European Cluster Conference 2020

Output paper

10-11 November 2020, virtual, Brussels, Berlin

EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM .eu

Contents

Agenda European Cluster Conference 2020

The 7th edition of the European Cluster Conference took place for the first time in an entirely virtual set-up, as a way to connect and make the clusters community stronger in spite of all the challenges generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme was organised by the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs in partnership with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, under the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union and delivered by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.

The Conference focused on the recent and future priorities for clusters highlighting ideas and proposals for the recovery plans, bridging the clusters' perspective with the Europe's priorities, and building connections between Europe's value chains, clusters and ecosystems.

This output paper provides a summary of the discussions held during the Conference. The video, recordings & presentations are all on the Conference website: https://www.eucluster2020.eu/ecc2020.

Tuesday 10 November

9.30-11.15	High level opening & Roundtable			
11.15-11.30	Cluster management Quiz part I	Visit Online exhibition, Network & Meet		
11.30-13.00	Keynote speeches on Recovery Panel discussion			
13.00-14.00	Pitches for contact & Quiz part II			
14.00-16.00	Europe's Challenges			
14.00-15.15	**GREEN** Presentations World Cafés round 1	**DIGITALISATION** Presentations World Cafés round 1	**RESILIENCE** Presentations World Cafés round 1	**SKILLS** Presentations World Cafés round 1
15.15-16.00	World Cafés round 2	World Cafés round 2	World Cafés round 2	World Cafés round 2
16.00-16.30	Pitches 6 Cluster Partnerships & Quiz part III	Visit Online exhibition, Network & Meet		
16.30-17.45	EU Financing landscape & closing			

Wednesday 11 November

9.00-10.00	Vote for Cluster Manager of the Year | Wrap-up day 1 | Expert group on Cluster							
10.00-12.30	Clusters and Ecosystems							
10.00-11.00	**Tourism** Presentations World Cafés	**Mobility** Presentations World Cafés	**Aerospace & Defence** Presentations World Cafés	**Construction** Presentations World Cafés	**Agri-food** Presentations World Cafés	**Energy intensive industries** Presentations World Cafés	**Textile** Presentations World Cafés	**Network Meetings & Exhibition**
11.00-11.30	Answers to the Quiz				Visit Online exhibition, Network & Meet			
11.30-12.30	**Creative & Cultural** Presentations World Cafés	**Digital** Presentations World Cafés	**Renewable energy** Presentations World Cafés	**Electronics** Presentations World Cafés	**Retail** Presentations World Cafés	**Proximity & social economy** Presentations World Cafés	**Health** Presentations World Cafés	**Network Meetings & Exhibition**
12.30-13.30	EU Cluster Awards & closing remarks							

The conference at a glance

With more than 1000 registered participants from 51 countries, the Conference represented all the stakeholders involved in the cluster constellation, from public authorities to cluster managers, from business to practitioners.

On Day 1, our virtual studio welcomed Commissioner Thierry Breton and Peter Altmaier, German Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, whose opening remarks introduced two high level roundtables on the role of public authorities and business during and after COVID-19 and on recovery and resilience, with keynote speeches from.

The afternoon was dedicated to four main challenges of Europe: Green, Digital, Resilience and Skills. After an introduction given by the European Commission and by cluster managers, participants were invited to attend two rounds of world café. The day was concluded by an overview of the EU financing landscape in 2021-2027, with projects submitting their ideas for the feedback of experts.

Day 2 of the Conference kicked off with the results of Day 1, and introduced the Cluster Awards for this edition of the Conference. For each of the 14 industrial ecosystems there were workshops, participants could share their experiences and views in a world café set up, which resulted in a series of recommendations for policy making.

The Conference was closed with three awards: the Cluster Manager of 2020 (Uwe Pfeil), the Cluster Partnership of 2020 (IOT4Industry) and a special award for EU Cluster Mobilisation 2020 which was given to Antonio Novo, President of the European Cluster Alliance, for his work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main aim of the Conference was to allow the cluster community to come together and build new ties, ideas and opportunities. For this reason, there were several specific sessions:

❖ Pitching for contacts: 12 new, innovative ideas for projects were presented and 6 cluster partnerships had the opportunity to present results, future activities and upcoming events.
❖ 1-to-1 networking: throughout the whole conference, participants could schedule bilateral private meetings with other attendees. A total of 191 bilateral meetings were made.
❖ Virtual exhibitions: Participants could visit 93 different booths. A whooping total of 1090 visits were made.

The main takeaways:

❖ Clusters are drivers and enablers of change in the context of the green and digital transitions and building resilience as Europe recovers from COVID-19.
❖ International and interregional collaboration through clusters is a key tool for supporting innovation, industrial modernisation and the scaling up of SMEs as well as the reskilling and upskilling of the workforce.
❖ The right partners – policymakers, SME intermediaries and industry – need to be involved.
❖ Funding opportunities, dedicated support, new initiatives and sustainable partnerships are needed to advance collaboration in specialised sectors and ecosystems.

Synopsis of the European Cluster Conference 2020

1. Welcome

The audience was welcomed by the organisers of the conference:

Ulla Engelmann - Head Social Economy - European Commission's Directorate-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)
Stefan Schnorr - Head Digital and Innovation Policy Department, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany

2. High-Level opening

The conference was opened by the European Commission and the German Federal Minister.

Thierry Breton - European Union Commissioner for the Internal Market
Peter Altmaier - German Federal Minister Economic Affairs and Energy.

Both stressed the key role that clusters must play in helping the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, boosting the competitiveness and internationalisation of businesses whilst fostering the green and digital transitions of the European economy.

"This event illustrates how important collaboration and clusters are for our economy, now more than ever."
"Together we are strong, connected we are resilient and autonomous." (*Commissioner Breton*)
"Clusters help us make full sense of the benefits of the Single Market and by networking they can create added benefits" (*Minister Altmaier*). He also announced that Germany's 'Go Cluster' Programme will join the European Clusters Alliance, making it the 14th country to be represented.

3. High-Level Policy Roundtable

Slawomir Tokarski - Director Industrial Policy & Innovation DG GROW, European Commission (moderator)
Jekaterina Rojaka – Vice Minister Ministry of Economy, Lithuania
Catalin Bulf – Secretary of State Ministry of Economy, Romania
Stefan Schnorr – Head Digital and Innovation Policy Department, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Germany
Therese de Liedekerke – Deputy Director General BusinessEurope
Antonio Novo – President of European Cluster Alliance
Veronique Willems – Secretary General of SMEUnited

High-level discussions followed on the role of public authorities and business during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, concluding that clusters provide an essential link between local and national policymakers and industry, as well as how clusters can support recovery. Two main questions were answered by the panellists and also by the audience as can be seen below.

How can public authorities support business during the covid-19 crisis and post-covid-19 recovery?
35% Increase public investments
33% Facilitate collaboration and sharing business intelligence
14% Simplify regulations
14% Support services for business
2% Protect EU market
2% Help in internationalisation of activities

How should businesses adapt so that the recovery leads to green and digital transition and improves EU resilience? (1=most selected)
1. Train staff
2. Enhance use of digital tools
3. Uptake of green solutions
4. Search new markets

4. Panel discussion on recovery and resilience

Public authorities, cluster organisations, research and business discussed how to accelerate transition towards a greener, more digital and resilient Europe, and also the audience answered the main questions (see below). In the moment of crisis, clusters and their members demonstrated speed of information flow, technological capacity, engineering capability, flexibility to reshape value chains, geographical diversity, territorial embeddedness and international connections. They were also fast at liaising with social movements that were serving the most vulnerable populations in the peak of the crisis.

Ulla Engelmann - Head Social Economy -DG GROW (moderator)
Annie Renders - Head Cluster policy - Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Beata Lubos -Head Innovation Policy-Ministry Economy, Poland
Daniel Ács - President Union of Slovak Clusters
Ilaria Massari - General manager REI, Italy
Barbara Lenz – Head Institute for Transport Research, Germany
Nathalie Errard - Senior Vice President Airbus, Germany

As public authority, how could clusters help you transform the EU into a greener, more digital and resilient EU?
1. Connect bottom-up requests and top-down initiatives
2. Support SMEs giving knowledge on green & digitalisation
3. Provide input to public authorities to design policy instruments
4. Channel public funding for sustainable growth
5. Detect and inform disruptions in supply chain
6. Provide real-time information on economic and technological development on the market

As a cluster manager, what kind of support would you expect from public authorities to help you transform the EU into a greener, more digital and resilient EU?
1. Public funding
2. Facilitate collaboration across EU
3. Help connecting to global value chains
4. Training
5. Information and awareness raising
6. We are better off without public support (not selected)

What would you suggest to public authorities and cluster managers to ensure implementation of research results for greener, more digital and resilient Europe?
1. Increase support for pilots, prototypes, demonstration
2. Foster joint research-business projects
3. Mobilise public funding for market-oriented ideas
4. Train in innovation management
5. Support spin-off/spin-out from universities
6. Invest in public research infrastructure

5. Keynote speeches

Christian Ketels – Harvard Business School Visiting Executive, Chair of TCI Network Advisory Board - gave a keynote speech "**Preparing Europe for the Post-COVID 19 World: How Clusters Matter**"

He indicated that Europe's trend growth was already weak and slowing and that the impact on the trend growth is at least as critical to address as the short-term shock. Different groups, regions, sectors, firms could see very different paths.


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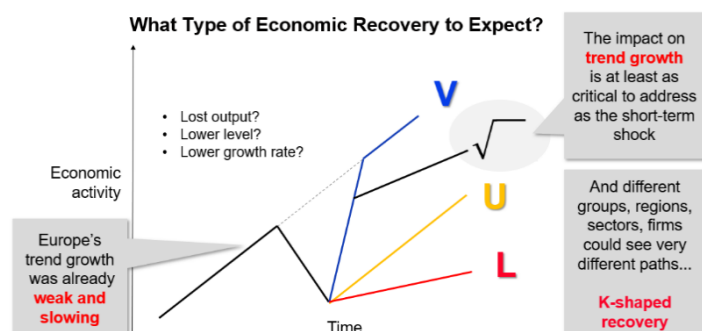
He also described the phases of policy response. Firstly, the crisis response is focused on public health. Secondly, the focus is on living with the pandemic. Thirdly, the focus is on trying to stimulate growth.

During these three phases social policy and macroeconomic policy are vital, among others through avoiding financial market collapse, mobilising financial resources and fighting a descent into depression. Fourthly, for enhancing competitiveness and resilience microeconomic policy is needed, which means keeping value chains operational, creating 'safe' operational environments and enabling innovation and productivity growth.

He closed with an overview of what policy makers and cluster organisations need to provide (see picture).
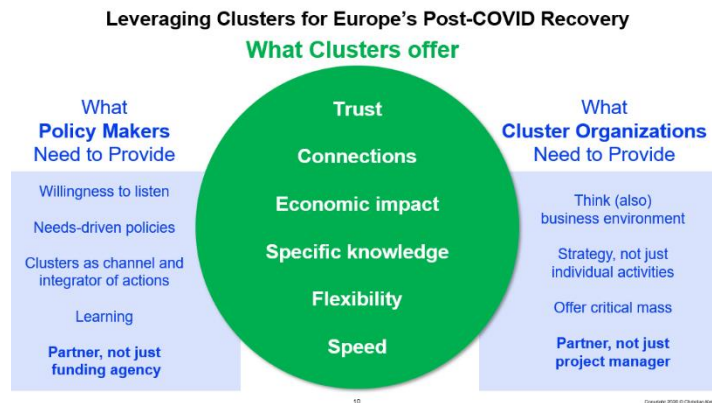
[Merete Daniel Nielsen](#)- Director Cluster Excellence Denmark and President TCI Network - held the second keynote speech "**Rethink and recover - how clusters are re-building a greener, more digital and resilient Europe**"

She described how digitalisation is a driving force, how green transition is even strengthened now, how the power of collaboration by clusters has proven its worth during the crisis and that new strategies and innovations are needed to embrace change and to utilise the eco-systems for the challenges of tomorrow. She provided a hands-on overview of new services that developed overnight (see picture). The innovation power of clusters was clearly described: matchmaking, dissemination of knowledge, branding, transformation, access to finance, innovation projects, competence development, qualified labour force, internationalisation, entrepreneurship, and programme operators.

She also presented the TCI Recovery Playbook and elaborated on the three stages of response and the role that clusters can play (see picture).
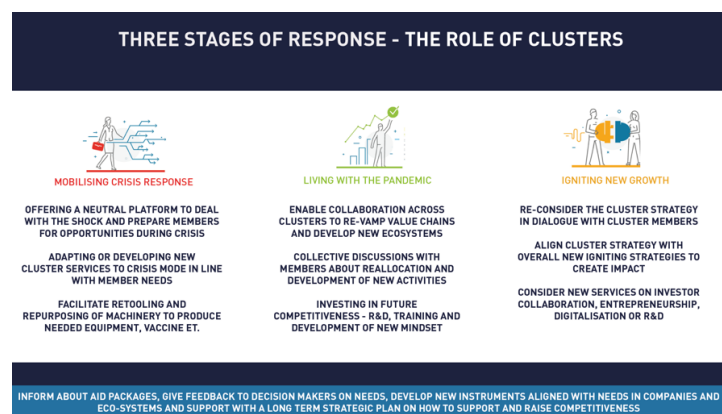
6. Europe's growth strategy and clusters

Each of the four main challenges of Europe - green, digitalisation, resilience and skills – were addressed by the European Commission and a cluster manager/expert, after which three questions were answered in 104 small groups in World Café setting. The results below of the discussions are a valuable input for DG GROW, together with an overview of the presenters.

Green

Actors: All economic actors are key in green transition, also media and financial institutions

Green transition need:
❖ Training
❖ Communication
❖ Knowledge of resource flows
❖ Identify and assess relevance of financing schemes
❖ Partner with others
❖ Measure what you do: indicators & data

Policy can help in green transition:
❖ Promotion and providing leadership to clusters
❖ Market incentives
❖ Better funding, also for series project implementation
❖ New mechanisms to channel funds
❖ Longer-term local public-private partnerships
❖ Public procurement

Green - recordings & presentations:

Marion Perelle, Policy officer in charge of finance for innovation -DG CLIMA
Bianca Dragomir – Director of Avaesen, Valencia cluster, Spain

Digitalisation

Actors: Companies (large, SMEs and start-ups, incl. employees), Clusters, Public stakeholders (EU/national/regional/ local, including education and Smart cities), Research and Citizens

Digitalisation need:
❖ Digital skills: assess needs, access to training & digital tools for managers and employees
❖ Cluster and business collaboration across sectors to implement IT solutions and uptake of digital tools, especially for SMEs (e.g. matchmaking, hackathon sessions, events for idea generation, focus groups, online platform of services, IT diagnostics)
❖ Have a vision / long term plan and build strong networks between key stakeholders and link to EU policies and big scale EU projects, cluster leads the way
❖ Take clusters and other networks at national and regional level as advisors/ guidance into cascade funding mechanisms to mobilize digitalisation

Digitalisation recordings & presentations

Alexander Riedl - Deputy Head of Unit Digital Economy and Skills - DG CNECT
Alexandru Roja – Cluster manager of Transilvania IT Cluster, Romania

Policy instruments for digitalisation:

- ❖ Funding programmes for digital projects (private and public incl. public procurement) and simplified access to loans for the investment in new digital solutions
- ❖ Support collaboration between clusters and digital innovation hubs (local and European)
- ❖ Support training access / upskilling managers & employees and digitalization services of industries
- ❖ Develop advanced infrastructures to leverage EU capacities and foster major EU digital players and
- ❖ More EU supported cluster cooperation projects with minimum bureaucracy for SMEs

Resilience Actors: Public authorities (e.g. regional and national level governments), SMEs, research institutes, other clusters, industrial associations and digital innovation hubs

Role of clusters to avoid disruptions in supply/value chain:

Resilience recording and presentations:

- ❖ Taking on the role of "coordinator", "orchestrator" of "addressing disruptions" - identify disruptions and possible substitutes
- ❖ Initiating/engaging in public-private partnerships
- ❖ Creating "spaces" for gathering various actors together, enabling them to experiment and develop solutions together
- ❖ Stronger & Tighter International partnerships & Collaboration which is embedded into existing and new supply-chain strategies

Paolo Casini - DDG - DG GROW
Ségolène Leloutre – Internationalisation responsible in the Cosmetic Valley, France

- ❖ Supply-chain risk management as a new role to ECCP
- ❖ B2B value chain in the cluster network is important; B2C becomes more important (new actors with link to consumer); cluster management is neutral and support all companies
- ❖ A forum for communication of permanence to maintain logistics frameworks
- ❖ Be vigilant, dedicate a task force to permanently monitor weaknesses in supply chain/value chains and look actively for substitute partners and players

Policy instruments to help clusters with resilience:

- ❖ Engage clusters as part of systematic "market intelligence"/foresight - looking ahead to strategic steps that can be taken.
- ❖ Work continuously with developing skills (e.g. digitalisation) and working across disciplines (policy instruments for lifelong learning, incentives to multi-disciplinary action, inclusion of new expertise)
- ❖ Leverage (longer-term) public-private partnerships
- ❖ EU-wide frameworks on holistic digitalization and supply-chain risk management
- ❖ Open database to connect the various supply-chain actors to facilitate partnership
- ❖ Business advisory service to strengthen cluster's resilience building approach
- ❖ Communication campaign to inform business owners of new cluster capabilities
- ❖ New funding programmes to support the transition-towards-resiliency process
- ❖ Cross clustering and cross-sectorial; networking events from EU/national level; local authorities should connect with regional cluster initiatives and exchange; funding for projects
- ❖ Support schemes, including funds for investment, could help clusters invest in key areas
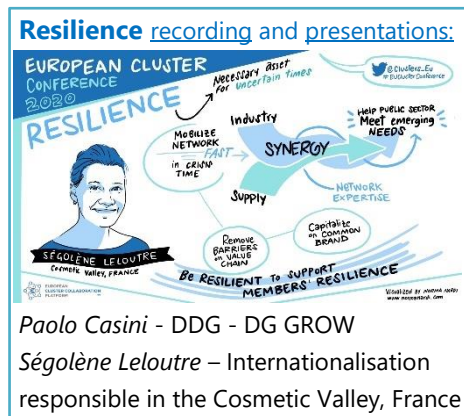
Skills :Needs:

❖ Skilling of the sectors workforce should be on strategic agenda of each cluster

❖ Recognition of clusters as interlocutors

❖ Broadening engagements/connections with actors related to the skills domain

❖ Capitalise on the cluster communities, using members to drive and build "collective skilling intelligence"

❖ Lifelong learning approach

Skills recordings and presentations:

Alison Crabb – Head of Unit Skills and Qualifications - DG EMPL
Lucia Seel - European Cluster expert, Austria

7. EU financing landscape

Day 1 concluded with a session on the EU Financial landscape in which four projects received feedback from the EIB, EASME and a financial expert. First Marek Przeor from the Cluster team of DG GROW provided an overview of the potential EU financing landscape in 2021-2027.
To help repair the economic and

social damage brought by the coronavirus pandemic, kick-start European recovery, and protect and create jobs, the EU leaders agreed in July 2020 on the NextGenerationEU (NGEU) recovery instrument (€750 billion). Together with the reinforced Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 (approx. €1 100 billion), this forms the recovery plan for Europe. Marek Przeor also provided a clear picture of the role that clusters can play as can be seen in the slides below.
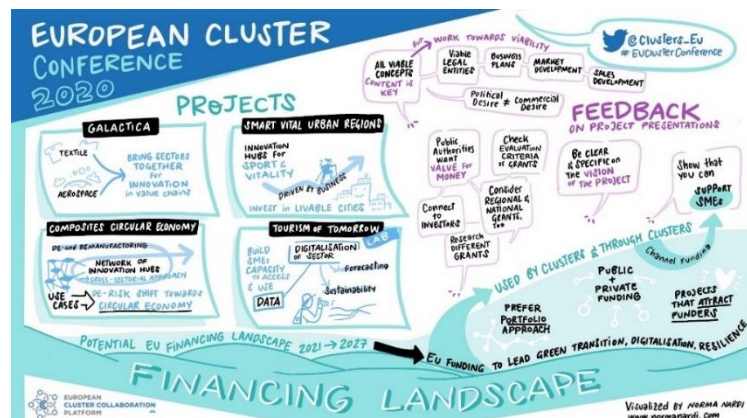
Overview of potential EU financing landscape in 2021-2027, *Marek Przeor* - Team Leader Cluster Policy, DG GROW
GALACTICA project (Innosup-01-2019), *Josep Casamada* - AEI Tèxtils, Spain
Composites circular economy, *Marcello Colledani* - Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Tourism of Tomorrow (ToT) Lab, *Kristian.Sievers* - Regional Council of Lapland, Finland
Smart Vital Urban Regions, *Marc van der Zande* - Cluster Sports & Technology, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
Mark Mawhinney - Head Digital and Business Transformation, European Investment Bank
Daniel Gassmann - Head Sector Innovation Support, European Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises
Irene Bejenke Walsh – Director MessageLab

Currently open European Commission calls for proposals for Clusters:

❖ Clusters Go International: https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/cosme/cos-clusint-2020-3-01-clusters-go-international

❖ European Cluster Excellence Programme with ClusterXchange scheme connecting ecosystems and cities: https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/cosme/cos-cluster-2020-3-03-european-cluster-excellence-programme-clusterxchange-scheme

❖ Strategic alliances for the uptake of advanced technologies by SMEs on the economic recovery: https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/section/cosme/cos-strat-2020-3-05-strategic-alliances-uptake-advanced-technologies-smes-economic

8. European Expert Group on Clusters

Members of the European Expert Group on Clusters presented 15 recommendations to policy makers on the European, national and regional level on how to use clusters strategically for reaching policy objectives, including the implementation of recovery efforts. They will be adopted by the Expert Group and submitted to relevant Commissioners by the end of 2020. The recommendations are:

Krzysztof Krystowski - President of the Silesian Aviation Cluster, Poland
Emily Wise - Researcher at IEC AB and Lund University, Sweden
Alberto Pezzi - Director of Competitive and Clusters Strategy, ACCIO, Government of Catalonia, Spain

Lead the green transition

1. Green transition needs agents of change: Use clusters as drivers of change, to co-develop policies, adapt policy instruments to industry, facilitate cooperation among stakeholders & ecosystems.
*2. Circular economy becomes a new norm***:** Use clusters to implement circular economy action plans, detect opportunities for reuse, bring circularity in business processes, strengthen industrial symbiosis.
*3. Flagship policy initiatives serve to mobilise SMEs and civil society***:** Mandate clusters to mobilize for European innovation missions (E.g. alliances on Hydrogen, batteries, raw materials, circular plastics).
4. Awareness raising and good practices sharing on green solutions: Develop capacity building programmes for cluster organisations and equip clusters to support members in the transition.
5. SMEs access to green knowledge and financing: Use clusters as intermediaries to support and mobilize SMEs and channel expertise and financing to SMEs through clusters.

Accelerate the digital transition

6. The importance of education and skills for the digital transition: Mobilise clusters to participate in digital skills initiatives, to develop their skills services and connect with local education structures.
7. Integration of physical and digital systems: Increase cluster capacity to provide advanced business services and shift from knowledge-based to data-driven & knowledge-enabled smart manufacturing.
8. Linking digital innovation hubs and clusters: Incorporate clusters into the DIHs' government and operational structures and make DIHs more connected to local ecosystems & SMEs, & demand-driven.
9. Initiate public private partnerships for the digital transition: Use clusters to initiate new and to reinforce existing PPPs and build on clusters to boost collaboration and partnering across actors.
10. Participating in European policies and programmes for the digital transition: Use clusters to inform policies and channel industry views to the development of policies & reach out to SMEs & start-ups.

Build resilience

11. Clusters as a tool for strategic intelligence: Rely on clusters for reconsidering supply chains and reshaping or rebuilding vulnerable value chains, and engage clusters in strategic foresight initiatives.
12. Reskilling and upskilling of workforce: Use clusters as intermediaries between industry/research / education, connecting skills demands and supplies, and mobilise them in the European Pact for Skills.
13. Clusters addressing societal challenges: Strengthen clusters' ability to help companies constructing new products/services that respond to societal challenges and through shared value approach.
14. Facilitating access to global value chains: Reinforce clusters ability to look for trade, investment and partnering opportunities at global markets and help them benefit from the EU's free trade agreements.
15. Joint cluster initiatives – Euroclusters: Use the initiative to connect ecosystems across regions and sectors to strengthen value chains; to boost innovation, internationalization and scaling up support to SMEs; to foster knowledge sharing and to facilitate industrial transformation.

9. Clusters strengthening industrial ecosystems

The industrial ecosystems approach is about encompassing all players operating in a value chain: from the smallest start-ups to the largest companies, from academia to research, from service providers to suppliers. Clusters are tangible parts of industrial ecosystems.
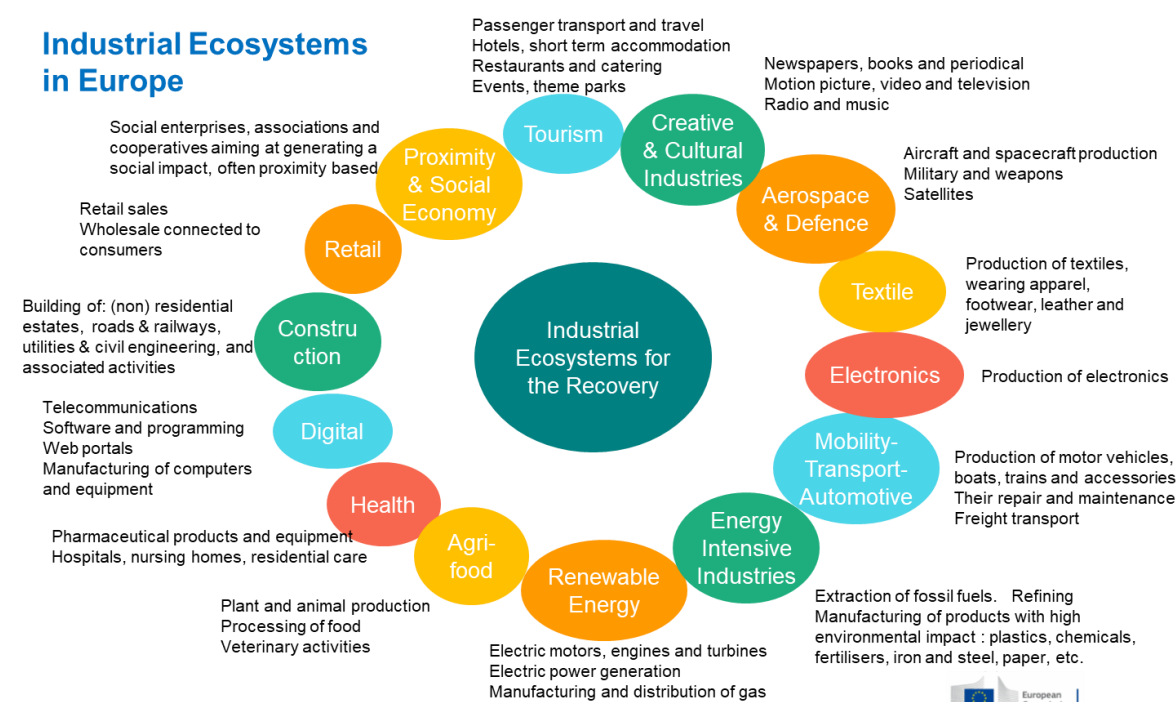
Much of day two focused on how clusters can strengthen the 14 industrial ecosystems and with which policy instruments. There were presentations and discussions per ecosystem. The results are presented below.

Tourism Recording & presentations

Milosz Momot – Deputy Head of Unit Tourism, Textiles and Creative Industries - DG GROW

A*ntonio López del Ávila* – President of Turisfera, Turistec cluster, Spain
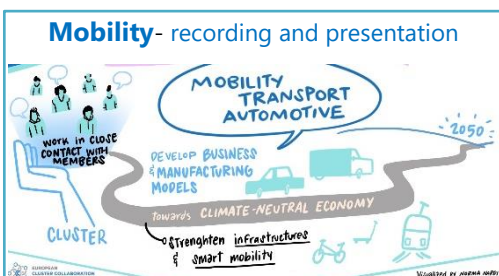
How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?

❖ Keep in touch with new trends & main objectives

❖ Clusters need to drive the change

❖ Tourism ecosystem needs hand-on actions

❖ Translate policies into activities

❖ Join forces with members of clusters and public agents, civic society, research organisations

❖ Create new tourism ecosystem with local residents

❖ Introduce technology to the ecosystem

What policy instruments do clusters need?

❖ Have a specific plan among all the actors and financing to work long term.

❖ Select the most innovative projects, not the cheapest

❖ Adapting procurement rules

❖ Adjust, if needed, local legislations

❖ Clusters need to lobby in this ecosystem, to have the regional authorities on their side

❖ Involve authorities and decision makers in the work of clusters

Mobility- recording and presentation

Morgan Guillou – Legal officer Automotive and Mobility Industries - DG GROW

Veronica Elena Bocci - Coordinator of DITECFER | District for Rail Technologies, Italy

How can clusters strengthen the ecosystem?

❖ Work more altogether (railway, maritime, automotive) within the mobility ecosystem, identify cross-cutting topics and common roadmaps

❖ Provide information about reskilling and upskilling programmes

❖ Recovery plans: members lack knowledge and understanding of opportunities & calls

❖ Clusters as interlocutor with public authorities

What policy instruments do clusters need?

❖ A visionary policy on integrating the transport (interface among transport infrastructures)

❖ What after clusters recognition?

❖ Budget to transform roadmap in concrete actions, support investments in new technologies

❖ INNOSUP calls are a good funding model (cascade funding)

❖ Support for clusters as themselves (in addition to the support of the cluster members)

❖ Support of trans-European & cross-sectorial projects: e.g. AI, Advanced manufacturing,

❖ Standardisation of technologies: e. g. data communication protocol, charging infrastructure

Aerospace & Defence
Recording Presentation

Tanja Zegers - Inter-institutional coordinator - DG DEFIS

Krzysztof Krystowski – President of Silesian

How can clusters strengthen the ecosystem?
- ❖ Training, capacity building, exchange expertise
- ❖ Standardisation across Europe
- ❖ Support collaboration between companies (build platform for SMEs) – region, national and European level – linking and building relationships can develop new inputs and innovations / value chains, SMEs individually are too small to develop such relationships themselves
- ❖ In this industry relationship development is key

What policy instruments do clusters need?
- ❖ Clusters build bridges – thus can be considered as a tool, which needs to be maintained. Politicians are required to know this – to understand, support is needed
- ❖ Large cluster associations should be treated equally as the OEMs – as also representing many thousands of employees and knowledge (large proportion of employees are employed in companies that are parts of clusters - may be up to 50%) - some examples of this
- ❖ Specific flagship / joint cluster initiatives
- ❖ Bring many organisations together to have a few very large projects
- ❖ Some sub-sectors are growing faster because of COVD-19 – e.g. drones & additive materials
- ❖ Clusters are very well organised in the sector

Construction Recording Presentation

Antonio Paparella - Senior Expert Sustainable Construction - DG GROW

Victor Ferreira - Cluster Habitat Sustentavel, Portugal

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
Clusters can help transforming the ecosystem towards green, circular, digital and rethink value chains; explore internationalisation particularly for knowledge and services

What policy instruments do clusters need?
- ❖ Policy makers to take full account of the construction ecosystem, e.g. in circular economy action plans
- ❖ Clusters can inform policy makers on the particularities of the eco-system (e.g. understand waste streams)
- ❖ Policy instruments (funding) also available for clusters

Agri-food Recording & Presentation

Blaga Popova Valentinova - Trade Affairs Officer at Food industry - DG GROW

Marjolein Brasz – Managing Director of Food Valley, the Netherlands

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
- ❖ Provide companies with tailor made activities
- ❖ Inter-cluster collaboration (structural and incidental)
- ❖ Cross-fertilize between sectors – value chain approach – involve all stakeholders - Clusters can take initiative
- ❖ Start & scale-up support, build EU-ecosystem
- ❖ Provide access to and create living labs to demonstrate and test solutions, and to provide skills and training
- ❖ Arrange investments in research, test & living labs
- ❖ Be more active in lobbying
- ❖ Help SMEs in price driven sector & start-up overcome the

"valley of death"

❖ Establish a long-term ambition, action lines & mobilise actors/networks for the ecosystem
❖ Develop programs for the development, attainment and retainment of talent
❖ Provide new services taking into account different areas of expertise (digitalisation)

What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ Strategy building (e.g. COSME) & industry support to get companies involved (e.g. Innosup)
❖ Interregional investment programmes (e.g. to invest in a European network of infrastructures)
❖ Enhancing public infrastructure e.g. in school cantinas or other public places & Take away legislative barriers: e.g. food waste handling & Inter-cluster programmes (content sharing)
❖ Extending public investment funds und request further programs e.g. for the food sector

Energy Intensive Industries
Recording Presentation
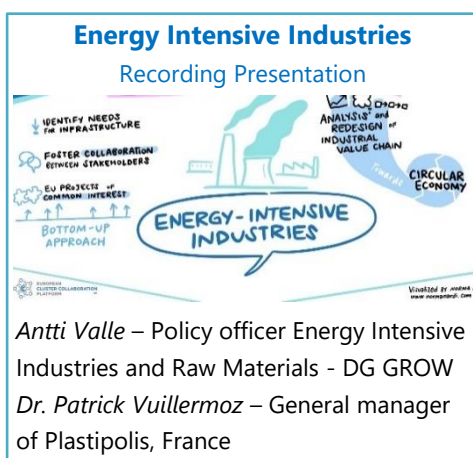
Antti Valle – Policy officer Energy Intensive Industries and Raw Materials - DG GROW
Dr. Patrick Vuillermoz – General manager of Plastipolis, France

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Organise industrial transformation in facilitated and professionally managed open innovation structures
❖ Connect SMEs as suppliers of innovative solutions with large enterprises as the biggest energy consumers
❖ To secure the supply chains and to support re-localisation of feedstocks or materials production
❖ To anticipate the disruption of market demands from global OEMs and to mitigate the risks for SMEs.
❖ Diversify eco-systems from global mass markets to more added value markets (e.g. health)

What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ Highlight capabilities of clusters and the importance of their work in official publications
❖ Support transnational and trans-sectoral cooperation of clusters on green transition, circular economy, materials and energy efficiency
❖ Incentives for industrial investments in Europe for relocating supply chains in Europe, developing green industrial solutions (climate neutral) and companies participating in cluster-facilitated open innovation/ transformation processes
❖ Support the growth of the European domestic market for energy intensive industries and improve the business models and the sustainability of these industries
❖ Mitigate the high labour and production costs in Europe by including sustainability factors in European market regulations: discriminate clean and green solutions from conventional ones

Textile Recording & Presentation

Mikael Garellick - Trade affairs officer Tourism, Textiles and Creative Industries at DG GROW
Silvia Kabaivanova - Chairman Bulgarian Fashion Association

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Leverage Circular Economy approach, business models
❖ Capacity building & promote innovation to members
❖ Reskilling and upskilling the workforce in relation to the circular transition of the textile industry – e.g. ESF re:skills Textile and Fashion 2030 - sustainable skills for the future
❖ Use of European projects to enforce collaboration at a broader level-cross sectoral and cross-border
❖ Connect SMEs to other peers in EU ecosystem
❖ Support the new normality (after-COVID) (digital tools as virtual events/missions/trade fair)

❖ Clusters as drivers for change: look at textile industry transition in view of societal challenges
❖ Move from connectivity to interconnectivity between clusters for knowledge and strengths
❖ Include civil society and build trust to support the move towards sustainable consumption
❖ Draft internal documents in line with international/EU standards to guide strategy of members
❖ Develop cluster services to support SMEs to foster their activities
❖ Lobby to strengthen the cluster in order to play a significant role in the ecosystem
❖ Cooperate with other tech clusters, with public authorities (regional and at EU level)

What policy instruments do clusters need to strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Consider textile beyond fashion (technical textiles, home textiles, etc.) for higher added value
❖ Promote direct grants in cascade funding, easy applications and low burden
❖ Use clusters for capacity building of SMEs
❖ Continue supporting ESCP like projects to strengthen cluster ecosystems and its members
❖ Promote cross-disciplinary research (materials, chemistry, digital, etc.), diversify sale channels
❖ Support to implement traceability mechanisms and to reskilling/upskilling
❖ Build a monitoring system for tracking companies (benchmarking)
❖ Reinforce competitive landscape regulation to ensure equal opportunities
❖ Ensure both small and big companies have access to similar technologies and possibilities
❖ Develop digital communication that helps the different stakeholders to connect
❖ Ensure all actors embrace current trends across EU (circular economy, digital transition) and create standards for them and to facilitate development of new products

Creative & Cultural industries
Recording & Presentation

Lucia Recalde Langarica - Head of Unit Audiovisual Industry and Media Support Programmes - DG CNECT
Satu Miettinen - Arctic Design cluster, Finland

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Meet up with cluster members and discuss their needs
❖ Provide critical mass, give a face to the stakeholders
❖ In Arctic partnerships are strong, people know each other
❖ Provide a link between the stakeholders and policy
❖ Clusters can boost the capacity of the stakeholders

What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ Creative-cultural industries is not always considered as crucial for the economy. Include it in policy documents
❖ The creative-cultural industries ecosystem can provide input into other sectors, e.g. INNOSUP. Support leveraging knowledge to innovate. (e.g. design in hardcore industries, e.g. mining, for quicker services)
❖ Enable people to diversify their economy as one sector/industry is risky as pandemic shows
❖ Find a balance in providing too much or too little support to 'rescue' the economy.

Digital Recording & Presentation

Alexander Riedl – Deputy Head of Unit Digital Economy and Skills - DG CNECT
Vasco Lagarto – Cluster manager of Tice.pt, Portugal

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Knowledge transfer, organise exchange about and show tools, digital match-making. Address cyber security and help the companies to implement, training of employees and managers!
❖ Give support to SMEs to show digitalisation is doable
❖ Best practices event to foster digital transformation in production and manufacturing: how to use AI
❖ Cross-sectoral transfer of knowledge, participate in digital hubs all over EU to foster digital transformation

What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ Networking events: knowledge transfer from the governmental side about digitalisation
❖ Vouchers to strengthen the abilities of companies to perform their digital transformation. Baden-Württemberg offers SMEs innovation & advice vouchers for implementing digital tools
❖ Encourage cross-sectoral/cross-cluster dialogue through instruments dedicated to collective actions to approach the digital tech community (Block chain, AI, HPC, …) and the end users
❖ Standardisation processes focussing on industry

Renewable energy
Recording & Presentation

Julia Walschebauer – Policy officer Innovation, clean technologies and competitiveness - DG ENER
José Ignacio Hormaeche – Director General at Cluster de Energia, Spain

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Participate in interregional partnerships and projects
❖ Boost B2B meetings through missions and specific events
❖ Support innovative SMEs to develop new products and services and identify the right partners and potential customers
What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ Policies or political influence to incentivise big European companies (windfarm developers, wind turbine manufacturers, OEMs) to develop open innovation with European supply chain
❖ Enable data sharing in renewable value chains
❖ Incentivise that data owners (usually big companies) make data accessible to data users (suppliers, SMEs, digital start-ups , academics) through digital platforms so that they can develop data analytics applications and services

Electronics Recording & Presentation

Francisco Ibanez Gallardo – Deputy Head of Unit Competitive Electronics Industry - DG CNECT
Hervé Floch – Director General at ALPHA-RLH Route des Lasers et des Hyperfréquences, France

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Lobbying, visibility and representation for SMEs
❖ Connect SMEs and larger companies at local and EU level (EU meta-clusters like Silicon Europe Alliance)

What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ For good use of funding with impact enable cluster organisations to redistribute funding to SME (e.g. INNOSUP and cascade funding) & funding for Clusters in ECSEL
❖ Big EU funding for electronics development to compete with Asia (for new developments & industrialisation)

❖ Support for standards/certification/reliability (process management in production) & support for digitalisation – easy access for SMEs

Retail Recording & Presentation

Paulina Gbur - Policy officer Retail and Online Services - DG GROW
Monica Riera – Project manager at Packaging Cluster, Spain

How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Good practices, working with companies in testing circular economy solutions. Work with policy makers and scale-up possibilities and with consumer culture and behaviour – nudging consumers. Consumer of tomorrow?
❖ Find solutions with members to change consumer behaviour & producer responsibility – what do industries find important. Investigate how to impact the law, provide policy makers with input from businesses
❖ Role of clusters links with research and academia
❖ Collaboration with other clusters relevant in the value chain and network; investment in R&D
❖ Connect knowledge providers, public administration, companies, final users (quadruple helix)
❖ Effective communication -communicate correctly to the final consumer

What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ Dialogue is very important. Green economy needs transparency in work. Producers should be more transparent, e.g. what chemicals are used. Retailers are not aware of exact value chain
❖ Projects in social funds – to develop retailers skills, not only digital, also in circular economy. E.g. in textiles – to prolong the life of the garments. Experts are needed to judge the commercial value. Matching of existing with the needs of the circular economy
❖ Clusters should pass messages to policy makers to have needs reflected in recovery plans

Proximity & Social economy Recording & Presentation
Karel Vanderpoorten – Policy officer Social Economy - DG GROW
Stefan Panhuijsen – Director Social Enterprise Network, the Netherlands

Ensure that the social economy actors are stronger together and can offer an alternative economic model
How can clusters strengthen the industrial ecosystem?
❖ Collaborate, connect. Patient centred care. Challenge for companies; intermediate role of clusters to help innovation. Link actors in the whole system (also clinicians & patients). Distribution of care will result in more stakeholders (multiplier). Makes it more complex
❖ Value chain; bio tech/ pharma also connect to MedTech and Healthcare

Health Recording & Presentation

Anna Ablazevica – Legal & policy officer Chemicals & Plastics Industries - DG GROW
Victor Haze, Innovation manager at Health Valley, the Netherlands

What policy instruments do clusters need?
❖ Horizon Europe very important for clusters

❖ Facilitate SME can work in EU projects

10. European Cluster awards of 2020

In 2020, three categories of Cluster Awards for 2020 were handed out. The main goal of the Awards is to showcase the best practices of cluster organisations, partnerships, and initiatives in driving industrial transformation, boosting competitiveness and fostering innovation. The Awards this year focused on communications aspects of cluster management and partnerships.

European Cluster Partnership of the Year 2020

This Award stimulated European Cluster Partnerships to showcase their efforts. This year's award was designed to focus on communication activities of the partnership. **The winner of European Cluster Partnership of the Year 2020 was cluster IOT4Industry (www.iot4industry.eu/), coordinated by Marielle Campanella.**

European Cluster Manager of the Year 2020

This year, the award for European Cluster Manager focused on the communication aspects of their work. The jury shortlisted three finalists:

- Antonio Novo Guerrero, from cluster IDiA;
- Uwe Pfeil, from clusters IT-Logistik Cluster and E-Mobilitätscluster;
- Corinne Farace, from cluster Techtera;

All finalists gave a short presentation to pitch for their candidature. Voting among the participants of the Conference was held in real-time, using Sli.do.

The winner of the European Cluster Manager of the Year 2020 was Uwe Pfeil, of the E-Mobility and IT-Logistics clusters in Germany.

Special Award for EU Cluster Mobilisation 2020

As an initiative from the European Commission, a Special Award for EU Cluster Mobilisation 2020 was handed to cluster manager Antonio Novo Guerrero, from Cluster IDiA in Spain and President of the European Clusters Alliance.

The Special Award recognised his excellent work during the pandemic, which included setting up the European Alliance Against Coronavirus and organising daily webinars: https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/event-calendar/european-alliance-against-coronavirus-webinars .

11. Games

During the Conference, a cluster management quiz was held where you could test your knowledge. The Cluster Management Quiz was prepared by guided by *Alain Tubiana* - Head of Master programme in Cluster Management, University of Strasbourg.

The Master of Ceremony of the two days, *Teodora Jilkova*, guided also the slido's. At the right the results can be seen of the association that the audience had with the word Cluster.

12. Networking & virtual exhibitions

During the conference there were several ways to network:

❖ Make one-on-one appointments. More than 100 appointments were made through the Cluster Conference

❖ The almost 100 virtual exhibition booths could count on more than 1000 visits
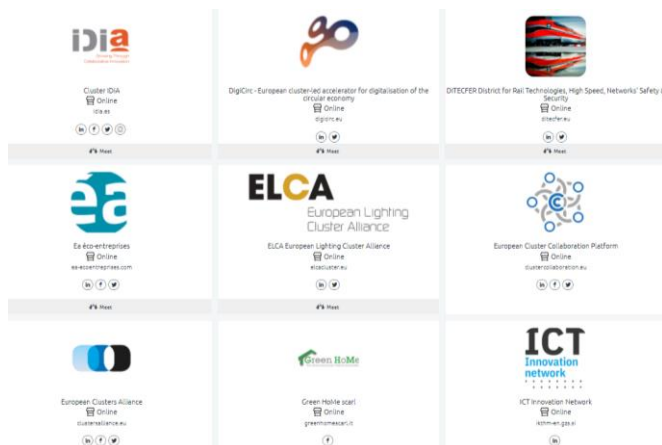
❖ It was possible to explore the speakers, the participants and indicate what you were offering and looking for:
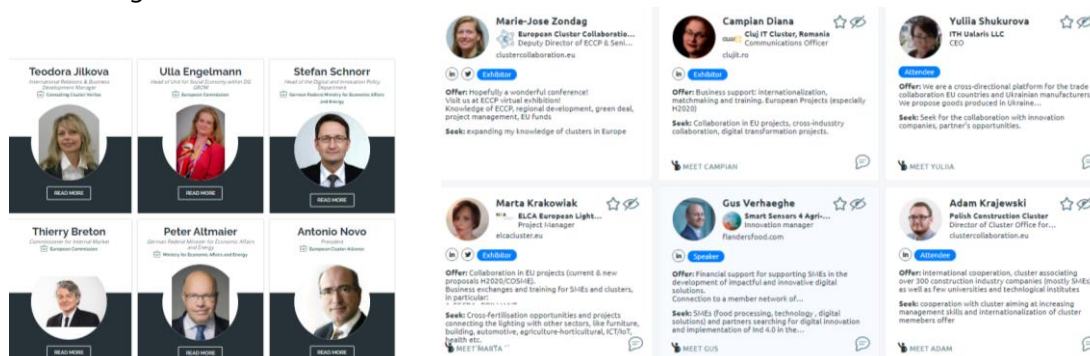
❖ 12 organisations pitched ideas for contacts:
1. New Association EUCLES for cluster labelling system, Hervé Floch, AFPC, France/Germany
2. Raw materials resilience and industrial symbiosis, Santiago Cuesta-Lopez, ISMC, Spain
3. Green HoMe scarl, Giuseppe Rossi, Italy
4. Minalogic - Digitalisation, Laure Quintin, Minalogic, France
5. Multi-class serum classification for image-based clinical analytics, Roman Seidel, Deepmentation UG, Germany
6. Digital Innovation Hub, Alicja Serewko, Cluster for photonics and Fibre Optics, Poland
7. Digital and paperless transport for Europe, Ulrika Hurt, Single Window Initiative, Estonia
8. Textile sustainable business model, Daniela Zavec, Textile Association of Slovenia
9. Pan-European disaster response capability, Donatas Gendvilas, Lithuania
10. AI assistants for remote education, Bryan Ogden, EIC, Malta
11. Innovation in Tourism, Roberto Antunes, NEST Tourism Innovation Center, Portugal
12. Digitalisation transformation, Patrick Vuillermoz, Plastipolis, France

❖ 6 partnerships presented their projects, events and activities:
1. S3Food, *Gus Verhaeghe*, Flanders' FOOD, Belgium
2. C-Voucher, *Almudena Sanchez Escrich*, C-Voucher project, Spain
3. EXTRATEX, *Enrico Venturini*, Next Technology Tecnotessile, Italy
4. DIGI-B-CUBE, *Gupta Udatha*, Oslo Cancer Cluster, Norway
5. Block.IS Project, *Danijel Pavlica,* Voivodina ICT Cluster, Serbia
6. HY2. ZERO, *Uwe Pfeil*, IT Logistics & E-mobility cluster Regensburg, Germany

Intra-EU Matchmaking & side events Cluster Conference

Alongside the conference, the Intra-European Cluster Matchmaking event on 11 and 12 November 2020 gave cluster and business network organisations the chance to connect, communicate and collaborate through pre-arranged one-to-one online meetings.

Next to this, two virtual side events of the European Cluster Conference were also held (on invitation): the side event for the European Cluster Partnerships took place on 16 November and the side event for the Cluster Associations and Networks on 17 November. For both side events an output paper was drafted, which has been disseminated to the participants of those events.