

WIRE 2018 Conclusions

Starting Austria's Council presidency in the field of research and innovation

Highlighting connectivity, entrepreneurship and the role of science and research as powerful elements for the development of regional ecosystems for innovation

Exchanging first views on the European Commission's vision for regional innovation in the next generation of the European framework programme for research and innovation and the European Structural and Investment Funds

Discussing a forward-looking perspective on continuous efforts to base Europe's regional prosperity and competitiveness on knowledge and innovation, and on using the new opportunities of the digital economy to help regions across the Union, including rural and remote areas, seize their innovative potential as places to live and work

Inspired by keynotes and balanced examples of good practice from across the European Union and therefore

Acknowledging

- The role of Lead Institutions of science and research in shaping the profile of their regional ecosystem of innovation, and in mobilising the knowledge triangle of skills, research and innovation with entrepreneurship
- Trust as the currency for regional innovation and co-operation, and that trust needs to be built in the sufficient funding of excellent research as a key to attract international talents to knowledge locations across the Union
- Entrepreneurship as the driving force for innovation and for opening new markets for innovation
- The need to better include and connect citizens to knowledge and innovation created in Europe
- The need to use traditional as well as digital infrastructure to connect Europe's regions and also rural and remote areas to international knowledge, technologies and markets
- The need to demonstrate the capacity of research to change citizens' lives for the better and to enhance the quality of politics at all levels
- The need for regions to further develop their profiles in a broader neighbourhood and international context
- The need to create access to excellent research results across the Union, to widen the participation in the framework programme and the use of the Structural Funds for regional development based on knowledge and innovation
- The need for a view of Europe as a unique place to innovate, created by particular ecosystems of innovation

The 9th WIRE calls on entrepreneurial people working in science, business and regional development to

- Use their specific competence to develop and enhance the international profile of regional ecosystem of innovation
- Engage with regional partners as game-changers, enablers and innovators to seize new opportunities also in rural areas, and to
- Develop their region's smart specialisations using complementary strengths of other regions
- Create European partnerships and use European instruments to connect regional ecosystems of innovation to face global competitiveness
- Strategically reconnect with successful compatriots abroad to infuse regional ecosystems with global mentorship
- Come forward with concrete feedback and proposals for joint synergies and simplification in Horizon Europe and the next generation of Structural Funds

And on public policies at European Union, member states, regional and local level to

- Create a credible narrative of the European Union as a distinctive place to innovate, driven by an entrepreneurial knowledge-based society, research excellence, high social standards, and well-connected regions with a strong profile
- Prioritise knowledge and innovation as drivers for regional development and all other sectoral policies
- Co-invest and secure sufficient public funding for frontier research and research institutions
- Foster entrepreneurial thinking and skills at all ages through education, training and mentoring initiatives, not only in the business sector
- Invest in digital and other infrastructures to seize new living and working opportunities in all regions, and also in rural areas
- Reiterate the role of research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation and diversification across the Union, and help to promote regional knowledge and innovation profiles internationally
- Jointly evaluate the research and innovation impact of Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds
- Jointly align and simplify the use of funding instruments for research and innovation to allow for their synergetic use, across instruments, sectors and policy levels
- Examine the exemption from state aid regulation for Structural Funds investments in research and innovation according to the Horizon Europe model
- Invest a high share of the next Structural Funds in research and innovation, take over projects awarded the Seal of Excellence for funding and use the option to deposit 5% of the ERDF programme budget in a ,national envelope' for research funding under direct management.

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