

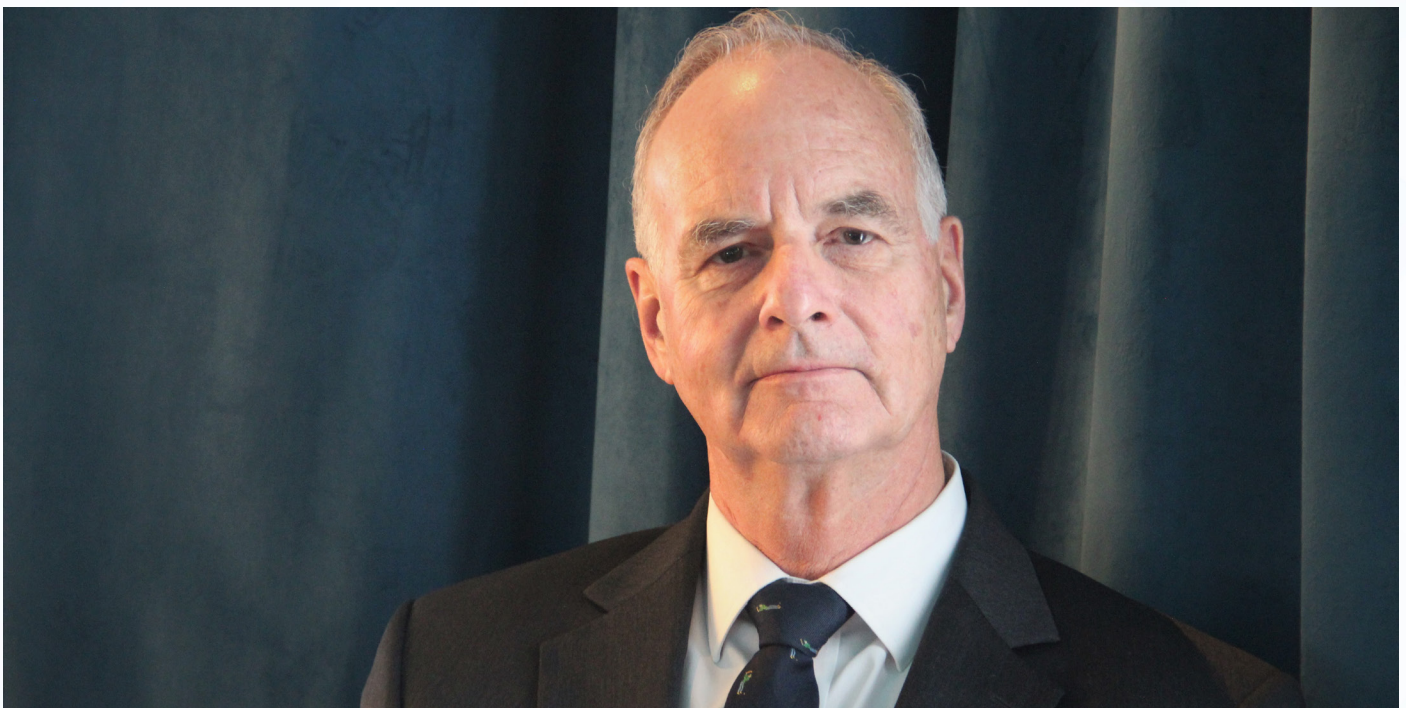
From crisis to opportunity: Digital solutions for a sustainable economic recovery

KEY TAKEAWAYS

CECIMO participated in the EU Industry Days 2021 - the European Commission's flagship event dedicated to industry gathering more than 15,600 people over the four-day event. CECIMO's stakeholder session on **"From crisis to opportunity: Digital solutions for a sustainable economic recovery"** discussed the importance of collaboration, partnerships, ecosystems and common standards as one of the fundamental factors for the industry recovery and mastering the green and digital transitions. The event promoted the uptake of new digital technologies and their impact on economic, social, behavioural, and business opportunities - areas that are critical to enabling economic growth and sustainable development.

Dr Hans-Martin Schneeberger, CECIMO President, opened the conference and underlined that the European manufacturing industry plays an essential role in the long-term global response to the pandemic. The European machine tool sector is one of the most inventive, contributing to research and innovation in additive manufacturing, robotics, and artificial intelligence. A strong and competitive manufacturing sector should be a top priority for policymakers, as it plays an essential role in the European economic and technological development to avoid future economic hardships. Dr Schneeberger called on EU policymakers to use the momentum to support the European industrial ecosystems in becoming frontrunners in the field of sustainability and digitisation.

The conference gathered industry frontrunners such as KUKA, TRUMPF, EOS and European Standardization Organizations – CEN and CENELC and representatives from the European Commission. They shared challenges and opportunities to implement digital solutions highlighting the needs of industry in the context of the next industrial strategy.



Dr Hans-Martin Schneeberger, CECIMO President



Anne-Marie Sassen, European Commission

The major takeaways from the event are the following:

Anne-Marie Sassen, Acting Head of Unit in the Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology of the European Commission, drew attention to the importance of optimisation along value chains and ecosystems of companies if we want to meet the objectives of the green deal. To achieve this companies must be willing to share the data with each other. In that light, the European Commission stated ambition to enable companies to make better use of their data and to become global players in the data economy. Within the manufacturing sector, the Commission plans to invest around 20 million euros in data spaces-related projects which can be used by industry companies to optimise certain applications such as agile supply chain management; dynamic asset management and data sharing for circularity, recycling, and remanufacturing. The Commission is encouraging the manufacturing industry to benefit from data spaces and to experiment with data sharing to respond to the big challenges that we have ahead of us for the green and digital transitions. Moreover, the Commission is setting up a network of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH) aiming to support SMEs in digital transformation.



Marie Langer, EOS

Marie Langer, CEO of EOS, stressed that the production should become more digital, decentralised and flexible to adapt to market requirements and customer needs. Ms Langer described the company's view on digital manufacturing, highlighting how digital data and digital processes help their customers to digitalise the entire supply chain and set up digital production facilities as part of manufacturing planning. Decentralised or distributed manufacturing uses a network of geographically dispersed digitally connected facilities, so manufacturing can happen where it is needed. On top of that, Ms Langer underlined the benefits of decentralised manufacturing to strengthen industrial sustainability - in particular the fast response time, increasing the flexibility of production, reducing storage, warehousing and shipping costs, more resilient and transparent supply chains. She emphasised that the pandemic has proven that Europe must become more sovereign in terms of digital technologies and supply chains and secure a leadership position in industrial 3d printing due to its flexibility and sustainability.



Dr Christian Liedtke, KUKA

Dr Christian Liedtke, Head of Strategic Alliances at KUKA, stressed how pandemic increased awareness of the importance of digitisation. He underlined that digitalisation requires cooperation. In Mr Liedtke's view, the keys to successful digitalisation are to integrate all people engaged and reduce complexity. Easy-to-use is a key factor to gain acceptance of the technology. Mr Liedtke added that digitalisation will lead us to the next level of production efficiency, but it will not cut the yearly costs or double the savings. In order to succeed in digitalisation, we should go for the low hanging fruits - new projects, promote data sharing, ecosystems.

Elena Santiago Cid, Director General of CEN and CENELEC, highlighted that European standards have always been an important player in supporting the European Single Market in ensuring fair competition and enabling market transformation both green and digital. Nowadays, a standardisation system is of paramount importance to address the challenges in the digital market and the European industry needs standards that would enable interoperability and trust in the market and contribute to innovation-friendly legislation. Ms Santiago Cid stressed out three points on how the EU standardization system can enable a fair and sustainable Single Market: 1) Through the continuous engagement of the EU industries. Europe needs experts that are willing and motivated to develop market-driven solutions to meet current and future needs.; 2) Policymakers and regulators at the EU and national level, EU standardization bodies and industries should cooperate closely.; 3) Collaboration with the International standardisation bodies, as the pandemic has made clear that global market access is fundamental for a quick response to a crisis.



Elena Santiago Cid, CEN and CENELEC

Dr Thomas Schneider, Managing Director R&D at TRUMPF, stressed that the upcoming technology would improve the way customers do manufacturing. Dr Schneider highlighted that this is a transformation journey for both OEMs and customers, and that collaboration is a crucial factor in order to successfully implement digital solutions. Dr Schneider emphasised that 80% of TRUMPF customers are SMEs companies and that one of the key things is to bring Artificial Intelligence (AI) down to the shop floor. According to Dr Schneider, co-creation and collaborations (e.g., partnerships with engineering and universities) can make a difference. It is a win-win if we accept that the AI is the only embedded system within our domain expertise. We need to bring together AI and the knowledge of our workers, that should be a starting point of a new ecosystem, concluded Dr Schneider.



Dr Thomas Schneider, TRUMPF

To succeed in the circular economy, it is not enough only to optimise companies in the production chain, instead, a collective and structured approach is needed, the speakers concluded. They stated that collaboration and data sharing are the first steps in spreading the technology across the industrial landscape. For enabling technology innovation, the policy should support partnerships and training and education programmes to tap into the full potential of digital factories of tomorrow, both audience and speakers concluded.



Drawing, EU Industry Days