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Process R&D

Europe on the wrong track for R&D says EC official

by **David Manners, Paris**

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Europe's electronics R&D is on the wrong track, especially R&D in the European semiconductor industry, according to Thierry van der Pyl, head of the EC's high performance computing and networking unit (**HPCN**) in the EC's Esprit programme for Information Technologies, speaking at the **European Nanoelectronics Forum 2008** in Paris today.

"Things are going wrong", said van der Pyl, "particularly in the semiconductor industry."

Asked by Electronics Weekly in what way things were going wrong, van der Pyl replied: "We're losing ground in market share. The Asian companies are major competitors. We have to ask: 'How can we create value in Europe?'"

"On the semiconductor side, the initiative came from industry in 2004", added van der Pyl, "now things are different. One of the things which we (the funding bodies) have to decide about **ENIAC** and **CATRENE** is where we want to go and what should we finance?"

Asked by EW how he responded to van der Pyl's remarks, the chairman of ENIAC and CATRENE, Enrico Villa, replied: "It is his opinion. There are many different opinions about what our future direction."

However van der Pyl's view is more than one man's opinion, he is, in effect, the main customer of ENIAC and CATRENE which depend on funding from the EC as well as from national governments and industrial companies.

Van der Pyl questioned the multiplicity of European R&D programmes. "Are we on the right track?" he asked, "we should talk together and define synergy. We need to define what is needed to solve the problem. Maybe we do need two programmes, but now we are looking at another programme on microsystems. On the industry side we are fragmenting instead of trying to find synergies."

The opportunity is great. "Europe is the 1st economic power in the world", said van der Pyl, "if we can do things together we are very strong. The EU is the No.1 ICT market. If we can exploit that, then the industry can be very strong. But now, in ICT, we consume more than we produce."

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