

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 SME 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, **Abi Phillips**, Head of Innovation - Economy, Science and Natural Resources Department, 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)

Carolina Gario - Policy Advisor to Director Jakub Boratynski, Networks and Governance, DG GROW, European Commission

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

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*

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

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

Marta Batalla Masana - Policy Officer, Advanced Technologies, Clusters and Social Economy, DG GROW, European Commission

Magdalena Cymerys - Policy Officer, Innovation Policy and Access to Finance, DG RTD, European Commission

Valentina Pinna - Program and Project Advisor, European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)

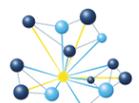
Jose Caldeira - Member of the Board of INESC TEC, VI Funding and Financing Task Group Lead

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



Speakers' booklet

Keynote speakers

Kris Peeters - *Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB)*



Born in Belgium in 1962, Kris Peeters is currently Vice-President of the European Investment Bank. He graduated with a law and philosophy degree in 1986. Peeters also obtained a license degree in taxation at the Vlerick School.

Subsequently and before entering politics, Kris Peeters was a lawyer and held several managing positions at UNIZO, the Belgian Union of Self-Employed Entrepreneurs and SMEs.

In 2004, Kris Peeters became Minister for the first time in the Flemish Government, succeeding Yves Leterme as Minister-President three years later. During the period 2014-2019, Peeters was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Consumer Welfare and Labour.

Between 2019 and 2021, Kris Peeters was a member of the European Parliament, focusing notably on Internal Market & Consumer Protection, Justice & Home Affairs and Defence & Foreign Affairs, with a special interest in NATO-related topics.

Kris Peeters joined the EIB in January 2021 where he holds the Benelux seat in the Management Committee. His oversight includes transport financing, financing of security and defence, operations in the Benelux, relations with the European Parliament and NATO as well as operations in the ASEAN countries.

Abi Phillips - *Head of Innovation, Welsh Government*



Abi Phillips has worked in Welsh Government since 2006, having previously held positions in Finance Wales and the private sector. Since joining she has worked within Economy, Finance and the Health and Social Services Department, overseeing the delivery of multi-million pound programmes with a focus on collaborative innovation, across sectors, and with international partners.

In 2020 Abi Phillips took up the role of Head of Innovation and has delivered a cross Government Innovation Strategy following a commitment in the Cooperation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, as well as an accompanying delivery plan. She is responsible for innovation interventions across Government, managing a delivery team of 52.

Abi Phillips has a business degree from Cardiff University, a Masters from Imperial College London, and is currently studying towards a PhD at the Swansea University School of Management.

Panel one**10 years of VI: Celebrating Achievements
and the Role of VI Regions**

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



Michiel Scheffer, a Dutch national, has three decades of experience in business, academia and public policy. He is equipped with a wide network in the world of research and innovation and has a remarkable professional experience of more than 20 years in the field of innovation, including on breakthrough technologies, disruptive innovations, start-ups impact investment.

Since 2000, he is the Founder and CEO of Polisema BV, which worked as adviser and investor for start-ups (in ICT, technical textiles, medical textiles, medical devices, energy storage, biorefinery). From 2000 until 2015, he was the Founder and CEO of Noéton Policy in Innovation BV, which was providing consulting services to firms in a range of areas including innovation management, program management and public affairs. In this capacity, he designed and managed several EU Funded Projects. He was three times elected regional party leader. As regional Minister of Gelderland, he was nominated for best regional politician in the Netherlands in 2018. In that capacity he was responsible for an ERDF Program and for Interreg DE-NL and member of the Committee of the Regions.

He worked with over 20 universities, and more than 200 partners across the EU in large R&D Projects and he is the author of more than 100 publications: scientific articles, edited books, newspaper opinions.

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



Birgitta Sacredeus, member of Dalarna County Council in Sweden, member of the CoR and rapporteur for the recently adopted opinion on Active and Healthy Ageing, is an instrumental figure in the local and regional government of Dalarna. Ms. Sacredeus has long been an advocate for active and healthy aging, recognizing the importance of ensuring that senior citizens enjoy a high quality of life.

Her dedication to this cause led her to become a prominent member of the Dalarna County Council, where she worked to implement policies and initiatives aimed at promoting well-being and independence among the elderly population.

In addition to her work at the regional level, Ms. Sacredeus has been a vital voice on the European stage. As a member of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), she has championed the cause of Active and Healthy Ageing, serving as the rapporteur for the recently adopted opinion on this critical matter. Ms. Birgitta Sacredeus's dedication to public service and her significant contributions to the field of active and healthy aging continue to make a positive impact at both the regional and European levels.

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

Richard Lochhead is a Scottish politician, currently serving as the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade in the Scottish Government. Born in Aberdeen, Scotland, he has had a distinguished career in public service. Lochhead is a member of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and has been a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) since the inception of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.

Lochhead's extensive political career has seen him hold various roles within the Scottish Government, including serving as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food, and Environment, where he made significant contributions to Scotland's agriculture and rural communities. His work in the Net Zero, Energy, and Transport portfolio reflects his commitment to addressing climate change and developing sustainable transportation solutions for Scotland. Lochhead's dedication to these crucial areas has made him a key advocate for environmental sustainability and energy transition in Scotland.

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

Dr. Petra Püchner has been the Commissioner for Europe of the Minister of Economic Affairs, Labor, and Tourism of Baden-Württemberg since January 2018 and serves as the head of Steinbeis Europa Zentrum. Her political appointment by the Minister focuses on strengthening the innovation capabilities of the Baden-Württemberg economy, bringing together applied research with practical applications, and utilizing European research and innovation capacities and initiatives.

Petra Püchner has been a member of the management team of Steinbeis Europa Zentrum for over 15 years and, in 2016, co-founded the Steinbeis 2i GmbH with Dr. Jonathan Loeffler. For many years, she has been involved in various expert groups related to innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises of the European Commission, the state, and the federal government. She has been a member of the steering group of the German Enterprise Europe Network and, in 2012, and founded the Women4Energy network, which connects women from research and industry on all energy-related topics.

Her expertise encompasses all areas of research and innovation policy, innovation management for small and medium-sized enterprises, open innovation, key technologies, and transnational technology transfer in the context of interregional cooperation in and beyond Europe.

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

António M. Cunha is the President of the Norte Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR-NORTE) and of the Managing Authority of Norte's Regional Programme 2021-27 (NORTE 2030) since 2020.

He was born in Braga, Portugal, in 1961. He Graduated in Industrial Engineering in the University of Minho (1984) and obtained a PhD in Polymer Science and Engineering (1991). Between 2003 and 2020, he was a Professor at the Department of Polymer Engineering, and a Researcher at the Institute of Polymers and Composites (IPC). He is co-founder of the 3Bs Research Group. Mr. Cunha also authored or co-authored 2 books, 120 international scientific articles and 4 patents.

Panel two**Mapping Regional Value Chains for Net-Zero 2050: Identifying Financial Needs**

Marta Batalla Masana - *Policy Officer, Advanced Technologies, Clusters and Social Economy, DG GROW, European Commission*



Marta Batalla is a Policy Officer at the Industrial Forum, Alliances and Clusters unit at the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, at the European Commission. She has more than 10 years of experience working on different monitoring projects such as the SME Performance Review, Digital Transformation monitor and European Monitor of Industrial Ecosystems.

She has co-authored numerous reports and papers mainly on SMEs, advanced technologies and twin transition and she is currently supporting the EU cluster team on digital technologies. She also serves as an expert in several policy networks at European level.

Before joining the European Commission, she worked for the Executive Secretary office for the Economic Commission for the Latin American and Caribbean at the United Nations (UN ECLAC) evaluating the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and providing support on the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She also worked at the United Nations Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) giving support to the economic discussions during the Annual General Assembly. She holds a Master's in Public Management from Bocconi University and a degree in Political Science and Economics from the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Magdalena Cymerys - *Policy Officer, Innovation Policy and Access to Finance, DG RTD, European Commission*



Magdalena Cymerys is leading the Regional Innovation Valleys project as the Policy Officer in the Innovation Policy and Access to Finance Unit at DG Research and Innovation. She is the coordinator of the Flagship 3 of the New European Innovation Agenda addressing the innovation divide across the EU. She is also responsible for various files within the European Innovation Ecosystems Work Programme, including representation of women in innovation, and oversees topics on social, frugal and reverse innovation.

Her working experience entails innovation ecosystems and policy projects at European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), Polish Ministry of foreign affairs, public sector consulting company, start-up, foundation, NGO, and multinational company. She holds an impressive educational background, including a B.A. in French studies from Adam Mickiewicz University, Master of Development Economics of Latin America at Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, and M.A. in Interdisciplinary European Studies at the College of Europe (Natolin).

Panel two**Mapping Regional Value Chains for Net-Zero 2050: Identifying Financial Needs**

Valentina Pinna - Program and Project Advisor, European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)



Valentina Pinna is currently working at EISMEA after 3 years spent at DG REGIO (European Commission) dealing with Smart Specialisation and the design of Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) instrument (2021-27). Before joining the EC, she was responsible for Research Innovation at the Lombardy Region. In this framework, she was involved in the launch of the Vanguard Initiative and she was the Chair of the network (2017-2018).

Valentina Pinna has experience working with key players of the regional innovation ecosystems (interface between regional administration/RDA and Quadruple helix Clusters), the Smart Specialisation Platforms, European Technology Platforms and contractual PPPs.

Valentina Pinna also worked for Finlombarda, a regional promotional bank responsible for the implementation of the Regional Development Program, Structural Funds and innovative financial instruments (EIB - EIF). In this framework, Valentina was involved in Enterprise Europe Network (business and innovation services), in the implementation of Smart Specialisation Strategy and Cluster policy, as well as in the animation of an Open Innovation Platform.

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



Marc Pattinson is a senior thematic expert for the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform focusing notably on regional innovation and interregional cooperation policy development support. He has written a number of policy briefs including ones on Innovation Governance, Clusters and [Smart Specialisation](#) and has published in total over 10 similar documents on themes relevant to regional innovation ecosystems.

He was an expert member of the S3 Expert Group and contributed to the JRC Handbook on S3 Partnerships and he is regularly given expert assignments by DG Regio/DG Grow and was part of the ReConfirm team supporting the development of interregional industrial cooperation partnerships.

He is also a Director at GAC Group and leads the team on innovation and territories and has supported a number of regions in designing I3 and EIE project initiatives. He is currently working with the Vanguard Pilot initiative on Smart Health and has helped partners develop their pilot projects and develop other interregional cooperation actions often associating clusters and SMEs. He holds a Masters in Economic Development from the London School of Economics.

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

José Carlos Caldeira is member of the Board of INESC TEC and also member of the Board of PRODUTECH – Production Technologies Cluster. He is member of the MANUFUTURE High Level Group and Chairman of its Implementation Support Group. He is also member of the Board of EFFRA – European Factories of the Future Research Association. He is invited associated professor at Porto Faculty of Economics, on Innovation Policies.

Between October 2014 and January 2018, he was the President of ANI – Agência Nacional de Inovação - the Portuguese National Innovation Agency.

In the last 30 years, he participated as responsible and/or a collaborator in the preparation, development and execution of several R&D and innovation projects, in the Industrial Management and Automation area, which received national and international funding, comprising different companies and sectors like: metalworking, textile, footwear, wood and cork, injected foundry, food and beverage, etc.

**Closing
Signature of the Vinnovate Letter of Intent**

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

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

Erwin Hoogland was born in Wolbeck, Germany, and raised in Twente. In 1981, he joined the Armed Forces and attended various military education programs in Breda, Rijswijk, Brussels, and Hamburg. Until early July 2023, Hoogland held various positions within the Armed Forces and was deployed four times; Bosnia, Macedonia, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

From 2017 to 2020, he also served as military strategic advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since 1988, he has been a member of the VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) and has held various diverse roles within the party, including Member of Provincial Parliament, both in Zuid-Holland and Overijssel.

"The economy is the backbone on which Overijssel relies. Without our entrepreneurs, we can make great plans, but we cannot realize them. In Overijssel, we have a strong SME sector and family businesses alongside a growing tourism and recreation sector. I will primarily focus on creating space and opportunities for future-oriented entrepreneurship."