

SUPEERA Final Event

AGENDA

Date WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023
Time 14:00 – 18:00 CEST
Location Online and physical at University Carlos III of Madrid, Puerta de Toledo

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| 14:00 – 14:05 | Welcome to SUPEERA final event | Adel El Gammal <i>Secretary General, EERA</i> |
| 14:05 – 14:20 | Official opening by European Commission | Hélène Chraye <i>Head of Unit, Clean Planet, DG RTD, European Commission</i> |
| 14:20 – 14:55 | Opening speeches by Spanish Government representatives | Teresa Riesgo , <i>Secretary General, Innovation, Ministry of Science and Innovation</i> Gonzalo Arevalo , <i>Director General, Research Planning, Secretary General for Research, Ministry of Science and Innovation</i> |
| 14:55 - 15:10 | Key outcomes of SUPEERA | Ivan Matejak , <i>SUPEERA Coordinator, EERA</i> |
| EERA role in the execution of the revised SET Plan | | |
| 15:10 – 16:00 | Bringing R&I and industry together for innovation uptake (Moderator: Berta Güell Matas, SINTEF) | Francesco Matteucci , <i>Programme Manager, European Innovation Council</i> Ricardo Sánchez , <i>Concentrated Solar Power Joint Programme Coordinator, EERA and PSA</i> Michael Geyer , <i>Managing Director, Malta Inc.</i> |
| Coffee break | | |
| 16:15 – 17:00 | Engaging EU13 Countries in the execution of the SET Plan (Moderator: Spyridon Pantelis, EERA) | Venizelos Efthymiou , <i>PANTERA coordinator, FOSS, University of Cyprus</i> Aurelija Povilaikė , <i>Head of Lithuanian National Contact Point group</i> Mariya Trifonova , <i>Assistant Professor, Department of Industrial Economics and Management, University of Sofia</i> |
| 17:00 – 17:45 | R&I and policymaking: aligning priorities on Net Zero Industry Act | Cecilia Serrano-Piedecasas , <i>Policy officer, DG Grow, European Commission</i> |



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| | (Moderator: Maria Oksa, VTT) | Àngels Orduña , <i>Executive Director, A.SPIRE</i> Pieter Vingerhoets , <i>Expert Energy & Climate Strategy, EnergyVille VITO</i> |
| 17:45 – 18:00 | Concluding remarks | Ivan Matejak , <i>SUPEERA Coordinator, EERA</i> |
| 18:00 | End of SUPEERA event | |

The [SUPEERA](#) final event marked the culmination of the SUPEERA project, a significant undertaking that has been at the core of the European Energy Research Alliance's (EERA) activities for the past three years. The event was held on Wednesday, 14th June 2023, at the [University Carlos III of Madrid, Puerta de Toledo](#). With representatives from the European Commission and the Spanish government, it brought together 125 participants from around Europe, 53 physically and 72 virtually, to discuss the key outcomes of SUPEERA and shed light on the EERA's role in executing the [Strategic Energy Technology Plan \(SET Plan\)](#).

The panel discussions held during the event focused on three key themes, including "Bringing R&I and industry together for innovation uptake", "Engaging EU13 Countries in the execution of the SET Plan", and "R&I and policymaking: aligning priorities".

Welcome to SUPEERA final event

Adel El Gammal Secretary General, EERA emphasised the significance of the SUPEERA project in producing relevant deliverables for the revamping of the SET Plan and it's important contribution as a link between energy research and the European policy priorities. He expressed his gratitude for the presence at this final event of key dignitaries, including *Hélène Chraye, Head of Unit, Clean Planet, DG RTD, European Commission*, *Teresa Riesgo, Secretary General, Innovation, Ministry of Science and Innovation*, and *Gonzalo Arevalo, Director General, Research Planning, Secretary General for Research, Ministry of Science and Innovation of Spain*. With these introductory remarks, the stage was set for engaging discussions and knowledge exchange around the main outcomes of SUPEERA project.



Hélène Chraye *Head of Unit, Clean Planet, DG RTD, European Commission* praised SUPEERA for its role in coordinating clean energy research in the EU. She highlighted its contributions in establishing a collaboration framework, showcasing collaborative research, mobilising EU13 Member States, and accelerating technology adoption. She noted that DG RTD is finalising communication on revamping the SET Plan, focusing on aligning objectives, increasing political visibility, and funding, and addressing cross-cutting issues. Hélène emphasised also EERA's involvement in the future structure of the SET Plan to support cross-cutting dialogue across all technological domains. She finally invited EERA to participate in the [SET Plan Conference](#) in Barcelona on 13-14 November 2023.



Teresa Riesgo, *Secretary General, Innovation, Ministry of Science and Innovation of Spain* recognised the SET Plan as a comprehensive guide for the advancement of research centres, technology, and companies. She emphasised that Spain is actively participating in the SET Plan, point to the solar platforms in Almeria as a concrete example of Spain's engagement in R&I endeavours. In conclusion, she extended an invitation

to the audience to attend the SET Plan Conference, underscoring Spain's commitment to embracing challenges and viewing them as opportunities.

Gonzalo Arevalo, *Director General, Research Planning, Secretary General for Research, Ministry of Science and Innovation of Spain* highlighted the energy challenge as a focus for the [Spanish Presidency](#). Their key objectives are to advance the integration of scientific evidence-based knowledge, analyse the impact of recovery and resilience plans on research and innovation investments, and facilitate discussions on the SET Plan. As a closing note, Gonzalo expressed his gratitude to the EERA community for their contributions and collaboration.

Key outcomes of SUPEERA





Ivan Matejak, *SUPEERA Coordinator*, *EERA* provided an overview of the key outcomes of SUPEERA highlighting that all this work will set the basis for future activities in all these three main working areas of the project. He shared statistics and highlighted how SUPEERA facilitated the execution of the SET Plan, along with the presentation of EERA's latest publication: [Manifesto](#). He shared statistics and highlighted how SUPEERA facilitated

the execution of the SET Plan, along with the presentation of EERA's latest publication: EERA [Manifesto](#). He also provided information about the mobilisation of public R&I resources in the EU13 countries. He also provided information about the mobilisation of public R&I resources in the EU13 countries, noting that a total of nine workshops were organised across these countries, generating various outcomes and findings which will be gathered in the related final report. To conclude and set the stage for the panel discussion, he presented the second topic of SUPEERA on accelerating innovation and industry uptake inviting the speakers to delve into these two important topics.

Bringing R&I and industry together for innovation uptake

Francesco Matteucci, *Programme Manager*, *European Innovation Council (EIC)* provided an overview of the EIC's role within the Horizon Europe program. Francesco emphasised the importance of enhancing collaboration between the EERA research community and industry, suggesting to connect them with EIC program managers to facilitate discussions on bridging the gap between the scientific community and industry. Additionally, he highlighted the role of existing initiatives like the [EIC Multicorporate Day on ConTech](#) in fostering the development and promotion of strategic ideas that align with industry requirements within the research community.

Ricardo Sánchez, *the Joint Programme Coordinator for Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) at EERA and PSA*, delved into the collaboration between the [EERA JP CSP](#) with industry and other stakeholders at both national and European levels. Ricardo highlighted the main barriers to cooperation with industry, including issues of confidentiality, work pace, and the lack of commercial power plant projects. He emphasised the importance of partnerships within the SET Plan, highlighting that the European Commission has specifically



requested to the Joint Programme CSP to enhance their partnership with the Implementation Working Group of Photovoltaics.



Michael Geyer, the Managing Director of *Malta Inc.*, highlighted the importance of collaboration between industry and research institutes. He shared the story of [Malta Inc.](#), company that has created a unique energy storage system capable of collecting and storing energy from different sources like wind and solar power. The fund behind this idea contributed to financing a study aimed at assessing the applicability of advanced modularisation

techniques and their impact on the optimisation and rapid deployment of Malta's energy storage system (PHES). By addressing the energy storage challenge, which is one of the main hurdles in the transition to a more sustainable energy system, the collaboration between Malta Inc. and the research centres brought together academic expertise in civil engineering and construction with industry-specific experience, thus accelerating the implementation of innovative thermal energy storage solutions.

Panel discussion



During the panel discussion, **Michael Geyer** emphasised that the majority of contributions throughout the implementation of [Malta Project](#) in terms of conducting test, providing facilities expertise as well as utilising available resources come from Europe, but, the first pilot project originated in the United States. He acknowledged that undertaking such a project within the EU would be feasible but the challenges lie in the fact that many

stakeholders in Europe are reluctant to take risks and venturing into the startup ecosystem. He acknowledged that undertaking such a project within the EU would be feasible but the challenges lie in the fact that many stakeholders in Europe are reluctant to take risks and venturing into the startup ecosystem. In this context **Francesco Matteucci** raised a concern regarding the evaluation of European researchers which is mainly focused on the publication of papers as the sole Key Performance Indicators (KPI). In this context **Francesco Matteucci** raised a concern regarding the evaluation of European researchers which is mainly focused on scientific publications as the sole Key Performance Indicators (KPI). To change this approach and to solve the discrepancy between USA and Europe, he highlighted the need to consider other



indicators to evaluate the work of researchers, such as societal impact, collaborations, innovative ideas, patents, and successful entrepreneurial ventures. At this point **Francesco** shared valuable tips for those interested in applying to the funding scheme of the EIC. He emphasised the importance of having strong, high-tech ideas as a crucial factor for success, suggesting that applicants should learn from existing EIC funding beneficiaries and engaging with the EIC itself, to seek guidance. Lastly, he suggested the potential applicants to be provide a clear, and detail assessment about their funding requirements and determine the necessary investment. **Ricardo Sánchez** shared the same vision of Francesco Matteucci regarding the evaluation of researchers. **Ricardo's** point highlighted the need for a more holistic and diversified approach to evaluate researchers, one that takes into account a broader range of factors, including but not limited to publications.

Engaging EU13 Countries in the execution of the SET Plan



In the second session, **Spyridon Pantelis**, *Project Manager at EERA*, highlighted the limited participation of EU13 countries in the SET Plan's Implementation Working Groups (IWGs), along with the major causes and challenges behind this fact. He presented some key outcomes of a recent research on the impact of Widening Pillar of Horizon Europe Programme and how WIDERA programme could be improved. He concluded

with some recommendations that would enable a higher involvement of actors from EU13 countries, stating that we need a paradigm shift: to empower EU13 countries instead of just supporting them.

Venzelos Efthymiou *PANTERA coordinator, FOSS, University of Cyprus* explained that effective communication with local policymakers to align the national priorities of the EU13 countries with the European agenda is crucial. He stressed also the importance for EU13 countries to participate in European partnerships, and facilitate the alignment of national strategies with the SET Plan, and respective EU policies. Such collaborative processes can be facilitated by digital tools, such as the [EIRE platform](#). Additionally, he suggested that joining consortia with actors from EU14 countries, combining local elements, and leveraging the competitive advantages of the EU13 countries, would foster increased engagement and participation.

Aurelija Povilaikė *Head of Lithuanian National Contact Point group*, shared insights from Lithuania's experience in its engagement in Horizon program. She noted that to improve Lithuania's performance in Horizon, the Lithuanian government requested to transfer €18.5 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to Horizon Europe for the upcoming program period. She noted that to improve Lithuania's performance in Horizon, the government requested to transfer €18.5 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to Horizon Europe for the



upcoming programme period. This enabled the Lithuanian NCP to concentrate its efforts on actively supporting EU funding applicants. She also mentioned the importance of the [Lithuanian Research Development and Innovation Liaison Office in Brussels \(LINO\)](#) which provides further assistance in monitoring, analysing the development of EU research and innovation policy to the Lithuanian NCP. Aurelija emphasised that NCPs networks in EU-13 countries can play a vital role in enhancing Horizon engagement. Finally, the importance of learning from other countries' experiences, investing in creating transparency, and providing clear structures for stakeholders' involvement was also highlighted.

Mariya Trifonova, *Assistant Professor, Department of Industrial Economics and Management, University of Sofia*, presented the obstacles faced by Sofia University in the context of industry decarbonisation and energy transition. These obstacles included mismatched national research priorities with EU funding objectives, limited project development knowledge, difficulties in work package coordination, and limited representation of Bulgarian academic institutions in consortium building. Mariya shared strategies implemented by [Sofia University](#), such as appointing administrative officials responsible for project coordination, establishing project screening processes, creating databases for proposal submissions, and fostering collaborations with industry.

Panel discussion

During the panel discussion, the speakers exchanged valuable insights regarding the engagement of the EU13 countries in the SET Plan. **Venizelos** emphasised the crucial link between the SET Plan and the representatives of the Steering Group. While all the speakers shared a common vision on that, **Mariya** highlighted that for Bulgaria, only one priority is listed in the SET Plan, which, however, does not fully reflect the significant



efforts of the University of Sofia. According to her, this discrepancy is primarily due to the lack of a centralised approach, which is an essential element for increasing country's involvement in the Plan. The fundamental need for centralisation was also evident in Lithuania, as **Aurelija** pointed out that their active contribution may not be adequately recognised, despite significant efforts on the ground. This highlights the necessity for a centralised coordination within the SET Plan, incorporating mechanisms to engage with the SET Plan strategy, conduct mapping exercises, and foster connections between national priorities and SET Plan.



R&I and policymaking: aligning priorities on Net Zero Industry Act

In the last session of the final event of SUPEERA, **Maria Oksa** introduced the state of play of [Net Zero Industry Act \(NZIA\)](#), which establishes the framework of measures for innovating and scaling up the manufacturing capacity of net-zero technologies. She also introduced the [Regulatory Sandboxes](#), made to simplify the regulatory framework of NZIA and to support the scaling up of net-zero manufacturing technologies in the EU. In conclusion, she invited representatives from the Commission, research, and industry sectors to share their perspectives on the NZIA.

Cecilia Serrano-Piedecasas, *Policy officer, DG Grow, European Commission*, reminded that for years Europe had been dependent on Russian gas, and is currently a net importer of clean technology. Increased electrification poses therefore a risk of substituting one dependency with another. The NZIA is a unique opportunity to address this, and to secure industry leadership in the advancing net-zero technology sector, a global market that is foreseen to grow very quickly. The NZIA will send strong signals to facilitate funding and investments, with the goal of scaling up European cleantech manufacturing. Projects targeting net-zero technologies, public procurement of such technologies, and the establishment of net-zero industrial academies are mentioned as tools for achieving this goal. Building connections with companies is also crucial, and will be facilitated through regulatory sandboxes, which will ensure the safe and efficient development of new technologies. Overall, the NZIA also rests on providing simplification with the establishment of clear timelines, one-stop shops, and single contacts, as well as “net-zero strategic projects” which will benefit from even faster funding and permitting processes.



Àngels Orduña, *Executive Director, A.SPIRE*, provided valuable insights into [P4Planet programme](#), the successor to the Horizon 2020 SPIRE, partnership between European Commission and the A.SPIRE. She gave an overview on the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda of this partnership (SRIA 2050) and the three ambitions which have been identified, as response of the main three challenges in

Europe: high impact of climate; linear use of the resources; and the global competitiveness. She also presented the pioneering large scale plants “FOAKs” which are unique in that they are the first of their kind, implementing new technologies on a significant scale. She explained they serve as platforms for testing the innovative processes, equipment, enabling evaluation of their performance, efficiency, and overall impact of the new programme.



Pieter Vingerhoets, *Expert in Energy & Climate Strategy at EnergyVille VITO*, shed light on the [REPowerEU initiative](#). He pointed out that while it is often referred to as a plan, it is a collection of ambitious goals that is lacking a concrete implementation strategy. He highlighted challenges related to manufacturing capacity, such as wind turbines. These concerns contribute to investment uncertainty within the industry, while the absence of dedicated funding and the lack of explicit mention in the Net Zero Act, exacerbate the problem. **Pieter** also argued that the overall tone of the document is misleading, stressing the importance of the need for strategic decisions about which industries should be retained within Europe for strategic reasons and which ones could be imported. In conclusion, he emphasised that the true asset of Europe lies in the people. He advocated for consulting Research and Innovation to find appropriate answers and shift the narrative surrounding energy transition.



Panel discussion

During the panel discussion, **Cecilia Serrano-Piedecasas** acknowledged the role of the research community in identifying policy trends and emphasised the importance of collaboration between companies and researchers. She recognised that while the Net Zero Act may not have a strong research focus, the ongoing collaboration and the use of regulatory sandboxes can facilitate better collaboration and innovation.



Àngels Orduña, acknowledging the energy-oriented nature of the Net Zero Act, raised concerns about its lack of complete support for technology from a neutral standpoint in the energy sector. She emphasised that while energy production is crucial, equal importance should be given to energy efficiency and flexible energy use. In terms of the research community within A.SPIRE, **Àngels** highlighted that industry takes the lead but collaborates with researchers across the entire value chain. This collaborative approach ensures comprehensive advancements and innovations within the sector. **Pieter Vingerhoets** expressed his positive view on



the regulatory sandboxes as an important component of the Net Zero Act (NZIA), highlighting the importance of considering Europe as a whole entity rather than individual countries aggressively allocating funds at the national level. He emphasised that the focus should not only be on carbon reduction but also on fundamental principles that ensure a unified approach towards achieving net-zero goals. Overall, the panel discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration between the research community and companies in identifying policy trends. While the Net Zero Act may have limited research focus, ongoing collaboration and regulatory sandboxes were seen as valuable for fostering innovation. Concerns were raised about the act's lack of neutral support for technology in the energy sector.

Conclusion

In his concluding remarks, **Ivan Matejak** expressed sincere gratitude to DG RTD, ENER, and JRC for their trust in this important project and providing continuous support throughout its duration. He also expressed appreciation to the esteemed partner organizations, including CEA, DTU, EERA, KIT, SINTEF, and VTT. It is worth noting that the accomplishments of SUPEERA go beyond the immediate outcomes of the project. They have a broader impact within the EERA community, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and innovation in the revised SET Plan and CET process on a larger scale. Ivan once again expressed heartfelt thanks to everyone for their dedication and support. He eagerly looks forward to the possibility of future collaborations and wishes each individual continued success in their future endeavours.

