

## Press release

### EU-Commissioner Mariya Gabriel meets with leaders from industry and academia for the inaugural Innovation Roundtable

*Brussels, 26 April 2023. EU-Commissioner Mariya Gabriel met with leaders from industry and academia at the Berlaymont in Brussels for the inaugural Roundtable of the European Sounding Board on Innovation (ESBI, #ESBI). Mariya Gabriel: “I welcome the ESBI Roundtable as a key milestone of the implementation of the new European Innovation Agenda. It is when the best talents work hand in hand with the best companies that we can build a resilient and competitive economy.”*

Europe is committed to being a leading global player in innovation. [The European Innovation Agenda](#) of the European Commission represents a crucial step forward in this effort. To complement existing structures and provide transparent and impartial feedback from movers and shakers, the ESBI was launched by [the National Academy of Science and Engineering](#) (acatech), Germany.

Today’s discussions focused on commenting activities of the European Innovation Agenda, how to further develop the European approach on education, research, and innovation in a global context to increase EU competitiveness and resilience, and how to improve collaboration between key actors from policy, industry, and academia.

“We agreed that a coordinated local, national and European approach to strengthen education, research and innovation in Europe is necessary”, says acatech President Jan Wörner. “Europe has to ensure its strategic resilience by successfully bringing and keeping innovations in the market. That is why the ESBI is delivering evidence based, concrete policy advice. I was pleased with the dedication of the EU commissioner and the commitment of the participants towards safeguarding Europe’s future and the welfare of its citizens.”

Participants were a diverse and gender-balanced group composed of representatives from academic institutions and various large companies throughout Europe:

#### Participants List

- Ann-Kristin Achleitner, Technical University München
- Kai Beckmann, Merck KGaA
- Miguel Belló-Mora, Spanish Space Agency
- Dimitris Bountolos, Ferrovial
- Alicia Garcia Medina, Atos SE
- Patrick Johnson, Dassault Systèmes SE
- Veselina Kanatova-Buchkova, Bulgarian Energy Holding EAD
- Anke Kaysser-Pyzalla, DLR, German Aerospace Center
- Barbara Lenz, Humboldt University of Berlin
- Ewa Lojkowska, University Gdansk
- Chiara Manfletti, NeuraSpace
- Maria Persson Gulda, H2 Green Steel
- Carlos Rodriguez Cocina, Telefonica S.A.
- Olivier Sala, ENGIE SA

- Christoph Schmidt, Leibniz Institute for Economic Research
- Monika Stanisheva, Bulgaria Innovation Forum
- Daria Tataj, Tataj Innovation, EIT Culture & Creativity, EIT Manufacturing
- Bertrand van Ee, Hardt B.V.
- Jan Wörner, acatech

**Kai Beckman, Merck KGaA, Member of the Executive Board/CEO electronics:** “To persist in the current international environment, the EU must leverage its excellent research & innovation capabilities to spearhead the digital and ecological transition. This will only be possible by increasing efforts and strengthening collaboration in research and innovation. Industry, academia, and political decision-makers need to work hand in hand – the ESBI is an important opportunity to take this collaboration to the next level.”

**Dimitris Bountolos, Ferrovial S.A., Chief Information & Innovation Officer (CIIO):** “Public-private collaboration provides a unique framework for ensuring the competitiveness of new European innovation models. Ferrovial can contribute to and accelerate Europe’s innovation by sharing our deep-tech startup expertise and US innovation ecosystem experience, while preserving historical European values.”

**Anke Kaysser-Pyzalla, German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt; DLR), Chair of the Executive Board:** “The new European Innovation Agenda, together with Horizon Europe, safeguards the entire research and innovation chain, thus providing the best possible support for DLR’s wide-ranging activities in applied research and technology development. We are working together to provide industry, SMEs and start-ups with solutions and the framework conditions they need if they are to contribute to the European Green Deal with innovative products. I am delighted to present DLR’s vision and ideas today in the framework of the European Sounding Board on Innovation.”

**Maria Persson Gulda, H2 Green Steel, Chief Project Officer and Chief Technology Officer:** “It is crucial to continue to develop the European Innovation Agenda and make sure that new files like the Net-Zero Industry Act help scaling and commercializing cleantech innovations in the EU. The critical role of start-ups and scale-ups pushing the technical readiness of innovations must be recognized and rewarded in the EU’s innovation framework.”

**Olivier Sala, ENGIE SA, Group Vice President of Research & Innovation:** “The European Union is at turning point. The war in Ukraine and the current geopolitical tensions raise many challenges for our industries and our economies. European innovation and research policies need a paradigm shift to help us switch faster from a resource-intensive economy, towards a greener and highly innovative one. ENGIE is ready to take up the challenge and help build the carbon neutral energy system of tomorrow. It requires a significant change of mindset and break-through innovation to ensure energy efficient processes, clean electrification, as well as flexibility and green gases for a resilient energy system. By taking part in the European Sounding Board on Innovation, ENGIE is willing to contribute to this roadmap and help make Europe’s innovation policy future-proof.”

**Monika Stanisheva, Bulgarian Innovation Forum:** “If yesterday we stated that the digital revolution is to happen, today we see that smart technologies like AI are shaking our culture, industries, and societies. If we want to have Europe at the driver’s seat of innovation, we need to speed up the access to finance for innovation, startups, deep tech, and R&D. The New European Innovation Agenda positions Europe at the forefront of the new wave of deep tech innovation and start-ups. It aims to ensure that the best talents work

closely together with the best companies to create breakthrough innovative solutions across the continent. As an advisory vehicle for Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, the ESBI will stimulate further-development of this strategic aspects of the NEIA to make Europe not only the global powerhouse for innovations but also an early adopter of advanced technologies.”

### Next steps

In the upcoming months, a working group will prepare a report on topics outlined above. It's foreseen to discuss and publish the report at the second Roundtable in November 2023. The working group are composed of members of ESBI, and experts they nominated. Be sure to follow updates on social media: #ESBI.

### About the ESBI

The ESBI is an advisory vehicle that provides EU Commissioner Mariya Gabriel with transparent and impartial feedback on the European Innovation Agenda, stimulating further development of strategic aspects of the European Innovation Agenda and discussing emerging dossiers with high-level representatives from European industry and academia. It facilitates discussion and encourages the further development of related activities, ensuring that Europe leads the new wave of innovations. The ESBI is organized by [the National Academy of Science and Engineering](#) (acatech), Germany. acatech is an organization committed to independent, evidence-based advice on policy issues.

### Further information

The New European Innovation Agenda and ESBI: [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/support-policy-making/shaping-eu-research-and-innovation-policy/new-european-innovation-agenda\\_en#european-sounding-board-for-innovation](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/support-policy-making/shaping-eu-research-and-innovation-policy/new-european-innovation-agenda_en#european-sounding-board-for-innovation)

ESBI at a glance: <https://en.acatech.de/project/european-sounding-board-on-innovation/>

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