

PAYS DE LA LOIRE LEADS A THIRD INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

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The Pays de la Loire Chamber of Commerce and Industry announced its support in 2013 along with the region's Chamber of Trades and Crafts and Chamber of Agriculture for a *Troisième Révolution Industrielle et Agricole* (TRIA) initiative. By accepting a role in this project, the Loire consular networks have committed themselves to addressing today's global economic, demographic and climate challenges, all of which are already making their effects felt locally, with the aim of becoming future business incubators

TRIA, inspired in particular by the work of J. Rifkin, embraces a clear "vision", that of actively supporting companies throughout their digital and energy transition so that they become drivers for future Pays de la Loire economic development. TRIA currently assists some 200,000 Loire companies, helping them to become more "agile" by making use of four competitiveness levers: the energy and environmental transition; improved global performance ; new economic models; and the digital revolution spearheaded by new technologies and connected objects. The chambers make practical tools and schemes available to businesses in each of these areas, including PEPS for controlling energy production, DINAMIC for improving internal performance, ACT'IF for mapping incoming and outgoing flows of materials in order to pool resources, the functional economy club, the Eco-Produire ecological initiative and CSR.

To develop sectors with strong growth potential, TRIA has also set itself the objective of creating a smaller group of some 3,000 "challengers", future intermediate-sized enterprises or unicorns providing cutting-edge products or services in six sectors structuring the regional economy: renewable energy; positive-energy buildings; ecomobility of goods and people; energy conversion and storage and smart grids; big data and connected objects; and ecologically intensive agriculture.

The Pays de la Loire region is fortunate enough to have its own favourable and dense ecosystem of semi-public stakeholders, including various clusters. They play an important role in supporting and promoting sectors at the forefront of innovation and in developing a production knowledge unique in

France, as evidenced by its major OEMs (Airbus planes, STX cruise ships, Alstom offshore wind turbines) and their dense subcontractor network. More recently, and somewhat surprisingly, numerous private initiatives have also been set up aimed at providing direct support for such companies. Enterprises like the *Cité des Objets Connectés* in Angers (fab lab created by several manufacturers) and the Startup Palace in Nantes (accelerator for digital start-ups) tend to prove that government intervention is no longer strictly necessary, that private initiatives are in fact more agile and more responsive in terms of keeping up with revolutionary trends.

Such revolutions are necessary for future growth, and for innovative projects and businesses to be successful they must be underpinned by efficient national and European innovation policies. We have to make Horizon 2020 and InnovFin type programmes more accessible in order to more rapidly meet the needs of "agile" companies and "challengers". The Juncker Plan, which provides for the establishment of investment platforms as well as funding for business investment projects in the form of bank loans rather than grants, seems to us a good solution for such companies. Finally, while it is important that we "detechnocratise" access to structural funds for public and semi-public structures, these funds must first be brought back up to an acceptable and realistic standard in terms of control, legal certainty and availability, at the risk of becoming increasingly unusable – and therefore unused. To make the transition, it is essential that companies have access to investment and that our innovation ecosystems be sufficiently agile. (May 2016)

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