



CLUSTERPLAST

Inter-cluster initiative to target the future challenges for the European polymer converting industry

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Executive summary report

Held on September 24th and 25th, 2009, in Tortona and Milan, Italy, the first dissemination event of Clusterplast project embodied the privileged stakeholders' summit of the Polymer Converting and Tooling Industry, under the umbrella "**CLUSTERPLAST | European Tooling Forum Common Initiative**".

Concerned about sustainability and competitiveness and, at the same time, fostering the exploitation of synergies—in line with the project's objectives—the initiative was a joint **Clusterplast Consortium** and **ISTMA-EUROPE** organization (the European section of the International Special Tooling and Machining Association) and comprised a integrated realization of the *CLUSTERPLAST European Intercluster Initiative event & Technical Conference* and, the 2009 edition, of the *European Tooling Forum*.

Under a shared vision of enhancing the basis for sustainability, employment and growth—by promoting and reinforcing Industrial policies and strategies that support a more competitive European Industry—the initiative gathered the Industry's stakeholders in the discussion and highlighting of the Plastic Processing and Tooling value system's importance and strategic positioning in the economic and industrial fabric, towards the launch of proposals, policies and initiatives aiming at the sustainable development of the European Industry.

Tortona, Italy, was the scene for the events of the initiative's first day, congregating the stakeholders to access, apprehend and assess the project's objectives, its first results and the outlooks for the Joint Action Plan, and to further additional contributions and proposals in line with Clusterplast project's aims.

Building on the project's work on the assessment of the European state-of-play, at clusters' level, and on the international benchmarking study, on Japanese and US clusters, and sustaining the presentation of perspectives for the joint plan, the event was developed in straight articulation with the gathering of the Clusterplast's Satellite Group, while also integrating the realization of a technical seminar on "latest trends on moulding temperatures conditioning control".

With over 80 participants, the initiative gathered in its development key Industry's stakeholders from the Business Environment, notably sector's companies and SMEs, from the Research panorama, including leading European Research Centers and Universities, and also local and regional authorities. This first day of the initiative was a key milestone in furthering links and synergies between European clusters, active in the Polymer Converting Industry, towards the generation of joint initiatives leveraging complementarities, best practices and networking within and beyond the consortium. Additionally, the realization of the technical conference also supported the widening of the impact of current R&D efforts and information sharing, in line with project's objectives.

On the second day, Milan was the stage for the European Tooling Forum. Following the success of its first edition, held in Lisbon, in 2007, this Forum congregated the Industry, decision-makers and responsables for national and European public policies, representatives from associations, research centres and universities, together with clients, entrepreneurs and

renowned experts, in an event that is viewed as the summit for the European Tooling Industry.

Counting with the participation of 100 delegates, this edition's programme included the presentation of updated information regarding the Industry's status world wide, communications from the European Tooling Platform, Industry's clients and Toolmakers on development perspectives, the divulging of joint initiatives in the Industry –notably the Clusterplast project–, and the Manufuture's insights on policy challenges and on the EC's measures supporting R&D and sector's Innovation.

From the discussions held, it was evident (1) the strategic positioning and part played by the sector in the wider economic fabric, (2) the key relevance of the work being done at the level of the European Tooling Platform and Manufuture's initiative, and (3) the importance of giving structural support to concerted efforts which would allow companies to be better prepared to face new challenges in the market.

Included on the strategy of **ISTMA Europe** to raise awareness and promote the strategic importance of the Sector in the development and sustainability of the European economy within the political decision-making centres, the alliance with the **Clusterplast consortium** for the edification of the **Clusterplast | European Tooling Forum Joint Initiative**, is the reflex of the partnering and networking priority assumed by both co-organizers.

In recognition of its relevance, **the Clusterplast | European Tooling Forum Joint Initiative** counted with the straight support from the European Tooling Platform and MANUFUTURE, having been participated by delegates from 16 countries¹, from Europe and abroad.

Under the umbrella **Clusterplast | European Tooling Forum Common Initiative** a shared vision was promoted: to push and reinforce Industrial policies and strategies that support an evermore competitive Industry in Europe.

¹ Notably Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

Annexes

1. Information/Dissemination Package **Clusterplast | European Tooling Forum Joint Initiative**

2. Specific CLUSTERPLAST Project Presentations made during the **Clusterplast | European Tooling Forum Common Initiative**

- a) "Clusterplast Project" by Caroline Barnay – Région Rhône-Alpes
- b) "European Clusters: State-of-play" by Elsa Henriques – IST (Engineering and Tooling Cluster)
- c) "International Benchmarking Results" by Patrick Vuillermoz – Plastipolis
- d) "Perspectives for a Joint Action Plan" by Laura Fusani – Proplast
- e) "Joint Activities in the Tooling Industry" by Patrick Vuillermoz - Plastipolis