



## EU Interregional Innovation Investments : towards EU economic recovery

As the COVID-19 crisis reaches new levels, the European Union is preparing to address an unprecedented post-Corona reality with the development of an EU economic recovery policy and a realigned Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF). European regions and innovation stakeholders jointly call on the European institutions to use the EU **Interregional Innovation Investment instrument** to unleash the innovation potential available in Europe's regions for Europe's recovery.

This crisis has illustrated the dependence of the EU on external providers for strategic goods, for whole or parts of the value chains of antibiotics and painkillers as well as protective masks and medical equipment, with a weak EU capacity to react in a collaborative manner in first instance. Nevertheless, many regional innovation ecosystems across Europe have responded to the outbreak rapidly. **Key technologies like biotechnology and 3D-printing** have been mobilised to create innovative solutions, **by bottom-up collaboration** between stakeholders **within regional innovation ecosystems**. RTOs, universities, industry, small and big companies, start-ups, hospitals, public authorities, fablabs, developers and cluster organisations play their part in creating new innovative solutions to face the crisis. Industries have reoriented parts of their production lines to produce the needed goods, and new production lines are under development. The many examples available illustrate the tremendous richness and diversity lying in our European regional ecosystems, but also the willingness to share and collaborate between stakeholders. The **creation and strengthening of resilient European industrial value chains** is being labeled as a main priority by the Eurogroup when discussing the way towards EU economic recovery: *"Policies to restart the single market and preserving the integrity of supply chains, which demonstrate the interdependence of our economies, are also a priority"*<sup>1</sup>.

EU regional innovation collaboration support tools will play a key role during the next MFF period to achieve EU economic recovery. To this regard, European Regions, clusters, RTOs and other innovation stakeholders jointly call on the European institutions to use the **Interregional Innovation Investment instrument** to unleash the innovation potential available in Europe's regions<sup>2</sup>. This new instrument, proposed by the European Commission in the 2018 MFF proposal and supported by the European Parliament and Council, entails a **coordinated approach for innovation related investments in the development of interregional value chains across the EU**. It supports the creation of **interregional public-private innovation partnerships that can strengthen our European industrial ecosystems and their key value chains, paving the way for follow up financing by private investors**. Guided by the **Regional Smart Specialisation (RIS3) principles** and supported by the **Smart Specialisation Platforms**, it allows enhanced efficiency

<sup>1</sup> Eurogroup, Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

<sup>2</sup> [Joint Statement on Interregional Innovation Investments for European value chains](#), 2019

and avoids duplication. This new instrument is fully in line with the EU's strategic orientations in terms of Cohesion Policy and beyond: it will serve EU economic recovery based on the new EU Industrial Strategy. Such Interregional Innovation Investments will support sustainable and inclusive recovery and growth in the EU.

#### **Example**

The "[3DP Pan-EU](#)" matchmaking platform is a Preparatory Action developed in the context of the Vanguard Initiative 3D-Printing pilot. This platform fosters awareness, knowledge and uptake of 3D-printing technologies by matching offer and demand in the 3D printing sector across the EU. The platform creates transparency in the complementary offer towards SMEs, thus contributing to the establishment and strengthening of the 3DP value chain. As such it shows the potential of how Interregional Innovation Investments can bring concrete solutions to match 3D printing solution providers and manufacturing SMEs in strategic value chains across Europe.

The COVID-19 crisis has an asymmetric impact at territorial level. Regions, sectors and companies across Europe will be affected differently, with SMEs being the most hardly hit. A major part of the policy responses will lie in regional hands. Therefore, the European Institutions should ensure that the revised MFF and the EU Economic Recovery Plan have a strong territorial dimension, providing adequate budget and involving regional authorities in the governance of the European tools based on interregional cooperation.

Crucial decisions are being taken to tackle the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. This crisis can be a trigger to rebuild our economies differently while making them more resilient. The Interregional Innovation Investments instrument can, **with a relevant budget**, play a key role in shortening and strengthening EU industrial supply chains and creating the complete value chains that are crucial to strengthen the EU economy, to secure Europe's innovation capacity and to create a strong European industrial base.

#### **About us**

[Vanguard Initiative](#) is the largest network of EU industrial regions which are committed to play an active role in the renaissance of European industry and to transform regional clusters into world-class clusters.

[EARTO](#) promotes and represents the interests of over 350 RTOs in more than 20 countries in Europe which together represent 150.000 highly-skilled researchers and engineers managing a wide range of innovation infrastructures.

[European Regions Research and Innovation Network \(ERRIN\)](#) brings together over 120 regional authorities, universities, research organisations, chambers of commerce, and clusters focussing on research and innovation priorities.

[Assembly of European Regions \(AER\)](#) brings together regions from 30 countries across the entire European continent to promote a Europe that embraces its diversity to thrive in a global world.

[Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions \(CPMR\)](#) brings together more than 150 Regions from 24 States from the European Union and beyond to campaign for a more balanced territorial development at the heart of the European Union and its policies.

[European Network of Living Labs \(ENoLL\)](#) is the international federation of benchmarked Living Labs in Europe and worldwide, with 150+ active members.

[Eurotech Universities Alliance](#) is a strategic partnership of 6 leading universities of science & technology.

[Universities of Applied Sciences for Europe \(UAS4EUROPE\)](#) is the voice of European universities of applied sciences in the field of applied research and innovation.

[European Clusters Alliance](#) joins more than 740 industrial clusters with the mission to facilitate and maintain strong, close and trust-based collaborative relations between companies, research organizations and public authorities, to strengthen the competitiveness and prosperity of our regions.