



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Security, Innovation and the Green Transition: Recap of the EU Industry Days

Summary



EU Clusters Talks
18 June 2025, 8:30 – 9:45 CET

An initiative of the European Union





Security, Innovation and the Green Transition: Recap of the EU Industry Days

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform, on behalf of the European Commission, organises the EU Clusters Talk "**Security, Innovation and the Green Transition: Recap of the EU Industry Days**" on 18 June, 8:30 – 9:45 CET, to summarise the key messages from the event and reflect on takeaways for clusters and SMEs.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderator: Zivile Kropaite

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Key messages from the EU Industry Days
Jitka Vocaskova, DG GROW, European Commission
3. Panel debate
Aleksander Grabski, Director, East Automotive Alliance
Lina Smovziuk, Fundraising Team Lead, Kharkiv IT Cluster
Manuel Seuffert, Director, Kearney IMP³ROVE, European Cluster Collaboration Platform
Monika Antonowicz, Expert in Strategy and Analysis Department, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development
4. Funding opportunities
Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Key messages

- Clusters play a pivotal role in connecting non-traditional suppliers with Europe's expanding defence and security value chains.
- With €70 billion allocated under the TechEU initiative, clusters should actively guide members to tap into new opportunities for technological growth.
- Dual-use technologies are gaining strategic relevance, and clusters can unlock new markets by identifying companies with cross-sector capabilities.
- Digital sovereignty and artificial intelligence are urgent pillars of Europe's resilience, which clusters must integrate into their regional agendas.
- The war in Ukraine has fast-tracked the EU's shift toward defence autonomy, highlighting the role of clusters in supporting both reconstruction and co-innovation.
- Innovation must move beyond vision into implementation, and clusters are essential in linking public funding to concrete business outcomes.
- Strengthening resilience in critical raw materials requires global partnerships and better resource reuse; clusters should promote both international collaboration and circular economy models.
- Future EU Industry Days will prioritise convergence technologies and regional foresight—clusters have a central role in shaping this evolving agenda.



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Chris Burns, the following news items were presented:

1. Discover the [new European Semester Spring Package sets out guidance to boost EU competitiveness](#).
2. The [guidance on the implementation of NextGenerationEU provided](#) by the Commission.
3. Register for the [Matchmaking in Dubai](#), UAE, 1–3 October 2025.
4. Register for the [Matchmaking in New Delhi and Greater Noida](#), India, 29 - 31 October 2025.
5. Register for the [Matchmaking in Taipei](#), Taiwan, 21–23 October 2025.
6. Register for the [Matchmaking in Bac Ninh](#), Vietnam, 4–6 November 2025.

2. Key messages from the EU Industry Days

Jitka Vocaskova, DG GROW, European Commission

Jitka Vocaskova opened her presentation by expressing appreciation to participants and partners of the EU Industry Days, held in Poland and online, noting the strong turnout of **over 4,500 participants from 44 countries**. She highlighted the event's packed agenda, which included plenary sessions focused on the European Commission's industrial policy initiatives, alongside numerous stakeholder-led parallel sessions and an accompanying exhibition showcasing project outcomes funded by the Commission. A **matchmaking area and one-to-one discussions** with Commission experts further enriched the programme, offering participants the opportunity to exchange on topics such as financing, intellectual property, and regulatory access.

The event focused on **three primary thematic pillars**, with a fourth theme running across all discussions. First was the **link between competitiveness and decarbonisation**, with emphasis on creating the right regulatory and market conditions for businesses to adopt and invest in green technologies. This included addressing how to incentivise private investment to support the EU's green transition.

The second focus was on **innovation**. While Europe excels in basic research, the transition from research to market remains a challenge. The discussions explored how to support this innovation gap, with particular attention on targeted support for startups and scale-ups. Notably, the [European Investment Bank's "TechEU" initiative](#) was announced, allocating €70 billion to support European tech companies and make them more competitive globally.

A third key topic was the **single market and the simplification agenda**. Jitka Vocaskova underlined the importance of the EU's single market as a fundamental asset for industrial competitiveness. The European Commission is actively working to reduce internal barriers and simplify rules through ongoing omnibus packages aimed at improving the ease of doing business across Member States.

Security was a distinct and contextual topic at this edition of the EU Industry Days. Held in Zheszow, near the Ukrainian border, the event took place in a location visibly impacted by the ongoing war. This proximity prompted a specific focus on resilience, strategic autonomy, and defence. Discussions



covered how to strengthen European defence value chains and diversify supply sources. She stressed the potential role of clusters in this area, suggesting that many companies with relevant capabilities are not currently engaged with the defence sector. Clusters, through their close relationships with SMEs and knowledge of their capacities, are well-positioned to identify such companies and facilitate connections with defence industry actors.

3. Panel debate

A key theme that resonated throughout the panel was the growing importance of **security and defence** within the European industrial agenda. Lina Smovziuk emphasised how the war in Ukraine had accelerated strategic shifts in EU policy, notably towards defence sovereignty and innovation integration. Her cluster has created a **defence and security community** to connect companies already active in military-related production with those capable of contributing to defence value chains. She underscored Ukraine's ambition not only to receive support but to co-develop defence technologies with the EU.

Aleksander Grabski echoed this point, noting that many civilian technologies, particularly in the **automotive and aviation sectors**, could be adapted for defence use. He referred to examples such as the Polish Automotive Group collaborating with national armament organisations. His observations reflected a broader interest in leveraging smart specialisation for dual-use innovation and industrial resilience.

Manuel Seuffert discussed the **value of bridging public and private sectors to accelerate innovation** uptake across industries. He stressed the increasing relevance of AI, cybersecurity, and resilience, while suggesting that innovation processes need to be more embedded in day-to-day business strategies, not merely driven by hype.

Monika Antonowicz brought a **comprehensive policy perspective**, referencing her participation in multiple events, including a Ukrainian delegation study visit. She identified three central themes: the need to address geopolitical tensions, the rapid pace of technological convergence, and Europe's continued dependency on external suppliers. She called for deeper cooperation between clusters to anticipate future technology trends and proposed a stronger role for clusters in reducing regulatory burdens, supporting SMEs in accessing EU funds, and enhancing regional resilience. She also highlighted the challenges in health tech regulation, suggesting clusters could advocate for a unified European framework.

There was general alignment among the speakers regarding **the urgency of integrating security and defence dimensions into European industrial strategy**. All speakers recognised clusters as essential mediators for involving non-traditional actors in the defence value chain and enhancing resilience.

On future priorities, there was consensus on the centrality of **digital sovereignty** and the increasing importance of AI and cybersecurity. Lina Smovziuk and Monika Antonowicz both emphasised the role of digital infrastructure and sovereign technology development as pillars for Europe's competitiveness.

One notable question from the audience concerned the **role of critical raw materials** and cooperation with international partners such as India. Jitka Vocaskova, from the Commission,



confirmed that the issue had been addressed in plenary discussions on supply chains. The **need to partner with trusted third countries** and to **reduce internal material leakage** within Europe was highlighted as a key takeaway.

Additional discussion emerged around the **types of companies** that can contribute to defence without being traditionally defence-oriented. Lina Smovziuk clarified that many are digital and software-focused firms, offering technologies like AI, computer vision, or cybersecurity solutions. These companies are increasingly essential to modern defence and security strategies.

The panel concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening the role of clusters in Europe's strategic transitions. Recurrent themes included the importance **of dual-use technologies, digital and defence sovereignty, regulatory simplification, and cluster cooperation across sectors**. The speakers expressed hope that future editions of the EU Industry Days would address reconstruction efforts in Ukraine, promote convergence technologies, and provide space for deeper foresight work by clusters.

4. Funding opportunities

Nina Hoppmann, team member, European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann shared the following examples of funding opportunities:

1. [Supporting the clean energy transition of European industry and businesses](#); deadline 23 September 2025.
2. [Advanced manufacturing technologies for leadership of EU manufacturers in products for the net-zero industry](#); deadline 23 September 2025.
3. [Additional activities for the European Partnership Water Security for the Planet \(Water4All\)](#), deadline 17 February 2026.