

Smart Specialisation and Technology Transfer as Innovation Drivers for Regional Growth

3-4 May 2018
National Palace of Culture
Sofia (Bulgaria)



eu2018bg.bg



European
Commission

Rationale

The Trio Presidency Estonia-Bulgaria-Austria identified investments in research, innovation and human capital as key priority areas for boosting jobs and growth, particularly in the context of digital economies. At the same time, EU support towards the Western Balkans remains on the agenda with a special focus on fostering progress, inclusive regional cooperation and promoting socio-economic development.

The proposed conference will consider the opportunities and challenges for Europe, notably South-East Europe, in research, development, education, employment and innovation and in particular, the process of skills creation, knowledge and technology. This conference underlines the importance of evidence informed policy-making – notably for an efficient allocation of resources – embodied in the strategic concept, methodology and application of “Smart Specialisation,” an approach extensively applied in the EU’s regional and cohesion policies. In addition, knowledge and technology transfer is recognised as proven enabling operational tools for boosting local and regional economic and social impact.

Designing comprehensive innovation strategies together with local stakeholders provides a coherent framework for prioritising public investments in economic domains that are relevant for transforming and modernising regional economies. Choosing the right instruments to achieve this transformation is a second key step. Finally, governments need to monitor and adjust activities based on performance to ensure an effective use of public investments.

The Directorate-General Joint Research Centre (DG JRC) of the European Commission, with the Bulgaria Presidency of the Council of the EU, will provide a platform to discuss and commit to place-based innovation as a priority for Europe, with a focus on South-East Europe, including the Western Balkans, and an arena for constructive dialogue between institutions and businesses. After setting the scene and presenting the facets of the innovation landscape in Europe, policymakers, scientists, businesses, regional authorities and universities will engage in a debate on good practices and key success factors to inspire countries, regions and stakeholders willing to reap the potential of Smart Specialisation. On this basis and building on a variety of examples from the EU, participants will have the opportunity to dig into the policy mix needed to connect actors from the quadruple helix (businesses, academia, government and civil society). This will take place through two parallel streams focusing on: (i) the four challenges to regional innovation outlined by the European Commission in its July 2017 Communication on Smart Specialisation; and (ii) technology transfer and the digital economy. These exchanges will highlight the ingredients to make the most of innovation ecosystems and make Smart Specialisation a success story.

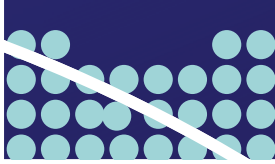
Please note that this Programme is as developed at time of printing. Any subsequent changes will be announced in the relevant session.



SMART SPECIALISATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AS INNOVATION DRIVERS FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

Thursday 3 May 2018
Overview

08:00 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 09:15	Opening and Welcomes + Yordanka Fandakova , <i>Mayor of Sofia, Bulgaria</i> + Vladimir Šucha , <i>Director-General, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission</i>
09:15 - 10:15	Opening statements: Innovation - a response to Europe's challenges
10:15 - 11:30	Panel discussion: The innovation landscape in the EU - Main actors, initiatives, tools and outcomes
11:30 - 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 - 13:00	Sharing experiences I: Innovation in places - Making smart specialisation a success story
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 15:00	Sharing experiences II: Success factors in R&D and innovation - How businesses cooperate with academia
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 - 16:45	Parallel sessions + Smart Specialisation + Technology Transfer + Wafaty Inspire
16:45 - 17:45	Strengthening Research and Innovation in Bulgaria
18:00 - 19:30	Official opening of "Putting science at the heart of EU policymaking" exhibition, hosted by + Vladimir Šucha , <i>Director-General, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission</i> + Patricia Reilly , <i>Deputy Head of Cabinet, Commissioner Navrascics</i>



OPENING STATEMENTS INNOVATION, A RESPONSE TO EUROPE'S CHALLENGES

Thursday 3 May

From 9:15 to 10:15 - Azarian room

Chair: Vladimír Šucha, *Director-General, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

Tomislav Donchev, *Deputy Prime Minister, Bulgaria*

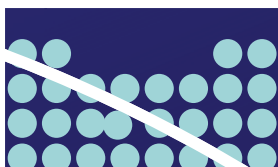
Mariya Gabriel, *European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society*

Markku Markkula, *Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions*

Julian Revalski, *President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences*

Ivan Dimov, *Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Bulgaria*

Place-based innovation policies have moved centre stage in the EU priorities for jobs, growth and investment. The EU's new industrial policy strategy and the Communication on Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions outline what needs to be done to harness the benefits of globalisation. It will be critical to enhance the effectiveness of research, development, education and innovation both in the EU and in enlargement countries. This high-level opening session will highlight those common challenges from the speakers' different perspectives and outline how they see this conference contributing to the contemporary debate on innovation policy and what they expect as outcomes from the discussions.



PANEL DISCUSSION **THE INNOVATION LANDSCAPE IN THE EU - MAIN ACTORS, INITIATIVES, TOOLS AND OUTCOMES**

Thursday 3 May

From 10:15 to 11:30 - Azarian room

Moderator: Charlina Vitcheva, *Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

Rudolf Niessler, *Director, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission*

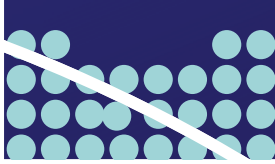
Slawomir Tokarski, *Director, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission*

Patricia Reilly, *Deputy Head of Cabinet, Commissioner Navrascics*

Iliyana Tsanova, *Deputy Managing Director of the European Fund for Strategic Investments at the European Investment Bank*

Cristina Russo, *Director, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission*

The EU has arguably one of the most complex and sophisticated research and innovation systems in the world. A plethora of actors, initiatives and tools are working towards the common goal of increased competitiveness and societal well-being. When designing and implementing policies in this context, evidence informed policy-making and involvement of key stakeholders are cornerstones for legitimate and sound innovation policies. The panellists will discuss key achievements and how they came about. Important lessons will be drawn also for enlargement countries.



SHARING EXPERIENCES I INNOVATION IN PLACES: MAKING SMART SPECIALISATION A SUCCESS STORY

Thursday 3 May

From 12:00 to 13:00

Moderator: Alessandro Rainoldi, *Head of Unit, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

Making the intervention logic work for a holistic innovation policy
Jurgita Petrauskienė, *Lithuanian Minister of Science and Education*

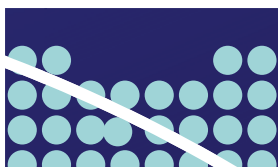
Lessons learned from the early stages in Serbia
Viktor Nedović, *Assistant Minister, Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development*

Key ingredients of place-based innovation policies
Peter Berkowitz, *Head of Unit, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission*

The economic rationale for Smart Specialisation in the Western Balkans
Hugo Hollanders, *University of Maastricht, Advisory Board Member of the Global Innovation Index*

Competing models and low-hanging fruits
Slavo Radosevic, *UCL London*

Success stories from transition economies can provide inspiration and send positive messages concerning the potential of Smart Specialisation for economic transformation. In this context, panellists will present both academic insights and the practitioners' perspective of managing these processes in different types of territories, discussing specific challenges in place-based innovation policy.



SHARING EXPERIENCES II SUCCESS FACTORS IN R&D AND INNOVATION - HOW BUSINESSES COOPERATE WITH ACADEMIA

Thursday 3 May

From 14:00 to 15:00

Moderator: **Sasha Bezuhanova**, *Founder of MOVE.BG and EDIT*

Peter Statev, *co-founder of DigiTech 4.0*

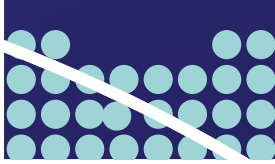
Stefano Fantoni, *President of Fondazione Internazionale Trieste*

Isfandyar Khan, *Program Leader on Smart Specialisation, World Bank*

Katerina Sereti, *Policy Officer, European Institute of Innovation and Technology*

Galia Angelova, *Institute of Information and Communication Technologies,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences*

Innovation policies must properly address real business needs. To identify these changing needs, iterative processes are needed. Smart Specialisation puts special emphasis on demand-driven policies and programmes and flexible approaches for implementation. Successful businesses will discuss key factors that governments can take into account.



PARALLEL SESSION

Thursday May 3

From 15:30 to 16:45

Smart specialisation

Reforming of Research and Innovation Systems: stakeholder mobilisation

Moderator: Manuel Palazuelos Martínez, *Leader of the Smart Specialisation platform, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

Creating coherent strategies together with stakeholders

Gorazd Jenko, *Secretary at Slovenian Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy*

Involving all relevant actors: The role of academia and universities in smart specialisation

Nikolay K. Vitanov, *Vice Director of Institute of Mechanics, Plovdiv University, Bulgaria*

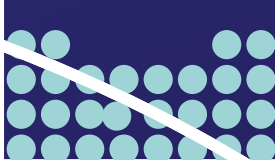
The Role of Clusters in Smart Specialisation in Transition Regions

Bianca Dragomir, *General Manager Cluster AVAENSEN, Valencia*

Mobilising innovation partnerships

Karolina Lipinska, *Pomorskie Region plus representative from Pazardzhik, Bulgaria*

In the EU, more than 120 strategies for Smart Specialisation were designed and assessed by the European Commission. Over EUR 40 billion is invested until 2020 in the priority domains defined in these strategies. As a prerequisite for cohesion policy investment, Smart Specialisation has contributed to putting in place reforms in about half of the Member States and helped to address many research and innovation challenges. Panellists will build on this vast experience and present how Smart Specialisation has changed innovation policy-making in their countries and regions.



PARALLEL SESSION

Thursday May 3

From 15:30 to 16:45

Technology Transfer

Innovation Ecosystems: Science Parks, Incubators and Innovation areas Driving Growth

Moderator: Luis Sanz, *Director General of the International Association of Science Parks*

Gordana Grkovic, *Belgrade Science Park*

Alessandro Fazio, *Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

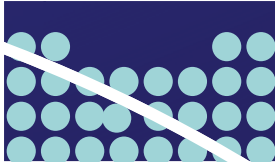
Sergio Paoletti, *Area Science Park*

Alberto Mina, *AREXPO, Milan*

Paris Kokoritsikos, *Innovation for Growth Incubator*

Marjana Majerič, *Ljubljana Technology Park*

The aim of this session is to explore the different types of areas of innovation and consider the role that various stakeholders, both private and public, can play to generate a virtuous circle that can promote technology transfer, accelerate local economic development and drive regional competitiveness.



PARALLEL SESSIONS

Thursday May 3

From 15:30 to 16:45

Watify Inspire

Boosting technological transformation in Europe

Moderator: Ian Andersen, *Participatory Leadership Adviser, European Commission*

Stijn Switten, *De Trog*

Nerea Sopelana, *Trimek*

Michael Behr, *Bächer Bergmann*

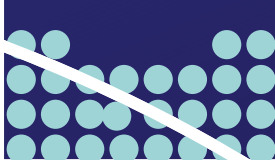
Spas Kerimov, *Printivo*

George Dimitrov, *Evrotrust*

Andrei Bunis, *Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission for Watify*

WATIFY is an awareness-raising campaign that stimulates the modernisation of European industry. The campaign focuses on the technological transformation of traditional SMEs, promotion of regional digitisation and uptake of advanced technologies – notably Key Enabling Technologies. WATIFY seeks to boost the rate of European industrial modernisation through increased productivity and efficiency, resulting in improved competitiveness and job creation.

This session, organised in an innovative way to give an inspiring image, aims to pass sound messages on the modernisation of industry through digital transformation and advanced technologies, creativity and innovation.



PLENARY **STRENGTHENING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN BULGARIA**

Thursday May 3

From 16:45 to 17:45

Moderator: Giancarlo Caratti, *Head of Unit, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

Specific Support to Bulgaria under the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility
Luc Soete, on behalf of *Directorate-General Research and Innovation, European Commission*

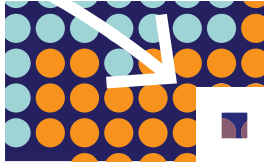
Diagnostic Study for Sofia Tech Park
Stephen Taylor, *Director, Innovation and Complex Systems Department, Area Science Park*

Fund of funds instruments to advance innovation
Svetoslava Georgieva, *Executive Director, Fund of Funds, Bulgaria*

From 18:00

Ground floor - Room 1

Vladimir Šucha, Director-General, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission, and **Patricia Reilly**, Deputy Head of Cabinet, Commissioner Navrascius, will open the JRC exhibition, "*Putting science at the heart of EU policymaking*".

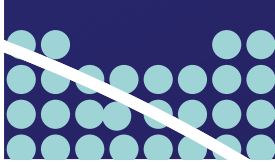


SMART SPECIALISATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AS INNOVATION DRIVERS FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

Friday 4 May 2018

Overview

08:00 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 10:30	Statements on Opportunities and Challenges in the Region: The Innovation Roadmap
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break and group photo
11:00 - 12:15	Parallel sessions + Smart Specialisation + Technology Transfer + Digital Economy
12:15 - 13:00	Lunch
13:00 - 14:15	Parallel sessions + Smart Specialisation + Technology Transfer + Digital Economy
14:15 - 15:30	Final Plenary Panel discussion: Coordinating processes and synergies – Bringing multiple initiatives together
15:30	Closing remarks



STATEMENTS ON OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE REGION THE INNOVATION ROADMAP

Friday 4 May

From 09:00 to 10:30

Moderator: Christian Danielsson, *Director-General, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission*

Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council 2018 (tbc)

Ciprian-Ion Preda, *Secretary of State, Ministry of Research and Innovation, Romania*

Viktor Nedović, *Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Serbia*

Besa Shahini, *Vice-Minister of Education, Sports and Youth, Albania*

Sanja Damjanović, *Minister of Science, Montenegro*

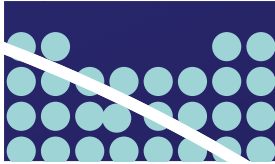
Jasna Šafhauzer, *Counsellor, Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Republic of Bulgaria*

Ministry for Economy, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (tbc)

Arber Geci, *Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo**

For Western Balkans, Smart Specialisation is not an ex ante conditionality like it is for the EU Member States. It is, however, an increasingly popular innovation policy concept spreading worldwide. Starting early to transform research and innovation (R&I) systems is an important precondition for success. Those just starting their Smart Specialisation process could benefit from a sound and objective analysis of their economic potentials, similar to what the European Commission has been doing in Serbia. To assess relative performance and potentials, a comparative analysis of the entire region is necessary. This discussion will underline the importance of cooperation in economic, innovation and research policies that benefits partners from the Western Balkans and EU Member States and regions that can deliver positive economic effects and help integration processes.

**This designation 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*



PARALLEL SESSION

Friday 4 May

From 11:00 to 12:15

Smart specialisation

Increasing Transnational Cooperation for Innovation Investments

Moderator: Nikos Pantalos, *Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission*

Thematic platforms (industrial modernisation, energy, agrofood) - Representatives from lead/participating regions

Ilari Havukainen, *Bioenergy partnership*

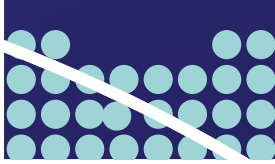
Vanguard Initiative

Wim De Kinderen

Beyond the EU: Preparing the grounds for Smart Specialisation in enlargement countries

Alexander Kleibrink, *Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

Smart Specialisation has a fundamental role in driving a more effective innovation policy and pushing interregional cooperation in new cross-border value chains. To help European regions upscale Smart Specialisation investments and achieve critical mass, the European Commission launched three Smart Specialisation thematic platforms focusing on interregional innovation activities. This session will build on this example and on the experience of the Vanguard Initiative to generate a debate about the importance of exploiting inter-regional and cross-border complementarities to build and reshape EU-wide value-chains.



PARALLEL SESSION

Friday 4 May

From 11:00 to 12:15

Technology Transfer

[From Lab to Market: How to commercialise innovations](#)

Moderator: Elena Andonova, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre,
European Commission

Henric Rhedin, *President, ASTP Proton*

Barbara Diehl, *UCD, Ireland*

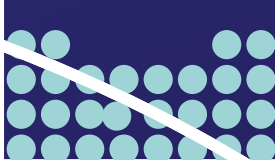
Steffen Preissler, *Fraunhofer Society*

Julia Djarova, *EU4TECH*

Dragan Soljan, *European Investment Bank*

Nina Anticic, *Zagreb University*

This session covers various aspects relating to technology transfer models and processes for the development of innovative products and services. Issues to be discussed involve opportunities, such as access to international excellence, and challenges such as funding, intellectual property management, and cultural differences of the university-industry interface.



PARALLEL SESSION

Friday 4 May

From 11:00 to 12:15

Digital economy

Digital Transformation: Setting the Scene

Moderator: Alessandro Annoni, *Head of Unit, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

The Digital Single Market and Artificial Intelligence

Cécile Huet, *Deputy Head of Robotics & Artificial Intelligence Unit, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission*

Better Use of ICT to leverage the competitiveness of companies in the Industry 4.0 era

Valerio Alessandrini, *EFCC Estonian Fieldbus Competency Centre and WATIFY Ambassador*

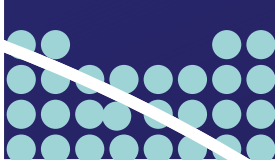
Platform Economy

Nestor Duch Brown, *Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

Economic governance of data-driven markets

Daniel Castro, *Center for Data Innovation*

Digital transformation refers to the profound changes taking place in the economy and society as a result of the uptake and integration of digital technologies in every aspect of human life. It has a pervasive impact and all sectors will be affected.



PARALLEL SESSION

Friday 4 May

From 13:00 to 14:15

Smart Specialisation

Leveraging Research and Innovation in Less Developed and Industrial Transition Regions

Moderator: Marek Przeor, *Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission*

Implementing Smart Specialisation in less developed regions

Marina Ranga, *Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

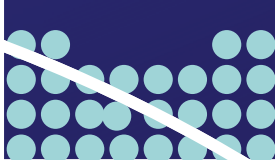
Doing Smart Specialisation at the local level

Desislava Koleva, *Head of Economic Development Department - Municipality of Gabrovo*

Smart Specialisation from the perspective of knowledge actors

Atanas Kocov, *Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University St. Cyril and Methodius Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and DG JRC Board of Governors Member*

While Smart Specialisation is relevant to all regions, less developed regions and industrial transition regions face specific challenges. In this session, policy-makers and experts in this area will discuss about how to best address these challenges to make the most of their innovation capacity and move up the value chain.



PARALLEL SESSION

Friday 4 May

From 13:00 to 14:15

Technology Transfer

Harnessing Synergies between EU Policies and Instruments for Financing

Moderator: Fabio Mondini de Focatiis, *Idinvest Partners*

Yordan Zarev, *NEVEQ Capital Partners*

Almudena Trigo Lorenzo, *BeAble Capital*

Early stage investment gaps

Luigi Amati, *Business Angels Europe*

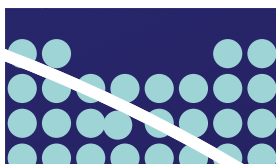
Financing eco-system development

Anwar Aridi, *World Bank*

The Venture Capitalist's point of view

Robert Bush, *Investor and advisor to technology companies*

In this interactive session, there will be opportunities to hear about existing funding schemes for technology transfer projects and the perspectives of early stage investment funds, such as Proof of Concept vehicles and venture capital funds. The session will also touch upon the Commission's initiatives related to bridging the 'valley of death' and relevant technical assistance.



PARALLEL SESSION

Friday 4 May

From 13:00 to 14:15

Digital economy

Going deeper into Digital Transformation

Moderator: Alexander Kotsev, *Directorate-General Joint Research Centre, European Commission*

The Digital Transition Partnership and Digital City Challenge

Vladimir Danailov, *Sofia Investment Agency*

New challenges and opportunities for the ICT industry

Ognyan Trajanov, *Bulgarian Association of IT Companies*

Data-driven innovation in the Western Balkans

Darko Vucetic, *Republic Geodetic Authority of Serbia*

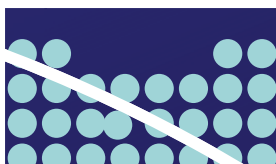
Artificial Intelligence can change our world now

Martin Pecar, *OmniOpti*

The Impact of Blockchain goes beyond Financial Services

Georgios Petropoulos, *Bruegel*

This session will present the Digital Transition Partnership and will provide a closer look at some of the main technologies shaping the Digital Transformation: Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and Robotics. Special attention will be given to their global, cross-sector and cross-technology nature.



FINAL PLENARY PANEL DISCUSSION **COORDINATING PROCESSES AND** **SYNERGIES – BRINGING MULTIPLE** **INITIATIVES TOGETHER**

Friday 4 May

From 14:15 to 15:30

Moderator: Andrey Novakov, MEP

Building an Action Plan for Smart Growth in the Western Balkans
Lucian Brujan, *Speaker of the Joint Science Conference of the Berlin Process,*
German National Academy of Sciences

Smart Growth as a Corner Stone of the WB6 Multi-Annual Plan of the
Regional Economic Area
Gazmend Turdiu, *Deputy Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council*

Evidence-based policies: analytical support for successful strategies in the
Western Balkans
Marzena Kisielewska, *Head of Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation*
and Development (OECD)

Smart Specialisation and the circular economy in the Western Balkans and
South-East Europe: upgrading international cooperation
Christophe Yvetot, *UN Industrial Development Organisation*

Multiple initiatives already co-exist in South-East Europe. The European Commission and the international community are committed to continue looking for synergies and value added in the policies they design and implement. The invited panellists will discuss selected initiatives and how they can be better coordinated for increased impact.

