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Strengthening the innovation community in South-East Europe: EIT Manufacturing creates hub in Athens, Greece

The European innovation network [EIT Manufacturing](#) is in the process of creating a new innovation hub, the Co-Location Center South-East, CLC SE for short. EIT Manufacturing is the manufacturing-focused Knowledge and Innovation Community within the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#), a body of the European Union.

CLC SE is the sixth EIT Manufacturing hub and will serve eight countries in South-East Europe: Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania and Turkey. These countries are of key strategic focus for EIT Manufacturing and hold great potential for developing and strengthening of the European manufacturing industry. Currently, the Vienna-based hub serves the manufacturing industry community in these countries. During the ramp-up phase of the Athens hub, Vienna will continue in the lead to guarantee uninterrupted service.



Caption: In April, the roadmap for the set-up of the Athens-based EIT Manufacturing innovation hub was laid out in workshops.

The Athens hub will aim at accelerating cross-national synergies across the different players of the regional manufacturing ecosystems, including start-ups, scale-ups, manufacturing companies, solution providers, small and mid-sized companies (SMEs), universities, and research institutes. The target will be to extend the existing regional innovation network by attracting and welcoming more stakeholders from the local ecosystems to collaborate with EIT Manufacturing, so that, in turn, partners and members can benefit from fruitful collaboration in public-private partnership projects.

Apart from Albania and Moldova, the countries which the Athens hub future team will take care of are classified as either moderate or modest innovators according to the European Innovation Scoreboard



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and, therefore, are eligible for the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS). The EIT RIS offers innovators based in the targeted countries an additional level of tailored support.

Dr Niki Kousi, Interim Director of CLC SE, who will build the organisation, comments: “Given the vital role of manufacturing and innovation in the future economic development of the region, the expansion of EIT Manufacturing’s Knowledge and Innovation Community towards South-East Europe will add value to the products, processes and services developed by start-ups and SMEs. It will inspire the creation of globally competitive and sustainable manufacturing companies. In complementarity, boosting the innovation capacity of the involved EIT RIS eligible countries will be one of the hub’s strategic goals. This shall be achieved through close cooperation with the EIT RIS hubs which are already established in our member countries.”



After the foundation of EIT Manufacturing in 2019, the first five Co-Location Centers were founded in areas which could tap into existing ecosystems and help accelerate innovation across Europe. Located in Darmstadt (Germany), Gothenburg (Sweden), Milan (Italy), San Sebastian (Spain) and Vienna (Austria), they have helped form a strong EIT Manufacturing community so that the new hub can gain traction on well-prepared ground.

“The foundation of our Athens-based hub is a step into a new era” says Klaus Beetz, CEO of EIT Manufacturing. “When we started building EIT Manufacturing, we promised we would deploy activities across Europe and exploit all relevant opportunities for the benefit of future European manufacturing. With the new hub in Greece, we strengthen manufacturing and innovation actors in the region, while, at the same time, we are becoming capable of following up on opportunities with huge innovation potential for European manufacturing more closely.”



“We are delighted to initiate this activity and see the regional industrial partners being eager to get involved in the EIT Manufacturing ecosystem. We believe that the new hub and consequently South-East Europe can make an important contribution to EIT Manufacturing’s vision of global manufacturing innovation, led by Europe,” says Professor Panagiotis Stavropoulos, Laboratory for Manufacturing Systems and Automation (LMS) – University of Patras, Greece.



Background information

[EIT Manufacturing](#) is supported by the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#), a body of the European Union. EIT Manufacturing’s main goal is to bring European stakeholders focused on manufacturing together in innovation ecosystems that add unique value to European products, processes and services and inspire the creation of globally competitive and sustainable manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together more than 80 member organizations (universities, research institutes and businesses).

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The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#) strengthens Europe’s ability to innovate by powering solutions to pressing global challenges and by nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe. The EIT is an EU body which is an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The Institute supports the development of dynamic pan-European partnerships – EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities – among leading companies, research labs and universities.

EIT Manufacturing — Making Innovation Happen!

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