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The commentator of the EU Cluster Talks is **Chris Burns**.

Agenda



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. From Our Own Correspondent
3. Perspectives from the European Commission
Giancarlo Granero, *Head of Unit Coordination & Interinstitutional Relations, DG DEFIS, European Commission*
Catherine Eginard, *Deputy Head of Unit Coordination & Interinstitutional Relations, DG DEFIS, European Commission*
4. Panel debate
Fabienne Daveran, *Head of European Office, Aerospace Valley*
Isabelle Tovena Pecault, *Director Europe & International, Alpha-RLH*
Krzysztof Krystowski, *Managing Director, Silesian Aviation Cluster*
5. Open round with the audience
6. Funding opportunities



Nina Hoppmann starts with ECCP news.





Would you like to host the next Clusters m Regions event?

- The ECCP has launched a **Call for Expression of Interest** to select the national/regional authorities and cluster organisations to run each of these important events.
- The next deadline for making your application is **1 April 2023, 18:00 CET**.
- National and regional clusters and policymakers come together to share experiences, secure new partnerships and learn from one another how we can all make better use of clusters.
- Check out the application process on the [ECCP](#).



Register for the next C2Lab!

- **Registration** is open for **Lund, Sweden, on 21-22 March 2023**
- Interactive workshop to bring and find collaboration partners, mature your project idea, and build the business case for your idea
- Focus on energy transition and circular economy + 1 open strand
- For cluster organisations, companies, research organisations, actors from the civil society, and other interested entities
- Join the [C2Lab Discussion Group](#) on LinkedIn



More about the event [HERE](#)

You are welcome to join the ECCP Discussion Groups on LinkedIn.

ECCP Discussion Groups on LinkedIn

ECCP General Discussion Group
Connect with the ECCP partners, discuss all activities and exchange ideas and project partners.

Green Transition Support Discussion
Write and share ideas and learn how to access a wide range of EU funds and support to help you overcome all barriers.

Cluster Networks Discussion Group
Exchange knowledge and learn mutual learning by participating in your cluster network.

C2Lab Community Discussion Group
Connect with other clusters in the up to date regional to cross border value chains to be successful in the digital economy and innovated in C2Lab.

EU Clusters Support Ukraine Discussion Group
Share information, experiences and the services which you can offer regarding business opportunities and financial assistance in order to facilitate procurement and delivery of urgent humanitarian requirements.

Euroclusters Discussion Group
Work together, exchange ideas, and learn how to overcome all barriers and challenges faced by the Eurocluster projects.

Cluster Booster Academy Discussion Group
Exchange your knowledge and experience with other Cluster Booster Academy participants before, during and following the training sessions. The group will include you throughout training duration, including following the training sessions and to continue to exchange with the trainers.

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COSME project PRESTIGIOUS published mapping drone actors in Europe

PRESTIGIOUS is an European project co-funded by the COSME program of the European Union to **STRENGTHEN THE COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF "DRONES" SMES IN EUROPE**.

4 MAIN ACTIONS:

- Assessment of the value chain for drones in Europe
Identify the strengths of European SMEs
- Organization of 3 missions to non-European countries
 - Identify potential end users outside Europe
 - North America (Canada)
 - Central Africa (Nigeria, Senegal)
 - South America (Chile)
- Supply of individual support for European SMEs
 - Organization of training seminars for the transfer of information
- Preparation of a joint internationalization strategy
 - Roadmap to establish an European strategy for drones

VALUE CHAIN
PRESTIGIOUS project formalized the value chain of low high potential drone market.

Mapping of drone actors

STRUCTURE OF THE VALUE CHAIN:

- Security market: Security relative to Civil or State security
- Inspection market: Inspection relative to any other market application that is using drones
 - Industry
 - Offices, Quarries, Construction sites
 - Agriculture
- Software editor
- Drone manufacturer
- Drone operator
- Integration center
- Manufacturing drone
- Drone repair
- Drone maintenance
- Drone training
- Drone consulting
- Drone certification
- Drone distribution

<https://clustercollaboration.eu/community-news/prestigios-drones-i-techdrone>

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More information about ECCP community news [HERE](https://clustercollaboration.eu/community-news/prestigios-drones-i-techdrone)

Follows the video from Giovanni Caprino, a general manager at the Distretto Ligure delle tecnologie marine.

Let's move to Giancarlo Granero, the Head of Unit Coordination & Interinstitutional Relations, DG DEFIS. European Commission



Let's talk about the transition pathway for the Aerospace and Defence ecosystem. The goal is to transform the ecosystem's business models and value chains. Such a transition requires a plan. There is a standardised process for all the ecosystems. The first step for the European Commission is to publish a staff working document accessible to everyone. The current state of the plan and initiatives scenarios are drafted here. Then feedback from the ecosystems is required – public consultation. And the last is the code drafting part between the commission and ecosystems, which delivers the actual pathway. The Aerospace and Defence ecosystem was not labelled as a priority ecosystem, meaning it was not part of those adopted in 2021. Five pathways were adopted in 2021. Giancarlo hopes that the path for this ecosystem will be completed by the end of 2023.

Catherine Eginard, the Deputy Head of Unit Coordination & Interinstitutional Relations, DG DEFIS, European Commission, tells us where we are now regarding the document.



Chris also asks how we make the transition greener and more digital and develop skills.

Firstly, she mentions today's challenges. We mustn't forget the post-Covid impact and current situation in Ukraine. We are vulnerable regarding the supply chain (external dependency, external countries). We also have strengths, such as a single market – a solid element to facilitate our growth and welfare. But we know we need to strengthen our investments in green resilience.

Policy aspects – we have cross-cutting policies in green and digital resilience (Green Deal, EU Climate targets, Plan for 2030, Plan for 2040, Plan for 2055, Report EU in energy, Hydrogen Strategy, Digital Decades, Synergy between civil defence and space...).

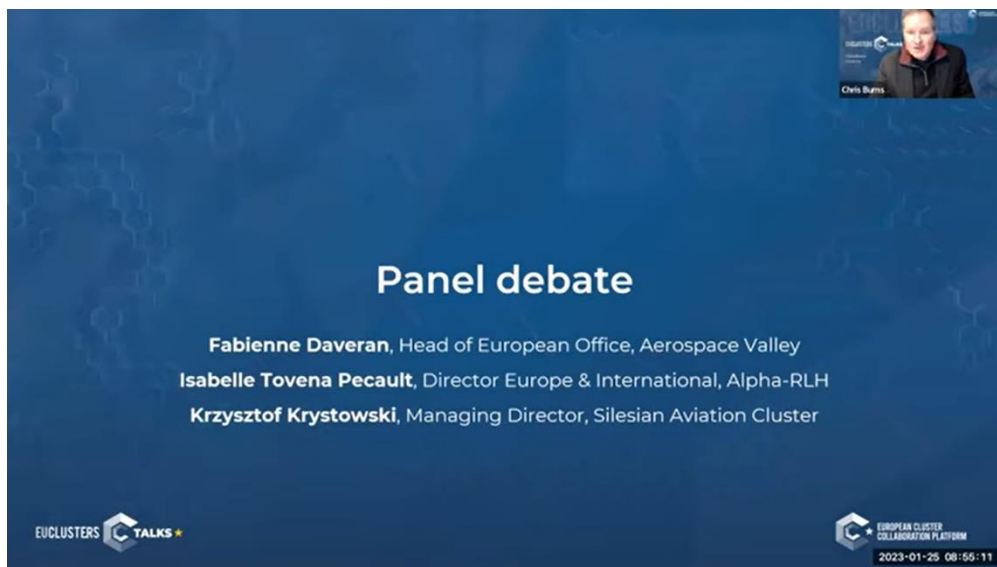
We also need to look at the skills. We must reskill and upskill our workforce, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The first outcome of the document will be delivered in the first quarter of the year.

They also look at how to be more resilient and have more competitive ecosystems. An essential element in the field of resilience is security and how we protect our critical infrastructure and transport route; how can we better use the directive investment regulation to protect our assets and our companies? Innovation is also at the centre of the discussion on how we develop technological excellence in Europe.

European Commission's main objective is to be a climate-resilient society by 2050. There are data providers in the field of space and service providers for climate change. The Aerospace & Defence ecosystem helps significantly with the green transition.

Follows the Panel debate



Fabienne Daveran, Head of European Office, Aerospace Valley

Fabienne introduces the Aerospace Valley cluster. It is a southern French cluster focusing on aeronautics, space, drones and defence. They have over 860 members; over 500 are SMEs, but they also have academic and public authority members. Three hundred members work for the defence sector. The main focus is on innovation right now. Cluster is aware of all innovative ecosystem projects and is quite a specialist in funding programs (public, national, regional, European or private funds).

Cluster is also involved in training and education in the ecosystem. They provide plenty of academic and engineering courses. They also support start-ups.

Fabienne tells us more about the Metastasis project. It is a Eurocluster project. It started in December 2022 and will end in February 2025. Aerospace Valley is a coordinator of this project. In the consortium, there are partners from Spain, Greece and Poland. The project aims to help the Aerospace and Defence ecosystem with resilience and support the twin transition. They will work on establishing industrial roadmaps for the A&D transition pathway. They will work to elaborate on topics that can help this transition pathway. They plan to have workshops specialised on the issue. The first will be on the 3rd of February 2023. The workshop topic is How the A&D product-service could be implemented to support life in a severe environment. The cluster will also distribute vouchers, mainly for SMEs but also for technology innovation support, training and education. Seventy-four vouchers will be handed to SMEs.

New Space Factory – Cluster is helping nanosat producers and companies dealing with space telecommunication technologies, and the cluster helps them with internationalisation.

The next panellist is Isabelle Tovena Pecault, the Director Europe & International, Alpha-RLH.



Isabelle says we need clean tech, investments and well-educated people. Alpha-RLH is a deep tech cluster focused on photonics and electronics. They are deeply rooted in A&D and are technic providers. As a cluster, they work with universities, industries, government, the public, and the environment and try to interact with all partners. She says that resilience is for her linked to A&D (a secure and robust economy within the sector). Their focus as a cluster is also on people, research and development (using EU funding) – also on the international level – they have offices in China, Japan, and Canada. They help deep tech start-ups, SMEs, and large companies to have connections abroad and to see what is being done outside. She also says that she agrees with Catherine regarding critical raw materials. She adds that we could have seen the support between the clusters and others during the pandemic, solidarity, and challenges. She also mentions the importance of Euroclusters, which is a new possibility for clusters.

Chris asks Isabelle what technology we should prioritise to make things greener. Can we get an example?

She says **photonics**. Why? It is vital in green technology. And it isn't very well known between the public and society. This is why they are working on a project called Photon in Europe. There are vouchers for SMEs for innovation. Photonics and electronics work well together. You can't do electronics without photonics and vice-versa. They are very connected.

We move to Krzysztof Krystowski, Managing Director of Silesian Aviation Cluster.



Krzysztof represents a cluster from the Silesian region, Poland. They have over 100 companies gathered in the organisation. They are active not only in the area but also in the country. The Silesian region is near the Czech Republic's borders and is the most industrialised region. Their members are from neighbourhood regions. They are one of the Key Clusters. There are 20 Key National Clusters in Poland. A few years ago, the Polish Ministry of Technology and Economic Development established a program for the best clusters in Poland, Key National Cluster. Silesian Aviation Cluster is the only gold-labelled certified cluster. What is their main specialisation? They are focused on light aircraft, including gliders. They also have companies that supply aircraft components, including aero engine components. The biggest company in the cluster is Avio Aero (a former Italian company, now part of General Electric). They also have plenty of SMEs – most are Polish SMEs involved in composite technologies, f.e. gliders used in sports. Krzysztof mentions drones that member companies developed. He says it was natural for companies to create drones as they started with light materials, composite materials etc. Together with German partners, they established the European drone cooperation organisation - CURPAS. Now they have 12 different clusters from 10 countries that are part of this organisation, including the Aerospace Valley cluster.

[CURPAS – The European Drone Cooperation](#)

Exciting events happening this year:

Bordeaux drone show: October 10-12, 2023

The Silesian aviation cluster will have its stand at **Friedrichshafen Expo: April 19-22, 2023**

Chris asks what barriers there are to overcome; what barrier are you dealing with on the ground?

Krzysztof says that the problem of the drone industry is the fragmented market. There are plenty of small companies, and they don't know each other. He thinks that development would be faster if they met each other. They could find common interests and realise joint projects. This is the idea of creating platforms. Another element of drones is regulation and standardisation.

Chris comes back to Isabelle with a question from the audience about photonics. Can you be more concrete about what it means in terms of the products?

Isabelle says that when we have light, we have a photon, a very small amount of lighter photon. Photonics is linked to quantum technologies, or in satellite; you have scientific instruments that use spectroscopy.

Another question from the audience. Besides focusing on innovation, do A&D clusters have specific actions to strengthen defence SMEs' position in the EU market? Since the war of aggression from Russia on Ukraine, many member states have increased their defence budget. Yet, it benefited Third Country Companies and not EU ones, e.g. Poland buying military material from South Korea and drones from Turkey...How can we support EU SMEs to get deals with the member states?

Fabienne answers this question. In terms of supporting SMEs in the defence sector, they work closely with National Authority for Defence. There are different support schemes at the national level with French National Authorities for Defence, but they also have actions dealing with the European Defence fund. They follow these schemes and organise several events to promote the European Defence Fund. They also have specific activities for SMEs helping them to create innovative projects that will answer the European Defence Fund calls. They are also a member of the European Network of Defence Regions, and together they co-organised an event on Greener defence and how the defence sector could appropriate some green technologies. They discussed the energy sector, materials, and other vital issues – lack of interest in defence jobs.

Isabelle adds that this is an excellent example of what we can do as a cluster. To organise workshops, networking and matchmaking events to connect people in the sector. All talents are needed.

Next question from ASD Clusters. France, Germany and Spain recently announced their joint development of a future combat air system (Chris adds, this is a warplane). Are EU Clusters involved in this project that could potentially highlight European ASD cluster cooperation?

Krzysztof says that these projects are led instead by big OEMs like Airbus. The way to involve SMEs in such a project is to be part of the stable supply chain of this prominent place. Clusters could help very much. The majority of cluster members are SMEs. But very often, clusters cooperate with someone who has prominent company members. The idea is to stay in touch with those involved in such companies and support SMEs. Then when new projects are established, SMEs should be naturally part of the project. Unfortunately, not all SMEs can fit into this supply chain of big companies. Therefore, we should consider creating a place on the European level for clusters, where clusters could represent SMEs and bring them in touch with prominent companies.

There is a [European Aerospace Cluster Platform \(EACP\)](#) that gathers around 45 clusters from Europe.

Clusters can be very active and helpful in promoting internationalisation or international sales of members. For example, in Poland, they have support from the Government and European funds, so they can go with their members abroad and support them and their products internationally. **Thanks to international trips, the Silesian Aviation Cluster can proudly** say that two members now supply drones to Ukraine.

How is Airbus working with smaller suppliers? This question will answer Fabienne.

The chairman of the Aerospace Valley cluster association is a coming from Airbus. That is why they have closer relations and are part of the supply chain. Also, major OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) are part of the cluster. The cluster is there for SMEs. They support SMEs through projects to support zero-emission aircraft targets. They have to help them innovate and reach funding for such innovations.

Any thoughts on the EU encouraging SMEs in more significant projects?

Giancarlo says that not only thoughts but also actions can be mentioned. They are in regular contact with the ecosystem. One of their channels is the expert group on the A&D. They have about 60 members (unfortunately, he doesn't remember its name). This group comprises representatives from clusters, SMEs, start-ups and large companies.

How do they support the EU industry and value chains in A&D?

Defence industry – there are European Defence funds. There is also a proposal for the EDIRPA. They will also have an ADIP proposal, which is the European investment program.



Alliances for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills (implementing the 'Blueprint')



- These partnerships shall implement a **coherent and comprehensive set of sectoral or cross-sectoral activities for talent and skills development**, which should be adaptable to future knowledge developments across the EU.
- Partners can be public or private organisations legally established in an EU Member State or third country associated to the Programme, e.g. non-governmental organisations, SMEs, sectoral or professional associations, or economic development agencies
- Deadline: 3 May 2023
- Erasmus+ Programme; TOPIC ID: ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PI-ALL-INNO-BLUEPRINT
- Published on [Funding & Tenders Portal](#)





SecurIT: Critical infrastructure protection, disaster resiliency, public spaces protection

- SecurIT aims to increase the security of current applications, services and infrastructures by integrating state-of-the-art security solutions or processes, supporting the creation of lead markets & market incentives in Europe, following an end-user driven approach.
- Deadline: 14 March 2023; www.securit-project.eu
- Online matchmaking session on 8 February

Prototyping	Demonstration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consortium of minimum 2 European SMEs (security & cybersecurity) Maximum 12 months 74 000 € / project TRL minimum 5 (R7 expected at the end of the support programme) 74 projects - 28 SMEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consortium of minimum 2 European SMEs (security & cybersecurity) Maximum 12 months 88 000 € / project TRL minimum 5 (R7 expected at the end of the support programme) 28 projects - 56 SMEs

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AMULET 2nd Open Call

- Goal is to create new value chains through projects that will foster the penetration of advanced lightweight materials in four sectors
- Deadline: 22 March 2023
- Up to 26 consortia (2-3 SMEs) to submit a feasibility study: 23,000 €
- Up to 7 consortia (2-3 SMEs) to demonstrate their solutions: 80,000 €
- Up to 7 consortia (2-3 SMEs) to get follow-up support services: 17,000 €
- More info on: www.amulet-2oc-h2020.fundingbox.com

What kind of materials?



What kind of sectors?



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The SURE 5.0 project - Acceleration Programme 1

- The SURE 5.0 project aims to support European SMEs working in the mobility, transport & automotive, aerospace and electronics European ecosystems to advance in their digital transformation process while becoming more human-centric, sustainable and resilient.
- Deadline: 1 March 2023; www.sureproject.eu

Divided in two phases, the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 1 will help its participants to both understand and implement Industry 5.0 by utilising the following step-by-step approach:



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From the chat:

Sophie Schmitz - <https://www.polemecatech.be/en/>

Hello everybody, Sophie from Pole MecaTech, a cluster for industrial engineering in Belgium. We are currently working on a strategic roadmap for the defence sector, together with Skywin, the aeronautics cluster: <https://www.polemecatech.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/mctch-bro-defenseindustry-061021-web-low-compresse.pdf>

Klaus Bolving - In CenSec operate this open green defence innovation network. Please feel free to contact me/us in case you want to discuss or collaborate on this agenda: https://censec.dk/blog/2022/04/07/innovationsnetvaerket-for-groent-forsvar/?doing_wp_cron=1674633056.0849781036376953125000

https://censec.dk/?doing_wp_cron=1674633120.2071330547332763671875

Juliana Semionova - <https://tools.eu/>

Ana Cucu - <https://www.spacetechnology.ro/en/>

Niamh Mc Dermott - <https://realtra.space/>

Loïc MARIN (CIMES and coordinator of GEMSTONE project (Euroclusters)) - <https://www.cimes-hub.com/europe/projets-europeens/en/cimes-competitiveness-cluster-dedicated>

Workshop - <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2363406169289934938>

<https://www.protect-pcp.eu/> - PROTECT will support public procurement of space data of Earth Observation for the environment

Isabelle Toven Pecault - <https://www.alpha-rlh.com/eng> - ALPHA-RLH ecosystem based in Nouvelle Aquitaine region on deep technologies (electronics and photonics and materials and digitalisation)

Alexander Widmann - Good morning from Munich, Germany, Alexander Widmann, Scientific Officer @ BayFOR. If you're looking for Bavarian partners for collaborative projects (Horizon Europe / EDF) please feel free and contact me https://www.bayfor.org/en/about-us/organisation/team.html?fachbereich=24&standort=0&no_cache=1

Isabelle Toven Pecault - We have opportunities for R&D&Innovation funding from our EU projects: Newskin on nanotexturing, surface treatment, nanotechnologies, PIMAP4sustainability in Photonics, PhotonHub Europe, EDIH DIHNAMIC <https://www.alpha-rlh.com/eng/pass-europe-566>

Fabienne Daveran - Aerospace Valley is member of EDC (Eu Drones Cooperation) and recently joined the EU network of U-Space stakeholders.



8 February 2023: Health in Europe – where does our ecosystem stand?

22 February 2023: Transition Pathway for Mobility

8 March 2023: Euroclusters

