

EACN promotes cooperative projects and joint investments for the modernisation of the automotive industry

October 19th, 2018

The European automotive industry faces today several challenges such as changing mobility patterns (use, not own), the need for zero/low emission vehicles, the arrival of connected and autonomous vehicles, the growing importance of mobility services and related data, or changing skills and competences for employees. And this in a more and more competitive market with new actors from Asia and America entering the scene and impacting the historically grown value-chains. These challenges force the European Automotive sector, and especially the SMEs, to innovate and to optimise production and processes to ensure their future competitiveness.

Founded in early 2017, the *European Automotive Cluster Network* (EACN) regroups currently nine European automotive clusters from Bulgaria, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Serbia and Spain. EACN's objective is to enhance competitiveness of the cluster members by stimulating cross-regional joint research and investment projects in four domains: product innovation, new production methods, optimised processes and people's skills. EACN partner clusters represent 1,400 companies and institutions (most of them are SMEs) employing more than 300,000 people.

In October 2018, the European Commission approved the project proposal 'EACN for Joint Industrial Modernisation Investments' for co-funding which had been submitted and supported by the EACN clusters. This project aims are:

- Strengthening Cluster-to-Cluster cooperation via a common collaboration strategy and joint cluster actions.
- Boosting competitiveness of cluster members, especially SMEs, via business creation, the initiation of collaborative research projects and of joint investments in industrial modernisation in the field of Industry of the Future.

The basic idea is that common developments and investments allow minimising risks and costs, sharing experiences and building confidence between partners to prepare future collaborations. EACN will build a strategic interregional collaboration and strong industry cooperation focused on four pillars:

1. Virtualisation for planning processes (simulation and modelling)
2. Robotics & Artificial Intelligence in production processes
3. Elasticity of production processes in SMEs
4. Skills and competences of people

The project is in line with the innovation strategies of the partners' regions and the objectives of the European Smart Specialization Platform on Industrial Modernization and Investment. It will contribute to the European Union's ambition to promote economic growth and strengthen competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises in the European Union.

The project started in October 2018 and lasts until September 2020. It will get a co-funding from the European Commission through the COSME program. It is built around seven work packages among which the following stand out: a joint partnership strategy, joint cluster activities, a partnership agenda for long-term, business and project development for cluster members and pilot projects.



The official kick-off meeting will take place on 19 – 21 November 2018 parallel to the Industry of the Future exhibition in Mulhouse (France) where the project will be presented at the EACN booth for the first time to a large public of industrialists and other interested parties.

About the project 'EACN for Joint Industrial Modernisation Investments'

Partners:

Pôle Véhicule du Futur (FR, leader), Automotive Cluster Bulgaria, Automotive Cluster Serbia, Silesia Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Cluster (Poland), CEAGA - Galician Automotive Cluster (Spain), Clúster de la Indústria d'Automoció de Catalunya (Spain).

Duration

October 2018 to September 2020

Budget

473.400 Euro, European Commission's contribution: 349.984.50 euro (Call for proposals European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialisation investments - COS-CLUSPARTNS-2017-3-02) under the Grant Agreement 821989.

Contacts

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About the clusters

automotive-bw (Germany)

automotive-bw bundles the competences of the vehicle industry throughout the whole of Baden-Württemberg and in particular intends to support small and medium-sized component suppliers in managing the structural transformation and in developing business models which are fit for the future.

The nationwide network was founded in 2010 at the initiative of the Ministry for Economic Affairs in Baden-Württemberg with funds of the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRE). Well-known players cooperate on this platform: Vehicle manufacturers and automotive component suppliers, service providers, University institutes, research institutions and associations. The aim is to systematically press ahead with the networking of the automotive industry in the country and to promote development co-operations. To the extent that OEMs and system suppliers form a network and cooperate worldwide, particularly small and medium-sized component suppliers should also be encouraged to bundle their forces by means of co-operations. Today automotive-bw represents direct 70 automotive companies (40% SMEs) with 70.800 direct workers and addresses more than 2.000 companies in the Autoland Baden-Württemberg.

The cooperation of the network partners, mostly regional business development agencies or initiatives of the Chambers of Commerce in the country, is coordinated by the RKW Baden-Württemberg – it is the central funding organization and office of automotive-bw and additionally also organizes nationwide offers and events such as the annual "component supplier conference automobile". A close cooperation exists with the State Agencies e-mobil BW and Leichtbau BW. automotive-bw holds the quality label "Cluster Excellence Baden- Württemberg" since February 2015. www.automotive-bw.de

Automotive Cluster Bulgaria

Founded in July 2012, ACB is a non-profit organization that represents the interests of car manufacturers, suppliers and providers of services for the automotive industry in Bulgaria. It promotes synergies between cluster members and strives to maintain business growth and competitiveness through participation in international collaborative projects, case studies and professional automotive training programs. ACB is an active partner of the international automotive network. Its "backbone" are leading international OEM and Tier 1 suppliers. Currently, 37 are the registered members of ACB and more than 20 companies are in negotiations procedures for a membership. Our members are national and international companies representing over 20,000 employees in Bulgaria and more than 650,000 people worldwide. These are companies produce upholstery, seats, cables, plastics components, parts for air conditioning and engine microchips, sensors, rubber seals, glass, spring, electronics, filters, aluminium profiles, lighting systems, belts, etc. not just for the middle class cars, but also for the luxury segment. The only OEM member so far is Litex Motors which is the official partner of Great Wall Motors. It assembles vehicles of the Chinese manufacturer at the jointly-developed facility located in Lovech, Bulgaria. ACB's main activities are related to development and management of projects under various EU programs; services for members – trainings, seminars, round tables, suppliers days, etc.; networking with automotive clusters across Europe; initiatives for national legislative changes in favour of the industry; cooperation in developing research and new products and services with high added value. automotive.bg/



Automobile Cluster Serbia

Serbian Automotive Cluster - AC Serbia network includes Serbian companies and institutions that are producing automotive parts and components, respectively providing services in the automotive sector. AC Serbia operates on the whole country.

Missions: Connecting business and networking of scientific, development and public institutions which will help creating synergies and launching joint development projects, reaching the level of quality and creating a recognizable brand. This will also contribute to international competitiveness strengthening of our members.

Vision: AC Serbia is acting as the central network of automotive parts and components manufacturers in Serbia, who have become part of international supplier chains. www.acserbia.org.rs/en/

Bayern Innovativ

Bayern Innovativ GmbH is Bavaria's organisation for innovation, technology and knowledge transfer. It supports players from industry and science in all stages of the value chain by providing customised services to boost innovation dynamics. Bayern Innovativ operates at the interfaces of various industries and technologies. The goal is to build an ecosystem of dynamic networks to accelerate the innovation process. In addition to the organisation's own clusters Energy Technology, Automotive and New Materials, activities focus on "cross- clustering" with other Bavarian clusters and networking with key players in the Bavarian innovation landscape. www.bayern-innovativ.de/

CEAGA - Galician Automotive Cluster

The Galician Automotive Cluster (CEAGA) brings together the entire automotive sector in Galicia, region in the northwest of Spain which holds an important position in the field of manufacturing cars and components at European level. The mission of CEAGA is to develop cooperative projects to foster competitiveness. More than twenty years after its creation, CEAGA has become a solid structure, allowing the sector to develop initiatives of great strategic value and to introduce new companies into the Galician economy. Since it was first established, the number of members has grown by more than 100%: from an initial figure of 37 companies to the 122 companies (including the Groupe PSA Center of Vigo and the Galician Automotive Technological Centre) which currently take part of CEAGA. CEAGA represents 122 automotive companies (54% SMEs), 20.800 direct workers and 8.680 Million Euros turnover. The Galician Automotive Cluster holds the Gold Label certification awarded by the European Secretary for Clusters Analysis (ESCA), since 2013. CEAGA was the first automotive cluster in to obtain this award. www.ceaga.com

Clúster de la Indústria d'Automoció de Catalunya

The Automotive Industry Cluster of Catalonia (CIAC) is a non-profit association open to companies operating in the automotive industry, that are based in Catalonia, and pursue R&D+I activities. CIAC works to boost the competitiveness of the automotive industry, as the driving force behind the Catalan economy, through the implementation of successful projects. CIAC has helped developing many projects in relation with Industry 4.0 and automated, electric and shared mobility, causing a real impact on the sector at a national level. CIAC also has its own Project Management Platform and has actively promoted the creation of the Automotive Professional Training Centre (CFPA) in Martorell, to which board of directors the Cluster takes part in.

Although it is a quite young cluster, as it was created at the beginning of 2013, it has grown quickly and it is now one of the main clusters in Spain, with 185 partners (74% SMEs), +80% of which are



industrial manufacturers, as well as the only Cluster with 2 OEM's in the country, Seat and Nissan. CIAC represents an approximate number of 44.200 direct workers and 19.100 Million Euros of turnover. www.ciac.cat/en

European Automotive Strategy Network

In 2008 EASN has been established as a platform for European automotive regions and clusters as well as their companies, institutes and authorities. Via its clusters and other partners, EASN promotes in-depth knowledge of the regional situations, access to the Automotive industry, institutes and universities in the respective regions, close contacts to SME companies in these regions and access to local, national and EU governments. www.easn.eu/

Pôle Véhicule du Futur

Pôle Véhicule du Futur (PVF) is one of the leading automotive clusters in Europe, located in the Eastern part of France. The cluster is federating industrials and research institutes in the field of future vehicles and mobility. The overall objective is to create solutions for tomorrow's vehicles and mobility by initiating collaborative research projects to develop near-market innovative products or services and by improving the industrial performance of companies via e.g. lean manufacturing or industry 4.0.

PVF totals 375 members having been partner in 164 funded projects, including 27 European projects for a total amount of EUR 563 million. PVF obtained the European Gold Label Excellence award, gained a comprehensive experience in European research and cooperation programmes by its participation in eight EU R&D projects, and has relationships to a multitude of clusters in France and around Europe. PVF's target markets & strategic business areas are Composites and new materials, Recycling, Automotive components, Battery/fuel cell electric vehicles and powertrains, Recharging infrastructures, ITS and Mobility services. www.vehiculedufutur.com/en

PVF is currently leading the European Automotive Cluster Network as well as coordinating the European funded project 'EACN for Joint Industrial Modernisation Investments'.

Silesia Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing

The cluster Silesia Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing was established in 2011 and covers three regions in the Southern part of Poland: Śląskie, Małopolskie and Opolskie. More than 1089 companies are active in the automotive sector in this area, of which 57 are official cluster members. Several other companies – most of them situated on the premises of the Katowice Special Economic Zone – participate in the cluster activities on a case by case base. Among the cluster members, there are 8 research organisations and universities and 3 business support organisations. Continuous process and production improvement, employee productivity and motivation, new technology competences and local supplier networks are key success factors. The importance of agile and flexible production technologies is the fundament for the cluster's activities in the area of advanced manufacturing. The cluster organizes workshops, meetings, benchmarking analyses, brokerage events and development projects. silesia-automotive.pl/en

