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€100bn 'needs to be invested in European nanoelectronics'

29th November 2012



Two European bodies have called for a significant investment to be made in the continent's nanoelectronics sector by 2020.

In a report published by the Cluster for Application and Technology Research in Europe on Nanoelectronics (CATRENE) and the Association for European Nanoelectronics Activities (AENEAS), it was suggested €100 billion (£81 billion) ought to be spent on establishing "a strategic research and innovation programme" between now and the end of the decade.

Doing so, the paper suggests, would ensure the European nanoelectronics industry can become the dominant force in the global market once more, regaining the lead that is currently held by other regions in the world.

Indeed, it is believed the continent is currently not only "in danger of losing [a] competitive advantage" in nanoelectronics, but also in many sectors that rely on the technology and "demand innovation", including aerospace, telecoms and health.

Putting the development programme in place, however, would improve links between participating industry bodies and academics "to perform leading-edge nanoelectronics research", as well as establish test facilities for state-of-the-art microchip technologies.

The AENEAS and CATRENE report also indicates the nanoelectronics sector requires "an industrial strategy that is firmly aligned" with the objectives of the European Union (EU) and individual member states, with public-private partnerships due to play a key role in financing the project.

"Despite today's climate of austerity, investing in technologies that will sustain Europe throughout the 21st century and solve important societal challenges such as energy efficiency, security and the aging population makes economic sense," CATRENE chairman Enrico Villa notes.

It is thought that if the research programme is implemented annual revenue in the sector will increase by more than €200 billion per year, as well as create some 250,000 direct and indirect jobs across the continent.

Last month, universities and science minister David Willetts told the Daily Telegraph there needs to be a change in EU regulations to drive scientific development across the continent, as the current amount of red tape is curtailing economic growth.

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