

# Brussels Hosts High-Level Forum on Innovation and Cooperation in the EU Market



**Brussels, November 26, 2024** – The European Parliament hosted the 2nd European Innovation Partners Networking Forum, a pivotal two-day event that brought together key stakeholders from academia, industry, and public institutions to discuss sustainable innovation, funding opportunities, and collaborative strategies for Europe's economic and technological future. The event, which took place on November 25-26, focused on fostering collaboration between companies, research institutes, and vocational training providers to drive economic growth and innovation. Among the many significant projects presented was SEBCoVE: Smart Electricity for Buildings, which underscored the vital role of cooperation in advancing smart energy solutions and sustainability in the built environment. **[contd. on page 3]**

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## Spanish partners host event in Gipuzkoa

On November 28, SEBCoVE co-organized a landmark event at Usurbilgo Lanbide Eskola in Gipuzkoa, Spain, in collaboration with Zubigune Fundazioa, CONAIF, and Instagi.

The event brought together industry experts, educators, and innovators to explore the transformative impact of smart technologies and the evolving needs of vocational education.

### Event Highlights

- **Inspiring Presentations:** Speakers delved into advanced building automation, renewable energy integration into BAS, and the latest trends in sustainability and energy efficiency.
- **Dynamic Panels:** Discussions focused on aligning regional training frameworks with EU sustainability goals and how VET systems can adapt to an ever-evolving market.
- **Active Participation:** The audience engaged in enriching dialogue, reinforcing SEBCoVE's collaborative spirit.

## IPP: Progress Through Engagement and Strategic Action

From 01/09/2024 to 31/12/2024, SEBCoVE continued making significant strides toward achieving its objectives. During this period, IPP played a key role in advancing Deliverables 3.1 and 2.3. IPP took charge of Deliverable 3.1 - SEBCoVE Knowledge Triangles Roadmap, creating an initial draft of the roadmap. While the full submission is scheduled for February 2025, this early version lays the groundwork for further refinement and completion. Deliverable 2.3 - Competences and Skills Gap merges two distinct reports: Task 2.3 (Competences Gap) and Task 2.4 (Skills Gap). IPP is directly responsible for Task 2.4, having developed and adapted a base template to integrate findings from both tasks. To support this effort, IPP conducted surveys and facilitated focus group interviews to collect valuable insights. The finalized deliverable is on track for submission to the Sygma platform by the end of December 2024.

In addition to these deliverables, IPP actively participated in both general and targeted meetings and maintained its focus on disseminating information through social media channels.





## ECTE's participation in High-Level Forum on Innovation and Cooperation in Brussels

**SEBCoVE: A Model for Collaboration in Smart Energy:** One of the key highlights of the event was the presentation of the SEBCoVE project, which aims to bridge the gap between vocational education, research, and industry by developing new training programs tailored to the evolving needs of the smart building sector. The project showcases how collaboration between educational institutions and enterprises can contribute to workforce upskilling, innovation, and increased competitiveness in the European market. The SEBCoVE project aligns with the European Union's broader objectives of digital and green transformation, addressing the challenges of energy efficiency, smart electricity applications, and workforce development in a rapidly evolving sector. By fostering partnerships between companies and vocational training providers, SEBCoVE is setting a benchmark for how education and industry can work hand in hand to meet the demands of an increasingly smart and interconnected world.

**Forum Highlights: Innovation, Policy, and Human Capital Development:** The forum served as a platform for high-level discussions on EU funding mechanisms, research collaborations, and the transition toward a circular and digital economy. The Dinner Debate at the European Parliament, titled "Circular, Digital, and Green Transition in the EU," provided a space for policymakers, researchers, and business leaders to exchange views on the future of sustainable innovation. Moreover, the Lunch Debate on the second day, focusing on "The Role of EU Funding in Enhancing Human Capital Development," emphasized the importance of investing in skills and training for the future workforce. The session featured insights from industry experts and EU officials on how strategic investments in education and vocational training can boost economic growth and social cohesion across Europe.

**The Future of EU Innovation Partnerships:** As Europe continues to navigate challenges related to sustainability, resource scarcity, and digital transformation, initiatives such as SEBCoVE demonstrate the value of cross-sector collaboration in addressing these pressing issues. The discussions and networking opportunities at the forum reinforced the EU's commitment to fostering an ecosystem of innovation that benefits all stakeholders—entrepreneurs, educational institutions, policymakers, and businesses. With over 50 in-person attendees in Brussels and 200 participants joining online, the event successfully facilitated knowledge exchange and consortium-building for future EU-funded projects. The forum concluded with a Rooftop Reception and Awards Ceremony, celebrating outstanding contributions to research, innovation, and sustainable development.

As the EU looks ahead to 2025-2026 funding opportunities under programs like Horizon Europe and Erasmus+, the outcomes of this forum will play a crucial role in shaping the next wave of research and innovation initiatives. The success of SEBCoVE and similar projects signals a promising future for sustainable energy solutions and workforce development in the European market.

# Skills gap in the SEB sector in Northern Italy – SEBCoVE Italian partners at work

In the framework of the SEBCoVE project three Italian organisations, ENAIP NET, ComoNEXT, and BuildTech, are partnering to investigate the state of the art of the Smart Electricity for Buildings sector, the existing training offer for current and future professionals, and what is missing: the skills the job market is requiring –and will increasingly be.

The partnership covers most of the northern regions of the country, which are also the strongest in terms of industrial fabric and adoption of the new technologies linked with the SEB sector. ENAIP NET is the largest VET provider in Italy, gathering vocational education and training organisations from the Veneto, Lombardy, Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Piedmont regions. ComoNEXT is a Scientific and Technological Park & Innovation Hub, based in Como (Lombardy) and hosting over 140 SMEs promoting, among the others, the transfer of technologies from Universities and R&D centres to the business world.

BuildTech is an engineering company, which is linked to the University of Genova (Liguria), operating in the construction and infrastructure sector with the goal of transferring innovative techniques and products to the world of design and redevelopment to create efficient and comfortable outdoor and indoor spaces with a positive environmental impact. Together the three organizations started to investigate their reference area to outline the strategic skills gaps towards which the SEB CoVE activities will be oriented in the Italian context. Some of the contributions to the skills gaps report highlighted that the cybersecurity and digital literacy profiles linked with the SEB technologies are still quite overlooked in the training offer, when the industry is increasingly requiring professionals equipped with skills to manage interconnected systems, ensure data integrity, and protect the integrated systems against cyber vulnerabilities in building operations.

The desk analysis combined with the results of a survey among VET providers also underlined a need for advanced energy management and optimization skills and for specialized competencies in analyzing energy consumption patterns and implementing sustainable solutions to meet climate goals.

SEB professionals also need to be properly trained in embedding green and circular economy principles in their work, developing skills in conservation, sustainable design, and integrating circular economy practices into building technologies.

Finally, it emerged the need for context-tailored training in different renewable energy implants installation, as renewable sources such as solar and wind energy systems can be a driver for new energetic efficiency and sustainability perspective.

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