



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Press release

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## Commission announces huge new influx of partners to the Graphene Flagship project

To coincide with [Graphene Week 2014](#), the European Commission is proud to announce that today the [Graphene Flagship](#), one of the largest-ever European research initiatives, is doubling in size. **66 new partners are being invited to join the consortium** following the results of a €9 million competitive call. While most partners are universities and research institutes, the share of companies, mainly SMEs, involved is increasing. This shows the growing interest of economic actors in graphene. The **partnership now includes more than 140 organisations from 23 countries**. It is fully set to take 'wonder material' graphene and related layered materials from academic laboratories to everyday use.

Vice-President of the European Commission [@NeelieKroesEU](#), responsible for the [Digital Agenda](#), welcomed the extended partnership: *"Europe is leading the graphene revolution. This 'wonder material' has the potential dramatically to improve our lives: it stimulates new medical technologies, such as artificial retinas, and more sustainable transport with light and ultra-efficient batteries. The more we can unlock the potential of graphene, the better!"*

### SMEs and Italian partners on the rise

The 66 new partners come from 19 countries, six of which are new to the consortium: Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Israel.

With its 16 new partners, Italy now has the highest number of partners in the Graphene Flagship alongside Germany (with 23 each), followed by Spain (18), UK (17) and France (13).

The incoming 66 partners will add new capabilities to the scientific and technological scope of the flagship. Over one third of new partners are companies, mainly SMEs, showing the growing interest of economic actors in graphene. In the initial consortium this ratio was 20%.

### Big interest in joining the initiative

The €9 million competitive call of the €54 million ramp-up phase (2014-2015) attracted a total of 218 proposals, representing 738 organisations from 37 countries. The proposals received were evaluated on the basis of their scientific and technological expertise, implementation and impact ([further information on the call](#)) and ranked by an international panel of leading experts, mostly eminent professors from all over the world. 21 proposals were selected for funding.

Prof. Jari Kinaret, Professor of Physics at the [Chalmers University of Technology](#), Sweden, and Director of the Graphene Flagship, said: *"The response was overwhelming, which is an indicator of the recognition for and trust in the flagship effort throughout Europe. Competition has been extremely tough. I am grateful for the engagement by the applicants and our nearly 60 independent expert reviewers who helped us through this process. I am impressed by the high quality of the proposals we received and looking forward to working with all the new partners to realise the goals of the Graphene Flagship."*

## Europe in the driving seat

Graphene was made and tested in Europe, leading to the 2010 Nobel Prize in Physics for Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov from the University of Manchester.

With the €1 billion Graphene Flagship, Europe will be able to turn cutting-edge scientific research into marketable products. This major initiative places Europe in the driving seat for the global race to develop graphene technologies.

Prof. Andrea Ferrari, Director of the [Cambridge Graphene Centre](#) and Chair of the Executive Board of the Graphene Flagship commented today's announcement on new partners: *"This adds strength to our unprecedented effort to take graphene and related materials from the lab to the factory floor, so that the world-leading position of Europe in graphene science can be translated into technology, creating a new graphene-based industry, with benefits for Europe in terms of job creation and competitiveness"*.

## Background

The [Graphene Flagship @GrapheneCA](#) represents a European investment of €1 billion over the next 10 years. It is part of the [Future and Emerging Technologies \(FET\) Flagships @FETFlagships](#) announced by the European Commission in January 2013 ([press release](#)). The goal of the FET Flagships programme is to encourage visionary research with the potential to deliver breakthroughs and major benefits for European society and industry. FET Flagships are highly ambitious initiatives involving close collaboration with national and regional funding agencies, industry and partners from outside the European Union.

Research in the next generation of technologies is key for Europe's competitiveness. This is why €2.7 billion will be invested in [Future and Emerging Technologies \(FET\)](#) under the new research programme [Horizon 2020 #H2020](#) (2014-2020). This represents a nearly threefold increase in budget compared to the previous research programme, FP7. FET actions are part of the [Excellent science](#) pillar of Horizon 2020.