News

At the forefront of micro- and nano-electronics – the MEDEA+ Forum 2005

Interest in developments in the microelectronics industry peaked this week in Barcelona, with over 300 delegates attending the MEDEA+ Forum. Two days of intensive discussions on project progress and the challenges facing the industry sparked talks about a successor to this EUREKA strategic initiative — to continue efforts in enabling European applications of a dazzling variety and performance, to maintain leadership in established industries, while acting as a growth engine for new industries.

MEDEA+ provides a strong industry voice in the debate to maintain European leadership in semiconductor technologies, applied to telecommunications, automotive, consumer electronics and smart cards. “The FORUM provided an unparalleled chance for key actors to network and develop a consolidated vision for the future of microelectronics. MEDEA+ is seen as an essential link in the chain connecting all innovation activities throughout Europe in the nanoelectronics domain”, said MEDEA+ Chairman Arthur van der Poel.

The eight-year MEDEA+ programme aims to make Europe a leader in system innovation on silicon, turning its microelectronics sector into a world-class industry. It is exploiting technologies developed through existing national and European programmes, and playing a significant role in defining European standards and interoperability.

Prominent keynote speakers gave their views on technical evolutions and global market trends, with particular emphasis being placed on two very promising areas where Europe has a unique opportunity to expand its importance: microtechnologies for lab-on-chip, and security of IT systems.

European Technology Platforms

A full exploitation of all possible political and technical synergies, such as coordination with the European Technology Platforms (ETPs), proposed for the EU Seventh Framework Programme was encouraged. MEDEA+ is actively contributing to the establishment of two ETPs closely related to MEDEA+ applications and technology domains: ARTEMIS (Embedded Systems) and ENIAC (Nanoelectronics). The Strategic Research Agendas defined by ARTEMIS and ENIAC will serve as roadmaps for any R&D initiative in Europe. Such synergy between the various research and funding mechanisms demonstrates the reinforced commitment of the EUREKA members on supporting and funding EUREKA projects, as well as further industrial investment in high-tech ‘Eco-systems’. The MEDEA+ EUREKA Cluster community will continue to play a pivotal role in this area.
The two-day Forum gave a vibrant and dynamic impression of MEDEA+ activities, with lively demonstration sessions from project leaders and experts presenting the latest achievements and technical results of many of the 70 MEDEA+ projects, involving 350 partners from 21 countries. The programme mobilises cumulative resources in the range of almost 2,500 highly qualified engineers, with an associated investment of about 500 million euro per year, with average project duration of 3.5 years. 42% of submitters are SMEs participating in the development of next generation tools.

Jean-Pierre Noblanc Award for Excellence

The second prestigious Jean-Pierre Noblanc Award for Excellence, initiated in 2004 to commemorate the late MEDEA+ Chairman, was won by the A207 Pocket Multimedia project. Aiming to produce a common development environment for low-power, highly portable devices, the project results deliver excellent multimedia performance, very low power consumption when using multimedia processors, Organic Light Emitting Diodes (OLED) technology and tiny operating elements Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMs). Targeting mostly image and video processing applications over mobile phone networks using MPEG 4 standard, the project helped to reduce costs and cut time-to-market, reaching far beyond initial expectations. It won against tough competition from three other innovative projects A508 SpeAC: application-oriented design of complex automotive and communication systems; T403 EXTATIC: development of a new reflective optical system operating at a wavelength of 13nm and providing the first Extreme Ultraviolet (EUV)-exposed 300 mm wafers for evaluation; and T405 EUV-Sources, providing revolutionary advances in extreme ultraviolet lithography source development. The of EUV development is expected to have a labour market impact of approximately
18, 000 jobs in Europe over the next 5 years.

For more information about MEDEA+, please visit: www.medeaplus.org.

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