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IMEC Pushes Authorities to Stimulate International Collaborations

Posted by EDA Geek News Staff in Research on Thursday, October 30, 2008

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To increase Europe's microelectronics competitiveness, the Belgian nanoelectronics research center IMEC asks Europe and its governing public authorities to stimulate true cross-border collaborations, not only by setting up networks but also by creating financial means. Only international collaboration will enable Europe to continue to play a competitive role in nanoelectronics and related fields.

The last decade, the research challenges and the associated costs for semiconductor technology have soared. As a result, true joint collaboration with sharing of costs, risks and talents has become indispensable. To remain competitive in a market facing increasing research and economical challenges, companies must think and act on a global scale. From its start, IMEC, located in the small country Belgium, has stimulated such worldwide collaborations, which is witnessed by about 400 residents of more than 55 different countries currently collaborating in IMEC's research programs. Today IMEC is regarded as one of the leading research centers worldwide in this field and a true example of open innovation.

IMEC is involved in numerous EC co-funded research projects that help improving the European competitiveness. In this regard, especially projects in the 7th framework programs (FP7) have been very successful and IMEC continues to be strongly involved, although it hopes the budget for the framework program will be further increased in the future.

IMEC also welcomes the goal of Eureka programs such as CATRENE (cluster for application and technology research in Europe on nanoelectronics). Eureka's goal is to stimulate cross-border collaboration to improve the economic prosperity of Europe and to reinforce the ability of the European industry to be at the forefront of global competition. "This matches our vision of helping to guarantee a competitive position in a global market," said Gilbert Declerck, President and CEO of IMEC. "Therefore, we expect a lot from Eureka and programs like CATRENE, ITEA2 and Celtic. However, at this moment, Eureka is only funded locally, with funds which are mainly meant to support local players within a country or a region, not to stimulate cross-border collaboration between e.g. research organizations in one country and companies in another country. But as the market and the competition has become global, research centers must work together with companies worldwide and borders should not create limitations. Therefore, we call Eureka to set up the means to stimulate true cross-border collaboration with appropriate cross border funding schemes."

With the creation of JTIs (joint technology initiatives) like Artemis and Eniac, Europe had the opportunity to enable real cross-border collaborations. However, the rules and the means – 16.7% from the European Commission for all participants involved in a collaborative project, topped up by local funding for partners of Member States participating in the yearly ENIAC and ARTEMIS calls - are not sufficient to increase the level of European cross-border collaboration. Moreover, it puts companies and institutes located in smaller countries and targeting major activities in a European wide context in a disfavored position compared to entities located in larger countries. IMEC regrets this, and would like to go on strengthening Europe by collaboration that is not limited by country borders. "We will have to get our act together in these very competitive times and implement a true single market for European Research," concludes Gilbert Declerck.

About IMEC

IMEC is a world-leading independent research center in nanoelectronics and nanotechnology. IMEC is headquartered in Leuven, Belgium, has a sister company in the Netherlands, IMEC-NL, offices in the US, China and Taiwan, and representatives in Japan. Its staff of more than 1650 people includes more than 500 industrial residents and guest researchers. In 2007, its revenue (P&L) was EUR 244.5 million. IMEC's More Moore research aims at semiconductor scaling towards sub-32nm nodes. With its More than Moore research, IMEC looks into technologies for nomadic embedded systems,

wireless autonomous transducer solutions, biomedical electronics, photovoltaics, organic electronics and GaN power electronics. IMEC's research bridges the gap between fundamental research at universities and technology development in industry. Its unique balance of processing and system know-how, intellectual property portfolio, state-of-the-art infrastructure and its strong network worldwide position IMEC as a key partner for shaping technologies for future systems.

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- IMEC Promotes Guido Groeseneken and Paul Heremans to Fellow

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