Agenda

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

   Nina Hoppmann, *Team Member European Cluster Collaboration Platform*

2. Cluster policy and broader industrial and regional development strategies

   Fabian Schmidt, *Consultant, Prognos and Team Member European Cluster Collaboration Platform*

3. Panel debate

   Annie Renders, *Head of Unit Cluster Policy & Strategic Relations, Government of Flanders, VLAIO*

   Robert Wenzel, *Head of R&D Infrastructure Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic*

   Lukas Nögel, *Project Manager, German „go-cluster" program of the BMWE and Senior Consultant at VDI/VDE-IT*

4. Funding opportunities

   Nina Hoppmann, *Team Member European Cluster Collaboration Platform*

Housekeeping rules

Jennifer Baker, presenter

- We will use **slido** to launch polls. Please scan the QR code to answer.

- Please use the **Zoom Q&A function to ask questions,** and the **chat function** to comment or share links.

- If you want to speak: Please **raise your hand** and we will give you the floor.

- Please note that the session is being **recorded** and that the recording will be **published** on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.

NEWS FROM THE
EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Feedback on 28th regime: a single harmonized set of rules for innovative companies throughout the EU

The European Commission has launched a [call for evidence and feedback consultation](#) on the **28th Regime**, a future corporate legal framework to provide companies, especially innovative ones, with a single set of rules to invest and operate more easily across the EU Single Market.

The initiative will:

- Establish a **harmonised EU-wide corporate legal framework**

- Cover key issues in **company law, digital tools, and online procedures**

- Complement measures in areas such as **finance, taxation, labour law, and insolvency**

- Support innovative companies to **scale across Europe**

- 📅 **Feedback period: until 30 September 2025**

Public Consultation on European Innovation Act

The European Commission has launched a call for evidence and a public consultation, inviting all interested stakeholders to contribute to the **future European Innovation Act**.

A key deliverable of the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy, the European Innovation Act will facilitate bringing innovative ideas to market across all sectors.

The Act will:

- Facilitate bringing innovative ideas to market across all sectors

- Improve access to finance, markets, talent, and infrastructures

- Strengthen industry–academia collaboration

- Cut red tape and create a more innovation-friendly EU framework

📅 **Feedback period: until 3 October 2025**

Commission seeks experts for AI Scientific Panel

The European Commission is establishing a **scientific panel of 60 independent experts to advise on the implementation of the AI Act (renewable 24-month term)**, particularly regarding general-purpose AI (GPAI).

The panel will guide the EU AI Office and national authorities on systemic risks, model evaluation, and cross-border oversight. Candidates must have a **PhD or equivalent expertise** in fields like AI risk, cybersecurity, or compute thresholds, and remain independent from AI providers.

[Applications](#) are open until **14 September 2025.**

While EU citizenship is not a requirement, 80% of the experts must be from the EU or EFTA Member States.

MORE INFORMATION

ECCP Investment Survey, give us your feedback!

As part of the Summary Report 2025, the ECCP team is collecting **information on major investments** attracted by European clusters. The aim is to showcase the impact of cluster organisations in fostering investment activity and regional development.

For this, we need your input! Which investments has your cluster organisation helped to attract over the last years? The short survey should take no more than 5–10 minutes of your time. Thank you for your contributing to the ECCP Summary Report 2025!

Complete the survey [here](#)

Name of your cluster organisation:

Your EU Member State:

Your region:

Sector(s) covered by your cluster organisation:

Since January 2022, has your cluster attracted any significant private investment in your ecosystem (e.g., in member companies, infrastructure, R&D projects, production facilities, etc.)?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Clusters meet Regions in Vaasa on 24-25 September

The ECCP, on behalf of the European Commission, in collaboration with **Merinova and the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia**, is proud to organise the **Clusters Meet Regions** event in **Vaasa, Finland**, on **24 & 25 September 2025**.

This edition will focus on the role of clusters in advancing the **green transition, technology innovation, and energy sector competitiveness,** with a strong emphasis on collaboration between clusters, regional authorities, and businesses. The ideas presented during the pitching session will be further developed in **C2Lab Kuopio,** taking place in Finland on **29-30 October 2025.**

REGISTER NOW

Register for C2Lab in Kuopio, Finland

In partnership with **Kuopio Water Cluster, Comprehensive Security Cluster North Savo, SuperEcosystem, BoostECO, Savonia University of Applied Sciences, and the North Savo Regional Council**, we are hosting the Cluster Summit Finland 2025 and the Cluster Collaboration Lab (C2Lab) in Kuopio, Finland.

C2Lab is a **workshop-style event** where you will have the opportunity to meet new partners, discuss your project ideas, and initiate collaboration. Participants could **either join with a concrete project proposal or offer their expertise and knowledge by joining others.**

REGISTRATION OPEN

Matchmaking in Taiwan – 21-23 October 2025

The **EU – Taiwan Matchmaking Event** will take place on-site in Taipei, Taiwan, during the week of 21–23 October 2025, held in the context of European Innovation Week and alongside TAITRONICS & AIoT Taiwan. The event will focus on sectors such as AI, robotics, sustainable energy, industrial IoT, semiconductors, and the circular economy.

For clusters: The event will provide **funded participation for up to 20 cluster representatives**. Additional participants may join at their own expense, subject to confirmation.

For SMEs: Participation costs are at **their own expense**. However, selected SMEs will benefit from free access to the Renewable Energy India Expo 2025 and will be informed about available discounted rates for accommodation and flights.

Third cut-off date for clusters and SMEs to participate in this matchmaking is 19 September.

Matchmaking in Vietnam – 4-6 November 2025

The **EU – Vietnam Matchmaking Event** will take place on-site in Bac Ninh, Vietnam, during the week of 4–6 November 2025 in the context of the **Vietnam Industrial & Manufacturing Fair.** The event aims to foster collaboration between European clusters, SMEs, and Vietnamese partners in key industries, including machinery, robotics and automation, logistics processes and transport, digital industries, electronics (incl. semiconductors), and clean tech.

For clusters: The event will provide **funded participation for up to 20 cluster representatives**. Additional participants may join at their own expense, subject to confirmation.

For SMEs: Participation costs are at **their own expense**. However, selected SMEs will benefit from free access to the Renewable Energy India Expo 2025 and will be informed about available discounted rates for accommodation and flights.

Third cut-off date for clusters and SMEs to participate in this matchmaking is 23 September.

Clusters meet Regions in Regensburg on 26-27 November

The ECCP, on behalf of the European Commission, together with the **City of Regensburg, the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Bayern Innovativ,** will host a "Clusters meet Regions" event in Regensburg.

The two-day programme will focus on cross-innovation as a driver of sustainability, resilience, and competitiveness. It will bring together clusters, policymakers, businesses, researchers, and citizens to explore new ways of collaboration in areas such as **AI, healthcare, creative industries, mobility, greentech, IT security, and sensor technology.**

REGISTER NOW

ECCP Events 2025

Vaasa, Finland
Clusters meet Regions | **24-25 September**

Kuopio, Finland
Cluster Summit Finland & C2 Lab | **28-30 October 2025**

Pamplona, Spain
Clusters meet Regions & ECCP Matchmaking | **12-13 November**

Alentejo, Portugal
Clusters meet Regions | **18-19 November**

Regensburg, Germany
Clusters meet Regions & ECCP Matchmaking | **26-27 November**

Copenhagen, Denmark
Clusters meet Regions | **2-3 December**

EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

- Update of 56 Cluster Policy Factsheets for EU, SMP/COSME and 3rd countries

- Information on cluster policy in ERDF OPs & country-specific recommendations from the ESR

- Data gathering from August-December 2024 (mostly in national languages)

- Validation with national authorities in EU and COSME countries
- Additional checks by experts from European Cluster Alliance (ECA)

Insights on the countries:

1 Economic policy context

2 Industrial ecosystems & the cluster landscape

3 National cluster policy, programmes & initiatives

4 State of cluster policy & its role in broader economic policy challenges

Country factsheet

Denmark

Almost 50 relevant policies in the EU27 identified:

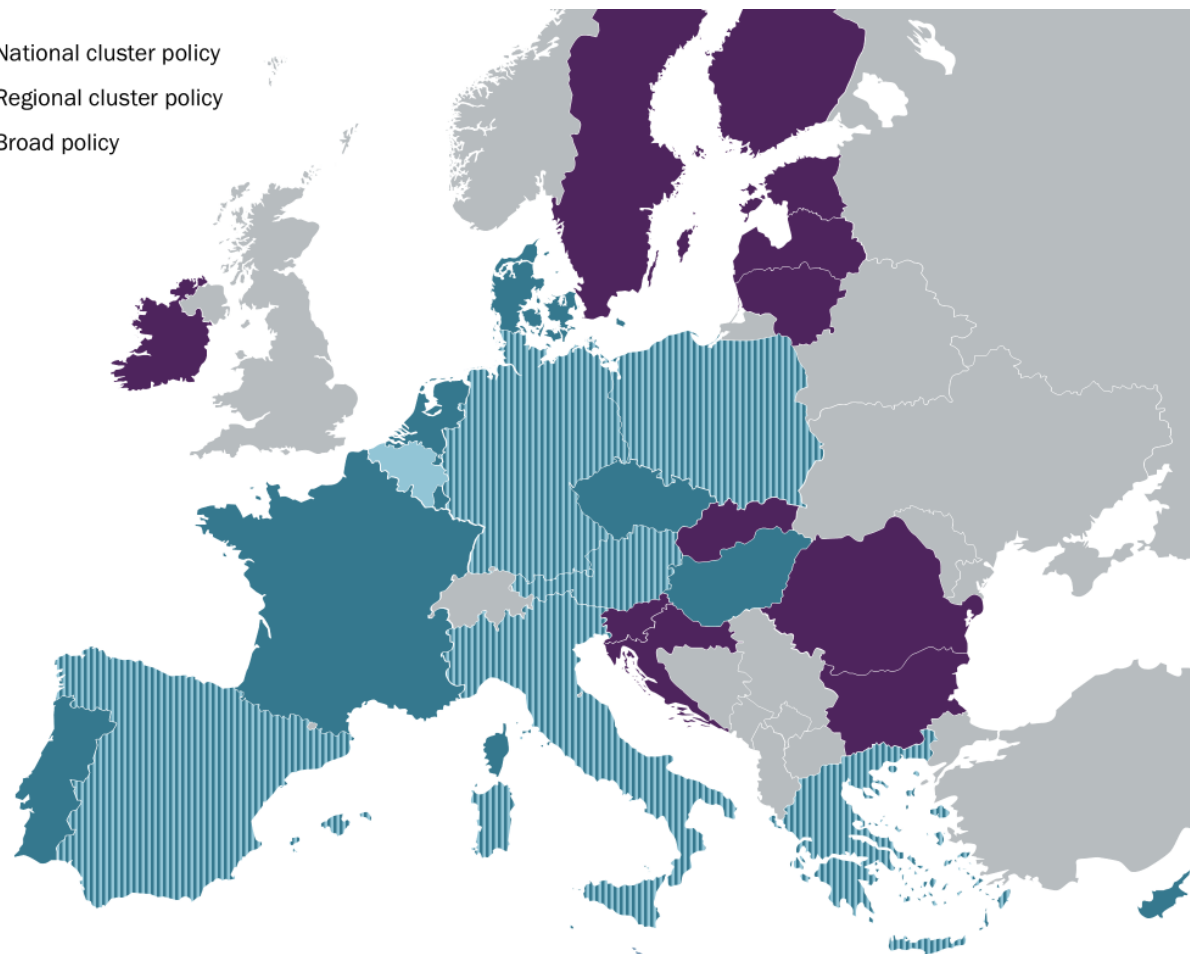| 20 national cluster policies	8 regional cluster policies	20 broad policies

Fifteen Member States employ a **dedicated regional cluster policy**

Dedicated cluster policies often found in **central & southern EU MS**, whereas broad policies are more frequent in south-eastern/Baltic MS.

Policy Types:

- National cluster policy
- Regional cluster policy
- Broad policy

Source: ECCP (2025), based on information gathered through desk research and validation by National Authorities.
N1 = 48 policies, N2 = 27 countries

EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

1990-2020: Globalisation

- Cluster policy was the **reaction to the failure** of traditional industrial and regional development policy in a **context of globalising markets**
- 2000s: **Rise of "place-based policy"** (Barca report 2009, Smart Specialisation).
- The overall policy agenda was focused on **competitiveness in a globalised market environment**

2020-?: Geoeconomic competition

- The **international context of economic policy** has shifted from globalised market integration to geoeconomic competition.
- A **new industrial revolution** decides on where value creation takes place in the coming decades.
- However: **Globalisation is not over** but continues under a **different context** (e.g. supply chain diversification)

Innovation Competitiveness Employment	Objectives of economic policy	Strategic autonomy Technological sovereignty Supply chain resilience

Sectoral selectivity

- Some cluster policies come with a **defined list of sectors** that are supported
- **Sectoral platforms** often serve as focal points that **interact with other national policies**

Twin transition

- Cluster policies usually contain elements of **green & digital transition criteria/objectives**
- Clusters or groups of clusters **participate in national transition programmes**

The Netherlands has **integrated sectoral cluster support** within its *Topsectoren* policy linking a set of sub-programmes.
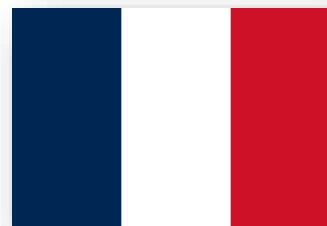
Spain's *Agrupaciones Empresariales Innovadoras* policy comes with a strong **cross-sectoral focus on digitalisation and industry 4.0**.

Base funding

- Purpose: **Build & maintain** cluster ecosystem (organisations, networks, infrastructure)
- Selectivity: Cluster size, management quality (**internal**) or sectoral priorities (**external**)

Project funding

- Purpose: **Mobilise** clusters to deliver policy priorities
- Selectivity: Depending on programme/call (**horizontal, vertical, transition goals**)

France has **reduced the direct funding** of its Pôles de Compétitivité programme, **directing cluster organisations towards project-based funding sources** provided under the France 2030 agenda.
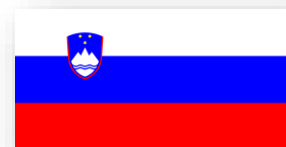
Poland's **multi-tiered cluster programme** provides **differentiated access** to base & additional funding.

20

- Cluster policy in many countries is aligned with **Smart Specialisation** priorities

- Usually linked with **ERDF-supported funding streams**

- Can be combined with **both** a **dedicated cluster policy** and a **broad policy set-up**

- In these cases, the S3 framework is usually not limited to the regional level but explicitly used as a **national strategy** (with possible regional layer)

Denmark runs a **dedicated cluster policy** aligned with its **14 national S3 priorities**

Slovenia's **broad policy** supports clusters based on **Strategic Research and Innovation Partnerships (SRIP)** along its **S3 priorities**

Conclusion: Clusters & Policy

- Cluster policies can link up to broader industrial and regional policies **on multiple dimensions**

- Cluster programmes can be **multi-tiered**, concentrate on **specific sectors**, and include a **transition agenda** – **directly** or **indirectly** through attached programmes

- **Access criteria** to **base and project funding** shape clusters' broader policy alignment

- Cluster policy needs to **balance its ecosystem-building and strategic roles** as priorities shift

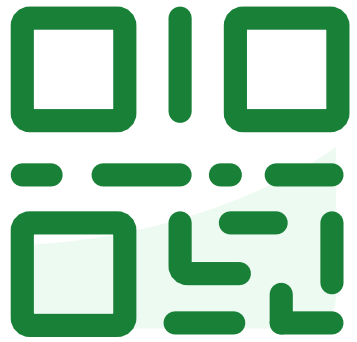**Outlook: Clusters in the next EU budget period 2028-2034**

- **Shift in EU funding logic**: From ERDF-driven, regional focus to Competitiveness Fund with stronger industrial policy orientation?

- Larger role for **multi-tiered, integrated EU cluster structures** (e.g. *Euroclusters*) to interface with sectoral EU programmes (incl. through cascade funding)?

European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Thank you!

For the updated ECCP Country Factsheets and the upcoming ECCP Summary Report 2025, see:

https://clustercollaboration.eu/in-focus/policy-acceleration/country-factsheets-on-cluster-policies-and-programmes

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Where are clusters most visible in your national/regional strategies?

What challenges most affect the integration of clusters into wider industrial strategies?

Which policy priorities do you think clusters should address more effectively?

Panel debate

Annie Renders, Head of Unit Cluster Policy & Strategic Relations,

Government of Flanders, VLAIO

Robert Wenzel, Head of R&D Infrastructure Department,

Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic

Lukas Nögel, Project Manager, German „go-cluster" program of the BMWE

and Senior Consultant at VDI/VDE-IT

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

TCI GLOBAL CONFERENCE **2025**

DUBLIN, ISLAND OF IRELAND
14–16 OCTOBER 2025

Why attend TCI 2025?

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- Experience Collaboration
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tciglobalconference.com

Implementing co-funded action plans for connected regional innovation valleys

- The objective of the call to create **interconnected regional innovation valleys** that bridge the innovation divide across Europe, aligning with the **New European Innovation Agenda.**

- Project results are expected to, among other outcomes, contribute to:

  - Efficient, inclusive and interconnected ecosystems building **on Smart Specialisation Strategies**

  - **Stronger synergies** among innovation hubs, clusters, missions and networks (e.g. Digital Innovation Hubs, Hydrogen Valleys, Enterprise Europe Network)

  - Increased capacity in deep tech and **strategic EU value chains** (green, digital, healthcare, food systems, circular economy)

  - **More co-investments** mobilising EU, national, regional and private funds

- Topic ID: HORIZON-EIE-2025-02-CONNECT-02

- Deadline: 15 October 2025

- Published on EU Funding & Tenders Portal

Accelerating uptake through open proposals for advanced SME innovation

- The aim of the call is to **support SMEs and start-ups** in delivering mature **digital and security technologies** that respond to EU civil security priorities and accelerate their market uptake.

- Projects should foster cross-border collaboration and involve security end-users as validators and first adopters.

- SMEs are encouraged to coordinate proposals, with strong involvement of RTOs and industrial players to boost technology transfer and business model innovation.

- Expected outcomes:

  - Market-ready solutions for EU civil security challenges (crime & terrorism, disaster resilience, border management, resilient infrastructure).

  - Easier SME access to public buyers and finance.

  - Stronger SME partnerships to reduce EU dependency on non-EU suppliers.

  - Enhanced cooperation schemes for innovation transfer and commercialisation..

- Topic ID: HORIZON-CL3-2025-01-SSRI-04

- Deadline: 12 November 2025

- Published on EU Funding & Tenders Portal

Uptake Acceleration Services

- The objective of the call is to accelerate the **market uptake** of EU-funded **security research** by providing **specialised services and advisory support** to SMEs, start-ups, and security practitioners.

- Projects are expected to contribute to:

  - Accelerated **innovation uptake** within the security ecosystem

  - A **self-sustained service mechanism** acting as a market catalyst

  - Stronger **collaboration between research, SMEs/start-ups**, and **security practitioners**

  - Improved **technology transfer** and **market access** for innovative solutions

- Topic ID: HORIZON-CL3-2025-01-SSRI-02

- Deadline: 12 November 2025

- Published on EU Funding & Tenders Portal

Register for the next Talks

24 September

[Clusters and the European Competitiveness Fund: Future Roles and Opportunities](#)

Continue the discussion

European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) — General Discussion Group

Private Listed

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