The European Fabless Semiconductor Association was formally launched today in Brussels; Semiconductor veteran Paul de Bot named its first President

The first pan-European body for companies that design semiconductor chips without owning a fab was formally launched on November 4 at the ALLPROs event in Brussels.

BRUSSELS, 4 November 2026 – The European Fabless Semiconductor Association is being created to advance fabless semiconductor design within Europe. The founding members Axelera AI, Quside, Semidynamics, SiPearl and VSORA passed the important milestone of notary registration of the articles of association. Paul de Bot, who spent more than a decade at TSMC and led its business in Europe, has been named the initial President of the European Fabless Semiconductor Association, to serve during the incubation phase of the Association.

The CEOs of the founding members and the incoming Association President made the announcements in the presence of European Commission EVP Henna Virkkunen on Wednesday **4 November 2026** in Brussels during the event "Technology Sovereignty Package in Practice", organized by the European Alliance of Processor and Semiconductors Technology ALLPROs.

Fabless companies design chips and have them manufactured by foundries. By focusing on design, while leaving the capital-intensive manufacturing to thirds, they can innovate faster. Over the past decade, fabless companies outgrew the overall semiconductor market and currently represent over 60% of the semiconductor market outside memory. Particularly the fast growing segment of leading edge chips for the datacenter market is the domain of fabless companies. However, Europe holds less than 1% of the global fabless market. Europe has various semiconductor associations and clusters, but until now none has been dedicated to fabless companies, despite their important role in leading edge innovation.

The European Fabless Semiconductor Association gives European fabless start-ups, SMEs and mid-caps a single voice. Its work covers four areas:

- **Policy:** representing fabless companies towards EU institutions, including the Chips Joint Undertaking, DG CONNECT and DG GROW.
- **Intelligence:** a shared hub on EU policy, funding calls, markets and technology.
- **Investment and market access:** connecting members with investors and with European system companies looking for European-designed chips.
- **Shared services:** pooled deals that no single SME can negotiate alone, such as group EDA tool licensing.

The Association is open to fabless SMEs across Europe and aims to bring together more than 50 of them within three years. It will be constituted as an international non-profit association (AISBL) under Belgian law. Its set-up is supported by the Horizon Europe project VOICES (grant agreement 101297687), coordinated by Quside.

Fabless companies interested in joining can initially contact the Association through the VOICES address at admin@voices4semi.eu or its website www.voices4semi.eu.

Funded by the European Union

“Europe cannot strengthen its position in the global semiconductor industry if we don’t succeed in chip design. While we have world-class research in the field, and an incredible potential for innovation, too often this is not translated into successful fabless companies that can rapidly scale up in the market. We must change this. We need a vibrant chip design ecosystem, capable of nurturing innovative startups and helping them become tomorrow’s semiconductor champions.” said **Henna Virkkunen, EVP of the European Commission**, responsible for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy.

"Fabless companies don’t have to worry about transistor development, capex and fab utilization, and can focus all their effort on differentiating chip design with short time-to-market, out-innovating their competitors. If Europe wants to stay relevant in the global semiconductor market, it has to grow its fabless design ecosystem to play a role in fast-growing markets like leading edge chips for datacenter. " said **Paul de Bot, President of the European Fabless Semiconductor Association**. "Europe now has the fabless startups to compete in this space, but they need scale-up capital and access to customers. The European Union can support this, and the Association gives them the voice to get heard in Brussels. I am honoured to kick-start the Association, and passionate to grow the relevance of Europe in the fabless industry."

“Europe now has fabless companies shipping silicon that competes with the best in the world, and public programmes deserve part of the credit for getting us here. But sovereignty is not a business model. What turns a design company into an industry is customers, and America built its chip industry by being the first buyer of technology that was not yet proven,” said **Fabrizio Del Maffeo, co-founder and CEO of Axelera AI.** “Europe is building AI factories, sovereign cloud and public data centres at record speed, and most of the chips inside them are still designed somewhere else. Make European silicon the first purchase order instead of the last, and we will not be the companies asking for support, we will be the companies giving employment and paying taxes here. Fabless Europe gives us one voice to make that case.”

“Europe has the talent and technology to build a globally competitive fabless semiconductor industry, but we need to turn innovation into industrial scale,” said **Carlos Abellán, co-founder and CEO of Quside and coordinator of the VOICES project**. “The European Fabless Semiconductor Association will help bridge the gap between chip design and industrial deployment by strengthening access to investment, manufacturing capabilities and European customers. Building a strong fabless ecosystem is essential to Europe's industrial competitiveness and technological sovereignty.”

“Fabless companies are the demand side of Europe’s semiconductor strategy. If Europe wants sovereign AI and a real industrial base, it must support European chip designers, connect semiconductors with AI, and enable public procurement to choose competitive European solutions. Without customers, new fabs and new technologies will not create lasting value in Europe”, said **Roger Espasa, CEO and Founder of Semidynamics.** “At Semidynamics, we are building European AI inference systems, from silicon to rack, to prove that Europe can design and scale the compute its digital future depends on.”

“Since its inception, SiPearl has worked closely with European institutions and the public authorities in the countries where it operates to champion its cause as a fabless semiconductor SME. It is therefore only natural that we have played a particularly active role in setting up the association, with the aim of giving a voice to European fabless companies. We hope that many of them will join the European Fabless Semiconductor Association”, said **Philippe Notton, CEO and Founder of SiPearl** who has been appointed Chairman of the Board of the Association.

"Europe has the talent and the technology to become a major force in semiconductor innovation. The challenge is turning that innovation into industrial success at scale. As a European fabless company developing high-performance AI chips, VSORA sees first-hand how critical access to manufacturing, investment and global markets is to our growth”, said **Khaled Maalej, CEO and Founder of VSORA.** “With Paul de Bot’s extensive industry experience and leadership, the Association is well positioned to strengthen Europe’s fabless ecosystem, helping innovative companies scale and compete on the global stage."

About the European Fabless Semiconductor Association

The European Fabless Semiconductor Association is the first pan-European association dedicated to fabless semiconductor companies: start-ups, SMEs and mid-caps that design chips and outsource their manufacture. The association represents its members towards EU institutions, shares policy and market intelligence, connects members with investors and customers, and negotiates shared services. It is an international non-profit association (AISBL) under Belgian law, founded in 2026 by SiPearl, Semidynamics, VSORA, Axelera AI and Quside. Its set-up is supported by the Horizon Europe project VOICES (grant agreement 101297687). Membership is open to fabless companies across Europe. More at **www.voices4semi.eu.**

About the founding members

About Axelera AI: Axelera AI, headquartered at the High Tech Campus in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, designs hardware and software for AI inference. Its Metis AI platform combines digital in-memory computing with RISC-V to deliver high performance at low power, from the edge to the data centre. Founded in 2021, the company has R&D offices in Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and the UK, and closed a funding round of more than $250 million in February 2026. **axelera.ai**

About Quside: Quside is a deep-tech company building verifiable cryptographic infrastructure for the next generation of digital trust. Founded in 2017 as a spin-off from ICFO, The Institute of Photonic Sciences, Quside combines quantum randomness, real-time entropy verification, and cryptographic technologies to strengthen classical and post-quantum security. Its hardware-rooted solutions enable secure, measurable, and resilient cryptographic systems across critical infrastructure, cloud environments, sovereign systems, and embedded devices, where trust is verified, not assumed. **quside.com**

About Semidynamics: Semidynamics is a Barcelona-based advanced computing company building memory-centric AI infrastructure for large-scale inference. Founded in 2016, the company designed its own implementation of the open RISC-V architecture from first principles around one conviction: in AI inference, cost is driven by data movement as much as by raw compute. Its architecture supports several times the memory capacity of conventional HBM-based systems, allowing larger models, longer contexts and more users per rack, which lowers the cost per token. After completing its first 3nm tape-out with TSMC in late 2025, Semidynamics is delivering a vertically integrated stack of chips, boards and rack-scale systems, developed by a team of more than 150 engineers. **www.semidynamics.com**

About SiPearl: SiPearl is the European fabless designer of secure, high-performance, energy-efficient CPUs for sovereign HPC, AI and data centre. Born inside the European Processor Initiative (EPI) consortium and supported by the European Union, SiPearl has teams in France, Spain, Italy and Taiwan. Its first CPU, Rhea1, will equip the cluster module of JUPITER, first European exascale supercomputer. **sipearl.com**

About VSORA: Vsora is a French semiconductor company developing AI inference infrastructure designed to make AI deployment economically viable. Its inference processor, Jotunn8, is purpose-built to overcome the memory wall - one of the main barriers to efficient AI inference, enabling operators to run AI with significantly lower infrastructure costs and energy consumption. Following a successful tape-out in 2025, Jotunn8 is entering manufacturing. Designed for datacenter-scale inference workloads, it delivers the performance, efficiency, and economics required to scale AI in the real world. Headquartered in France, VSORA is backed by the European Innovation Council (EIC) and works with leading industry partners, including TSMC and Global Unichip Corp (GUC), to bring next-generation AI processors from architecture to silicon. **www.vsora.com**

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About Paul de Bot

Paul de Bot brings more than three decades of experience across the semiconductor value chain, from chip design to foundry. He joined TSMC in 2015 and, after roles in account management, was President EMEA until January 2026. He later served as Executive Vice President, Global Sales Strategy at TSMC Europe. Paul left TSMC in September 2026 and currently acts as advisor to companies and investors in the semiconductor space.

He began his career at Philips in video technology, becoming Chief Strategy Officer of its digital TV systems division. In 2003 he joined Philips Semiconductors, later NXP Semiconductors, as Vice President Strategy & Business Development for its consumer, automotive and identification businesses. He also held executive roles in the software industry and in corporate finance.

De Bot holds an MSc in Electrical Engineering and an Engineering Doctorate in Telecommunications from Eindhoven University of Technology, and an MSc in Business Valuation from TIAS Business School.

Media contacts and notes to editors

European Fabless Semiconductor Association press contact: admin@voices4semi.eu

Notes to editors

Funded by the European Union

EU funding: Funded by the European Union under Horizon Europe, grant agreement 101297687 (VOICES). Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.