

## PRESS RELEASE

# LAUNCHED THE EACP-EUROSME PROJECT FOR SME INVESTMENTS WITHIN THE AEROSPACE SMART SPECIALIZATION STRATEGY<sup>1</sup>

The Aerospace Campania District – DAC – is the coordinator of the European project **EACP-EUROSME** “aErospace inter-clUster smaRt specialization actiOns for SMEs competitiveness in the circular economy approach”, **funded by the European Union’s COSME Programme**.

The cluster, led by Luigi Carrino, coordinated 5 other European clusters in the participation to the call “European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for smart specialization investments” within the COSME (Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises) Programme. The EACP-EUROSME project will last 24 months starting from October 2018 with a total budget of approximately five hundred thousand euro funded at a 75% rate.

The partnership is composed by 6 clusters, 5 of which are members of EACP (European Aerospace Cluster Partnership), namely: Distretto Aerospaziale della Campania (DAC, Italy), Hamburg Aviation (HAv, Germany), Moravian Aerospace Cluster (MAC, Czech Republic), Tecnologie per le Osservazioni della Terra ed i Rischi Naturali (TeRN, Italy), Aerospace Valley (AV, France), North West Aerospace Alliance (NWAA, United Kingdom).

The objective is to achieve at least 4 technological innovation projects for an overall value of 20 million euros, ready to be financed by public funding or private investment. EACP-EUROSME will involve 300 SMEs, 46 clusters (6 directly and 40 indirectly), 6 regions, 20 technological centres and scientific parks from the countries falling within the COSME Programme area. Twenty B2B Cooperation Agreements are expected involving 60 stakeholders.

### **Main steps**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, DAC welcomed the partners of the EACP-EUROSME project for the kick-off meeting at Industry Association of Naples. During the meeting, the first

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operational actions were planned to pursue the project goals. In particular, HAV illustrated the way towards the joint cluster partnership strategy while NWAAs discussed interregional business-to-business collaboration, and AV addressed how to strengthen cluster-to-cluster cooperation. Dissemination aspects were then dealt with by MAC and integration of space-related topics by TeRN.

On October 24 the EACP-EUROSME project was presented in Brussels at the offices of the EASME agency of the European Commission, by the project manager Gennaro Russo and by the EACP coordinator Francine Schulz, from the Hamburg Aviation cluster. The opportunity was offered by the kick-off of the COSME programme, dedicated to the Clusters Go International in the Defence and Security sector and European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Smart Specialisation Investments. With this programme the European Union invested 3.1 M€, funding 11 projects including the EACP-EUROSME, the only project in the aerospace sector.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October in Brussels, the EACP-EUROSME representatives also participated to a partnering event of European Cluster Partnerships in several disciplines: Aerospace, smart buildings/city, textile, medicine, health, agro-food, automotive, cyber security, and ICT. In the occasion, the EACP-EUROSME project manager **Gennaro Russo** received a label from representatives of the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission. With this label, the partnership's commitment to support joint actions, value chain collaboration and investment projects in common smart specialization priority areas linked to industrial modernisation is recognised, thereby contributing to the European Commission's objectives to boost growth, jobs and investment in Europe, as expressed in the partnership's ESCP-S3 Charter.

## **Objectives**

EACP-EUROSME in brief aims at:

- stimulating cooperation between clusters for the definition of a common strategy on the priority areas of smart specialization in the aerospace sector;
- developing a pipeline of inter-regional industrial investment projects for a total amount of approximately 20 million euros, ready for public or private funding;
- exploiting the potential of the smart specialization to promote new efficient supply chains with a relevant focus on the circular economy.

In particular, the project aims to strengthen SME collaboration within the involved clusters and regions through the participation to investment projects within common aerospace priority areas for smart specialization and in the circular economy perspective, which is not very advanced in the sector. It will encourage the creation of a favourable entrepreneurial environment and an innovation ecosystem by identifying new investment opportunities.

The planned actions are: stimulating the cooperation among clusters from regions with different levels of development; searching for common interest and synergies among the S3 of the represented regions; fostering the cooperation of the SMEs within the clusters and the regions.

## European Scenario

Aerospace is one of the largest and most powerful industries in the world, essentially characterized by a continuous positive trend. In fact, the European Aerospace industry, in 2015, achieved a turnover of **222 billion euro** (1/3 represented by the supply chain), with an increase of 11% compared to 2014.

The sector is composed by large enterprises and many innovative SMEs and start-ups, which are able to innovate the main enabling technologies, and to allow the sector to continuously progress and evolve.

**Aeronautics** is the sector in which European private and public stakeholders provide world leadership. **Space** drives scientific progress and boosts growth and employment in many other areas, as telecommunications, navigation, Earth observation, etc., and has started expanding the limits of humanity in the Fourth Environment.

**Aerospace** is at the hearth of the EUROPE 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, and is a vital facilitator of European integration and cohesion.

For all these reasons, the new competitiveness challenges require that European regions and clusters cooperate with each other more and more, to strengthen their enterprises. Economic activities located in Clusters account for about 39% of European jobs and 55% of European wages. The collaboration between different European clusters can indeed foster the matching of research, development & innovation solutions and support interregional innovation activities.

Naples, 29 October 2018