

## Photonics gets implemented as one of 5 key ecosystems in Latvia

Since 2019 the Latvian Ministry of Economics has been pursuing development plans of 5 national key ecosystems. One of these ecosystems is smart materials and photonics. Currently, the strategic development plan has been drawn up and discussed between Latvian Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Education and Science, publicly funded R&D institutions and industry players. It is planned that memorandum between parties will be signed in nearest months which will allow serious addressing of "pain areas": shortage of new STEM students and PhD as well as postdoctoral research in ecosystem themes; shortage of investments; alignment of state funded research, education with national industry needs; promotion of photonics in society and other industry branches, both locally and internationally.

For practical implementation, Photonics and smart material cluster has been formed under LETERA (Latvian Electrical Engineering and Electronics Industry Association) because association have proved their operation-ability with electronic cluster ("Bronze" mark" award). Two clusters will ensure that sometimes separate interests are compromised. On State side, LIAA, Investment and Development Agency of Latvia will be responsible for plan implementation. Source: EuroLCDs.

## COVID updates

1. EuroLCDs: Due to COVID-19 some of big international companies have shut down or suspended some of their product R&D based on corporate strategies. This has negatively impacted EuroLCDs operations, but was partly compensated by increased activities from SME customers and partly by recently approved H2020 project "NGEAR". Video streams for customer R&D projects from production environment are now used as a solution to travel restrictions. As for daily operations, EuroLCDs has experienced supply chain disruptions and increase of air logistic cost. No downtime and people layoff have been reported.

## New products or services

1. The plates in EKSMA Optics ion-beam sputtering coating chambers are spinning and new products are being developed every month: for example Nd:YAG harmonic [separators](#) with high transmission and high power laser [mirrors](#) for ns applications.

2. EKSMA Optics now offers high voltage [drivers](#) for fast amplitude modulation as well as HV series OEM high voltage power [supplies](#) as high repetition rate Pockels cell drivers.



Figure 1. EKSMA's new HV driver with fast amplitude modulation (left) and HV power supply (200 or 400W Pockels drive, right) .

3. Ekspla now offers the [PhotoSonus+](#) laser system that gives higher imaging depth and resolution in [photoacoustics](#).

4. Ekspla updated it's range of high-energy [tunable wavelength lasers](#). The main upgrades were implemented into the two main series of high-energy tunable lasers – [NT340](#) (increased tuning range) and [NT350](#) (higher pulse energies).



Figure 2. Ekspla extended the tuning range NT340 series lasers to 4.4 μm.

## Other news

1. The annual BPC meeting is held **online** on the **23<sup>rd</sup> of October**.
2. 3rd International conference "Biophotonics-Riga 2020" took place on 24th to 25<sup>th</sup> of August in a hybrid version - reports were in ZOOM and catering/social programme was onsite. There were 31 oral report presented, 11 countries represented and most of presentations are reflected in papers at a special issue of Proc.SPIE.
3. Eventech in May 2020 [signed](#) two contracts with European Space Agency to further push the Timer performance and investigate its use in Space and New Space applications.
4. LightGuideOptics changed their brand name to [LightGuide](#).
5. EKSMA Optics has started a new [R&D project](#) with an objective to develop two new innovative products: a laser attenuator with high laser damage threshold and a dichroic cube beamsplitter.
6. Optogama has a new R&D project "[RANGER](#)" developing lasers and distance measurement systems for the autoindustry.
7. Baltic Photonics Cluster invites You to be part of activities related to the [day of photonics 2020](#): either take part in relevant webinars or organize an event to promote photonics around 21st of October 2020.

