

Success breeds success: ECSEL Joint Undertaking shaping Digital Innovation in Europe

14 June 2017: The European Union's €5bn flagship Research and Innovation public-private partnership for Electronics, The ECSEL Joint Undertaking – Electronic components and systems for European leadership is delivering on its objective of bridging the gap between research and exploitation. Too often in the past, European innovation has slipped through the innovation gap or was lost to other regions globally. "By providing resources, support and expertise from both the EU and its Member States, the ECSEL-JU is ensuring that Europe, not other regions, reaps the benefit and remains competitive in a global economy"

This was the message delivered at the ECSEL Symposium in Malta under the auspices of the Maltese EU Council presidency, which brought industry, research, finance and academia together with policymakers at European, national and regional levels. Attendees were informed about the vast scale of opportunity offered by the growth in smart technologies and the vital importance of securing a competitive European presence at all stages, from conception to marketing. A range of expert speakers highlighted where ECSEL projects were establishing clusters of common interest and excellence and advancing technology in key strategic areas of semiconductors, automotive technology, smart production and smart mobility.

Bert De Colvenaer, Executive Director of ECSEL-JU, said "Too often, our rich research capabilities have not benefited Europe to the extent they should. Fragmentation provided an obstacle between concept and market. The ECSEL-JU was conceived to ensure that Europe retains and maximises this capacity, helping Europe compete in the technology systems market. By all measures, it has been successful." He continued, "More than this, it is now helping to orient this capacity to address core societal needs and provide solutions to pressing problems. ECSEL is now ready to play a role in the next phase of development."

De Colvenaer also underlined the need to communicate ECSEL's accomplishments to the outside world. "Success breeds success, so we need to better sell our achievements. These are substantial achievements that deserve wider recognition. All partners should see it as their responsibility to promote the benefits of ECSEL."

Since its inception in 2014, the ECSEL-JU has rapidly matured from a series of project-driven initiatives to a strategic platform, providing all stakeholders, large and small, with access to a viable, supportive ecosystem that would not have formed spontaneously. The ECSEL approach allows SMEs to access a wider audience and support network and provides larger enterprises with an incentive to become involved in areas that may be outside their core activities.