

Conference “Supporting Smart Specialisation Strategies and Technology Transfer in South-East Europe”

Tuesday 18 June 2019

Politehnica University of Bucharest, Romania



MINISTERUL CERCETĂRII ȘI INOVĂRII

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Executive Agency for Higher
Education, Research, Development
and Innovation Funding



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Under the [Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU](#), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, the [Romanian Ministry of Research and Innovation](#) and the [Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding](#) are organising this high-level conference on smart specialisation and technology transfer, taking place at the [Politehnica University of Bucharest](#) on 18th June.

Progress, results and challenges related to the development and implementation of successful smart specialisation strategies, innovation ecosystems and technology transfer capacities will be the conference's main topics.

The event would set a scene for stock-taking/lessons learnt from the smart specialisation processes in South-East Europe, also with special focus on the Western Balkans economies. It will open a dialogue on possibilities and issues for regional and transnational cooperation for smart specialisation and technology transfer. The conference is also linked to the "[Innovative Enterprise Week](#)" which will bring together innovation activities from different EU R&I funding programmes and agencies and in light of the future European Union's R&I programme [Horizon Europe](#) (2021-2027).

The event will have a **mixed format** with presentations of analytical studies and tools to support policy creation, as well as roundtable contributions by local and Europe-wide practitioners to continue the exchange of best practices and knowhow and strengthen connectivity among the practitioners. In particular, the conference in Bucharest would set a scene for stock-taking/lessons learnt from the smart specialisation processes in South-East Europe, with special

focus on the Western Balkans economies. It will also open a dialogue on possibilities and issues for regional and transnational cooperation for smart specialisation and technology transfer.

The conference will **target and bring together**: Innovation practitioners; Policy makers; Financial institutions; Decision-makers from public and private organisations; Chambers of Commerce; Innovation agencies; SMEs; Representatives of academia; other innovation actors

Background

Promoting research and innovation, digitalisation and connectivity is among the priorities of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The 2018 edition of European Innovation Scoreboard has confirmed the large innovation gap between West and East Europe. At the same time, following President Juncker's 2017 State of the Union address, the Commission adopted in February 2018 a strategy for 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans'.

The Sofia Process

In 2018, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) started an initiative called "the Sofia process," aiming at making smart specialisation and technology transfer important tools to promote transnational cooperation in the region for innovation-based economic transformation and to provide a dialogue forum for discussing strategic innovation policies and implementation practices. The Sofia process was launched with the conference on 'Smart Specialisation and Technology Transfer as Innovation Drivers for Regional Growth', during the Bulgarian Presidency. This high-level event presented an opportunity to propagate evidence-based policy-making as well as to build on the links between the EU and the Western Balkans R&I community, to enhance connections towards economic integration and to exchange experience among the broader South-East Europe region in the fields of smart specialisation, technology transfer and digital economy.

Draft Agenda¹

Time	18 June 2019
08:00-09:00	Registration and Welcome coffee
09:00-09:30	<p>Welcome addresses</p> <p><i>Moderator</i>, Rector/Vice-Rector, Politehnica University of Bucharest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Nicolae HURDUC</u>, Minister of Research and Innovation of Romania ▪ <u>Charlina VITCHEVA</u>, Deputy Director-General, European Commission, Joint Research Centre
09.30-11.45	<p>High-level Panel discussions: Advancing Innovation Policies in South-East Europe through Smart Specialisation Strategies and Technology Transfer</p> <p><i>Moderator</i>: <u>Katarina Mathernova</u>, Deputy Director General, DG NEAR</p> <p>Following a keynote, scene-setting introduction by the Moderator, this panel will then address, in two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Initiating Smart Specialisation Strategies and the Enterprise Development Process 2) Promoting Technology Transfer as an implementation tool of Smart Specialisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Adrian CURAJ</u>, Director-General, Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding ▪ <u>Besa SHAHINI</u>, Minister of Education, Sports and Youth, Albania ▪ <u>Adil OSMANOVIĆ</u>, Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia-Herzegovina ▪ <u>Karina ANGELIEVA</u>, Deputy Minister for Research and Structural Funds, Bulgaria ▪ <u>Blaženka DIVJAK</u>, Minister of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia ▪ <u>Costas FOTAKIS</u>, Alternate Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Greece ▪ <u>Shyqiri BYTYQI</u>, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Kosovo* ▪ <u>Sanja DAMJANOVIĆ</u>, Minister of Science of Montenegro ▪ <u>Arbër ADEMI</u>, Minister of Education and Science, Republic of North Macedonia ▪ <u>Mladen Šarčević</u>, Minister, Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development ▪ <u>Jernej PIKALO</u>, Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Republic of Slovenia <p><i>Enhancing the effectiveness of research, development and innovation in South-East Europe requires appropriate action both on the strategy and implementation level. This panel</i></p>

¹ Some speakers listed are still to be confirmed. The event will be webstreamed.

* This designation, and all other designations in this programme, is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

	<i>discussion involving high-level representatives from the relevant Ministries in the region will explore common challenges from their different perspectives on designing and implementing smart specialisation strategies in combination with technology transfer capacity building activities fostering place-based innovation and regional growth.</i>
11:45-12:15	Coffee break
12:15-13:45	<p>Smart Specialisation as a driver of Innovation in South East Europe.</p> <p><i>Moderator: <u>Normund Poppens</u>, Deputy Director General, DG REGIO</i></p> <p>Following an introductory keynote by the Moderator, the following speakers will then address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Slavo Radosevic</u>, Professor of Industry and Innovation Studies, UCL London – "Challenges for smart specialisation in the South-East Europe"; ▪ <u>Mihaela Toader</u>, State Secretary in the Ministry of European Funds, Romania; ▪ <u>Sotiris Pavleas</u>, Special Advisor to the Secretary General for Research and Technology, Greece ▪ <u>Peter Wostner</u>, Head of the S3 Coordination Division, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Slovenia - "S3 as an operational plan facilitating the shift to high-productivity economy" ▪ <u>Radu Gheorghiu</u>, UEFISCDI – "Romanian S3 experience in setting the 2021-2027 financial period" <p><i>The session will aim at highlighting common growth and innovation challenges in the SEE to address path dependency patterns in the economic structures and overcome industrial legacies of the past, and the role of smart specialisation as a driver of regional and national innovation ecosystems to address them. Key dimensions of RIS3 will be addressed, incl. the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process, governance, monitoring and evaluation, inter-regional and international cooperation, as well as institutional capacity-building.</i></p>
13:45-14.45	Lunch Break

Parallel Sessions			
14:45-16.00	1.1 - Engaging the actors of the innovation ecosystem in smart specialisation in the WB	2.1 - New Emerging Trends in Technology Transfer	3-1- Facilitating access to finance for High-Growth Innovative Enterprises (HGIE): do's and don'ts
	<i>Moderator: <u>Alessandro Rainoldi, Head of Unit, JRC B3</u></i>	<i>Moderator: <u>Giancarlo Caratti, Head of Unit, JRC I4</u></i>	<i>Moderator: <u>Xabier Goenaga, Head of Unit, JRC B7</u></i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Enric Fuster</u>, SIRIS Academic, Spain - Mapping of the economic potential of Western Balkan countries ▪ <u>Viktor Nedović</u>, State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Serbia ▪ <u>Darko Petrusic</u>, Director General, Ministry of Science, Montenegro ▪ <u>Linda Pustina</u>, Head of the S3 Working Group, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, Albania ▪ <u>Jasmina Majstoroska</u>, Head of the S3 Working Group, Ministry of Economy, North Macedonia ▪ <u>Ammar Mirascija</u>, Head of Department for Science, Ministry of Civil Affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina ▪ <u>Vedat Sagonjeva</u>, Acting Director of the Strategic Planning Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Kosovo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alessandro Fazio, JRC, Presentation of EC Competence Centre for Technology Transfer (15 min) ▪ Adrian Curaj, Director-General, Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding: Presentation of the Romanian Laser Valley Mega Project (10 min) ▪ Luis Sanz, Director-General, International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP): Insights into a study on the use of Public-Private Partnerships for Science Parks and Innovation Districts (10 min) ▪ ASTP-Proton representative 	<p>Keynote Presentation:</p> <p>the HGIE study: Aurélien Genty, JRC B7</p> <p>Panel discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Andrea Alunni, Innovation Financing Specialist ▪ Debora Revoltella, Director of the Economics Department, European Investment Bank ▪ High-level Representative of a Regional Development Agency ▪ CEO of a Romanian start-up
	<p><i>Contribution to the enhancement of the innovation potential can come from diverse, often neglected sources. Stakeholders need to be identified and mobilised for participating at the smart specialisation process Montenegro and Serbia should have RIS3 strategies adopted by mid-2019, while Albania, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have started the smart specialisation process in 2018 and by mid-2019 at least two countries should be prepared to enter the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process. Following the comparative mapping presentation at the beginning of this panel the WB policy makers will address the biggest challenges that the countries might face in the process and provide possible solutions for overcoming them.</i></p>	<p><i>The domain of Innovation Ecosystems (IE) is one of the three main pillars of the JRC's Competence Centre for Technology Transfer (the other two being capacity building and financial instruments). The Centre provides on-demand policy and operational support for the structuring, development and management of IE, including science parks, technology transfer offices, incubators and accelerators A number of countries in the SEE plan and/or already construct IE to modernise and boost their national and regional economies and fight brain drain. The session will also present the results of a study on the trends in the utilisation of PPP models for creating or regenerating urban innovation areas.</i></p>	<p><i>This session will discuss how to facilitate the access to finance for young innovative companies and which policy measures contribute to their growth. The aim is to discuss with experts, practitioners and stakeholders the role and impact of public schemes in facilitating the access to finance of this type of companies. Particular attention will be drawn to the efficiency of different types of instruments based on a study conducted by JRC and comparing equity, grants and guarantees. The main lessons on policy design and implementation will be presented and discussed.</i></p>

16.00 – 16:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>		
16:30 – 17:45	<p>1.2-Challenges and achievements in the economic transformation of the SEE economies</p> <p><i>Moderator: Manuel Palazuelos Martinez, Team Leader, JRC B3</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Barbara Banki-Gardinal</u>, HoU, DG NEAR (tbc); ▪ Peter Berkowitz, HoU, DG REGIO (tbc); ▪ <u>Ulla Engelmann</u>, HoU, DG GROW (tbc); ▪ <u>Kostas Glinos</u>, HoU, DG RTD (tbc); ▪ <u>Marina Ranga</u>, JRC B3; S3 as a Catalyst for Regional Innovation Systems - Insights from the "Targeted Support to S3 in Lagging Regions" project (with emphasis on BG, HR and RO); ▪ <u>Ales Gnamus</u>, JRC B3; Mapping and Alignment of S3 Priorities in the Danube Region – A basis for enhanced R&I cooperation in the SEE; <p><i>The enhancement of the governance in the area of developing efficient innovation frameworks in the SEE economies came as the result of increased capacity building activities in the region, as well as of the real needs emerging as a result of social and economic transformation. In this process, research and innovation systems need to continue shifting their focus towards private sector in order to yield more promising results in terms of competitiveness of the economies. This panel will provide results of the analyses of the governance structure for smart specialisation process and beyond, and reveal the key challenges in the process as well as provide some outlook on the smart specialisation developments towards the next Multiannual Financial Framework.</i></p>	<p>2.2 - Tech Transfer: Supporting promising ideas with Proof of Concept</p> <p><i>Moderator: Elena Andonova, Policy Officer, JRC I.4</i></p> <p>Panel Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Romanian VC fund (GapMinder or Early Games Ventures, TBC) ▪ Ivan Rakonjac, Director Innovation Fund, Serbia ▪ Petra Karanikic, Rijeka University TTO ▪ Fraunhofer Technology Transfer Fund ▪ European Investment Fund (TBD) ▪ EBRD (TBD) <p><i>Proof of Concept is the first step of the technology transfer process. It consist of granting relatively small funds to researchers that aim to facilitate the validation (prototype, demonstrator, etc.) and explore avenues for the commercialisation of technologies developed within Public Research Organisations (PROs), start-ups and micro-enterprises. This session will present best practices in the area of Proof of Concept and discuss most appropriate models for SEE</i></p>	<p>3.2 - Assessing the Regional Innovation Impact of Universities</p> <p><i>Moderator: Xabier Goenaga, Head of Unit, JRC B7</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of the framework and comparative case study analysis: Koen Jonkers, Deputy Head of Unit, JRC B7 ▪ Case study 1 – Svilen Kunev, Ruse University (confirmed) ▪ Case study 2 – Rovira i Virgili: Prof. Francesc Xavier Grau Vidal, Secretary General for Universities of the Catalan Government ▪ Kiril Geratliev, Executive Director, Executive Agency OP Science and Education for Smart Growth (SESG) ▪ Panel Discussion (to address the challenges in drafting, usefulness of the exercise both for the universities and for policy makers) <p><i>In 2018 JRC published a report which provides a framework to assess the impact of universities on their regional innovation ecosystem. The assessment objective is to set a path for an additional institutional funding stream for universities based on the contribution they can have on their regional innovation systems. The presentation will give an insight into the first outcomes. JRC will also conduct a comparative analysis based upon two case studies.</i></p>

17:45-18:00	Closing Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Adrian CURAJ</u>, Director-General, Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding▪ <u>Charlina VITCHEVA</u>, Deputy Director-General, European Commission, Joint Research Centre <i>[Confirmed]</i>
18:00-19:30	Networking Cocktail

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