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VNO NCW

Joint press release
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FRANCE AND THE NETHERLANDS SIGN A PACT FOR INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, WITH THE AIM OF BOOSTING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN THESE FIELDS

French and Dutch Ministers Roland Lescure (Industry), Micky Adriaansens (Economy and Climate) and Liesje Schreinemacher (Foreign Trade), together with representatives of French and Dutch business federations (MEDEF and VNO-NCW), signed a Pact for Innovation and Sustainable Growth.

As a symbol of the dynamic collaboration between France and the Netherlands, this Pact is intended to structure and develop bilateral cooperation and to find further synergies between our economic, industrial and research ecosystems. It builds on the work undertaken since joint France-Netherlands Declaration of August 2021 and the intergovernmental consultations of March 2022.

Our two countries wish to develop a structural dialogue and strengthen public-private cooperation around concrete projects, in key economic fields for the twin digital and sustainable transitions and the European Union's strategic autonomy. These include: key enabling technologies (semiconductors, quantum technologies, photonics), sustainable industry (decarbonisation of industrial processes, renewable and low-carbon energies, including nuclear and hydrogen, critical and biobased raw materials, circular economy, decarbonized energy storage), agriculture and agri-food, as well as sustainable mobility.

The implementation phase will start very shortly with the setting up of a steering committee, co-chaired by the Dutch and French partners.

On the same day as the signing of the Pact, several cooperations were announced or confirmed:

- **The two countries, which are leading players in chips design, manufacturing and production equipment, will organize a seminar and mission from Grenoble to Brainport Eindhoven in the second half of 2023.** This will allow exchanges between businesses, research institutions and representatives of the governments.
- **Research and Technology organizations CEA (FR) and TNO (NL) have agreed today to strengthen their strategic cooperation, especially in the energy domain, by signing a Memorandum of Understanding.** It aims in particular at contributing to build a new solar panel (PV) industry in Europe and strengthening the French and Dutch hydrogen strategies.
- **To promote innovation on floating offshore wind,** a mission of Dutch businesses, research institutions and governmental representatives will be organized 3-6 July to the French Occitanie region to meet with regional counterparts.

- The TU Delft and France initiative was officially launched with the signing of an academic agreement in the field of aeronautics and maritime for collaborative research, with possibilities for private sector funding.
- Research institutions CWI and INRIA signed today a cooperation agreement in order to intensify cooperation on cryptography, digital health, energy, human interaction, machine learning, quantum and software engineering.
- The two leading organizations in Agri & Food in Europe, Wageningen University & Research and INRAE, signed today a joint statement to strengthen their existing collaboration on digitalization, biotechnology / breeding, sensing and robotics applied to food, agriculture and the environment, to secure the needed transitions in the Agriculture & Food sector as mentioned in the Pact.

Micky Adriaansens, Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy: *"France and the Netherlands already cooperate fruitfully within the European Union to face global challenges such as sustainability and digitalization. With Dutch and French entrepreneurs and knowledge institutions we will work more intensively on innovative solutions in the field of semiconductors, quantum technology, critical raw materials, sustainable mobility and energy infrastructure. Our common goal is to have a leading economy and excellent scientific position."*

Liesje Schreinemacher, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation: *"This pact is an important step in strengthening Dutch-French ties and it makes our trade relationship future-proof. It creates opportunities for innovative companies working on solutions to global challenges such as climate change."*

Roland Lescure, Minister Delegate for the Industry: *"Today, both governments and business communities express their commitment to further deepen their cooperation, by providing it a structured framework for dialogue and synergies. This is one more step in the direction of industrial resilience, competitiveness, green transition and decarbonization of our industries, based on a low carbon energy mix, in which nuclear will be key."*

Ingrid Thijssen, President of VNO-NCW: *"Both French and Dutch companies are amongst the frontrunners in innovation and sustainable technology. For example, in the design and production of chips and in the field of offshore wind energy and hydrogen. The France-Netherlands Pact for Innovation and Sustainable Growth will further accelerate the already strong cooperation between French and Dutch technological ecosystems."*

Geoffroy Roux de Bézieux, President of MEDEF: *"The Pact for Innovation and Sustainable Growth embodies everything I believe in: innovation, progress and central role of companies to achieve a sustainable growth. It is a concrete example of what should be done to reduce Europe's dependencies and increase our resilience and our sovereignty."*

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ANNEX: Non-exhaustive list of innovation and industrial cooperations between France and the Netherlands

Semi-conductors

The French and Dutch ecosystems already have close cooperation relations, particularly between the Grenoble and Eindhoven hubs, through the High Level Forum and the collaboration between the Minalogic and High Tech NL competitiveness clusters within the framework of the Silicon Europe Alliance and the Alliance of European Semiconductor Regions (to which the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and the Brabant regions belong). These exchanges could be further developed and formalised within the framework of the Innovation Pact.

Also, at the European level, both ecosystems cooperate through the Important Projects of common European interest (IPCEI) microelectronics and the Eureka network. In this context, a mission delegation from Grenoble is due to visit Eindhoven in the near future (companies, research establishments, ecosystems) where a high-level forum will be organised. This seminar could be the occasion to sign the memorandum of understanding between the CEA, in France, and TNO, in the Netherlands, on cooperation in the fields of microelectronics and quantum technologies.

Bilateral work and joint interests exist for SOI technology, used in the products of leading companies in the sector, to develop new applications and new chips in the different technological nodes and offers.

Within the framework of the European Chips Act, ideas could be put forward for further collaboration between France and the Netherlands in essential links in the microelectronics value chain and areas in which our two countries have solid assets to develop.

Photonics

The French and Dutch photonics ecosystems have started to actively discuss future collaborations given that, comparable to the French Grenoble ecosystem in photonics, the Dutch ecosystem is at the forefront of applied research in microelectronics and photonics.

A number of actions have been carried out to bring stakeholders together: the French regional photonics clusters had the opportunity to present their projects at the Dutch Embassy in Paris in November 2021, and the Dutch and French ecosystem players respectively participated in the PIC Summit Europe 2022 organised by PhotonDelta and Minalogic Business Meetings in 2022.

Quantum

Existing collaborations are already fruitful between the ecosystems of our two countries, and more particularly between those of Grenoble and Delft, to which both our national federations Initiative France Quantum and Quantum Delta NL contribute. In line with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2021, initiatives are being taken to strengthen exchanges between universities, research centres and companies, amongst others for the development of QBit technologies on silicon, a major sector on the path to quantum computing. Among the

next milestones of this collaboration is the organisation of the 2023 edition of the Erasmus Descartes Conference, the "high point" of the bilateral relationship in terms of innovation and science, which will be entirely dedicated to quantum cooperation.

These cooperations could also be bolstered by the reinforcement of the collaboration between the Dutch, French and German governments, which in a joint statement signed in November 2022, committed themselves to strengthening their collaboration on quantum technologies to contribute to Europe's strategic sovereignty.

Energy

Our two countries place particular importance on the rapid decarbonisation of our energy mixes, thus reducing our dependence on fossil fuels. In this respect, considering the convergent energy strategies favoured by our two countries, cooperation between our green energy sectors will be strengthened. This is particularly relevant in the field of off-shore wind energy, including floating wind energy, since a bilateral mission is planned for July 2023 in the French Occitanie region. It also concerns hydrogen, where our companies are jointly participating in the Hydrogen IPCEI), and given the cooperation between the cities of Eemshaven and Rotterdam with Engie, including hydrogen application to airport infrastructures.

In terms of research, Dutch and French entities are committed to working together, particularly on solar panels and hydrogen, but also on nuclear energy, a field in which there are numerous scientific and expert exchanges on all activities in the sector (waste management, technical assistance and engineering), including cooperation on research reactors. Our State Agencies, such as IRSN on technical cooperation and ANDRA on nuclear waste, are closely collaborating in this field together with their Dutch counterparts.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS)

Our companies are involved in various transport and CO2 sequestration and reuse projects, aimed at facilitating the large-scale decarbonisation of our two countries' industrial clusters (steel, chemicals, cement, refining and waste incineration, including in the Netherlands).

Sustainable mobility

Aviation

Several partnerships are active in the field of aeronautics, notably between our companies and our university centres (among which Delft University and Toulouse University). These collaborations will benefit from recent orders from the Franco-Dutch group AF-KLM for several aircrafts to Airbus group, and from further cooperation on the development of a sustainable aircraft running on hydrogen and electricity (a project on which our companies and research centres are already cooperating). Furthermore, AFKLM and TotalEnergies signed a Memorandum of Understanding on sustainable aviation fuels in December 2022.

Automotive

In the field of automobile, both countries have important partnerships. The Netherlands are notably collaborating with the automobile actors of the Region Hauts-de-France. To decarbonise road transports, our countries also cooperate in the framework of the European competitiveness cluster Nextmove concerning battery recycling, and they both participate in the IPCEI Battery.

Agri-food

Wageningen University & Research (WUR - Netherlands) and l'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRAE - France) have a strong and long-lasting collaboration, in particular through their involvement in research projects undertaken at European level. The two institutes represent the top leading research organisations at European level in the domain of food, bioeconomy, natural resources, environment and agriculture. Since 2014, WUR and INRAE have been involved jointly in more than 140 European projects. Some of these projects target specifically robotics, biotechnology and digitalisation, such as:

- **Data4Food2030**: Developing pathways towards a fair, inclusive and innovative Data Economy for Sustainable Food Systems, coordinated by WUR with participation of INRAE (Horizon Europe).
- **BIOINDUSTRY 4.0**: Research Infrastructure services to promote deep digitalization of Industrial Biotechnology, towards smart bio-manufacturing, coordinated by INRAE with participation of WUR (Horizon Europe).
- **AgROBOfood**: Business-Oriented Support to the European Robotics and Agri-food Sector, towards a network of Digital Innovation Hubs in Robotics, coordinated by WUR with participation of INRAE (Horizon 2020).