

The European Platform for Sport Innovation

House of Sport

43 Avenue des Arts

1040 Brussels

EPSI co-hosts Flanders Bike Valley Conference in Beringen

EU representatives and key figures from the Sporting Goods Industry push for sustainable economic solutions and innovation through EU funding



Left to right: Jordi Escriba (Partner of B Link), Dr. Anna Sobczak (DG Growth), Alberto Bichi (Secretary General of FESI) and Jean David Malo (DG Research & Innovation) at the Flanders' Bike Valley Conference.

Brussels, Belgium – 4 November 2016 On the 26th of October 2016, EPSI hosted in cooperation with [FESI](#), [Flanders Bike Valley](#), [VSSO](#), [FIFAS](#) and [Assosport](#) the Flanders Bike Valley Conference in Beringen (Belgium, Flanders)¹. The main objective of this event was to encourage technical innovation by guiding SMEs, through the landscape of financing opportunities available from the European Commission. By bringing together an eclectic line up of speakers and participants, all invitees were granted with the possibility to network and exchange good practices on the development of viable and profitable business models.

Present at the conference were various representatives from the European Commission and other experts, specialised in EU funding. On behalf of DG Research & Innovation, Jean David Malo stressed that it is crucial to allocate more resources to the Sporting Goods Sector as it is undoubtedly an active and significant contributor to our everyday life and future. Thereafter Dr. Anna Sobczak from DG Growth, provided a transparent presentation on EU funding possibilities for the Sporting Goods Section and encouraged SMEs to rely on external bodies such as EPSI for the expansion of their

¹ EPSI (European Platform for Sport Innovation); VSSO ([Verband der Sportartikelerzeuger und Sportausrüster Österreich, Austria](#)); FIFAS ([Fédération Française des industries du sport et des loisirs, France](#)); Assosport ([Associazione nazionale fra i produttori di articoli sportive](#))

network and the successful acquisition of grants. Moreover, these actors are key in providing specific insight in improving economic & policy knowledge in the field of sports and sport related industries.

Dr. Anna Sobczak also announced that DG Growth will start a study on the current structure of the sporting goods sector and sport related industries entitled *'Improve Economic & Policy Knowledge in the Field of Sport Related Industries with a particular focus on Sporting Goods Sector'*. As the representative of the sporting goods sector, FESI has previously persuaded the European Commission to launch a [study](#) on the importance of the sector in Europe and is therefore strongly applauding this incentive as well. Furthermore, speaking for the DG for Sport & Education - Mr. Michal RYNKOWSKI presented the Erasmus + funding programme for 2014-2020 and shed a light on an EU Work Plane for Sport for 2014-2017. **Thereafter Jordi Escriba (Partner of [B Link](#)) presented the *"Guide on EU Funding for Sport Industry 2014-2020"*, a practical tool that was created within the framework of the [EU4 Sports Cluster Alliance Project](#) and that specifies the main funding programmes available on an EU level. He also reinforced the importance of being associated with industry federations, as they play a crucial role in providing the required expertise in jumpstarting and managing EU sports projects.** Last but not least, on behalf of Interactive Wear (Andreas Ropert) presented the [Easy Imp project](#) which is a successful case study and a European research project (funded by the [Horzion2020 program](#)