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Author: [Editor Connect](#) [1], published in [DAE blog](#) [2] on 01/10/2012



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At a roundtable that I attended last week at CeBIT, European Commission's Vice-President for the Digital Agenda Neelie Kroes discussed with four industry executives how Cloud Computing could impact manufacturing.

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--- *Posted by Erastos Filos, DG INFSO, Coordinator Intelligent Manufacturing Systems/ICT for Factories of the Future*

At a roundtable that I attended last week at [CeBIT](#) [4], European Commission's Vice-President for the Digital Agenda [Neelie Kroes](#) [5] discussed with four industry executives how Cloud Computing could impact manufacturing.

The chairman of the roundtable, [Dr.Massimo Mattucci](#) [6], head of the European Factories of the Future Research Association - [EFFRA](#) [7] -, an industry-led body, opened the discussion by highlighting two open issues: firstly the technology readiness of clouds which is a crucial prerequisite for wide industrial deployment; secondly, some yet unsolved legal and security aspects of a Europe-wide cloud infrastructure that need to be settled beforehand.

[Neelie Kroes](#) [5]' replied similarly to what she had declared earlier this year, at the World Economic Forum in Davos - [WEF](#) [8] -, that [Europe needs a Cloud partnership](#) [9]. "Europe has to become not only Cloud-friendly but Cloud-active". She said: "I invite Europe's manufacturing industry to join this partnership and to start embracing the technology".



[10] [Jason Yotopoulos](#) [11], Executive Vice President Global Research and Business Incubation of SAP AG, [Philippe Forestier](#) [12], Executive Vice President Global Affairs of Dassault Systèmes and [Dr. Peter Post](#) [13], Head of Research and Program Strategy of FESTO AG also participated in the roundtable.

Following the discussion, Neelie Kroes received a copy of the [Vision and the Roadmap documents](#) [14] that had been prepared within the context of [ActionPlanT](#) [15], a European-funded Factories of the Future project, dedicated to promote "Manufacturing 2.0".

The documents identify how current megatrends like demographic change, global competition and sustainability have a significant impact on the business environment of manufacturing companies today and propose new concepts for reviving the state of European manufacturing.

The discussion was well summarised by Philippe Forestier's concluding statements: *"ICT has a major role to play in resolving some of the most crucial pinch points in European manufacturing. Cloud-computing is part of this strategy."*

As a next step, industry will come forward with a research agenda for Factories of the Future in [Horizon 2020](#) [16]. An important first step has been made on the ICT side by project [ActionPlanT](#) [15]. Under the ICT Theme's work programme 2013, the European Commission will launch Cloud Computing experiments to support the take-up of cloud-based applications by the manufacturing industry, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.

If you are interested to know more or to get involved more actively, you can take a look at the [European Cloud Computing Strategy](#) [17] or visit our [Factories of the Future's webpage](#) [18]. You can also contact me by [email](#) [19]

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