

Israeli Chairmanship event

EUREKA and its Clusters strengthen role as major players in R&D&I

In its latest debate in the European Parliament in Brussels, ‘Effectively supporting transnational cooperation in industrial innovation’ and the third under Israeli Chairmanship, EUREKA once again stressed its pivotal position in the European Research Area and demonstrated that research and innovation are more than ever ‘crucial to addressing global challenges’, adding that ‘innovation can be more effectively addressed at regional or even local level’.

Over 90 high-level stakeholders from the EUREKA network, EU institutions, industry and academia got involved in a lively debate on the different R&D support measures for hi-tech SMEs along the value chain and heard the view of big industry on strategically-significant R&D segments and the importance of networks.

German European Parliamentarian Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, host of the event broadcasted a brief welcoming address to participants where, on behalf of the European Parliament, he stated that EUREKA's expertise is needed to make the next funding programme more effective than the previous one.

Vittorio Prodi MEP said that, despite no longer being involved with the ITRE Committee, he had a long-standing relationship with EUREKA. The network's philosophy of combining expertise across frontiers and collaborative working was the right one to ensure that Europe becomes more competitive.

Eli Oppen, EUREKA Chairman said that new mechanisms are needed because stakeholders are cautious of risk-taking and because Venture Capital funds are not focused on long-term gains.

Julian Sesena, MaPeEr SME coordinator, highlighted in his presentation that there should be a better promotion of contacts with Venture Capital and other contact needs that SMEs might have after a research activity is carried out, adding that grants should be complemented with loans.

Luuk Borg, Head of the EUREKA Secretariat and moderator of the whole event, explained in further detail the EUREKA network and especially the Eurostars Joint Programme with the European Commission. He focused on the answer of EUREKA to the Eurostars Mid-Term Evaluation report, stressing the fact that, the Eurostars model fits largely SMEs needs and that its strong added value relies on EUREKA's well-established network of national project coordinators (NPC) and national funding bodies (NFB), which have a deep local implementation and an extensive experience in supporting SMEs.

Yigal Erlich from the Israeli Chair and Chair of EUREKA's Round Table Financing Innovation, explained the benefits of public and private funding joining efforts while praising the governance structure flexibility of the EUREKA network.

Three EUREKA Cluster Chairmen (Enrico Villa-CATRENE, Rudolph Hagenmueller-ITEA2 and Jose Jimenez-CELTIC) presented the added value of industry in developing generic technologies of key importance for European competitiveness and stressing the success of a bottom-up approach and flexibility, allowing industry a quick and efficient response to changing parameters.

Magnus Madfors, Director R&D Policy at Ericsson, suggested that SMEs and big enterprises need to find a way of working together as an ecosystem. ‘There is a big difference between playing to win

and playing not to lose and sometimes in Europe we are playing not to lose’ he concluded.

Vice President at Israeli SME Runcom Eli Sofer showcased a number of projects and success stories done with the cooperation of EUREKA Clusters and called for a stable funding environment to be created in order to relieve the uncertainties accompanying the setup of a new consortium between project partners.

To consult the presentations, please visit www.eurekanetwork.org.



