

Press Information

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Europe's largest integrated photonics companies call on the EU to support building a resilient supply chain for photonic ICs

Group of CEOs present the EU Commission with a €4.25 billion plan to support growth of industry which is critical to applications including high speed internet, data security, autonomous vehicles and quantum computing.

CEOs from eight* of Europe's largest integrated photonics companies have presented Thomas Skordas, Deputy Director-General, DG Connect, and Lucilla Sioli, Director for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Industry, DG Connect and Werner Steinhögl, Head of Sector, Unit for Microelectronics & Photonics for the European Commission, a plan to build a resilient European supply chain for photonic integrated circuits.

The plan calls for a total investment of €4.25 billion over eight years and a range of recommendations to enable the European integrated photonics industry to become a global leader and have the ability to supply EU customers autonomously. Photonic integrated circuits (PICs) open the door to the creation of smaller, faster and more energy-efficient devices. They are already being used in a range of innovations including tele- and datacom, autonomous vehicles, quantum communication and agriculture.



The group states that the low level of EU manufacturing capacity and over-reliance on Asia threatens the EU's economic security and resilience. Currently, less than 6% of the manufacturing of indium phosphide and silicon nitride PICs is done in the EU and less than 4% of global assembly, testing and packaging capacity resides in Europe.

The CEOs of X-FAB (Germany/France), LIGEN TEC (France/Switzerland), SMART Photonics (The Netherlands), Aixtron (Germany), PHIX Photonics Assembly (The Netherlands), VLC Photonics (Spain), Almae (France), and PhotonDelta (The Netherlands), unveiled the plan at PIC Summit Europe in front of more than 500 members of the global photonics and semiconductor communities. The proposal makes a number of recommendations including:

- Provide over €2 billion in incentives for industrial scale InP and SiN PIC manufacturing capacity in Europe.
- Provide EU PIC SMEs access to industrial PIC Test and Experimentation facilities (TEFs) that partly mirror commercial lines, with the latest commercial wafer processing equipment and tools, at the relevant industry standard wafer sizes.
- Establish an industrial PIC 'manufacturing supply chain' resilience fund of €200 million to support the investments needed to strengthen linkages and minimise vulnerabilities.
- Provide a €360 million fund to stimulate application development through offering design tape-outs, leading to industrial photonic design IP creation and validation based on hardware testing.
- Promote and incentivise collaboration amongst vertical clusters and the European PIC ecosystem.

Thomas Hessler, CEO of LIGENTEC, said: *"Photonic Integrated Circuits (PICs) are on their way to disrupt many industries beyond telecom and datacom and create new high value add applications. Europe is leading in PIC Technology and now it is the time to build on this technical leadership a commercially successful industry. This is a unique chance and it requires a resilient supply chain for volume manufacturing, testing and packaging and also to support the needs of the innovative European SMEs with high value add and large leverage effects."*



*Members of the group are:
Rudi de Winter – CEO of X-FAB
Johan Feenstra – CEO of SMART Photonics
Thomas Hessler – CEO of Ligentec
Felix Grawert – CEO of Aixtron
Albert Hasper – CEO of PHIX Photonics Assembly
Inigo Artundo – CEO of VLC Photonics
Jean-Louis Gentner – CEO of Almae
Ewit Roos – CEO of PhotonDelta

About LIGENTEC

LIGENTEC supplies application specific Photonic Integrated Circuits (PICs) to customers in high-tech markets such as quantum computing, advanced computing, communication, autonomous driving, space communication and biosensors. LIGENTEC's proprietary, patented and fully CMOS compatible semiconductor fabrication technology was originally developed at EPFL Lausanne and is now installed in a high-volume 200 mm wafer production line, It essentially combines the benefits of known, low loss material such as glass with the benefits of silicon photonics and addresses with its low propagation loss, high power handling and wide wavelength transparency and short production cycle the main challenges of integrated photonics today. LIGENTEC offers a seamless path from R&D to volume, supported by its low entry barrier MPW services and custom PIC developments. LIGENTEC is based in Lausanne, Switzerland and Corbeil-Essonnes, Île-de-France, France.

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