



# 11th EUROPEAN INNOVATION SUMMIT

Implementing Horizon Europe: From Policy to Impact

3 - 6 February 2020 | European Parliament | Brussels

knowledge4innovation  
K4I Forum of the European Parliament

Dinner Debate in cooperation with  
the partners of the **SmartPilots Project**



**Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant** and the **Department for Economy, Science and Innovation of the Flanders Region** (Belgium)

**Bioprocess Pilot Facility** and **The Province of South-Holland** (The Netherlands)

**VTT Bioruukki** (Finland)

**Innovhub**, Lombardy Region (Italy)



INNOVHUB  
STAZIONI SPERIMENTALI  
PER L'INDUSTRIA

## SmartPilots Final Event: Boost European bio-economy innovation deployment by smart interregional cooperation

Co-hosted by MEPs Victor Negrescu and Sirpa Pietikäinen

Tuesday, 4 February 2020 | 19:00 – 21:00

Members' Salon | European Parliament | Brussels

### Target audience

Policy advisors; Policy makers; Regional authorities; Regional Development Agencies; Directorates General of the European Commission with a focus on innovation, (circular) bio-economy, environment, economic growth, SMEs and interregional cooperation; Pilot facilities; Relevant European Technology Platforms; National Contact Points; the Vanguard Initiative; etc.

### Aim

SmartPilots, an INTERREG Europe project, has brought together the six leading European Shared Pilot Facilities in the field of bio-economy and their regional authorities with the aim to improve (regional) policies in support of shared pilot facilities. Based on the thorough analysis of the different business models of the facilities involved, and the support measures offered (best practices) or not (gaps) by their respective regional authorities, **the consortium will present a number of proposed and implemented policy recommendations to encourage interregional collaboration in support of impactful and more efficient bioeconomy piloting.**

The recommendations and improved regional policies focus on:

- Optimizing support for shared pilot facilities and their users



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- Facilitating interregional cooperation

*Bio-economy is an important global tool that offers significant opportunities for sustainable economic growth in Europe. Shared pilot facilities allow industry to bring bioeconomy innovations from the laboratory into industrial practice. They are open to all companies and research institutes as shared investments in a wide range of innovative, state-of-the-art equipment and expertise. Early stage collaboration with such facilities substantially lowers the financial risk for the innovating company and speeds up the commercialization of their new product or process.*

*Typically, large-scale innovation infrastructures have very high initial cost and then require further investment and maintenance costs. Therefore, supporting innovation policies on the regional, as well as the European level, is of utmost importance to safeguard the long-term existence of these innovation accelerators.*

## Programme

- 19:00 – 19:10 **Welcome**  
**Victor Negrescu**, Member of the European Parliament  
**Sirpa Pietikäinen**, Member of the European Parliament
- 19:10 – 19:20 **Introduction by Interreg Europe**  
**Erwin Siweris**, Interreg Europe Programme Director
- 19:20 – 19:30 **SmartPilots project and policy recommendations**  
**Katrien Molders**, Coordinator SmartPilots Project and Communication Manager Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant, Belgium
- 19:30 – 19:40 **SME testimonial on collaboration with a pilot facility**  
**Paul Decraemer**, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Inbiose
- 19:40 – 19:50 **A voucher system for interregional cooperation in a region hosting a pilot facility**  
**Iskra Nikolova**, Policy Officer, Province of South-Holland, The Netherlands
- 19:50 – 20:00 **Innodriver: A voucher system for interregional cooperation in a region not hosting a pilot facility**  
**Ilaria Bonetti**, Senior Project Manager at Innovhub SSI and representing the Lombardy Region, Italy
- 20:00 – 20:50 **Interactive Panel Discussion: How can Europe and the Regions work better together to stimulate interregional cooperation?**
- Moderator: **Willem Sederel**, Board Member Biobased Delta and Chair Biobased Circular Business Platform
- Panel member 1: **Katja Reppel**, Deputy Head of Unit 'Smart and Sustainable Growth', DG REGIO, European Commission,  
Intro (5 min): Bio-economy investments in the future Cohesion Policy
- Panel member 2: **Hilde Vermeulen**, Policy Officer, Department of Economy, Science and Innovation of the Flanders Region  
Intro (5 min): Interregional innovation projects and plans in Flanders
- Panel member 3: **Erwin Siweris**, Interreg Europe
- Panel member 4: **Wim Soetaert**, CEO Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant
- Panel member 5: **Ilaria Bonetti**, representing Lombardy Region, Italy
- Panel member 6: **Paul Decraemer**, Inbiose
- 20:50 – 21:00 **Summary and Closure**



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## Speakers

### Host

**Victor Negrescu**, *MEP*

**Sirpa Pietikäinen**, *MEP*

### Speakers

**Erwin Siweris**, *Interreg Europe Programme Director*

**Katrien Molders**, *Coordinator SmartPilots Project and Communication Manager Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant*

**Paul Decraemer**, *Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Inbiose*

**Iskra Nikolova**, *Policy Officer, Province of South-Holland*

**Ilaria Bonetti**, *Senior Project Manager at Innovhub SSI and representing the Lombardy Region, Italy*

**Willem Sederel**, *Board Member Biobased Delta and Chair Biobased Circular Business Platform*

**Katja Reppel**, *Deputy Head of Unit 'Smart and Sustainable Growth', DG REGIO, European Commission*

**Hilde Vermeulen**, *Policy Officer, Department of Economy, Science and Innovation of the Flanders Region*

**Wim Soetaert**, *CEO Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant*

## Speaker's Biography



### Victor Negrescu

*MEP*

Victor Negrescu is a Member of the European Parliament active in the field of education, digital innovation and entrepreneurship.

Former Romanian Minister for EU Affairs in charge with the preparation of the EU Council Presidency, former MEP, vice-rector of the most influential school of governance in Romania, the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, and digital innovator, the newly elected member of the European Parliament after Brexit seeks to promote actively European innovation.



### Erwin Siweris

*Interreg Europe Programme Director*

Erwin is responsible for the overall programme management and relation to the programme governance institutions (the Partner States, the Hauts-de-France Region as Managing Authority, the European Commission etc.).

He is also in charge of managing the secretariat's team of 31 members.

He has experience in managing finances for the transnational programmes INTERREG IIC and IIB Baltic Sea Region in Rostock, Germany; and two years with the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel, Germany, advising SMEs about EU funding schemes.

Erwin was Deputy Programme Manager in the INTERREG IIIC West and the INTERREG IVC Programme.

He holds a diploma in Political Economics and Banking and has worked as a consultant in political economics.



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## Abstract of speech

Interreg Europe is a programme at the heart of the EU cohesion policy, helping to improve regional development policies and singularly Structural Funds. Interreg Europe currently supports 258 projects fostering interregional exchange of experience, with 322 million euros allocated to the different projects.

65 projects tackles research and innovation issues, and 12 more specifically on research infrastructures. Smart Pilots can already showcase interesting results, for example in the better support of bio economy shared facilities by the Flemish government, and more generally a greater integration of these facilities in the Flemish and European innovation ecosystem. So far, EUR 5,190,400.00 (mostly ERDF) have been influenced thanks to the project.

Finally, Interreg Europe also supports its projects and innovation actors by promoting the services offered by its Policy Learning Platform (on-site experts peer reviews, workshops, policy briefs) and by cooperating with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the S3 thematic platforms (S3P) on industrial modernization, energy and agri-food.



### Katrien Molders

*Coordinator SmartPilots Project and Communication Manager Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant*

Katrien Molders is Communication Manager at the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant (Ghent, Belgium), a pilot facility for process development, scale-up and custom manufacturing of biobased products and processes. She takes care of all communication related issues for BBEPP and is currently also coordinating the Pilots4U and SmartPilots projects. Being convinced that a shift to a sustainable bio-based economy will attract sustainable investments, create sustainable jobs and address the societal challenges Europe is facing, Mrs. Molders actively engages in communicating the role and the impact of pilot facilities in enabling such a transition by i.a. reaching out to regional, national and European policy makers as well as EU citizens.

Katrien Molders received a Master of Science degree in BioSciences at Ghent University. After working for a few years as a commercial profile in private companies, she understood her true passion is all about supporting and communicating the implementation of scientific innovations for the creation of a more sustainable society. Prior to her position at BBEPP, she worked for the Institute for Plant Biotechnology for Developing Countries (now called International Plant Biotechnology Outreach), The European Plant Science Organisation and the MELISSA project run by the European Space Agency.

### Paul Decraemer

*Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Inbiose*



Paul joined Inbiose as CFO shortly after the foundation of the company. He is closely involved in the set-up of corporate partnerships and fundraising processes.

Paul has a background of more than 20 year in investing in innovative European companies with technology as competitive advantage. He was one of the first European venture capitalists actively investing in green and sustainable technology companies.

## Abstract of speech

Inbiose has developed a unique fermentation based technology platform suitable for the industrial manufacturing of specialty carbohydrates. Inbiose's flagship products are human milk oligosaccharides that have been shown to positively influence the gut microbiome, modulate the immune system and help to protect against pathogens. More information on [www.inbiose.com](http://www.inbiose.com).

Our experiences in working with pilot plants will be shared during the speech.



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**Iskra Nikolova**

*Policy Officer, Province of South-Holland*

Iskra is policy officer, working for the province of Zuid-Holland, department Economic Affairs, team Science & Innovation since August 2018 and holds a MSc in Urban Development from the University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

She ensures the region's innovation fund is spent on projects according to the current policy programs. She coordinates the development of the Smart Specialisation Strategies and the new Operational Programme for the period 2021-2027. Recently she became a policy advisor for aerospace for the region of Zuid-Holland.

## Abstract of speech

The province of Zuid-Holland operates on behalf of the community of Zuid-Holland. In our society there are social challenges which run parallel to cross-border obstacles and chances. Our extensive international networks, expertise of lobby and knowledge of European subsidies contribute to reaching common goals. Within the complex European system, we form alliances between European and Zuid-Holland partners in order to support them in solving mutual challenges.

As partner of SmartPilots, PZH implemented a Smart Specialization action to improve the PZH innovation ecosystem towards interregional cooperation around existing pilot infrastructure bundling knowledge for scale up. SmartPilots provided insight in direct and indirect support mechanisms for sustainable business modelling for infrastructure investment in biobased pilot a demonstration plants and its operationalization, in line with smart specialization strategies of the partner regions, not to duplicate existing infrastructures but to cooperate. Investments and regional innovation subsidies should also be complemented with financial mechanisms (equity,) to de-risk industrial deployment. Pilot plants should provide easier and affordable access to biobased SMEs for their scale up: effective direct and indirect support to pilot facilities are fee-based and grant mechanisms such as clusters, vouchers (for pilot projects), also open for to actors of other regions.



**Ilaria Bonetti**

*Senior Project Manager at Innovhub SSI and representing the Lombardy Region, Italy*

Senior Project Manager at Innovhub SSI since 2004, she is responsible for setting up and management of information and assistance services to SMEs on various EU issues.

She has experience in European projects management of several European and international programmes such as: Horizon 2020, 7th and 6th Framework Programme; Culture 2000; Life Environment; transregional co-operation - Interreg scheme (Interreg Europe, Central Europe); R&D projects for benefit of SMEs.

She is Head of Innovation and Projects Area of Innovhub SSI which offers a wide range of information, support and assistance services such as:

- Information on EU subjects;
- Support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for Community legislation application (e.g. products labeling, CE marking, product standards...);
- Information on national, regional and EU funding possibilities, with particular attention to innovation and technology transfer;
- Assistance and support in the analysis of companies' investment projects, to select appropriate funding opportunities and to prepare the funding applications;
- Coaching companies in their innovation processes;
- Assistance to companies for partners' search abroad, to support businesses and/or research centers in their innovation and development processes and international cooperation networks.

In bioeconomy, she is actively involved in several initiatives both at regional and international level; she is Member of the board of 2 Regional clusters on green economy and smart manufacturing and cooperates with the Regional Government for the bioeconomy and circular economy initiatives developed locally.



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## Willem Sederel

*Board Member Biobased Delta and Chair Biobased Circular Business Platform*

Willem Sederel is a chemical engineer and polymer scientist from the University of Technology Twente in Enschede (NL). He completed his education cum laude and did a post doc on biomedical materials at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1977 he started his industrial career with Shell in Amsterdam, and then moved to General Electric where he fulfilled global leadership roles in process, product and application development and marketing. His last role before retiring from his 36 year career in Industry was global innovation leader with SABIC. Willem joined the Biobased Delta in 2013 as director and chairman. Since April 2016 he is responsible for the international activities within the Board.

Willem is also the founding father of the Green Chemistry Campus in Bergen op Zoom that opened in September 2011 as a Biobased Incubator for SME.

From 2015-2017 he was the chairman of the Biorenewables Business Platform in the Netherlands. He is currently member of the Advisory Board of Biorizon (NL) and CLIB (D)



## Katja Reppel

*Deputy Head of Unit 'Smart and Sustainable Growth', DG REGIO, European Commission*

Deputy Head of the Unit in charge of the competence centre for smart and sustainable growth of the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy.

Senior EU policy expert with over 20 years of experience in different European and national organisations.

Main fields of expertise: research, innovation, SME competitiveness, digital economy, education policy, smart specialisation, gender equality, State aid and synergies between different EU funding instruments related to smart growth.

## Abstract of speech

Cohesion Policy addresses the issue of bio-economy under three different angels:

- **Research and innovation to develop innovative solutions and products:** a very substantial number of regions have identified bio-economy related smart specialization priorities, addressing a wide range of specific issues like low-carbon, green growth, sustainable agriculture, innovative food production, green chemistry, eco-innovation and circular economy or blue growth.
- **Economic transformation,** in particular in the sense of fostering new business opportunities for SMEs and start-ups, and the take-up of innovations, for instance related to resource efficiency or circular economy.
- **Teaming up regions to develop value chains for the bio-economy:** to speed up innovation and match complementary capacities along value chains, Cohesion Policy runs since 2017 pilots testing via thematic partnerships how the future new instrument for interregional innovation investments should be designed.

Cohesion Policy is a key element in implementing the Green Deal and helping to make the necessary transitions just also from a social perspective, so that no region is left behind.



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## Hilde Vermeulen

*Policy Officer, Department of Economy, Science and Innovation of the Flanders Region*

Hilde is policy advisor of the department Economy, Science and Innovation, Flemish government since December 2006. She is Belgian delegate in the programme committee responsible for the Horizon2020 work programs 'Innovation and SMEs' and 'Access to Risk Finance'. She has experience as partner of a number of EU projects of the interreg and R&D framework programs in different areas of SME innovation policy. She was Belgian Sherpa for the High Level Group GEAR2030 (EU automotive industry).

She holds a master degree and a specialization in Applied Economics at KULeuven, where she was 5 years research assistant in the area of innovation and clusters. She also worked at Idea Consultant and as sector advisor for the Belgian industry federation Agoria.

## Abstract of speech

Department EWI is the regional authority for research and innovation policy. As partner of SmartPilots, EWI implemented a Smart Specialisation action to improve the Flanders innovation ecosystem towards interregional cooperation around existing pilot infrastructure bundling knowledge for scale up. SmartPilots provided insight in direct and indirect support mechanisms for sustainable business modelling for infrastructure investment in biobased pilot and demonstration plants and its operationalization, in line with smart specialization strategies of the partner regions, not to duplicate existing infrastructures but to cooperate. ERDF funded investments and regional innovation subsidies should also be complemented with financial mechanisms (equity,...) to derisk industrial deployment. Pilot plants should provide easier and affordable access to biobased SMEs for their scale up : effective direct and indirect support to pilot facilities are fee-based and grant mechanisms such as clusters, vouchers (for pilot projects), also open for to actors of other regions.

In preparation of post2020 programmes, Flanders participated in 6 interregional innovation partnerships (a.o. Circular and Bioeconomy) for the DG Regio Pilot action on interregional innovation investments and thematic smart specialization platforms. Objective is on EU regions based on their priority areas jointly invest in European value chains.



## Wim Soetaert

*CEO Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant*

Prof. Wim Soetaert holds a degree in chemical and biochemical engineering and did a PhD in bioengineering at Ghent University.

Prof. Wim Soetaert currently heads the Centre of Expertise for Industrial Biotechnology and Biocatalysis (InBio.be) at Ghent University, Faculty of BioScience Engineering. InBio is active in the areas of industrial biotechnology, biocatalysis, fermentation science and engineering and counts about 20 people. [www.inbio.be](http://www.inbio.be)

He is the founder and chairman of Flanders Biobased Valley, a public private partnership to promote the development of biobased activities in the Ghent area in Belgium. Since its creation in 2005, Ghent Bio-Energy Valley has quickly grown into one of the main growth centers for the biobased economy in Europe, with over 500 Million euros already invested in the port of Ghent. [www.fbbv.be](http://www.fbbv.be)

Prof. Wim Soetaert is also the director of the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant, an open innovation Pilot Plant for biobased products and processes based in Ghent. Within the framework of an Interreg project, over 21 Million euros have been invested in Bio Base Europe so far. [www.bbeu.org](http://www.bbeu.org)

Prof. Wim Soetaert is the founder and executive chairman of Inbiose, a spin-off company of Ghent University that is producing speciality carbohydrates through industrial biotechnology. [www.inbiose.com](http://www.inbiose.com)

During his earlier career, Wim Soetaert has worked as a research director in Germany and France, for the sugar group Pfeifer & Langen and the wheat processing company Chamtor.