

## A.SPIRE

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On 23 and 24 October 2024, the Second Process Industry Conference was organised in Brussels by A.SPIRE. The conference was a dynamic event, highlighting how A.SPIRE's **ten European energy-intensive industry sectors** are enabling the green and digital transition, innovation, industrial decarbonisation, increased global competitiveness and more.

Under the slogan "*Shaping the Transformation*", the event marked the mid-term of the P4Planet Partnership and of the Horizon Europe R&I Programme and was an opportune moment to review progress and highlight issues and opportunities to shape the green and digital transition of European industry. Presentations from across the P4Planet project portfolio demonstrated that the partnerships' cross-sectorial, cross-disciplinary and pan-European collaborations are yielding innovations that have the potential to significantly reduce industrial emissions, increase resource and energy efficiency, and establish a more circular economy. The event demonstrated that synergy and collaboration are significant strengths of the P4Planet Partnership.

## 23 October 2024 – Stakeholder's Event

### Opening Session: *"If not us, who? If not now, when?"*

The event was opened by the moderator for the day, Katrina Sichel, who welcomed everyone and outlined the agenda. She emphasised the importance of the event with the upcoming publication of the next European Commission's new Clean Industrial Deal. Katrina invited Angels Orduña, A.SPIRE's executive director, to the stage, who emphasised that the primary aim of the P4Planet Partnership is *"to boost competitiveness in this continent"*. She highlighted that analysis of the P4Planet project portfolio covering 2021-2023 already showed the potential to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 80-90%. Angels stressed the importance of wide collaborative innovation networks, such as P4Planet, in building Europe's sustainable future and making the EU industry globally competitive. *"If not us, who? If not now, when?"* she asked.



### **Empowering the Green Transition**

The first plenary session, Empowering the Green Transition, brought on stage Maria Cristina Russo, Director of Prosperity at the European Commission DG Research & Innovation and Pierre Joris, President of A.SPIRE.

Pierre Joris foresaw a big innovation challenge, but implementation depended on a sound business case for investment with any interim cost disadvantages compensated in some way.

Maria Cristina Russo stated that research and innovation would be at the core of the new Commission's agenda and that the new Clean Industry Deal should be seen as a continuation of the current Green Deal but more industry-friendly. There was a clear need to act urgently and together.

For Pierre achieving the Green Transition essentially meant that our industries "have a continued licence to operate" in that they will be able to produce goods in an economically viable way and without impacting the environment.

Maria Cristina Russo stated that there was also a need to better join the dots between different funding instruments. The new Competitiveness Fund could be a process to support research seamlessly from lab to market. And she also foresaw increased support for technology infrastructure and circularity initiatives. She further stressed that collaboration is key to successful European competitiveness and that it is important to be strategic and focus on areas with the best chances for EU competitive advantage.



## **The Role of Innovation to Transform the Process Industry**

This next plenary session was moderated by André Convents, A.SPIRE's APG Vice-chair for Innovation Framework.

The panel consisted of Jürgen Tiedje, Head of Unit for Industrial Transformation at DG Research and Innovation, Joao Serrano Gomes, Policy Officer in DG CLIMA, Jurgen Van Holen, R&D Manager at Oleon, and Daniel Bielsa, Technology Coordinator for CIC ENERGIGUNE.

Discussing market deployment, Andre stressed the need for high, late-stage de-risking and synergies with regional incentives. Joao Serrano Gomes talked about the ETS Innovation Fund and said that the results of the 2023 call were to be published during the day (they dropped off later and were briefly presented at the conference). He indicated that an additional 85 projects had been funded for a total value of EUR 4.8 billion, making a running total of EUR 12 billion for the fund so far. Jürgen Tiedje explained that DG RTD works very closely with DG CLIMA and highlighted the support available through Horizon Europe for P4Planet projects. A lot of funding was available, and he invited attendees to "make good use of it". Jurgen Van Holen presented **the project INCITE**, our February Success Story, and Daniel talked about the **REslag project**, which, in January 2024, kicked off the Success Stories campaign.



### **Sector Dialogue: A Clean Industry for Different Regional Realities**

The panel speakers were Ilse Kenis, Chief Carbon Officer of Carmeuse and CEO at Carmeuse Technologies; Marit Dolmen, Director of Process Development at Elkem; Koen Coppenholle, CEO of Cembureau; Małgosia Rybak, Climate Change & Energy Director for Cepi, and Dorota

Pawlucka, Global Alliances Manager at Covestro.

Koen Coppenholle talked about the need for public infrastructure and access to sources of waste to use as raw materials, which was subject to differing regulations across the regions. Małgosia Rybak explained how access to affordable clean energy was a key requirement for a successful green transition and that needed connections and flexibility. Ilse Kenis said we needed to create a demand for green tech across different regions, and that required infrastructure to be in place. Marit Dolmen went into sector-specific issues, stressing that a supply of carbon was essential to purify silicon. The use of hydrogen was not possible, but the use of biochar was one possible solution. The high cost of energy was also highlighted. Dorota Pawlucka said her company had a clear strategy to become fully circular by 2050. The major challenge was sourcing adequate resources and smoothing recycling.



### Synergies for the Twin Transition

The after-lunch session was moderated by Andrea Gentili from DG Research and Innovation who introduced speakers from four European innovation partnerships: Processes4Planet, represented by Sebastian Engell of TU Dortmund; The Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking,



represented by Pillar Llorente Ruiz de Azua; Clean Steel Partnership represented by Patrick Lafontaine; and Clean Hydrogen Partnership represented by Valerie Bouillon-Delporte.

The session emphasised the importance of cross-sector collaboration among partnerships to achieve sustainability objectives. Key projects showcased progress in recycling, biobased carbon capture, and green hydrogen integration. Challenges highlighted included scaling clean hydrogen supply, achieving higher technology readiness levels (TRL), and bridging gaps between research and industry. Infrastructure and market development for circularity and biobased products were identified as priorities. The panellists agreed on the need for closer collaboration to align efforts and enable impactful, scalable innovations.



### **Parallel sessions: Processes4Planet projects and H4Cs forum**

After the coffee break, the delegates were divided into three parallel sessions. In each of the sessions, the audience was invited to vote for their favourite project. The three winners of the “Projects’ Audience Award” were announced in the closing session of the event.

### **Session A: Emissions Reduction**

This session was moderated by Sophie Wilmet from CEFIC and Leader of the A.SPIRE working group on Process Optimisation & CCU. The session covered four projects: INITIATE, COZMOS, LEILAC2, and CO2FOKUS.

### **Session B: Circularity of Resources**

The Circularity session was moderated by Anna Domenech Abella from CELSA and leader of the Resources and Circularity Working Group in A.SPIRE who introduced four project presentations: AshCycle, REVaMP, PLASTICE, and RESURGENCE.

### **Session C: Electrification & Energy Efficiency**

Franz Hörzenberger from ArcelorMittal and APG Vice-chair for A.SPIRE moderated this session with four project presentations: ASTEP, PreMa, METAWAVE, and FIREFLY.

### **Closing Session**

Katrina Sichel introduced Aurela Shtiza, Director of Industrial Affairs and Raw Materials, IMA Europe, and Vice President of A.SPIRE to close proceedings. Aurela praised the organisation of the event for its diverse stakeholder viewpoints and well-balanced panels. She noted the need for sound business cases and the fact that innovation doesn't have borders and talked about how The Antwerp Declaration signalled the industry needs: to balance the Green Deal with global competitiveness.

To close proceedings, the results of the popular vote in the parallel sessions for the best project presentation were announced. The winners were INITIATE in Session A, RESURGENCE from Session B and METAWAVE from Session C.





After the session, participants enjoyed further networking at a cocktail reception.



## 24 October 2024 - "Collaborate, Innovate, Transform!" With A.SPIRE Members

The second day of the conference (24 October) - COLLABORATE, INNOVATE, TRANSFORM! – was dedicated exclusively to A.SPIRE members. The A.SPIRE Brokerage event provided a unique opportunity for A.SPIRE members to network, connect, and explore new opportunities to form

strong consortia for future Horizon Europe calls. We look forward to seeing those projects bring energy-intensive industries one step closer to climate neutrality, competitiveness, and circularity.

For a strong, made-in-Europe future and a prosperous society.

**A.SPIRE thanks all the attendees, speakers, moderators and its members for being at the forefront of the transformation of the European process industry!**