dual use technologies.

In discussions of small groups during the **partnerships world café** session, participants reflected on the how customised support for SMEs could help them achieve a greater impact. Other sessions highlighted the importance of raising funding and mobility activities as important measures for creating strategic and sustainable partnerships both within the cluster community and with other stakeholders.



An **open space** session allowed participants to select **13 topics** they wished to debate. The cluster community suggested that the results already achieved in cluster development could be further exploited by an online tool to share best practices and experiences and communicate open calls for SMEs, gather all relevant information and resources from the EOCIC, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the Commission services.

Participants also identified the need to streamline collaboration between SMEs and large industries as an important issue and co-design support services. Two other areas to be addressed also stood out: the importance, on the one hand, of continuing to promote cluster branding and, on the other, of organising events and meetings to increase knowledge and exchanges across cluster projects (e.g. a kind of Erasmus for cluster staff or cluster summer schools).

An **electronic vote** by participants at the end of the day gave the conclusions for the world café and open space discussions. Getting strategic information and customise support were

identified amongst the most important aspect for supporting SMEs with impact. The **take-aways for future Joint Cluster Initiatives** included the suggested focus on a funding mix of bigger and smaller cluster partnerships.

Interested in experiencing the collaborative and enriching discussions during the partnering event? Watch the **video and interviews** with some of the cluster partnerships [here](#).

EUROPEAN CLUSTER POLICY FORUM

In the Commission's 2017 Communication on a renewed [EU Industrial Policy Strategy](#), the European Cluster Policy Forum is referenced as part of the actions to facilitate a dialogue on better cluster policies for supporting smart, innovative and sustainable industry in the EU.

The **third edition of the European Cluster Policy Forum** ("the Forum") took place on 15 November 2018. Nineteen representatives of 15 EU Member States gathered in Brussels to discuss how clusters and local/regional ecosystems can accelerate **entrepreneurship**, industrial modernisation and growth, as well as what policies are necessary to boost this process.

During the Forum, Member States were informed about **recent developments in EU cluster initiatives**. This including flagging out the following calls that were planned for 2019:

2019 cluster-related calls

- **INNOSUP-1** Cluster facilitated projects for new industrial value chains
- **European Cluster Excellence Programme 2018**, which will also introduce the ClusterXchange pilot scheme (more at the end of this newsletter)
- **EU Clusters Go International**
Renewal of the **European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP)** by merging the present activities with those by the European Cluster Observatory for Industrial Change and the European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre

The Commission also informed that it is setting up a Commission **Expert Group on Clusters** as foreseen in the Industrial Policy Strategy to follow-up the fruitful discussions of the European Cluster Policy Forum. Participants in the expert group will provide strategic input e.g. on how to better use clusters as a strategic tool of industrial policy and for shaping of the future Joint Cluster Initiatives.

In addition, participants were informed about the [Joint Romanian-Hungarian Cluster Conference 2018](#) and the [Future Week Denmark](#) organised by Cluster Excellence Denmark that kicked off the **EU Cluster Weeks campaign** – reported upon in more detail further below.

The Forum was also the perfect opportunity for Member States to update on their **national cluster policies**, e.g. with France making a presentation on recent developments in its competitiveness cluster policy. The discussion highlighted a series of **common challenges** that Member States are addressing. Amongst these are the fragmentation of the cluster landscape; inadequate funding for the internationalisation of cluster initiatives and the need to further boost digitalisation and professionalisation of cluster management.

During the specific session dedicated to **entrepreneurship**, Member States also shared their best practices and challenges. The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change presented the work it is doing on the *Smart Guide to entrepreneurship support through clusters* that is currently being finalised and presentations on the following three examples at national and regional level provided inspiration for how to use clusters to support start-ups and scale-ups:



- **Scale-Up Denmark**, Søren Røn;



- **Bioindustry Park**, Fabrizio Conicella;



- **Bioeconomy region**, Gunner Hellerström and Monika Svanberg

The discussions illustrated that entrepreneurship support through clusters is about strengthening and leveraging links between the different actors of entrepreneurial ecosystems, including universities, technology transfer centres, providers of innovation services, service and manufacturing firms, providers of public funding and private sector venture capitalists. Whilst the cluster policy focus on entrepreneurship is still a relatively new area, there are already several good practice examples across Europe for both traditional and emerging industries, and in both developed and less developed regions.

With regard to future EU initiative under the next programming period, the discussions concluded that efforts to strengthen partnerships and to create sustainable ecosystems should be continued. The envisaged **streamlining of the four main ongoing cluster initiatives** (Cluster Excellence, ESCP-S3, ESCP-4i, INNOSUP) into Joint Cluster Initiatives proposed for the draft Single Market Programme were welcomed.

The **fourth meeting** of the European Cluster Policy Forum just took place on 14 March 2019 in Brussels with a focus on the topics of internationalisation and skills. The next newsletter will report about it in more detail.

For more information on the third edition of the Forum, see the dedicated news item with key conclusions on DG GROW's website [here](#).

The EU Cluster Weeks

The European Commission also launched in November 2018 the **first edition of the EU Cluster Weeks** to promote local, regional and national cluster-related events all over Europe under a common brand. So far, 35 events have been organised under the [EU Cluster Weeks](#) events and more events are scheduled to take place until the end of April 2019.

The main aim of the campaign is to promote participation in cluster events and increase awareness of the role and results achieved by clusters in supporting SME growth, industrial transformation and regional economic development. These events are also an excellent opportunity to share experiences across Europe, whether these be of best practice or challenges for clusters and needs for policy actions.

This dialogue will feed into the debates on the next generation of cluster initiatives, including Joint Cluster Initiatives under the forthcoming Single Market Programme. Rapporteurs from the main anchor events will bring the results into the discussion during the **European Cluster Conference on 14 to 16 May 2019**, which will be the EU Cluster Weeks' closing event.

More information on EU Cluster Weeks is available [here](#).

To have events to still feature under the EU Cluster Weeks, register them [here](#).

Joint launch event between Hungary and Romania

The European Cluster Weeks kicked off from 20-22 November 2018, when, for the first time in European cluster history, two countries decided to join forces and merged their national cluster conferences into one major, joint Romanian-Hungarian cluster conference. The three-day conference, which took place both in Oradea (Romania) and Debrecen (Hungary), was co-organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Finance and the Romanian Cluster Association (CLUSTERO), and supported by the INTERREG Europe CLUSTERIX2.0 project.

The event brought together more than 400 representatives of cluster organisations, national, regional and local authorities, the European Commission, academics; governmental authorities and cluster experts from across Europe.



There were lively presentations and panel discussions on topics such as cluster business models, the Y generation and new start-ups. The event included special sessions dedicated to debates on European opportunities, perspectives for clusters in Bihor, a cluster quiz, and an EEN matchmaking event. The conference was a great opportunity for cluster-related projects to meet and explore future cooperation prospects.

More information on the event is available [here](#).

Future Week Denmark kick-off event

From 26 to 30 November 2018, the second kick-off event of the European Cluster Weeks initiative took place with the Future Week Denmark organised by Cluster Excellence Denmark. During the last week of November, Danish clusters and innovation networks hosted various cross-disciplinary events all over the country.

Events revolved around themes such as the circular economy, digitalisation, biomarkers, drones, 3D printing, robots, cyber security, blockchain, millennials, music and IoT. Such diversity across the events was a first-rate occasion for showing the extent to which clusters and innovation networks cover most of the Danish business environment, both technologically and business-wise.

More information as well as a video of the event Future Week Denmark event are available [here](#).



The European Cluster Conference

The **European Cluster Conference on 14-16 May 2019** will take place at the **Palace of Parliament** in **Bucharest**, Romania. It will be the concluding event of the first edition of the EU Cluster Weeks.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs supported by EOCIC are organising the conference in collaboration with the Romanian Ministry of Finance and the Romanian Cluster Association (CLUSTERO) under the aegis of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The conference is a unique chance to hear about recent and future priorities for cluster policies and developments to support an innovative, sustainable industrial modernisation and interregional cooperation. The spotlight will be on building bridges among the different actors in the cluster community fitting with this year's theme of "Connecting Ecosystems: Bridge. Inspire. Change." More specific topics are **digitalisation** and **skills gap**, **circular economy**, **shared value** and **social impact**.

The interactive conference will include high-level plenary sessions on the need for clusters of change, panel discussions on fostering strategic interregional collaboration and on linkages across European Commission cluster-related EU initiatives, and participatory sessions where participants will have the chance to share their experiences, best practices and challenges.

There will be a pre-conference EU cluster **matchmaking event** on the morning of 14 May in collaboration with the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the Enterprise Europe Network. The last EU cluster matchmaking event was organised in conjunction with the European Cluster Conference in 2016, attracting 114 cluster organisations from 21 countries, representing more than 10 000 SMEs.

Last but not least, **four Cluster Award winners** will be announced during the conference dinner on the evening of 14 May: the EU Cluster Manager of the Year (awarded on the basis of participants' votes after a pitch by the three shortlisted candidates), the European Strategic Cluster Partnership for Going International (ESCP-4i) of the Year, the European Strategic Cluster Partnership for Smart Specialisation investments (ESCP-S3) of the Year, and the INNOSUP-1 Cluster Project of the Year. Make sure not to miss your chance to showcase your efforts and take home an award by applying [here](#).

More than 400 participants are expected to join. To ensure a place at the Cluster Conference, make sure to register early [here](#).

We encourage you to visit the [European Cluster Conference 2019 website](#) for all information. For any enquiries, please contact info@eucluster2019.eu.

New Cluster Excellence call published

The European Commission has published a new call for proposal to strengthen cluster management excellence and facilitate exchanges and strategic partnering between clusters and specialised eco-systems across Europe. The **European Cluster Excellence Programme call** is open to cluster organisations or business network organisations interested in supporting the development of cluster management skills, cluster strategy both at individual and Partnership level and the organisation of twinning, collaboration, networking and learning activities as well as joint activities for implementing business-to-business (B2B) and cluster-to-cluster (C2C) collaboration projects.

Successful applicants will form European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Excellence (ESCP-4x) that must also implement the **new "ClusterXchange" pilot scheme** by facilitating short-term exchanges from cluster organisations, technology centres and other scaling-up support organisations and SMEs that are members in a cluster. Inspired by the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs exchange programme and other initiatives such as the BSR Innovation Express, this scheme aims to explore growth opportunities for SME to boost industrial transformation. It is expected to start in 2020.

The European Cluster Excellence Programme call for proposal, together with the presentation and recording of a information webinar that took place on 12 February 2019 and the link to the submission system are available [here](#). The call deadline is the 4th of April 2019.

Watch a 3-minute [video](#) to learn more about the EU Cluster initiatives.



Upcoming events

Bulgarian National Cluster Conference 2019

Date: 26-28 March 2019,
Location: Sofia, Bulgaria
<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/event-calendar/bulgarian-national-cluster-conference-2019-innovations-clusters>



European Cluster Weeks – Hannover Messe Main Anchor Event

Date: 1-5 April 2019, during the Hannover Messe
Location: Hannover, Germany
Audience: Policy makers, practitioners, cluster managers and experts
<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/event-calendar/eu-cluster-weeks-main-anchor-event-context-hanover-fair>

European Cluster Weeks – CEBR Annual Meeting

Date: 4-5 April 2019
Location: Athens, Greece
Aim: Matchmaking event
Audience: Members of the Council of European BioRegions
<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/event-calendar/cebr-annual-meeting>



ZWEITE CLUSTERWOCHE DEUTSCHLAND“ / “SECOND CLUSTER WEEK GERMANY”

Date: 2-11 April 2019
Location: Berlin, Germany
<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/event-calendar/zweite-clusterwoche-deutschland-2nd-cluster-week-germany>



Annual Conference of the Go-Cluster programme

Date: 11 April 2019
Location: Berlin, Romania
<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/event-calendar/annual-conference-go-cluster-programme>



Promoting cooperation in the Danube Region through the use of clusters

Date: June 2019
Location: Romania



European Cluster Conference 2019

Topic: Digitalisation and skills gap, circular economy, shared value and social impact
Aim: To discuss the latest trends in cluster policies and stimulate a high-level policy discussion on the challenges and needs to be addressed in the next programming period to make better use of clusters' potential. The Conference will take place during and receive the support of the Romanian EU Presidency.
Date: 14-16 May 2019
Location: Bucharest, Romania
Audience: Policy makers, practitioners, cluster managers and experts
<https://www.eucluster2019.eu/>





The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change

The aim of the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change (#EOCIC) is to help Europe's regions and countries design better and more evidence-based cluster policies and initiatives that help countries participating in the [EU's COSME programme](#) to:

- Develop world-class clusters with competitive industrial value chains that cut across sectors;
- Support industrial modernisation;
- Foster entrepreneurship in emerging industries with growth potential;
- Bring together Europe's cluster policy-makers and stakeholders during dedicated events;
- Improve SMEs' access to clusters and internationalisation activities; and
- Enable more strategic inter-regional collaboration and investments in the implementation of smart specialisation strategies.

EOCIC builds upon the work undertaken by the [European Cluster Observatory](#) and the [European Service Innovation Centre](#), but with a stronger and wider focus on the role of industrial change and its key drivers, such as service innovation, entrepreneurship, key enabling technologies, digitalisation, creativity and eco-innovative and resource-efficient solutions. Each of these dimensions is being operationalised by a set of indicators, with a particular focus on measuring start-ups and scale-ups.



The EOCIC cluster database will ensure compatibility with previous results. It will show cluster strength based on a number of cluster stars and structural indicators such as labour productivity or number of enterprises. It will use the existing taxonomy of traded clusters and emerging industries.

In parallel, the previous [Observatory's Regional Ecosystem Scoreboard](#) is being updated and broadened. It is also developing indicators to display regional ecosystems in relation to the dimensions of industrial modernisation.



CONTACT

The European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change is implemented through a service contract from the Advanced Technologies, Clusters and Social Economy Unit of the European Commission's Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Directorate-General.

For any inquiry related to the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change, please contact:

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The EOCIC team is headed by Deloitte, in partnership with Valdani Vicari & Associati (VVA), Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (SPI), Maastricht University (MERIT), Fraunhofer ISI, Strasbourg Conseil, Centre for Industrial Studies (CSIL) and the Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT)

There is more information on the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change [here](#).

You can subscribe to the European Observatory for Clusters and Industrial Change newsletter by sending an email to:

EUclusterobservatory@EOCIC.eu

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