

# VANGUARD INITIATIVE

## 10-year Anniversary Open Conference

Townhall Europe  
Square de Meeûs 5-6,  
1000 Brussels, Belgium

**5 December 2023**  
**13:15 - 17:30**

The Vanguard Initiative is proud to celebrate a decade of fostering innovation, collaboration, and industrial growth across Europe. Our 10-year Anniversary conference will serve as a platform to reflect on the VI's remarkable journey, share insights into our achievements and milestones, and discuss the future of smart specialization, interregional cooperation, and innovation-driven growth.

In this context, the Vanguard Initiative will announce the launch of the **VI Interregional Funding Mechanism, VINNOVATE** - a funding instrument developed at Vanguard regional level, allowing to foster SMS participation and the results of innovation projects in the VI Pilots.

## Programme

**13:15** Registration and Networking Coffee

**13:30** Welcome from the VI Chair, **Vaughan Gething**, Minister for economy, Welsh Government

**13:45** Video Message from **Kris Peeters**, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB)

**14:00** Panel one - 10 years of VI: Celebrating Achievements and the Role of VI Regions  
*Moderator: Simone Van Trier*

**Michiel Scheffer**, President of the Board of the European Innovation Council (EIC)

**Richard Lochhead** - Minister for Small Business, Trade and Innovation, *Scotland*

**Vaughan Gething** - Minister for the Economy, *Wales*

**António M. Cunha** - President of the Norte Regional Coordination and Development Commission, *Norte*

**Petra Püchner** - Commissioner for Europe of the Minister of Economic Affairs, Labour, and Tourism, *Baden-Württemberg*

**Cristina Uriarte Toledo** - Commissioner for Science, Technology and Innovation, *Basque Country*

**Birgitta Sacredeus** - Member of Dalarna County Council, and of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), *Dalarna*

**15:10** Coffee break

**15:30** Panel two – Mapping Regional Value Chains for Net-Zero 2050: Identifying Financial Needs  
*Moderator: Simone Van Trier*

**Minerva Elias**, Principal Strategy & Innovation, EIB Institute

**Jose Caldeira**, Member of the Board of INESC TEC, VI Funding and Financing Task Group Lead

**Doris Schroecker** Industrial Research, Innovation & Investment Agendas – DG RTD

**Marc Pattinson**, Thematic Expert Research and innovation, Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform

**16:30** Signature by VI regions of the Vinnovate Letter of Intent

*Moderated by **Erwin Hoogland**, Regional Minister for the Economy and International Affairs, East Netherlands*

**17:00** Networking Reception