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Vanguard Annual Political Meeting

PRESS RELEASE

VANGUARD REGIONS LEAD PIONEER INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT IN THE EU

Vanguard Political leaders gathered for high-level discussions with Antoine KASEL, member of the JUNCKER CABINET and high-level representatives from EU Institutions. They announced the signature of the first Memorandum of Understanding between Vanguard Regions and called the EU to join the effort.

Senior political representatives from 29 of the 33 member regions of the Vanguard Initiative met in Brussels today to reconfirm their political commitment to further implementing the Vanguard methodology. **Five new regions** (Autonomous Province of Trento, Lower Austria, **West and East Slovenia**, Region Orebro County and Varmland) **joined the recently created Vanguard ASBL.**

Luca del Gobbo, current Chair of the Vanguard Initiative and Minister for University, Research and Open Innovation of Lombardy region, invited partner regions to join forces accelerating the process to support the more mature demo cases developed in the framework of Vanguard's pilot projects.

As a concrete sign of Regional commitment, **Del Gobbo announced the launch of a first Memorandum Of Understanding** addressed to the group of Vanguard Regions involved in a project dealing with Circular Economy, the "**De- and Remanufacturing demo-case**", developed in the frame of the "**Efficient and Sustainable Manufacturing**" Pilot Project.

Signing the MoU, Minister Del Gobbo wishes to lead by example, confident that other regions will support the initiative and will start the procedure to join the group of frontrunners delivering the first investment projects.

In addition to Lombardy – leading the project – other regions involved in the De- and Remanufacturing project are: Basque Country, Catalonia, East Netherlands, Emilia Romagna, Flanders, Norte, Pays de la Loire, Saxony, Scotland, South Netherlands, Tampere and Wallonia. In order to cover the total investment need of around **40 Million Euro**, a joint effort – at all levels – will be required.

Through this MoU, regional governments commit themselves to supporting the parts of the project implemented in their regions and in providing regional funding in a logic of co investment, based on smart specialization principles and inter-regional collaboration.



An effort, in the same direction, was presented by **Mrs Irén Lejgren, Chair of the Committee for Regional Growth in Region Örebro**. The Swedish County, together with **Emilia Romagna Region**, are conducting a **complementary joint demonstration project on 3D-printed hybrid material**, mainly for the benefit of the **automotive industry**. Half of the investment needs of the demonstration project (**200 000 Euro**), will be covered jointly from **Region Örebro County** and **Örebro University**. In Emilia Romagna, the funding is made possible by Bologna University and co-investments by the involved industrial companies for access to industrial facilities and knowledge.

Region Örebro County are proud to be a pioneering Vanguard region, leading by example, on how investments in regional innovation ecosystems are being scaled up at a European level, made possible by the Vanguard Initiative network, cluster cooperation and regional investments

The capacity of the Vanguard Initiative to deliver a pipeline of investments to accelerate the industrial uptake of innovative technologies - facilitated by clusters and European Networks of Demonstration Facilities - will influence the success of the Smart Specialisation Platforms set up by the European Commission and inspired by the Vanguard Initiative.

The two previous examples can only be the first of a long series of similar investments involving a wider range of industrial stakeholders, if actions are taken at regional, national and European level.

Bert Pauli, Vice Governor and regional minister of Economic and EU affairs of the Noord-Brabant Province in the concluding remarks said: “we need to upscale our success”. In order to reinforce EU value chains, he proposed to explore the possibility to set-up a “**Vanguard Initiative virtual Fund**” to support pilot project investments, according to variable geometry principles and a case based approach.

Vanguard regions called upon the EU institutions, present in the meeting, to design **new instruments** appropriate for an ambitious **industrial innovation policy** in the future Programming Period. As finding solutions to support public-private investments is a joint responsibility, Vanguard regions showed their commitment to deliver, and are confident that EU institutions will play their part of the game, including a financial contribution to support the co-investment agenda leading and to accelerate the industrial uptake.

In this context, Vanguard Regions invited president Juncker to coordinate the effort in order to create the right framework conditions for the emergence of truly new and competitive European industrial value chains, connected across regions and operating in a fast changing world.

This will benefit multiple political agendas (regions, Member States and Europe) and, above all, companies and citizens.

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ANNEX

WHAT IS VANGUARD INITIATIVE

Industrial Innovation initiative driven by the **political commitment of regions** to promote the **industrial renaissance of Europe with the final goal of creating growth and jobs**. Vanguard use **Smart Specialisation** as coordination principle for Interregional Cooperation to **align strategic investments**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slpqJ5OSJoQ>

A NETWORK OF MORE THAN 30 REGIONS - Vanguard Initiative launched in November 2013, thanks to an agreement between 10 European regions, now in an ASBL with more than 30 active members. Today we are collecting the first results of the hard work undertaken in the past 4 years, involving clusters, knowledge centres and companies.

www.s3vanguardinitiative.eu

THE MILAN DECLARATION formalise the political commitment of regions to lead by example, using **smart specialisation** to boost **innovation driven co-investments** and **bottom-up entrepreneurial innovation** supported by **clusters**. This political declaration engage regions in **interregional collaboration** to promote **European Smart Specialisation Platforms**, to leverage **public-private investments** and to **combine funding mechanisms**. Regions also commit to engage in the **strategic dialogue with the EU institutions**.

http://www.s3vanguardinitiative.eu/sites/default/files/contact/image/final_declaration_of_milan_final_27_10.pdf

INNOVATIVE GLOBAL COMPETITIVE VALUE CHAINS

Vanguard aims at creating **new value chains** building on the competitive advantages and complementarities of different EU regions. A **bottom-up approach**, based on **cluster facilitation** and **industrial engagement** is key to connect significant stakeholders in different regions and countries.

VANGUARD METHODOLOGY & THEMATIC SMART SPECIALISATION PLATFORMS

A 4-step methodology (Learn, Connect, Demonstrate and Commercialise/Uptake) developed together with EC and tested in the framework of 5 Pilot Projects, has inspired the creation of European Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms on Industrial Modernisation, Energy and Agro-Food where Vanguard is playing an important role. <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-thematic-platforms>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7h5I6vvrkZY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixDAKGapaUc>



PILOT PROJECTS AND DEMONSTRATION CASES

- Five pilot projects (**Bio-Economy, Efficient and Sustainable Manufacturing, High Performance Production through 3D-Printing, Advanced Manufacturing for Energy in Harsh Environments, New Nano-enabled Products**) challenge driven or technology driven, represent the current framework for cooperation.

Around **30 industry-led demo cases** aggregate communities of regional stakeholders (large companies, SMEs, RTOs and knowledge centres) testing and implementing the Vanguard methodology. Pilots and demo cases, facilitated by **clusters**, are expected to deliver a **pipeline of industrial innovative investments** with a significant economic, social and environmental impact. Vanguard pilots are also part of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms. Other “Vanguard labelled pilots” could emerge in the future.

FOCUS ON THE MARKET UPTAKE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Vanguard aims at **bringing new technologies faster to the market, Speeding up technology deployment in EU industry and connecting demonstration infrastructures in the regions, Vanguard facilitate SME access to these infrastructures**. The focus lies on ‘**demonstrators**’, i.e. technology deployment for new applications at post-prototyping level (>TRL5). The ultimate goal is not only to speed up new technologies uptake, but also to better align regional eco-systems and increase efficiency.

Both for the cooperation projects and the demonstration infrastructures we aim at **establishing structural and sustainable financial co-investment solutions**, to which private sector and public authorities (regional, national and European) can/must contribute.

