

A.SPIRE

Post date:

06/11/2025 - 11:46



On 22 October 2025, A.SPIRE hosted the ***Process Industry Strategy and Foresight Conference*** at the Double Tree by Hilton hotel in Brussels. Under the slogan “Building a new European Partnership led by the Process Industry,” the event brought together over 200 participants and provided a platform for strategic dialogue, foresight, and collaboration, taking stock of current challenges while looking ahead to the Research and Innovation paths to help the European energy-intensive industries address the aforementioned challenges and navigate today’s complex geopolitical and economic landscape.

Setting the scene: A new vision for a new context

The day began with the ***Process Industry Forum: Challenges and Opportunities***. With an attendance of over 60 participants, the forum gathered representatives from A.SPIRE's **ten industrial sectors** and the European Commission to assess the challenges and opportunities faced by process industries.

Ms Àngels Orduña, A.SPIRE Executive Director, welcomed participants and set the scene in an uplifting speech, followed by opening remarks from Mr Vedran Kujundzic (DOMO Chemicals), A.SPIRE President, and Mr Carsten Schierenbeck (DG RTD, Head of Unit Industrial Transformation).

In his address, Mr Kujundzic highlighted the progress of the **Processes4Planet Partnership (P4Planet)**, noting that with two years left for implementation, the partnership is accelerating industry-led innovation and cross-sector collaboration supporting the European process industry in achieving net-zero emissions and strengthened resilience, while remaining globally competitive.

"A new context requires a new vision," he stated, emphasising that A.SPIRE is preparing a renewed Vision for the process industry to respond to today's energy, resource, and market challenges. He stressed that collaboration, research, and innovation are essential to turn challenges into competitive opportunities and to maintain Europe's leadership in sustainability.

Mr Schierenbeck provided the Commission's perspective, highlighting the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034, the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), and the future Horizon Europe programme. He reiterated support for industry resilience and decarbonisation, underlining the Clean Industrial Deal as a critical tool to complement the Green Deal with a strong business case for European competitiveness.

Key challenges and strategic responses

During the Forum, industry representatives identified three major challenges:

- High energy prices
- Scarcity of resources and access to critical materials
- The need to accelerate innovation from research to deployment

To address these, A.SPIRE proposed:

- Advancing research and innovation to strengthen European resource sovereignty
- Accelerating the scale-up of key innovations (TRLs 3–8) to boost industrial competitiveness

Sustainability was highlighted as both a strategic lever and a potential competitive advantage, with cross-sectoral collaboration emphasised as critical to achieving these goals.

In the session *Strategic Discussion: R&I Avenues to Accelerate Scaling Up and Deployment*, Mr Bernard Mathieu presented the A.SPIRE vision for the future and a new industry-led partnership. This presentation was followed by a lively round of table discussions, facilitated by Mr Mathieu and his colleague, Ms Claude Lorea. During the table discussions, a series of opportunities and future-proof solutions to address the challenges indicated earlier were identified and discussed.

Looking ahead: foresight workshops and solutions

In the afternoon, A.SPIRE research members joined, and participants engaged in *The Future of the Process Industry R&I Foresight Workshops: Solutions*

, aiming to translate the morning's discussions into actionable strategies.

Mr Cyril Robin Champigneul (DG RTD, Deputy Head of Unit, Industrial Transformation) discussed the next generation of EU research programmes, underlining the importance of simplification, less prescriptive programming, and the lessons learnt from previous partnerships.

Mr Sebastian Engell (TU Dortmund, Advisory and Programming Group Chair) presented the *A.SPIRE Transition Proposal* for a new industry-led partnership under the upcoming 10th edition of Horizon Europe.

Participants then joined two series of parallel workshops, dedicated to the four pillars of the proposal, connecting the current state of technologies with a foresight-driven vision for the future.

Across 32 discussion tables, participants explored more than 10 potential solutions for Europe's process industries, demonstrating the community's shared commitment to climate neutrality, circularity, and competitiveness.

Member engagement and takeaways

The event received enthusiastic feedback from participants, and the day underscored the importance of bringing together industry, research, and policymakers to accelerate innovation, support decarbonisation, and secure Europe's industrial competitiveness.

The 22 October conference demonstrated the strength and ambition of the A.SPIRE community. Through dialogue, workshops, and strategic discussions, participants not only identified the challenges facing the European process industries but also explored solutions and pathways forward.

Collaboration in action: the A.SPIRE Brokerage

On 23 October, the focus turned towards collaboration. The A.SPIRE P4Planet Brokerage took place and facilitated 22 pitches and three networking sessions to support our members in forming strong consortia for Processes4Planet 2026 Horizon Europe projects. Read more about this successful collaborative event [here](#).

The A.SPIRE community continues to drive research and innovation, shaping a future that is resilient, sustainable, and competitive.



