

An interview with Mr Pierre MOTTET

President of AKT for Wallonia

What is the importance of research and innovation for Wallonia at the start of this new regional legislature?

The new Regional Policy Declaration (DPR) places innovation at the heart of Wallonia's economic transformation. Today, research and innovation are not just engines of growth, but essential tools for strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of our businesses in the face of current challenges, particularly the digital and low-carbon transition.



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The Walloon government has therefore put forward an ambitious industrial policy aimed at strengthening strategic autonomy and accelerating the development of innovative sectors such as artificial intelligence, the circular economy and technologies linked to decarbonisation. However, for this ambition to become a reality, it is crucial to strengthen the links between the various economic and research players. Close collaboration between the private sector, academic institutions and research centers is fundamental if Wallonia is to maintain a dynamic of continuous innovation.

Which of the research and innovation priorities supported by the DPR stand out?

Rationalising the regional ecosystems that support research and innovation is a key element of regional policy. We need to be bold enough to tackle their complexity and lack of synergy. In addition, the revision of the decree on support for research and innovation will also need to be closely monitored, in order to better respond to current needs and ensure a continuum between research activities funded by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and those supported by the Region. Across the board, however, all public and private action should be guided by the need to enhance the economic value of research results.

How is AKT for Wallonia supporting companies in this new innovation dynamic?

We are fully committed to this dynamic, actively supporting companies in their innovation initiatives, whether large or small. The National Contact Point for Wallonia ([NCP Wallonia](#)), one of our entities, is committed to helping businesses maximise their participation in European programmes such as Horizon Europe. Walloon businesses need to seize these opportunities, and I want to send out a simple message: call on our services, our experts are there to help you through the often complex stages of these programmes.

In addition, we are working closely with the Government to strengthen local research ecosystems, in particular by improving the coordination of support schemes and streamlining aid to make it clearer and more effective.

Is collaboration between the private sector and universities still a priority?

Absolutely. Collaboration between businesses and universities is essential to stimulate innovation. In addition, the transfer of research results to businesses is a priority, particularly in terms of intellectual property and economic development. AKT acts as an intermediary to promote these synergies, ensuring that companies, including SMEs, benefit from the academic expertise available.

What role does taxation play in the R&D performance of Walloon companies?

Taxation remains a fundamental lever for supporting innovation and research. Measures such as exemption from withholding tax for researchers and deductions for income from

innovation are essential to encourage companies to invest in R&D. The Walloon Government has announced its intention to argue in favour of maintaining these measures at federal level in order to preserve the competitiveness of Walloon companies and attract foreign investment. We can only encourage it to do so, and even advocate the reinstatement of schemes repealed by the previous federal government.

What are the challenges for the coming years?

There are many challenges. The cost of the ecological and digital transition, integration of AI solutions, budgetary pressures and the scarcity of talent in STEM fields are all obstacles to be overcome. But I am deeply convinced that innovation remains the key to overcoming these challenges. Let's give the region a clear objective: by the end of this legislature, Wallonia should have entered the category of Europe's most innovative regions in the European Commission's rankings. I'm convinced that, collectively, we have the ambition. Once we get our act together, we'll get there.