

## RIS3 kicks off cluster activity

Led by SPRI, regional and national governments of Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland and the UK, clusters kicked started activities to improve their policies and successfully deploy smart specialisation strategies (RIS3).

The Machine-Tool Biennial (BIEMH) hosted by BEC, the main industrial exhibition of excellence was the framework for the CLUSTERS<sub>3</sub> Project Launching Conference "Leveraging Cluster Policies for Successful Implementation of RIS3", INTERREG project led by SPRI. Over the next four years it will promote improvement processes for cluster support and promotion policies in participating regions, as well as co-ordination with other competition policies and programmes in the field of smart specialisation strategies (RIS3).



In his opening speech, Alex Arriola, Director of SPRI, highlighted the relevance of clusters as business co-operation catalysts. Subsequently, Joseba Jauregizar (TECNALIA) in representation of the main Basque corporations, summarised the R&D, Innovation and cluster policy history over recent years; while Juan Otegui (IK4) emphasised the major role played by technological agents acting as the "rear wheel drive" of a vehicle where the company holds the steering wheel and direction.

After the speeches, two interesting discussion panels were held where the project Member Regions and Regional Stakeholders Group made up of a group of Basque clusters closely linked to RIS3, exchanged their visions, good practices and future perspectives.

In the first panel, Support Programme Management authorities for Basque Countries Clusters, Hajdú-Bihar (Hungary), Highlands & Islands (Scotland, UK), Latvia, Lubelskie (Poland), Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) and Piemonte (Italy) told their experience in the approach, definition and evaluation of cluster policies highlighting to a lesser or greater extent, all of them have both covered part of the journey and interesting improvement margin yet to be explored.

In the second panel, Advance Manufacture Cluster (AFM), Aeronautical and Space Cluster (HEGAN), Automotive Cluster (ACICAE), Energy Cluster (GAIA) and the Basque Maritime Forum discussed their value contribution for companies and institutions, their instruments to facilitate inter business collaboration, RIS3 contribution to reinforce strategies and future perspectives in an increasingly wider and interconnected ecosystem.

Begoña Molinete of the Basque Energy Cluster highlighted the activity of Working Teams as trust generators and breeding grounds for these innovative ideas in collaboration as well as the major work carried out by the Basque Energy Cluster from the Energy Pilot Group presidency in the updating process of the technology energy strategy (EnergiBasque 2.0), collaborating with over 100 companies, 8 clusters, 7 R&D agents and other institutional bodies. This is a clear example of the participatory model in high level activities such as the pilot project Advanced Manufacture for Energy Applications in Hostile Environments (ADMA) of the Vanguard Initiative, co-led by Euskadi and Scotland where 13 regions and over 200 companies, centres and clusters collaborate.

To close the conference the "Passing of the Torch" ceremony from Euskadi to Piemonte, the region hosting the next CLUSTERS3 Project meeting, also took place.

### ***About the Basque Energy Cluster***

*The Basque Energy Cluster is a non-profit organization which was set up in 1996 with the mission of improving global competitiveness of the Basque energy sector companies by facilitating an industry-driven collaboration along the value chains and seeking public-private partnerships. Our vision is to contribute to the positioning the Basque Country as one of the European references in the energy industry sector in specific energy fields.*

*The Basque Energy Cluster is made up of 104 members, including the leading companies in the energy sector located in the Basque Country (energy operators, component and equipment manufacturers), agents of the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network and public administration bodies involved in the energy field.*

The Basque Energy Cluster will keep you regularly informed of any actions launched!