



PRESS RELEASE

EUREKA: 30 YEARS OF MAKING HISTORY

Intergovernmental research and innovation network marks its 30 years of existence at Lugano conference

Lugano, Switzerland, 1 July 2015 – Thirty years after its launch, in Paris, in July 1985, the intergovernmental research and innovation network EUREKA marked a very special anniversary with a one-day event, offering a historical perspective on its many achievements, including the €36 billion investment from public and private funds that it has leveraged since its beginnings.

Five ministerial representatives of France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland¹, invited by the Swiss EUREKA Chairmanship, each informed the 200-strong audience of the crucial role that EUREKA is playing in their country, as a key networking and support tool for close-to-market research and innovation activities.

In a lively panel debate moderated by Richard Hudson – a journalist who covered the launch of EUREKA in 1985 for the Wall Street Journal – the ministerial representatives aired their views on the ways in which EUREKA was bridging the innovation gap between Europe and other parts of the world. What has changed in the competitive position of Europe in technology over 30 years and the challenge of making the European Research Area a reality were also discussed.

The event, organised by the EUREKA Swiss Chairmanship, was graced by a video message from Jacques Attali, one of EUREKA's founders and former advisor and G7 Sherpa to French President François Mitterrand. In a speech as moving as it was farsighted, Attali recalled his memories of the origins of EUREKA and presented his vision for the network's next thirty years.

Pedro de Sampaio Nunes, Head of the EUREKA Secretariat, presented a retrospective of EUREKA's history by revealing the results of a study on its economic, technological and societal impact over the last three decades.

¹ The Swiss State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation Mauro Dell'Ambrogio; Swedish State Secretary to the Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Oscar Stenström; German State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research Cornelia Quennet-Thielen; Carmen Vela Olmo, Spanish State Secretary for Research, Development and Innovation and Benoît Formery, Administrateur Général at the French Ministry for Economy, Industry and Digital Affairs.

Rudolf Haggemüller of the EUREKA Cluster ITEA, highlighted EUREKA's impact by presenting the present activities, past successes and future ambitions, bridging the gap between public and private support for innovation in embedded software and involving major European players in the sector.

The event was also the occasion for the formal handover of the annual EUREKA Chairmanship from Switzerland to Sweden. The Swedish EUREKA Chairmanship will run until the end of June 2016.

Switzerland, one of the original members of EUREKA, counts among its many achievements over the past year the introduction of a new multi-track scheme to enhance participation of non-European countries in EUREKA projects, as well as the re-association of Canada and South Korea.

"The renewal of Canada's membership in EUREKA keeps the door open to Canadian and European firms to jointly accelerate market-driven innovation solutions," said John R. McDougall, President of the National Research Council of Canada and the country's High-Level Representative for EUREKA.

The Swiss Chairmanship also granted the adoption of a 'EUREKA in the European Research Area (ERA) Strategy' to become a leading ERA innovation stakeholder, contributing to growth and job creation for the benefit of European industry.

In terms of innovation instruments for support and funding, the Swiss Chairmanship saw the successful approval of the joint EUREKA-EU Eurostars-2 programme as part of the EU Innovation Investment package, with a budget of €1.14 billion; the signing of a memorandum of understanding with EUREKA Clusters to encourage investment in the sector of 'Smart City' technologies; the assessment of two new Clusters; the remodelling of EUREKA's original instrument, now rebranded as 'EUREKA Network projects', as a set of service modules for EUREKA's public funding agencies - and the launch of a High-Tech Investment Programme to boost the private investment awareness and readiness of EUREKA innovative SMEs.

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