

Brussels, 16th May 2018

CLEPA fosters automotive suppliers' research and innovation activities: three new members for the R&I working group

Automotive suppliers play a key role in innovating mobility and road transport and adapting the automotive industry to meet new global societal challenges and regulatory requirements. This drives the need for further research in energy efficiency in the global automotive sector, the development of new technologies for safety, automation and connectivity applications and the evaluation of advanced materials and manufacturing technologies.

The European automotive supply industry is a global technology leader, supported by its yearly investment of more than EUR 20 billion in innovation and development. Indeed, European automotive suppliers have registered the most patents for innovations in emissions and safety by bringing to the market an increasing diversity of products, with ever shorter development and production cycles over the last years.

The European Commission has recently announced that research is one of the priorities in its Multiannual Financial Framework proposal, which intends to allocate close to EUR 100 billion for the 'Horizon Europe' budget, the new EU's flagship Research & Innovation Programme also known as FP9, running between 2021 and 2027.

CLEPA considers Research & Innovation increasingly important to support the development of new technologies and affordable systems of higher performance in terms of safety, sustainability, connectivity and comfort, and to strengthen the position of automotive suppliers in the mobility research eco-system. In this regard, the activities of the CLEPA Research & Innovation working group are among the main priorities of the association and recently, the group has been enlarged with the participation of three new companies; Eaton, Firestone Industrial Products and Mahle.

"The CLEPA R&I team is organised to optimally capture the inputs from the members and to serve the needs of member communities clustered around research topics. The three thematic areas are Energy & Environment; Advanced Materials & Manufacturing Processes; Safety, Automation & Connectivity. We are delighted to welcome Eaton, Firestone and Mahle in the R&I team and look forward to their active involvement in the future R&I team activities", said Camille Feyder, chair of the CLEPA R&I Team.

Eaton, Power management company, is focused on developing technologies that improve fuel economy and reduce emissions of internal combustion engines and support electrified solutions through eMobility. "Our partnership with CLEPA has been long-standing, however the opportunity to strengthen this relationship by joining the research group really furthers our commitment to energy innovation," said Jeffrey Lowinger, president eMobility. "It provides us with a chance to speak regularly to the innovation teams of other tier one suppliers and opens up fresh possibilities for working on new projects in the automotive sector."

Firestone Industrial Products is a CLEPA company member driven by innovative, engineered vehicle-based technology to eliminate vibration in global transportation with intelligent suspension systems. Highly automated driving systems are increasing the needs to continuously adapt to actual vehicle, road and environment conditions, while the trend towards electric mobility is driving improvements for comfort and safety in vehicle and connected systems. The company has a comprehensive global knowledge and expertise in air suspension and connected technology, combined with local European R&D presence, that can contribute to CLEPA R&I initiatives across the automotive spectrum.

MAHLE is a leading international development partner and supplier to the automotive industry as well as a pioneer for the mobility of the future. The group's product portfolio addresses all the crucial issues relating to the powertrain and air conditioning technology—both for drives with combustion engines and for e-mobility. "As in the previous year, R&D expenses remained at a high level, at around EUR 750 million. Due to efficiency improvements and the consolidation of overlapping activities we realised an even higher number of R&D projects in 2017. One key focus naturally lies on the diversification of powertrains. Our participation in the CLEPA R&I group can help us finding partners for precompetitive collaboration and getting a better overview of EU funding priorities", said Dr. Otmar Scharrer, Vice President Corporate Research and Advanced Engineering.

The CLEPA R&I working group and its technical groups strive to be an active part of the EU research agenda, by defining common priorities and roadmaps for pre-competitive research, creating opportunities for member companies to participate in EU projects, participate in projects that bring value to CLEPA, and promote research results. CLEPA also actively liaises with other actors in the research eco system, be it European institutions or other associations and academia.

Note to the editor:

CLEPA represents over 3.000 companies supplying state-of-the-art components and innovative technology for safe, smart and sustainable mobility, investing over 20 billion euros yearly in research and development. Automotive suppliers in Europe employ nearly five million people across the continent.

For more information, please contact:

CLEPA- Pilar Perez (p.perez@clepa.be)