



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

EU Industry Days: Takeaways from Europe's flagship event for industry

Summary



EU Clusters Talks
11 October 2023, 8:30 – 9:45 CET

An initiative of the European Union





EU Industry Days: Takeaways from Europe's flagship event for industry

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 4 October 2023, 8:30 – 9:45 CET, to summarise the key messages from the event and reflect on takeaways for clusters and SMEs.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Zivile Kropaite

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Takeaways from the EU Industry Days
Mariella Masselink, Head of Unit, DG GROW, European Commission
3. Panel debate
Daniel Cosnita, President, CLUSTERO
Daniel González, Director, Smart City Cluster
Jose Ramón Natal, Cluster Manager, MetalIndustry4
Ola Svedin, President, Clusters of Sweden
4. Funding opportunities
Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Key messages

- The EU Industry Days focused on the green and digital transition, increasing resilience, strengthening the Single Market, strategic autonomy, and re- and upskilling.
- Clusters are valuable entities to help in these topics.
- It was seen positively that the event took place in the country of the presidency of the Council of the European Union.
- In-person events offer great networking opportunities that are lost in online events. A hybrid form was welcomed to accommodate more participants.



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Zivile Kropaite, the following news item were presented:

1. After the first open calls published by the Euroclusters, SMEs are starting their projects for a green, digital, and resilient Europe. Find articles about this in the [ECCP news](#).
2. Invitation to join [upcoming “Clusters meet Regions” events](#) in France, Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, and Poland
3. Report on [“Clusters meet Regions” in Bulgaria](#)
4. [Financing Opportunities](#) for EU-Japan Business Cooperation in Africa on 19 October
5. Invitation to join the [ECCP discussion groups](#)

2. Takeaways from the EU Industry Days

Mariella Masselink, Head of Unit, DG GROW, European Commission

Mariella Masselink provided an overview of the EU Industry Days. The event attracted 1,200 participants and included 39 sessions, encompassing high-level plenaries, fireside chats, and parallel sessions. Some of these sessions were organized by the cluster community. The event also featured 16 exhibitors and 27 experts sharing knowledge on various policies and programmes. For the first time, the event was organized outside Brussels, which was seen as a success for two main reasons: breaking out of the "Brussels bubble" and enabling more informal networking and exchange among participants.

Regarding the key takeaways from the event, Mariella Masselink highlighted the discussions on the **green and digital transition** as the main policy priorities and the transition pathways for different industrial ecosystems. The recent crises, like COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, have underscored the importance of accelerating these transitions. Another recurring topic was the need for **skills** development, aligning with 2023 being the European Year of Skills. The EU is focusing on large-scale partnerships to upskill and reskill workers.

Many voices emphasised the importance of a **strong Single Market**, with a focus on reducing reporting obligations and barriers, and integrating Ukraine into the EU market. Furthermore, the need for open **strategic autonomy** was discussed. Initiatives like the Net Zero Industry Act and the Critical Raw Materials Act can ensure necessary technologies and materials are available.

Closing her statement, Mariella Masselink stressed the **importance of collaboration** as a key to success, particularly for the cluster community known for its bottom-up approach and direct connection with SMEs.



3. Panel debate

The panellists shared detailed insights and reflections on their experiences at the EU Industry Days and the implications for their work in clusters.

The speakers agreed with the aforementioned topics:

- A significant focus was placed on the green and digital transition, especially in the context of raw materials and energy.
- The skills gap, particularly in the digital sector and the gender gap in technical skills, was a recurrent theme. There was a call for policy-level intervention to address these issues.
- The integration of Ukraine into the EU's industrial framework was a key topic, given its current geopolitical situation and the potential for collaboration.
- Single Market Challenges: The discussions revolved around understanding and addressing barriers to the Single Market and the need for simplification to enhance collaboration.

Future events could benefit from more focused sessions that directly address the **specific needs and challenges of businesses** in various sectors.

The speakers highlighted that clusters are expected to play a pivotal role in these transitions. Clusters can translate high-level EU policy and discussion outcomes into practical strategies and actions for their members. They can disseminate information and integrate them into everyday business conversations. The EU Industry Days reinforced the need for clusters to continually evolve and adapt to new developments.

Regarding the event organisation, the speakers suggested **simplifying the registration process** for future events. The location of the event in Málaga was discussed, with considerations about whether hosting in more industrialised region of Spain might impact participation and the nature of discussions. The speakers welcome the idea of having the event in the country of the presidency.

Furthermore, the panellists emphasised the **importance of in-person attendance** and suggested a balance between online and physical participation for future events. In-person events allow for effective networking and the exchange of ideas.

4. Funding opportunities

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann shared the following examples of funding opportunities:

1. [Industrial leadership in AI, Data and Robotics boosting competitiveness and the green transition](#) (AI Data and Robotics Partnership); deadline 19 March 2024
2. [European AgriFood Sustainability Cluster Partnerships](#); deadline 7 November 2023
3. [Development of technical and business solutions to optimise the circularity, resilience, and sustainability of the European battery value chain](#) (Batt4EU Partnership); deadline 18 April 2024



4. Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters; published on [European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#)
5. Invitation to come to [upcoming C2Labs](#) in Slovenia and Lithuania to work on project proposals