

Press release 1 July 2020

“Clusters need to be included in the recovery plans of the EU Member States”

In their virtual meeting on 30 June 2020, European Commissioner Thierry Breton and the European Clusters Alliance concluded that clusters play a critical role in the economic recovery of the European single market towards a green, digital, and resilient future. Together, the Commission and the clusters can bring the concepts to the local grounds and benefit from the clusters' essence: collective actions, cooperation, and strong partnership.

The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated the transformation to a green, digital, and resilient European economy. European Commissioner Thierry Breton and the European Clusters Alliance (ECA) discussed in their videoconference on 30 June 2020 the role of clusters in the framework of the recovery process and aligned their ideas.

Commissioner Breton stated clearly his intentions to work together, observing that “clusters are absolutely essential to accelerate the transformation that we are putting in place on our European continent, regardless where business is located in the EU.” He encouraged the clusters and the EU Member States to collaborate immediately, as the Member States will have to present their recovery plans to the Commission in the last quarter of this year. “You must be part of the recovery plans”, he declared to the ECA, for which the Commission proposes 750 billion EUR, 500 distributed to the Member States. “You are the pillars of the bridge I am willing to build across all the internal market.”

The members of the European Clusters Alliance expressed in their presentations their readiness to act, placing their resources at the disposal of the European Commission and requesting more responsibility and trust to implement industrial policies of the European Union. “Clusters are not a lobbying organisation”, emphasised Krzysztof Krystowski, ECA's vice-president. “We are practitioners, doing business with companies.”

Clusters have shown their potential since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, managing big groups of companies from different sectors at the same time and across different countries, in close and continuous collaboration with DG GROW, to help in this time of crisis and to look for ways of recovery. “In a moment where all the European members were closing their physical borders, we were able to overcome all the barriers”, explained Antonio Novo Guerrero, President of ECA. “This is how the European Clusters Alliance was born: as the coordinated efforts of the European national and regional networks of clusters to create effective and highly competitive transnational innovative ecosystems.”

This videoconference was a next step in the collaboration between the European Commission and the European Clusters Alliance. Further actions will follow, as Commissioner Breton announced the launch of Euroclusters under the new Joint Cluster Initiatives in 2020/2021 helping to link ecosystems as innovation agents in cross-sectorial projects. And it is required, as Ilaria Massari, General Manager of the Italian cluster Reindustria Innovazione, pointed out. There is still a need for recognitions of the clusters' capacities at different policy levels. Now we are in a momentum for innovation in Europe, concluded Jean-Luc Beylat, President of the French Competitiveness and Business Clusters Association (AFPC). "It is a huge opportunity to deliver and to reinforce the connections between the different European clusters to create a new European market."

More than 1.000 attendants from countries all over Europe followed the meeting online.

Review the meeting via this link: <https://youtu.be/cWi0rhzADcE>

Contact:

Antonio Novo Guerrero
President European Clusters Alliance

antonio.novo@clustersalliance.eu

+34 650 410 080