



## Dissemination Event

Brussels, 22 March 2024

### *Summary of key points from presentations and discussion*

This event was organised by the European Industrial Alliance on Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) that was launched on 6 February 2024. The Alliance aims to mobilise and establish a closer cooperation among SMR stakeholders to accelerate the development, demonstration, and deployment of SMRs by the early 2030s. The event welcomed over 100 attendees in person, complemented by more than 400 virtual participants, including policy makers, SMR project promoters, industrial leaders, small and medium enterprises, start-ups, financial institutions, civil society & professional organisations, experts and researchers. The event was moderated by Jan Panek, Director in the European Commission for Nuclear Energy, Safety and ITER.

The primary aim of the event was to present the scope, objectives, governance, organisational structure, future activities of the Alliance, as well as to give participants the opportunity to share their expectations from it and to contribute actively towards its objectives. Furthermore, several SMR projects and technologies were briefly introduced, allowing their promoters to present the key challenges they are facing and to express their expectations regarding the role that the Alliance could/should play in streamlining and fostering the collaborative effort of all stakeholders, over the years to come.

When opening the event, Commissioner Simson stressed that we need all the available clean and low-carbon technologies including nuclear. In this context, she highlighted the pivotal role that SMRs could play in the EU's energy transition while enhancing the European Union leadership in this strategical technology. Given the significant challenges involved, such as selecting the appropriate sustainable technologies, developing suitable financial models, and tackling security and sovereignty challenges, the Alliance represents a significant step forward in addressing these societal and strategic needs effectively. Commissioner Simson expects the SMR stakeholders to embrace an ambitious - yet pragmatic - vision to support concrete projects using all available tools at the EU level and to involve in the Alliance activities all interested EU Member States and stakeholders, including civil society representatives.

Commissioner Breton welcomed the launch of the Alliance and stressed the potential of SMRs for our decarbonization, energy security, and competitiveness objectives. In this context, he mentioned four main topics to be addressed by the alliance: i) supporting concrete industry-led SMR projects; ii) focusing on the



need to address both the supply and demand aspects of SMRs simultaneously, noting that a strong and structured demand market is crucial for attracting private and public investors, energy-intensive users, industrial hubs, as well as local municipalities; iii) stating that a robust supply industrial chain is essential for supporting engineering, innovation, and manufacturing in the nuclear sector in the EU; iv) mentioning the role of financial institutions, including the European Investment Bank, in support of these SMR projects. Commissioner Breton expects the Alliance to identify and propose concrete actions and milestones to advance towards these objectives.

Different SMRs projects have presented their status and emphasised their expectations from the alliance, in particular the development of new financial models based on IPCEI (Important Project of Common *European* Interest) or PPP (Public-Private Partnerships) schemes, solid and effective supply chain including fuel and skilled workforce, high level of nuclear safety and other topics key to public acceptance for SMRs projects. Finally, the projects underlined the importance of permitting and siting as key preconditions for developing their projects.

In the opening of the second session of this event, Massimo Garribba, Deputy Director General in the Directorate-General Energy stressed that the fulfilment of the promise of SMRs relies on a strong commitment of technology providers to develop their projects within the next decade without compromising on nuclear safety. He highlighted that realising this vision is not without challenges: deployment of a new technology, development of a supply chain, licencing, human resources, and aspects that we have been so far too slow in addressing. He emphasized as well that SMR deployment in Europe should not only benefit large “historical” companies in the nuclear sector but also help shaping a new European nuclear ecosystem of SMEs. New players, in particular startups, should enter the market. Innovation should be a key driver for success, and this is already reflected in the applications received since the call was opened the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2024.

Yves Desbazeille, the director general of nucleareurope, the nuclear trade association in Europe, provided more information about how the Alliance will be structured and its expected governance. He also highlighted the support of the nuclear industry for the launch of this initiative and reiterated the call for the different companies interested in the SMR technology to apply for membership in the Alliance before 12<sup>th</sup> of April and to be actively involved in its activities. So far around 100 applications from companies representing 22 countries have been received so far, showing a strong interest for the topics that will be covered by the Alliance.

SNETP, the European technological and innovation platform, was represented by its President, Bernard Salha who highlighted the need for focused, substantially and continuously supported research, development and innovation programs to foster collaboration between industries, academia, research centres, technical support organisations and small and medium enterprises, to demonstrate the viability and the sustainability of SMR projects in order to bridge the gap between research and EU industry. This will necessitate intensive collaboration between various stakeholders in the EU and establishing a “win-win” collaboration at the international level, to ensure the appropriate development path, the adequate demonstration, and the safest deployment of the various SMR technologies in the EU.

The event was closed by Commissioner Ivanova who highlighted the crucial role of research and innovation for SMRs’ development towards both safety demonstration and deployment. She recalled the Declaration co-signed by the EC with the nuclear stakeholders, industry, and academia, in April 2023 as a key milestone towards the recognition of the role that SMRs could play for the net-Zero target of the European Union.



She stressed that supporting research for the safety of SMRs to be deployed in the EU by interested member states is of paramount importance for the development and acceptance of these technologies. In the next five years Euratom will support SMRs safety research with more than EUR 30 million through different research projects funded by DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD) and with the direct actions of the Joint Research Centre (JRC). Furthermore, Commissioner Ivanova confirmed the continuous support of the Euratom research to the education and training of young generation to attract and retain the necessary skills and competences that should ensure the highest level of safe deployment of SMRs in the EU this also providing open access to the JRC experimental facilities.

The recording of the event is available on: [European Industrial Alliance on SMRs dissemination event - Streaming Service of the European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-iss/industry/industry-strategy/industrial-alliances/european-industrial-alliance-small-modular-reactors_en)

Further information about the SMR Alliance can be found on the website: [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/industrial-alliances/european-industrial-alliance-small-modular-reactors\\_en](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/industrial-alliances/european-industrial-alliance-small-modular-reactors_en)

