



Athens, 07 October 2022

European leaders work toward digital empowerment of industry as InnovEIT series continues

Event in Athens yesterday to advance efforts aimed at making AI part of the digital, green industry transformation

With the goal of **employing digital production and AI to empower stronger and more sustainable European industry**, high-level stakeholders from the European Commission, the Greek Government, the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#), a body of the European Union, and [EIT Manufacturing](#), gathered with experts in Athens yesterday for another themed discussion of the InnovEIT Weeks series on innovation and policy in Europe. The InnovEIT series highlights and builds on the work the EIT Community undertakes every day: accelerating innovation by bringing together creative thinkers from industry, academia, research and other sectors and facilitating collaborations to bring their big ideas to life.

“This was an excellent opportunity to bring together leaders from Europe and European stakeholder organisations to really move the needle on policy and practical steps needed to drive the twin transformation. I was excited to experience the local innovation community in Athens, which demonstrates the importance of EIT Manufacturing opening our new hub here in the region,” said **EIT Manufacturing’s CEO Mr. Klaus Beetz**.

Promoting the digital green transformation in Athens

Yesterday’s event in Athens took up the theme of the digital, green transformation that is a goal of the event’s hosts, EIT Manufacturing. As Keynote Speaker **Dr. Sotiris Makris, Senior Project Manager at Laboratory Manufacturing Systems, University of Patras**, said:

“InnovEIT Athens provided a unique platform for the exchange of ideas among leading experts on the potential of AI and Digitalization and the opportunities arising from them for industrial innovation. AI’s impact on manufacturing is visible in a plethora of industrial cases, however its full potential remains unexploited. Future research and innovation efforts in Digitalization and AI should exploit the potential of manufacturing, and this would bring substantial impact not only to manufacturing but to society at large”.

The event featured the participation of **Dr. Christos Dimas, Deputy Minister of Development and Investments of the Government of the Hellenic Republic**, and the discussion on AI included panellists like **Dr. Nenad Popović, Minister for Innovation & Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia**; **Mr. Jürgen Tiedje, Head of Unit, European Commission DG RTD**; **Ms. Eleonora Marino, Business Development at Prima Additive**; and **Mr. Gintaras Vilda, CEO Manufacturing Innovation Valley and former Vice-Minister of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania**. The panel looked at how AI can contribute to environmental and social sustainability, tackling questions like:



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- What are the implications for the human workforce when companies implement AI?
- How do data spaces and data quality affect the implementation of AI?
- What ethical questions must be addressed when AI shall be implemented?
- Which skill gaps does the European industry face in digital production and AI?

The InnovEIT series and EIT Summit

Starting 15 September, InnovEIT, Europe's largest innovation event of the year, has toured Europe with nine events looking at innovation from a range of perspectives – sustainable production, health care, education and regional growth, to name a few. The InnovEIT weeks, which included yesterday's event in Athens, have been hosted by various Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) established by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. InnovEIT weeks will culminate with a tenth event, the 11 October **EIT Summit in Brussels**, a gathering of all the KICs, policy-makers, investors, innovators, citizens and special guests. The EIT Summit, offers a chance to reflect on lessons from EIT's experience over the last 10 years, and the challenges and opportunities facing innovation in Europe today.

EIT Manufacturing Hub launched in Athens

The gathering in Athens also marked the launch of EIT Manufacturing's new innovation hub in the city, Co-Location Center South-East (CLC SE), serving eight countries in South-East Europe: Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania and Turkey. Among others, the event included the participation of **Dr. Mara Chachamidou, Managing & Implementation Authority for RTDI, General Secretariat Research & Innovation at the Ministry of Development & Investments of Greece**, and **Mr. Sebastian Ioan Burduja, Minister of Research, Innovation and Digitalization in the Government of Romania**.

Like other CLCs in the EIT Manufacturing network, the Athens hub will aim at accelerating cross-national synergies among 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 partners and members can benefit from fruitful collaboration in public-private partnership projects.

The CLC South-East is already working with several partners, including [Laboratory for Manufacturing Systems and Automation, University of Patras](#), [Cleantech](#) and [ICEBERG](#), and has begun discussion with national authorities and institutions.

"I am honoured that I took part in the creation of the first and only Co-Location Center in Greece, and I am very excited to continue working toward giving a strong boost to the manufacturing and innovation ecosystems of all countries covered by the CLC. I believe it was a great opportunity to combine INNOVEIT Athens with the CLC SE Inauguration event, reaching out and mobilising a plethora of stakeholders of the



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South-East European innovation ecosystem,” said Dr. Niki Kousi, **Managing Director of EIT Manufacturing CLC South-East.**

“The new CLC South-East will help accelerate and focus the outreach of EIT Manufacturing into a RIS area of Europe with high manufacturing innovation potential that has not been unleashed so far, and consequently facilitate the “onboarding” of even more innovative ideas, people and organizations that can bring added value to our mission”, added **Dimitris Mavrikios, Chief Operations Officer at EIT Manufacturing.**

RIS Hub Event

In addition to these events, on Wednesday, 5 October, the new CLC South-East hosted an event organized by [the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme \(EIT RIS\)](#), introduced in 2014 to advance the innovation performance of countries and their regions across Europe, especially countries with moderate or modest innovation scores as defined by the European Innovation Scoreboard. The conference, [“Deep Tech in Manufacturing: The High Potential for RIS”](#), showcased the implementation of Deep Tech in relation to the knowledge triangle, highlighting education and training needs and initiatives for developing relevant talents – and for successful implementation of Deep Tech in SMEs and start-ups.

“In the EIT Manufacturing RIS Programme, we are always looking for the most innovative actors across Europe. There is great potential and talent in South-East Europe, and the new CLC in Greece will enable us to collaborate even more closely with the key actors, organisations and individuals, with mutual benefits,” explained **Dr. Konstantinos Georgoulas, Director of EU Affairs and RIS at EIT Manufacturing.**

About EIT

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.

About EIT Manufacturing

[EIT Manufacturing](#) is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, and it is one of eight innovation communities within EIT. 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 members (universities, research institutes and business).

EIT Manufacturing — Making Innovation Happen!

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