

Dear EREF Network members and partners,

After 4 years of Network activities its Brussels Steering Committee authorized the Network Secretariat, SBRA (Slovenian Business & Research Association) to start an electronic Bulletin. The publication is to fulfill the following functions:

- to inform Network members and their stakeholders in the respective regions and countries on activities of the Network, and specially about the preparations of the next Forum;
- disseminate information on Knowledge Triangle's good practice cases among Network members and other regions;
- promote the Network and the annual Forum around Europe and beyond;
- keep past and future Forum participants informed about the preparations of workshops and the programme of EREF-2009;
- disseminate the adopted EREF-2008 recommendations;
- disseminate relevant information on concepts, policy documents and implementation issues on knowledge triangle and implementation of Lisbon agenda at the regional level;
- serve as an information platform for Network members.

The EREF Network Bulletin will be a quarterly publication, the first issue will be released at the end of January, the second in mid April, and the third in late June or early July – 3-4 weeks after the 5th Forum – taking place on 8th and 9th of June 2009.

Let me also inform you about the progress in preparations of EREF-2009 and its workshops, as well as about the decisions taken by the EREF Network Steering Committee taken at the last two meetings on October 6, and December 15, 2008 in Brussels.

Firstly, the development of the Forum Programme has followed the principle of allowing as much active involvement of participation as possible. Therefore, 3 working groups will be organized on second day morning, after the presentation of 5 major success stories in key topical areas of Forum 2009.

In line with the mission of EREF to serve as the bridge between the EU and countries of South Eastern Europe it was decided to devote the first day morning to specific problems of the region in the domains of education, training, brain circulation and migration management. No doubt, these countries have been severely affected by brain drain in the recent past, and face particularly serious challenges in building knowledge-based competitiveness of their economies. Besides presentations of national and regional authorities, stakeholders and non-governmental organizations, also several international bodies and think tanks will give their views on achievements, challenges and future priorities.

All this will be discussed in the context of intensified efforts of countries of the region to prepare for future Accession to the Union. Besides their internal policies, the efforts of EU to assist in human capital development in the region will be presented and evaluated.

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The afternoon will be devoted to assess to what extent present education and training systems in EU member states contribute to building knowledge society and how the international migration management fits into the broader development strategies. Besides regional and national experiences and success stories, the contribution of international bodies, from UN, OECD, EU and G-8 will be discussed.

Before lunch on the second day, the participants will split up into 3-4 groups to continue in-depth debate on some most burning issues, and after lunch they will listen in the plenary the report of the preparatory workshops. Till now 3 workshops are confirmed, and another 1-2 are expected to be agreed shortly. TUBITAK/TURBO will organize on 12 February in Ankara a workshop on the role of hosting institution in researcher exchanges programmes. Internationalizierungs Centrum Styria will host a workshop on e-learning for SMEs on 24 April in Graz, and Canada Research Chair on Science and Society will organize a workshop on 8 May on Brain Migration in Ottawa.

Details of the Forum draft-Programme are presented on page 13.

Mr. Gert Van Mol of Wall Street Journal Europe has joined the Network's Steering Committee and an agreement has been reached to make WSJE the Network's media partner. Mr. Van Mol has accepted the responsibility for dissemination – communication activities of the Network.

Perhaps the most important decision of the Steering Committee is concerning the future functioning of the EREF Network. In order to cover some of the expenses of SBRA as the Network's Secretariat it was decided that Network members will start paying from January 2009 an annual fee of EUR 2,000.- which will include a full membership in RIBN Network (including the use of EU Programmes' Roadmap – www.ribn.eu).

With Serbia joining the Network in Autumn of 2008, the Network now has 17 members.

It was also decided that EREF Network Bulletin will contain a brief presentation of member regions/countries, and in each issue 2 members hosting workshops and thereby being Forum Partners will be presented in a more comprehensive manner.

Network members are also invited to propose good practice cases to be presented in the next issues of the Network's Bulletin.

As this is the first issues of the Bulletin, we invite all readers to send us their comments and suggestions how to improve the publication and adjust it optimally to your needs and expectations.

Thank you in advance for your contribution!

Boris Cizelj
Editor

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European Regional Economic Forum: Network Members and Partners

The Initiative and its Evolution

Since 2005 The Slovenian Business and Research Association (SBRA) together with the Municipality of Nova Gorica and the Slovenian government - under the high patronage of the Committee of the Regions - and sponsored by HIT Nova Gorica, began organizing an annual event under the name of the **European Regional Economic Forum (EREF)**. The Forum brings together stakeholders and decisions makers from European regions interested in Knowledge Economy.

EREF Forum

The EREF Forum in Nova Gorica is an exchange and dissemination platform of European regions on knowledge economy and society, and is also acting as a bridge between EU Members and countries of South-Eastern Europe. The Forum supports them in their efforts of gradual integration into the Union through discussing policies and measures aiming at implementing the Lisbon Strategy and through the presentation of good practices from European regions.

SBRA, est. in 1999 as an international non-profit organisation connecting business, research and local communities in Slovenia with the EU institutions and other public and private bodies at EU level is serving as EREF Secretariat.

Forum Participants

Besides representatives of regions and relevant authorities responsible for implementing Lisbon Agenda, various stakeholders from business and RTD, innovation and education, as well as those of EU institutions, European associations and networks are sharing good practice in creating conditions for successful Lisbon-type reforms facilitating the strengthening of knowledge-based competitiveness of European regions. Members of several European networks are also actively participating in the Forum, such as: LRN (Lisbon Regions Network), NIROC (Network of Interest Representation Offices from new Member States and Candidate Countries), IGLO (Informal Group of RTD Liaison Offices), ERRIN (European Regions Research and Innovation Network), RIBN (Research, Innovation and Business Network), and others.

Forum Activities

Each year the Forum adopts a set of recommendations addressed to the regional and national entities, EU institutions, as well as to companies and institutions active in research, innovation and education. These recommendations are disseminated very broadly, and are contributing to the knowledge society awareness, debate, and quality policy making in Europe. An effort is also made to increase the awareness of stakeholders about their own responsibilities and indeed their interest to permanently innovate and strengthen their human capital base and thereby support their knowledge-

based international competitiveness.

The Nova Gorica Forum is also a good opportunity for the participants to establish fruitful contacts and to hold exploratory discussions about possible joint projects. For participants from South-Eastern European countries the Forum provides an opportunity to discuss with representatives of the EU institutions and to complete and update their EU information and documentation. The participants are also encouraged to deliver beforehand, or bring along some promotional material about their organisation/region or project, which will be available for participants. Upon request, the organizers can organize for participants bilateral meetings, preferably with their interests indicated before the Forum.

EREF Network

The purpose of the Network is to translate principles of knowledge society into productive policies and effective performance to be disseminated among various stakeholders from the knowledge economy. Representatives of 17 European regions (Stockholm, Lapland-Oulu, Flanders, Wallonia, Scotland, Baden Württemberg, Styria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lombardia, Emilia Romagna, Valencia, Cataluña, West Pannon, Slovenia, Croatia, Turkey and Serbia), are currently members of the EREF Network. These regions attend every year the Forum to discuss their experience in supporting RTD, innovation and education in line with the Lisbon Agenda.

Each year some members accept the role of EREF Guest Regions. In 2008 these were: Styria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Prague, Vojvodina and Istanbul. In the next issue of the Bulletin the guest regions for 2009 will be announced.

EREF Steering Committee

Representatives of EREF Network Regions, based in Brussels, are composing the “EREF Brussels Steering Committee” which is responsible for coordinating the preparations of the regions for the event, in particular helping to ensure a well balanced structure of regional presentations and selection of good practice cases, and a representation including senior level political figures and top civil servants working on Lisbon agenda.

Other Activities

Each year several parallel events are organised during the Forum, such as presentation of the findings of relevant EU funded projects on RTD policy and funding (e.g.: BIS-RTD – www.bis-rtd.net, R4R - www.regions4research.eu, etc.).

Linked to EREF, the Research Information and Business Network for Central and SE Europe - RIBN (www.ribn.eu) aims to support regional stakeholders in their preparations for the future EU accession and cooperation with entities in the region and throughout Europe.

EREF Network Regions

EREF Network Member regions are briefly introduced

Stockholm

The Stockholm Region is a "virtual" region that is based on voluntary cooperation between municipalities and county councils. The Stockholm Region consists of four Swedish administrative counties - Stockholm County, the County of Sörmland, the County of Västmanland and the County of Uppsala. Stockholm Region is by far the largest population center in Scandinavia and in the Nordic region as a whole, with some 2.9 million inhabitants. The cooperation is about the region's commitment to Europe and the Baltic Sea area, the region's own environment, culture and tourism, transport and social planning, as well as knowledge and competence development.

The economy in the Stockholm Region is based on knowledge and contact-intensive activities. During the last decades it became a leader in areas such as information technology, medical industry, biotechnology, banking and other financial institutions. Furthermore, the Stockholm Region has strong economic clusters in other sectors such as health care, art and culture, management, logistics and engineering.

For more information please go to www.stockholmregion.org

Lapland-Oulu

The diversity of the natural resources in North Finland and the rich areas of natural beauty are the corner stones of the basic industry and tourism. The northern regions in Finland form a natural, logistical gateway to the vast energy resources in the Barents Region. Natural resources, such as gas, wood, minerals and large natural areas, give a unique added value to the whole of Europe. In addition, the northern forest belt – the “lungs” of Europe – is a significant capturer of carbon dioxide emissions.

North Finland stands out from the other European regions in many ways. People in the North are amongst the most highly educated in Europe. The share of GDP per capita spent on research and development is one of the highest in Europe and significantly higher than the average in Finland.

For more information please go to www.northfinland.fi

Flanders

Flanders is the northern, Dutch-speaking region of Belgium. Flanders has a surface of 13,522 km² and accounts for some 60% of the total population. The Flemish Gross Regional Product provides 60% of the national GDP and is home to the majority of the country's industry and workforce, the region also generates the major part of national trade. Innovation and creativity is highly developed and new products and technologies place the region among the top performers of Lisbon Agenda in Europe.

Flanders offers businesses a uniquely central location at the hub of European trade and the heart of European decision-making. Moreover, transport and communication infrastructures are highly developed.

For more information please go to www.flandersdc.be

Wallonia

The Walloon Region, commonly called Wallonia, is one of the three Regions of Belgium. It represents 33% of the population and 55% of the territory of Belgium (surface area of 16,844 km²). The region is predominantly French-speaking but there are also German-speaking municipalities in the east (2% of the population). Its official languages are French and German. As other regions, the Walloon Region has its own parliament and government and exercises its functions within the limits defined by the Belgian constitution.

Innovation and entrepreneurship support is a major regional governments priority.

For more information please go to www.awex.be

Scotland

The European Union embraces a diverse collection of lands and peoples, few more distinctive than the Scots and the country they inhabit. Scotland's population of 5.1 million is similar in size to Denmark's or Finland's. It has a landmass of nearly 8,000 sq km, more than one-third the total landmass of Great Britain. Scotland is proud of its achievement in business – academia collaboration, resulting also in several highly performing science and technology parks.

Scotland has a tradition of excellence in education. It has 13 universities (plus the Open University), 6 specialist higher education institutions and 43 further education colleges. Scotland was named by the Financial Times as the “UK Region of the Future”, it has also won separate awards, such as the “European Region with best FDI Strategy” as well as “European Region with Best Human Resources”.

It performs significantly better than many other countries in terms of higher education expenditure on R&D. In 2004, an equivalent of 0.65% of GDP was spent by HE, higher than the OECD (0.39%) and UK (0.40%) average, placing Scotland in the top quartile in OECD.

For more information please go to www.scotent.co.uk

Baden Württemberg

Baden-Württemberg is in the southwestern part of the country to the east of the Upper Rhine—but one which has some of its major cities straddling the banks of the Neckar River. It is third largest in both area and population among the country's sixteen states, with an area of 35,742 square kilometers (13,800.1 sq mi) and 10.7 million inhabitants.

The region is among the most prosperous regions in Germany and is one of the wealthiest regions in Europe with a traditionally low unemployment rates. A number of well-known enterprises are headquartered in the state, for example Daimler AG, Porsche, Robert Bosch GmbH, Carl Zeiss AG, SAP AG (largest software enterprise in Europe). In spite of this, Baden-Württemberg's economy is basically dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. Many enterprises are considered innovative.

For more information please go to www.stm.baden-wuerttemberg.de

Lombardia

Lombardy is one of the 20 regions of Italy. The capital is Milan. One-sixth of Italy's population lives in Lombardy and about one fifth of Italy's GDP is produced in this region. The region is home to some world renowned fashion designers.

Lombardy's development has been marked by the growth of the services sector since the 1980s, and in particular by the growth of innovative activities in the sector of services to enterprises and in credit and financial services. At the same time, the strong industrial vocation of the region has not suffered from it. Lombardy remains, in fact, the main industrial area of the country. The presence, and development, of a very high number of enterprises belonging to the services sector represents a favourable situation for the improvement of the efficiency of the productive process, as well as for the growth of the regional economy.

For more information please go to www.regione.lombardia.it

Emilia Romagna

Emilia-Romagna is an administrative region of Northern Italy comprising the two historic regions of Emilia and Romagna. The capital is Bologna; it has an area of 20,124 km² and about 4.3 million

inhabitants. Emilia Romagna today is considered as one of the richest European regions and the third Italian region by GDP per capita.

Industry in the region presents a varied and complex picture and is located along the Via Emilia. The food industry is particularly concentrated in Parma, Modena and Bologna as well as the mechanical and automotive. It has a good regional, social and economic structure; including five universities, 24 research infrastructures, 24 laboratories and 66 parks. One of the main features of the regional economy is the role and number of SMEs (420.000, one very ten inhabitants) and a model of polycentric development, which assures a strong territorial cohesion.

For more information please go to www.regione.emilia-romagna.it

Valencia

The Valencia Region has 518 km of Mediterranean coastline and covers 23,259 km² of land with 4.8 million inhabitants. It is one of the most attractive areas for new business projects. Over 260 multinationals have chosen the region to set up their factories and distribution centers. They have based their choice on the region's excellent land, sea and air transport links, its pleasant climate, a highly qualified workforce, modern industrial infrastructure and costs that are below the European average.

The region is currently one of the most attractive destinations in Southern Europe for foreign investment and has the third highest industrial GDP in Spain. Five science parks are in development, linked to each of the five public universities from the region of Valencia. The region ranks third in Spain by the number of R&D intensive companies, it also represents roughly 9% of all Spanish researchers. Total R&D expenditure in Valencia sums up to 631.9 million Euros (equivalent to 0.87% of the GDP).

For more information please go to www.uegva.info

Cataluña

Catalonia is an Autonomous Community in the northeast part of Spain. The region covers an area of 32,114 km² and has a population of 7,210,508. Official languages are Catalan, Spanish and Aranese. Barcelona comes top in terms of doing the most to improve itself as a business location. The 3,000 plus foreign companies operating in Catalonia (out of 5.550 in Spain) come from a variety of countries.

The most important consideration for European managers, with regard to Barcelona was the effort it has been making to improve as well as the quality of life enjoyed by its professionals, two rankings where the Catalan capital was rated first in Europe. Value for money of office space, public transport, the political and tax climate, the availability of office space and good access to markets, suppliers and customers are some of the other factors that were highly rated.

For more information please go to www.copca.cat

West Pannon

The Region of West Pannonia includes the counties Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala. The extension of the region is lengthy in the direction North-South. The region borders four countries; Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Slovakia. The territory of the region is 11 183 km² that includes 12 % of the territory of Hungary.

International transit traffic through the four national frontiers of West Pannonia is significant: more than half of the frontier traffic of the country goes through the border stations of the region. The rate of foreign capital in the region is high, according to the GDP, it takes the second place among the regions after the Region of Central Hungary; the value of the GDP is by 33 % above the national average of the counties. Besides that however, the region has also recently put significant emphasis put on collaboration between innovative SME's and the science, research hubs in the region.

For more information please go to www.westpa.hu

Slovenia

Slovenia covers an area of 20,273 km² and has an estimated population of 2,040,788. Since gaining independence in 1991, Slovenia has become a member of the European Union, the Eurozone, the Schengen area, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe and NATO. Slovenia has a high-income developed economy which enjoys the second highest (after Cyprus) GDP per capita of the new EU countries, which is 93% of the EU average.

The institutional framework of innovation policy in Slovenia has gone through several changes since independence. Increasingly, the importance of R&D and innovation is being recognised in the official policy papers like the Slovenian Development Strategy 2006-2013 and the National Research and Development Programme 2006-2010. Current level of investment in R&D has been for several years around 1.5%, committing itself to achieving a Lisbon Barcelona 3% target. Technology parks and centres form top policy priority in creation of innovation friendly environment and in the improvement of knowledge transfer and technology diffusion.

For more information please go to www.sbra.be

Serbia

Serbia covers an area of 88 361 km², (roughly 77,000 km² excluding Kosovo) and has a population of 10,159,046, or approximately 7.5 million excluding Kosovo. In the most recent world economic outlook (April 2008), the IMF has included data for Serbia (without Kosovo), such that GDP per capita in terms of PPP has been recorded at \$10 911, and \$7 054 in real exchange rate terms.

Since the formation of the pro-European government in 2008, Serbia has seen an increasingly swift foreign direct investment trend, starting with significant investments from FIAT into Serbia's Zastava car manufacturer (in which the deal is worth US\$2.2 Billion). Besides that, Serbia has been traditionally known for its well qualified human resources. Serbia boasts approximately 200 scientific research and development organisations, of which roughly 75 are in RDI, 35 in RDU and 90 are faculties of HEO. About 2/3 are active in basic sciences, and 1/3 in applied ones. There are six public Universities in Serbia., including the University of Belgrade, the biggest and the most renowned in the country.

For more information please go to www.pks.komora.net

EREF Network Regions Special

Members of the EREF Network, in each of the quarterly issues, four regions will be complemented with longer presentations

Turkey

Turkey covers an area of 783,562 km² and has a population of 70,586,256 according to the 2007 census. The Anatolian peninsula, comprising most of modern Turkey, is one of the oldest continually inhabited regions in the world due to its location at the intersection of Asia and Europe.

Turkey has a very diverse culture that is a blend of various elements of the Oğuz Turkic, Anatolian, Ottoman (which was itself a continuation of both Greco-Roman and Islamic cultures) and Western culture and traditions, which started with the Westernization of the Ottoman Empire and still continues today.

The GDP growth rate from 2002 to 2007 averaged 7.4%, which made Turkey one of the fastest growing economies in the world during that period. The World Bank forecasts a 5.4% GDP growth rate for Turkey in 2008. Turkey's economy is no longer dominated by traditional agricultural activities in the rural areas, but more so by a highly dynamic industrial complex in the major cities, mostly concentrated in the western provinces of the country, along with a developed services sector. In 2007, the agricultural sector accounted for 8.9% of the GDP, while the industrial sector accounted for 30.8% and the services sector accounted for 59.3%.

TURBO is an international non-profit Association set up in Brussels by the public and private sector institutions representing Turkish Research and Business domains, i.e. TÜBİTAK, TOBB, KOSGEB and TESK. The founding philosophy and aims of TURBO are based on the principle of public-private partnership.

TURBO officially started its activities in March 2004 to serve public interest with private sector productivity and efficiency and to gain the maximum benefit for the country, it is headed by Mehmet Gökgöz.

Reinforcing the efforts towards EU membership, TURBO aims to contribute Turkey to attain the success in the European Union's RTD and private sector/enterprise-oriented programmes within the framework of the EU's Lisbon Strategy by providing information, communication, consultancy and training services, involving in target-oriented networks and carrying out lobbying activities.

TUBITAK on the other hand, is the main funding body of RTD projects in Turkey. Academic projects that are carried mostly in universities are funded through Research Grant Committees (RGC). There are nine RGCs which evaluate the academic RTD projects via panels and fund the awarded ones. The current RGCs are as follows: Agriculture, Forestry & Veterinary; Basic Sciences; Environment, Earth, Marine & Atmospheric Sciences; Electrical, Electronics & Informatics; Health Sciences; Engineering; Defence & Security Technologies; Space Technologies and Social Sciences & Humanities.

Apart from academic projects, private sector projects are also funded. Within the framework of this program, a certain portion (up to 60%) of the R&D expenditures of the private enterprises are reimbursed. The program includes small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) as well as large companies.

For more information please go to www.turboppp.org

Styria

Styria is located in the southeast of Austria. In area, it is the second largest of the nine Austrian states, covering 16,388 km². It borders Slovenia as well as the other Austrian states of Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Burgenland, and Carinthia. The population estimate (as of 2006) was 1,203,986. The capital city is Graz.

Because of its extensive forests, Styria is also called the "Green Province". 56% of the province's territory is forested. Three-quarters of Styria is mountain terrain. Styria consists of five regions which differ not only in their landscape, but also in their traditional costume and rural architecture.

The region is known by the high number of innovative SMEs and organisations dedicated to reaching the Lisbon Agenda targets; such as the Internationalisierungs Center Steiermark, with Michael R. Azodanloo responsible for territorial cooperation.

Compared with the rest of Austria, Styria exhibits above-average innovative strength and has enormous potential for further development due to its excellent R&D infrastructure. The Styrian rate of R&D (i.e. the share of the total R&D expenditure in relation to gross regional product) is currently 3.55%. Styria thus occupies first place in the Austrian federal province ranking. In 2004 €1.011 million was expended on R&D. Styrian companies account for almost 70%, i.e. approx. € 700 million of that. Styria has an excellent R&D and educational infrastructure in the higher education field. Over 40,000 students are currently being trained at 5 universities and 2 universities of applied science (with over 30 courses of study in applied sciences).

The regional distribution of subsidies of the Österreichischen Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft FFG (Austrian Research Promotion Agency) clearly shows the innovative strength of the individual industrial regions and branches. Styria occupied first place in 2006 with a subsidy share of 23.6% – more than € 105 million in total. Vienna occupied second place with € 93.84 million in subsidies, followed by Upper Austria with € 91.5 million.

Styria also boasts 47,000 companies, with up to 4,000 new companies set up each year, the Styrian service organisation (SFG) has sponsored up to 2,000 projects - equivalent to 80 million euros (sponsoring funds).

For more information please go to www.stmk.gv.at

Friuli Venezia Giulia

Friuli Venezia Giulia is situated in the Northeast corner of Italy, covers an area of approximately 7,856 km² with some 1.2 million inhabitants. It is also one of five regions in Italy that holds a Special Statute of Autonomy which confers legislative powers in important areas for the government of the Region. While abiding by the Italian constitution and national law as a whole, Friuli Venezia Giulia can promulgate its own laws in sectors such as the environment, health, industry, scientific research, culture and housing. The region is represented in Brussels and headed by Giorgio Perini.

It is one of the most developed regions in northern Italy. Its economy is founded on small and medium-sized enterprises, on specialised farming and high quality tourism, with a significant inclination towards exports. In recent years the small- and medium-sized enterprises of Friuli Venezia Giulia have strengthened their business relations and productive cooperation with neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe.

Alongside SMEs, the region boasts a number of large enterprises in the industrial and service sectors whose products are known throughout Europe and the world. The regional government of Friuli-Venezia Giulia has a variety of instruments available for supporting economic development, as it fosters integration between enterprises and the numerous scientific research centres present in the region so as to promote technological innovation.

Statistically, the region has 8.8 researchers for every 1,000 inhabitants, compared with 2.8/1,000 nationally, 5.4/1,000 in the European Union, and 8.1/1,000 in the United States. These figures reflect a deep-rooted vocation throughout the entire region for study, research and innovation.

Today the research and development system in the region is particularly rich and includes three universities: Trieste and Udine (which have decentralised their teaching activities to Pordenone, Gorizia and Monfalcone, with an overall teaching body of almost 2,000 teachers, 22 faculties, approximately 130 degree courses, about 100 specialist degree courses, 60 specialisation schools and more than 42,000 students enrolled) and SISSA – International School for Advanced Studies (for postgraduate training and leading-edge research in various areas of Physics, Mathematics and Neurosciences).

The “Science System” fare also includes: in Trieste the AREA Science Park, including the Synchrotron Light Laboratory ELETTRA , the realisation of which was directed by the Nobel Laureate in Physics Carlo Rubbia, the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology , and the Unido/ICS - International Centre for Science and High Technology, and in Udine The Science Park “Luigi Danieli - Friuli Innovazione”.

Currently the AREA Science Park is involved in creating a network of centres throughout the region which operate as “driving belts” between the demand for innovation originating from businesses and the supply provided by the technological and scientific system.

For more information please go to www.regione.fvg.it

Croatia

Croatia as of 2008 has an estimated population of 4,453,500 and covers an area of 56,542 km². As a Mediterranean and Central European country with an average annual GDP growth of 4% over the last ten years, Croatia is one of the most dynamic transitional countries in this part of Europe. By entering into negotiations for full membership of the EU, Croatia has turned a new page in its history, both in terms of politics and economy.

The new process of association with developed European countries started by the formation of negotiating teams for respective business fields, where the Croatian Chamber of Economy once again reasserted its crucial role through the participation of its staff within negotiating teams. By opening negotiations with the Republic of Croatia, the European Union recognised the development of democracy in the country and Croatia's constructive contribution in extending this process throughout South-Eastern Europe. The Croatian Chamber of Commerce Brussels office is headed by Dragica Martinović.

The Chamber is not a direct participant in the process of Croatian National Innovation System development, but represents, mediates and cooperates with all process participants in favour of its members. The diversified network of county chambers represents an efficient system for information gathering and dissemination as well as giving help to members of the Chamber in achieving cooperation with all authorised and active institutions in the National Innovation System (NIS).

The national scientific research programme determines the following: role of science and technology in Croatia's future; criteria for channelling state investments into science and technology; formulation of a strategy for sustainable development and application of new technologies; activities and measures encouraging the development of science and technology development; international co-operation in science and technology.

The Programme also envisages the construction of a national network of technology centres with six basic types of institutions: business and innovation centres, innovation and engineering associations, technology transfer centres, financial institutions, forecasting and supervisory institutions and other centres for technological excellence.

In statistics, Croatia boasts 114 higher education institutions attended by roughly 136,000 students. As for SMEs, they are an extremely important and certainly the most dynamic segment of Croatian economy. Their share of the total number of companies in Croatia is 99.4% and they account for some 64.3% of the total number of employed persons in Croatia. Additionally, SMEs generate 51.73% of the total assets in the Croatian economy, 40% of the exports and some 44% of Croatian GDP.

For more information please go to www.hgk.hr

Introduction to EREF-2009 Forum

The fifth **EREF** will take place on **8-9 June 2009 in Nova Gorica**, and it will be devoted to "**Human Capital Development and International Migrations Management**". Again, it will be preceded by a series of preparatory workshops. At this stage already three workshops have been fixed: in Ankara on 12 February the workshop will address the role of hosting institutions in researcher exchange programmes. In Graz on 24 April the workshop will address the issue of e-learning for SMEs, and in Ottawa on 8 May on Brain Migration.

All Forum registered participants will be invited to the workshops as well, and the same applies to RIBN Network members. The EREF Network members and its Secretariat hope to meet you at least on one of these interesting events.

EREF-2009 Forum Draft-Programme

 Draft as of 20 January 2009

Monday 8 June

08.30 Registration

09.00 Opening

Welcome Addresses:

Mirko Brulc, Mayor of Nova Gorica,

Jozsef Gyorkos, State Secretary, Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology
(tbc)

09.15 Keynote Address:

Borut Pahor, Prime Minister (tbc)

Education and Immigration Management for a more Competitive Europe

Luc van den Brande, President Committee of Regions (tbc)

Regions' Role in Developing Educations Systems, and Managing Migration Flows.

09.45 Short Topical Addresses by senior representatives of Guest Regions:

Preparations of Accession for Countries of South Eastern Europe

10.00 Challenges of Enlargement – supporting the preparations of the countries of South Eastern Europe - Michael Leigh, Director General, DG Enlargement (tbc)

10.30 Challenges of Accession – preparing for future membership - Self-Evaluation of Candidate Countries' Experience

11.00 National and regional efforts in human capital development and prevention of brain drain

-- Post-secondary education: funding, quality and accreditation of programmes, student and teachers mobility, fellowship systems, lack of research, university-industry cooperation;

-- Vocational training;

-- E-Learning and Life Long Learning;

-- Achieving Brain Circulation, with particular Reference to Diaspora

12.00 Contribution of international and regional entities towards human capital development and a more balanced brain circulation in the region

- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- European Commission (IPA)
- UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, BRESCE
- Regional Cooperation Council, Sarajevo
- Task Force for Human Resource Development in Western Balkans

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch

Human Capital Development and Migration Management in EU

14.30 Education Systems and the Future Knowledge Society

1. Human Capital Situation in Europe – the qualitative and quantitative problems and possible solutions, Center for Human Capital of the Lisbon Council, Hamburg (proposed)
2. Bologna-type Reforms – success stories and impediments, Prof. Janos Ginzler, Euro-CASE-Platform (proposed)
3. E-learning and European Regions of Knowledge, Jasna Dominko Baloh, Director of DOBA Business School Maribor, Slovenia

15.15 – 15.30 Coffee Break

15.30 Strategies and Management Schemes for International Migrations of the highly skilled personnel

4. Future International Migrations, their contribution to Growth and Jobs: response of National and European Policies
5. From brain-gain to brain circulation for sustainable global development (Mr. Cornelis-Mario Vis, DG RTD - proposed)
6. Proactive International Migration Policies and the role of Regions

16.00 – 17.00 Discussion

20.00 Dinner offered by EREF-2009 Guest Regions: Styria, Turkey, Ottawa, Slovenia

Tuesday 9 June 2009

09.30 Keynote Address

Achievements and Shortcomings of Slovenian Policy on Higher Education and Science - Minister Gregor GOLOBIČ

09.45 Towards Comprehensive and Sustainable Human Capital Policy

1. Messages from Key Documents and Strategies on Human Capital Development (UN, OECD, EU, IOM, and G-8 + 5, BRIC).
2. Lessons to be Learnt from Success Stories at Regional and National Level.
 - Success Story No.1
 - Success Story No.2
 - Success Story No.3
 - Success Story No.4
 - Success Story No.5

10.45 Discussion

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 - 13.00 Parallel Events:

- (A) Post-Secondary Curricula for Knowledge Society (dr. Lojze Sočan)
- (B) Potential and Challenges of Intersectoral and Geographical Brain Circulation (Mr. Cornelis-Mario Vis)

- (C) IT in support of human capital development (e-learning, LLL) – (Ileana Hamburg or Graham Attwell)
- (D) The Potential of Business and Intellectual Diaspora to support Knowledge Society Building

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 14.40 Towards Forum Conclusions and Recommendations

Reports from Preparatory Workshops and Presentation of Draft-Recommendations by the Rapporteurs

Workshop A: Role of Host Institutions in Researcher Exchange Programmes

Workshop B: E-Learning for SMEs

Workshop C: Lessons of Canadian Migration Policy

Workshop D: Communication with Brains and Business in Diaspora

14.40 – 15.00 Discussion

15.00 Comments on draft Recommendations by a senior representative of the European Commission

15.15 Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations

15.30 Topic and date of EREF-2010 and Closure.

EREF-2009 Preparatory Workshops

Venue	Organiser	Topic
Confirmed or Under consideration		
12 February, Ankara	TUBITAK, TURBO	Role of Hosting Institution in Researchers Exchange Programmes
24 April, Graz	Internationalisierungszentrum Steiermark, ICS Graz	E-learning for SMEs
8 May, Ottawa	Canada Research Chair on Science and Society	Brain Migration
Other possibilities		
Contact with		
Ljubljana	Ministry for Slovenians Abroad	Connecting Business and Brains in Diaspora
Trieste	Regional Government – Friuli Venezia Giulia	Exploiting large European Research Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing

EREF-2009 Articles on Success Stories

This Section will present good practice cases in Network members.

+ The “Unity Through Knowledge Fund” will enhance the cooperation between the Croatian scientist at home and those in diaspora.

Croatian Top Brain Gain

The “Unity Through Knowledge Fund” is a Croatian fund recently launched by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, aimed to enhance cooperation between Croatian scientists at home and abroad.

The underlying idea is actually very simple and easy to understand: if considered as a percentage, of the Croatian scientific community its diaspora is one of the largest in the world. One could say that this is a blessing in disguise – all the Croatian top scientists emigrated are today highly placed persons in reputable world universities and institutes. In order to utilize their influence, knowledge and experience the UTK Project aspires to link them with the scientists, scientific-research institutions and Croatian companies interested in R&D investment.

The UTK Fund was established from the loan funds approved by the World Bank to Croatia, totaling some EUR 5 million. The funds invested in scientific and technological projects should bring return to the society by means of technology development and all patents remain Croatian ownership.

First National Invitation for Tenders

“The basic goal is to utilize the potential of our scientists abroad. We have a high percentage of persons with university qualifications abroad, incomparably higher than the European

average, almost one hundred thousand with university qualifications in Western Europe and North America, on whom we can rely” says Mr. Hrvoje Meštrić, Head of the Fund.

Of the 13% of scientists (88 projects submitted, 12 selected) to whom the overall amount (HRK 4.5 million) was granted in the first tender, the majority were very young. The highest amount allocated to a project totaled to EUR 93,000 and the lowest to EUR 24,000 – an appropriate amount to stimulate the scientists to settle in institutes in Split and Zagreb.

It was the first invitation for tenders, implemented under the Young Scientists and Experts Programs Funds and it is hoped that the funds invested into 12 scientific projects will bring returns after a two year period. The procedure of application and allocation of funds itself was very rigorous.

Project Focused Consideration

Even if it does not seem so at first sight, the Fund is more focused on people than on products. The general goal is cooperation, not only between people, but also between science and industry.

Unfortunately, the mutual balance between science disciplines is inadequate – most of them belong to informatics, medicine and pharmacy, whereas, for instance, practically no liberal arts and social sciences have been submitted under the UTK invitation for tenders – only two projects out of the overall number of 88. “Perhaps they should be separated in a special invitation for tenders” asserted Mr. Hrvoje Meštrić.

From the beginning of its operation until now, the “Unity Through Knowledge Fund” has supported 29 projects. The overall planned investment in projects launched so far amounts to EUR 2.5 million.

Apart from the “Young Scientists and Experts Program”, the UTK Fund’s “Research in the Economy”, aims to strengthen the participation of young researchers from diaspora in the Croatian economy. Apart from the companies’ co-financing, it will provide for monthly gross wages of young scientists amounting to HRK 20,000.

The “Unity Through Knowledge Fund” has a specific educational role as well: no scientist is permitted to apply twice for project financing.

What we are desiring to achieve is raising the competitiveness of Croatian scientists at international level and teaching them how to obtain funds in international invitations for tenders, emphasized Mr. Meštrić.

For more information on the UTK Fund, please go to <http://www.ukf.hr>

 **The International University Institute for European Studies (IUIES) is an International University Consortium based in Friuli Venezia Giulia.**

The International University Institute for European Studies (IUIES) was founded in 2000 in Gorizia, it is an international university consortium comprised of the following universities; University of Trieste, the University of Udine, the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia, the University of Nova Gorica, the University of Klagenfurt, the University Eötvös Loránd of Budapest, the University Comenius of Bratislava, the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, the Jagellonian University of Krakow, the MGIMO University of Moscow.

In 2005 it became a member of the CEI University Network and as of 2006 it has been endowed with juridical personality; it is also an International Centre of Excellence in post-graduate education. MA and PhD courses are held in English and offered on an annual basis. A PhD in Trans-border Policies for the daily life, an MA in Communication and Methods in European Policy Making, as well as a MA in International Peace Operators.

IUIES sees international cooperation in post-graduate education as an essential element to strengthening and deepening the complex relations among regions and European and world peoples.

Within this process IUIES works in synergy with the regional institutions and academic bodies in Europe, organising meetings attended by lecturers and students from all over the world in Gorizia and promoting scientific exchange and academic comparison.

The Consortium aims to;

- ensure high-quality post-graduate training suitable to students from all over the world, following the principles of equity and transparency;
- offer students advanced courses in the field of social sciences;
- offer students specific expertise suitable to the demand of international markets and for the management of present social and political process;
- enter the scientific and academic networks through cooperative activity;
- foster intercultural relations and promote international cooperation among universities and scientific research institutes located in Central-Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean area and the European Union;
- give a wider vision of European processes with particular emphasis on regional issues linked to cohesion and integration in preparation for democratic citizenship;

Resources available for the scheme; two full time personnel, one part time, 45 professors, 90 students, the budget for 2007 was 250,000 Euros, for 2008 roughly 240,000 Euros (both yearly averages).

Since 2002, the first year in which all post-graduate programmes were activated, 168 students have enrolled in IUIES courses and 75 teachers (professors, scholars and experts) held lectures.

Obstacles and problems encountered (institutional-organizational, financial, insufficient personnel, poor public acceptance, other) and how they were resolved:

- 1) Specific resources for thorough dissemination and recruitment at the EU level (i.e. dissemination of announcement of competition)
- 2) Extra funds for increased fieldtrips and scholarships

Performance and results achieved (scope of activities, key statistics):

- 1) More than 250 students since 2000.
- 2) More than 50 countries represented in the student and teaching bodies;
- 3) 60% of alumni employed in key government agencies, international institution, academic world;
- 4) Publication of several volumes and of an international reviewed journal (IUIES Journal);
- 5) Co-Organisation of 8 international summer schools on specific topics within the field of "The problems of new Europe", gathering more than 900 scholars from all over the world.

Reforms, reorganisations, and major adjustments of the scheme so far, and future plans (upgrading, increasing budget and/or personnel, new focus, merging with other schemes, involving new partners, changing institutional anchor, new legal status, closing, other please specify):

- 1) Enlargement of the members of the Board, to other Universities

- 2) Emphasis on the goal to create in Gorizia a centre for specific professional training for the new Europe.
- 3) Establishment of: a) Network of IUIES academic and scientific partners; b) Council of supporting institutions

Lessons learnt

1) Success factors:

a) Highly scientific teaching body, highly selected students, scholarship ensuring students participation, highly international environment, high pressure on academic standards, strong students involvement in consortium members' research activities, continuous evaluation of students satisfaction

2) Mistakes to be avoided

IUIES has continuously enacted an internal evaluation system to improve the quality of its academic and organisational offer. No major "mistakes" recorded in the last academic years.

For more information please go to <http://www.interuniv.isig.it>

Proceedings of Previous Fora (2005-2008)

EREF-2008

The theme of EREF-2008 was »Public-Private Partnership and Private Funding in RTD, Innovation, and Education«, and the Forum was held on the 5th and 6th of June, 2008.

With participation of over 200 people, coming from 28 countries/regions, the Commissioner for Regional Policy Mme Danuta Huebner, CoR President Mr. Luc van den Brande, and Slovenian Minister for Regional Policy Ivan Žagar, and 20 presenters, the Forum has offered lots of »food for thought« and inspiration to all who wish to contribute more efficiently to the process of building the European knowledge society.

Prior to the Forum itself, 5 preparatory workshops were organized, in Graz, Istanbul, Novi Sad, Prague, and Trieste. The Workshops produced draft-recommendations submitted to the plenary, having been commented by Commissioner Huebner on the second day, and finally adopted by the Forum. The ground work for the workshops was done by SBRA in the form of Bibliographies, Analytical Compendia of earlier conclusions and recommendations of EU bodies and various conferences, and finally with draft-recommendations for each of the workshops.

EREF-2007

EREF-2007 a three day event, from 31st of May until 2nd of June 2007, focused on public RTD funding and communication, as well as the role of structural funding in support of knowledge-based competitiveness.

Besides stakeholders from business and RTD, representatives of regional and local authorities, as well as those of EU institutions, European associations and networks exchanged views on good practice in creating conditions for successful Lisbon-type reforms and making RTD the backbone of their development effort.

Benefiting from analytical reports prepared within the project 'Building and Improving Support for RTD Policy and Public Spending (BIS-RTD) - funded by the European Commission - the participants of the Forum acquired a good insight into the experience, successes, good instruments and challenges of European regions in building knowledge societies and linking

research with economic operators to enhance and support the creation of new technologies and other innovations.

EREF-2006

EREF-2006 took place on June 14–15, 2006. The theme of the event was 'Building Knowledge Society through Regional Innovation Support'. Mr. Esko Aho, former Prime Minister of Finland, presented the report 'Creating an Innovative Europe' of the Independent Expert Group on R&D and Innovation which was appointed following the Hampton Court Summit. Guest regions of EREF-2006 were Stockholm and Podgorica (Montenegro).

EREF-2005

The first EREF took place on October 27-28, 2005. The Forum evaluated the performance and problems of implementing Lisbon Agenda at the regional level. Seven regions presented their good practices: Baden Wuerttemberg, Flanders, Friuli Venezia-Giulia, Lombardia, Slovenia, Steiermark, and Stockholm Region. The Forum participants received an Overview of European programmes relevant to the regions, as well as of those open to countries of Western Balkans. Senior representatives of regional authorities, and their specialized agencies, business and research associations, of individual companies from all parts of Europe participated to the Forum, and a »project bazaar« with one-on-one meetings was organized.

EREF Bibliographies

This Section will bring relevant selective bibliographies on topics of upcoming EREF Fora. In this issue two EREF-2009 topics have been selected: brain Circulation, and e-learning for SMEs.

Select Bibliography on Brain Circulation

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Upcoming events

This Section brings information on relevant conferences being organized in Europe on EREF topics in the course of 2009.

Global E&P Summit 2009

Location: Spain. Dates: 27 – 29 January 2009.

The upstream industry is adopting new technologies and processes at an astonishing rate as fresh applications drive a global advance in the way the oil and gas businesses operates today. Join us at the Global E&P Summit 2009 – the conference and networking event, which focuses on all the aspects of how the best practice methods and latest technologies can be used to overcome declines in production and ensure operations remain profitable in the future. More than 50 industry leading minds will be on hand to uncover some of the critical issues affecting those working within upstream sector. Pre-arranged one-to-one meetings Making the right strategic and commercial partnerships is of paramount importance in this rapidly moving sector. This is why the Global E & P Summit includes a wealth of both formal and informal networking opportunities including a session of pre-scheduled one-to-one meetings so that you can maximize your knowledge sharing opportunities. Our specialist team will work with you to ensure that you only meet fellow delegates and solution providers with which you share common interests and goals.

For more information please go to www.wtqevents.com

Boosting R&D Excellence in Times of Economic Downturn: Insights from Turkey

Location: Brussels. Date: 29 January 2009.

The Turkish Research and Business Organisations (TURBO) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) have great pleasure in inviting you to the Turkish R&D Day which will take place on 29th January 2009 in the European Parliament.

Covering topics such as "Boosting R&D Excellence in Times of Economic Downturn: Insights from Turkey", the Turkish R&D Day aims at increasing collaboration within R&D and Innovation related European Programmes such as FP7, CIP and EUREKA. It will bring together prominent politicians from Turkey and the European Parliament, high level Turkish and EC officials coordinating R&D and Innovation programmes, R&D directors of related international institutions and companies, and university rectors together in the European Parliament. Thus, we anticipate a fruitful debate and excellent networking opportunities for all those involved in the European research and development activities.

Please note that due to the European Parliament security regulations, only registered participants can attend the event. Therefore, you are kindly requested to complete the online registration form on the event website before January 20th 2009. A confirmation email with further information will then be provided after having received your application.

For more information and online registration please go to www.turboppp.org/trday

 **Fifth Forum Meeting - OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance**
Location: Vienna. Dates: 9 – 10 February 2009

The 5th Annual Meeting of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance will be addressing an issue of central importance to most partnerships today: how can collaboration with the private sector be strengthened to deliver better and more sustainable outcomes on the labour market? Excellent examples exist of partnerships that have established strong collaboration between business and the public sector/local community, and which have managed to contribute significantly to a more inclusive local economy. In many of them business representatives play a leading role in the collaboration process or actively support local initiatives designed in partnership.

The OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance has been established to support area based partnerships in their mission, by gathering knowledge and providing advice on the most effective mechanisms for organisations to work together, adapt policies to local needs and set up appropriate initiatives. The 5th Annual Meeting will examine some of the most advanced partnership innovations in connecting business with other stakeholders locally to generate better jobs and inclusion. It will review a wide array of initiatives, from the US' pioneering approach with the Workforce Investment Boards to Denmark's new Regional Growth Fora and the UK's Regional Skills Partnerships and brand new Training and Employment Boards. It will work to extract from these approaches, and the experience of several other countries, the lessons to apply by both policymakers and practitioners for providing a collective response from industry, government, educational institutions and community that improves economic sustainability and growth.

For more information please go to <http://www.zsi.at/en/veranstaltungen/4273.html>

 **South East Europe one year on and the challenges ahead**
Location: Brussels. Date: 10 February 2009.

The European Policy Centre is delighted to invite you to a Breakfast Policy Briefing on Tuesday 10 February with Hido Bišćević, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council.

One year ago, the Stability Pact for South East Europe transformed itself into the Regional Cooperation Council. The aim was to encourage the Balkan states and societies to take joint responsibility and ownership of regional cooperation, to work together and to help create a stable and prosperous environment. While much has changed in South East Europe, cooperation between countries is still difficult and is hindering their path towards EU accession. What has the Regional Cooperation Council achieved so far to help the countries of South East Europe reach their goal of joining the EU? Many claim that 2009 will be a year of opportunities for the Balkans in that respect. What challenges lie ahead for the RCC in 2009? And how can cooperation help the accession process and contribute to stability in the region?

We very much hope that you will attend. Please confirm your participation by completing the reply form

For more information please go to www.epc.eu

FISER '09 - Frontiers in Science Education Research 2009

Location: Famagusta, Cyprus. Dates: 22 – 24 March 2009.

Eastern Mediterranean University is pleased to announce the first international conference on undergraduate science education; Frontiers in Science Education Research 2009 (FISER'09). The aim of FISER'09 is to provide a scholarly environment for promoting discussions in contemporary topics of undergraduate science and mathematics education research. FISER'09 is open to professional science and mathematics education researchers, educators, students and all others who are interested. During FISER'09, topics that will be covered will extend from education technologies to faculty development and from undergraduate curricula designs to the Bologna Process. FISER'09 will take place during 22 – 24 March 2009 in Famagusta. The official language of the conference is English. Papers in all fields of undergraduate science and mathematics education research are invited.

For more information please go to [http://fiser.emu.edu.tr/](http://fiser.emu.edu.tr)

Innovact, the European Forum for Young Innovative Enterprises

Location: Reims, France. Dates: 24 – 25 March 2009.

Coaching:

Learn to present your business in 5 minutes and optimize its profile in the Minute de l'Entrepreneur and the Funds Forum.

Marketing tools:

Reflection on the type of tools that must be used to face the market.

Exhibition:

Furnished and equipped 4 sqm stand (walls, furniture, sign, electricity) allowing entrepreneurs to present their business and meet potential partners.

Visibility:

Opportunity to present projects in the Entrepreneurs Pitches television programme (selected projects). Winning a cheque and benefiting from the Innovact Trophy press campaign – 6,000 € (2008 sum)

Funding:

Opportunity to present your project before investors who will attend the Capital Forum (selected projects).

Business:

Developing business contacts and opportunities (pre-agenda available online) by setting business appointments.

Management:

Benefiting from practical advice by participating in our Best Practice Workshops, which are held during Innovact's 2-day exhibition.

Experience:

Listening to confirmed entrepreneurs speak about their experience and special guests speak about their opinion regarding innovation by participating in the exhibition's Theme Conferences

For more information please go to <http://www.innovact.com/>

First European SME week

Location: Brussels. Dates: 6 – 14 May 2009.

The first European SME Week, taking place from 6 to 14 May 2009, is a campaign to promote entrepreneurship across Europe and to inform entrepreneurs about support available for them at European, national and local level. It allows SMEs to discover an array of information, advice, support and ideas to help them develop their activities.

Throughout 2009, events are taking place to inform, assist and connect existing and potential entrepreneurs and also help them develop new ideas and benefit from personalised information and support.

The SME Week encourages and supports SMEs to reach their full potential. It also marks an opportunity to inspire potential entrepreneurs to 'take the plunge' and work towards achieving their aspirations.

The European SME Week is co-ordinated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry, but most of the events and activities taking place during the SME Week are organised by business organisations, support providers, regional and local authorities, and others in the participating countries. The SME Week is one of the measures implementing the Small Business Act, the first comprehensive SME policy framework for the EU and its Member States.

The SME Week seeks to:

Inform: provide and disseminate information on what the EU and the national authorities are offering by way of support to small businesses

Support: create an EU-SME partnership, underlining how Europe is stronger with more competitive SMEs and also the fact that the EU is ready to offer them support and advice

Inspire: motivate existing SMEs to broaden their outlook and further develop and grow their business

Share: float ideas and share the experiences of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs

Encourage: convince young people that entrepreneurship is an attractive career option

For more information please go to http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policy/entrepreneurship/sme-week/about/index_en.htm

Research Connection 2009

Location: Prague. Dates: 7 – 8 May 2009

Are you a scientist, full of new ideas? Or an entrepreneur, looking for solutions? Or perhaps a researcher, willing to take the international challenge? Realize your dreams and get support for your projects. We want to know you!

The budget of the European Commission for research and innovation is increasing every year and we can show you how to participate. You will get first-hand information about priorities, objectives and

participation rules. In special sessions you will get concrete tips. We will be paying particular attention to promising ideas from the New Member States.

During two whole days, we will bring you into contact with experienced researchers from successful European projects, giving you the opportunity to meet reliable partners for your projects. In fact, the conference is full of opportunities.

It will offer:

- Plenary sessions with the main European political players
- Parallel sessions on EU research initiatives
- Hands-on sessions with FP7 participants, European organisations, etc.
- Presentations of successful projects to you and to the press. Guidance on how to participate in

EU research programmes (rules, tips, measures for small- and medium-sized enterprises, etc.) Forum sessions on how to maximise your participation in EU research programmes organised on a 'bottom-up' basis by the participants themselves.

The conference and exhibition will take place in Prague from 7 to 8 May 2009 under the Czech Presidency of the European Union. The participation fee will be €50 for the two days. One-day passes will be available for €30.

Scientists, industrialists and researchers will be invited to register for the conference. Participants will cover their own travel and accommodation costs; a list of hotels will be available on the conference web site.

Selected EU-funded projects will be exhibited. This will promote the networking and integration of research activities in Europe. A call for proposals targeting potential exhibitors has been published. Exhibitors will come at their own expenses.

For more information go to http://ec.europa.eu/research/conferences/2009/rtd-2009/index_en.cfm

Innovation through internationalization, ACA Annual Conference 2009

Location: University of Warsaw, Warsaw. Dates: 13 - 15 May 2009.

ACA's Annual Conferences have become a synonym for high-quality information, analysis and discussion on current policy and practice-related issues in the area of international higher education. ACA Annual Conferences address higher education representatives, such as rectors, vice-rectors, faculty and international relations staff, as well as policy-makers and practitioners from government departments, international institutions, non-governmental organisations and think tanks. They offer opportunities for learning, exchange and networking at a high level. The 2009 Annual Conference is laid out for a maximum of 350 delegates.

Internationalisation, once a marginal concern at best suitable for Sunday speeches, has now become a firm component of national and institutional higher education strategies in most countries in Europe. So has 'innovation'. What are the relations between the two concepts? Is innovation conceivable without internationalisation? How does internationalisation contribute to higher education renewal strategies already today, and in which way should it do so in the future? These are some of the overriding questions the Warsaw ACA Annual Conference will address. It will do so by focusing on particular thematic areas, among them foreign languages; marketing, recruitment and mobility; international rankings; ethics and the intercultural dialogue, and transnational education, and the Bologna Process.

For more information go to <http://www.aca-secretariat.be/08events/Conferences/Warsaw%202009/warsaw2009.htm>

Sustainable development: a challenge for EU R&D

Location: Brussels. Dates: 26 – 28 May, 2008.

One of the rationales for – and purposes of funding – R&D from the EU budget is to serve EU policy needs, while strengthening the scientific and technological basis of the European industry and reinforcing its competitiveness. In view of the strong political will expressed by the European Council to engage on a sustainable path, and the priority given to climate change and clean energy, European research is bound to contribute to sustainable development.

Putting European R&D at the service of sustainable development is also needed from a societal point of view. Indeed, there is rising concern about the relationship between science and society. Today's surveys show that Europeans have become less attracted by science or less confident that science brings solutions. If the level of public funding for research is to be maintained and indeed increased, it must be ensured and demonstrated that research is bringing value to the citizens, on substantial and tangible issues beyond competitiveness and jobs.

Coming close to mid-term of FP7 implementation, this 3-day conference will take stock of the progress made so far and identify ways and means for putting the European research system at the service of sustainable development.

With this in mind, the conference will initiate a structured dialogue on how to reform European research to best respond to sustainable development challenges. It will also investigate ways for improving the science-policy link and the relationship between science and society.

For more information please go to

http://ec.europa.eu/research/sd/conference/2009/index_en.cfm

23rd ICDE World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education

Location: Maastricht. Dates: 7 – 10 June 2009.

There are three reasons that make you go to a conference: (i) you may be inspired by the theme of the conference; (ii) you may be excited by the platform and network being offered through the meeting; and (iii) you may be attracted to the venue of the event.

Every chance that these arguments all three hold for the upcoming M-2009 event, which stands for the 23rd ICDE World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education including the 2009 EADTU Annual Conference, to be held on 7-10 June 2009 in Maastricht in the Netherlands. The conference is hosted by Open Universiteit Nederland.

The theme for M-2009 is: “Flexible Education for All: Open – Global – Innovative”. We are witnessing fascinating developments that are in the heart of our profile and that may touch the whole educational system. First of all new concepts and instruments are emerging that are really opening up education for all, which is a major global ambition as formulated by UNESCO. Secondly, society, the labour market, and individual as well as groups of learners require much more flexibility in their acquisition of (new) knowledge and competencies. This implies a major modernisation of the educational system that can build on our expertise and experience. In the third place, the expanding scope of information and communication technology (ICT) is contributing to innovations in education, facilitating a variety of mixed modes of on-site and on-line learning. Finally, globalisation is a real challenge for education. On the one hand it is a driver for (international) competition. On the other hand it is leading to new and rich forms of collaboration, institutional, interpersonal and intercultural, where ICT again is a key factor.

For more information please go to <http://www.ou.nl/eCache/DEF/80/137.html>

Past events

OECD Symposium on Global Open Innovation Networks

Location: Paris. Date: 23 January 2009.

Summary

OECD governments are faced with new challenges as globalisation and open innovation increasingly impact on the way innovation takes place, on the linkages within innovation systems at national and global level and on the ability to reap benefits from investments in R&D and innovation whether at regional, national or global level. At the same time the open innovation paradigm and the development of global innovation networks can potentially enhance the returns to both private and public R&D investment.

Using a case study approach and empirical analysis, the project on Globalisation and Open Innovation reviewed the trends and drivers behind open innovation and shed light on some of the policy implications for governments, higher education and public research and the business environment.

This symposium in Paris examined the phenomenon of global open innovation from the perspective of France and Europe.

The workshop will assess the international variations in open innovation practices. Such variations are important to take into account in order to understand the diffusion of open innovation practices and the policies to promote in order to fulfil the promises of the open innovation paradigm.

For more information please go to

<http://www.eirma.org/f3/calendar.php?s=691ab00e561d320bb0dd21ccab4d724c&do=getinfo&e=265&c=1>

EUROCITIES Knowledge Society Forum – TeleCities Winter Event

Location: Brussels. Date: 19 January 2009.

This one day event traditionally served to kick-off the policy and project activities of the Forum throughout the year and consisted of two parts: the morning was dedicated to a seminar on European Affairs and Funding Opportunities. Mister Bror Salmelin, Head of Unit New Working environments, European Commission, DG Information Society & Media gave a presentation on New Working environments for (governmental) organisations taking into account the changes brought about by ICT's. Mister Dave Broster gave a presentation on eGovernment and CIP, and as did mister Paul Timmers on funding opportunities.

The afternoon session was completely dedicated to discuss the work priorities for the Knowledge Society Forum – TeleCities, the Strategic document and the forums contributions to the EUROCITIES work programme 2007.

The event organized in Brussels, brought together the city-based representatives active within the Knowledge Society Forum – TeleCities.

For more information please go to <http://www.eurocities.org/main.php>

iLearning Forum 2009

Location: Paris. Date: 19 – 20 January 2009.

The organisers of iLearning Forum 2009 had the pleasure of inviting policy-makers, human resource managers, learning practitioners, researchers and suppliers of learning technology solutions to participate in the 4th international iLearning Forum. Building on the success of eLearnExpo, this was the 8th year that eLearning professionals from France, Europe and overseas were brought together in Paris to explore best practice in the use of learning technologies. The theme of this year's event was "Integrated learning: embedding learning technologies for individual and organisational development".

The iLearning Forum was organised in parallel with RAC 2009, the international conference on Recognition and Accreditation of Competencies.

Themes were: Integrated learning for organisational development and innovation; Integrated learning for employability, social inclusion and active citizenship; Learning innovation and futures; Architectures and infrastructures for integrated learning; Integrating learning with quality management; Exploiting the full potential of digital identity.

For more information please go to <http://www.ilearnforum.eu/>

Enhancing of Supervision: Professional Development and Assessment of Supervisors

Location: Imperial College, London. Dates: 8 – 9 January 2009

The profound changes in European doctoral education present a challenge to those engaged in the organisation of doctoral programmes as well as to the individual supervisors. The introduction of structured programmes with more explicit rights and duties of both doctoral candidates and supervisors, 3 - 4 year time-frame to doctoral degree as well as calls for interdisciplinarity and attention to transferable skills demand introduction of new supervision practices, methods and procedures and new ways of their assessment.

This **workshop aimed** at introducing practical examples of models of professional development of supervisors leading to higher effectiveness and quality of supervision. It also focused on supervisory structures in different contexts as well as means of assessment. It functioned as a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and good practice examples between different institutions.

The issues included:

- Professional development (training) of supervisors: how can supervisors get the right tools that respond to the needs of the doctoral candidates and the strategy of the doctoral programme?
- Supervision assessment: what procedures exist to monitor and evaluate the quality of supervision?
- Supervision and disciplinary differences: how can differences in supervision style and traditions between the disciplines be a source of inspiration and improvement?

These issues were each addressed by two different speakers from different countries, which gave the background for discussion. On each topic, the participants were divided into smaller groups to ensure everyone gave an active contribution, after which the groups rejoined in a plenary debate.

For more information go to <http://www.eua.be/eua-events/eua-cde-conference/>

R4R - Regions for research, Final Conference

Location: Brussels. Date: 11 December, 2008.

R4R aimed at developing models for Knowledge Transfer in the management of research policies at regional level. It directly involved 9 partners from 8 regions in different countries of Europe. The project's ambitions were to:

- ▶ Develop a solid methodology for the identification, modeling, adaptation and transfer of best practices;

- ▶ Allow the creation of a co-operation platform among European regions likely to provide concrete input to research policies management at regional level in the years to come.

The project was articulated in 7 work-packages one of which was devoted to management, three to methodological and technical work, two to dissemination and one to training. In this respect, R4R represented a good balance of model development and dissemination activities to create consensus about the R4R concept among all regional stakeholders of Europe.

The work started with the analysis of case studies in 8 regions and the identification of best practices, that is knowledge transfer models that are likely to be transferred to other contexts. The best practices selected were then analysed to identify their critical success factors and define which pre-conditions or other factors must occur to determine their success. Work then proceeded to define models to be used for the elaboration of concrete transferability scenarios. The exercise provided concrete plans with clear guidelines for the adoption of those models in specific contexts. The transferability scenarios entailed the participation of local stakeholders to identify potential obstacles or opportunities pertaining to their specific contexts. The project was backed by a massive dissemination action, through “transregional workshops” aimed at spreading the methodology also among regions not directly involved in the project. A final high profile conference was organised to present the project results, consolidate consensus about the R4R concept and promote a pan-European action plan for the years to come.

For more information go to <http://www.regions4research.eu/>

Conference ECRI 2008 Presentation: The fifth European conference on Research Infrastructures.

Location: Versailles, Palais des Congres, Paris. Dates: 9 – 10th December, 2008.

In the framework of the French Presidency of the European Council, the conference was jointly organized by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the European Commission, in cooperation with **ESFRI**.

World-class Research Infrastructures are one of the pillars of an ambitious European Research Area. Access to leading research infrastructures plays a key part in maintaining Europe’s competitiveness in both basic and applied research. Research infrastructures play an increasingly important role in the advancement of knowledge and technology, offering a unique research service to users from different countries and attracting young talents to science.

In this context, the Versailles Conference focused:

- ▶ on the impact of Research Infrastructures;
- ▶ on economical challenges in conjunction with the Lisbon objectives;
- ▶ on problems of society, such as environmental concerns or expertise;
- ▶ on training in human resources and attracting high level scientists.

For more information go to <http://www.ecri2008.eu/spip.php?article70>

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) – Policy Seminar: PPP – Future Directions

Location: Maastricht. Dates: 8 – 9 December, 2008.

This policy seminar aimed to discuss key policy issues relevant to PPP in Europe, it is to bring together key stakeholders which developed a common assessment of the risks, opportunities and challenges in key emerging areas of debate relevant to PPP.

The key issues for discussion at this year's seminar were; the impact of the global financial crisis on PPP, emerging methods of implementing Competitive Dialogue, management of PPP contracts and the recent developments in the EU legislative framework.

The seminar followed the recent publication by EIPA of "Public-Private Partnerships – A decision maker's guide", a copy of which was included in the seminar documentation.

The style of the seminar was interactive which ensured the widest possible exchange of experiences and perspectives.

The seminar was of particular interest to policy makers, lawyers, financiers, economists, public officials, academics and service providers within EU Member States, candidate countries and beyond who are engaged with PPP and officials in European organisations.

For more information go to <http://www.eipa.eu/en/activities/show/&tid=2470>

ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN

Location: Berlin. Dates: 3 -5 December, 2008.

ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN, the largest global e-learning conference for the corporate, education and public service sectors, is the key annual networking event for the international e-learning and technology-supported learning and training industry, attracting and bringing together experts in the vanguard of technology-enhanced learning from around the world. Participants forge essential cross-industry contacts and partnerships, thereby enhancing their knowledge and expertise.

Size and Scope

Over 2000 delegates from more than 95 countries and every continent attended the conference and discussed the latest developments in the field.

Calibre of Attendees

Participants were high-level decision makers from education, business, and government sectors, the three areas driving e-learning adoption and innovation. The networking opportunities and quality of discussion surpassed those of any other industry-related conference.

Expert Speakers

Online Educa invested in bringing the leading minds and practitioners of e-learning and technology-supported learning and training to present in Berlin, it ensured that attendees received the most authoritative, up-to-date, and useful information for their business. Five hundred speakers from nearly 50 countries addressed all forms of technology-enhanced learning.

Depth and Breadth of Programme

World-class experts led plenary, presentation, and special focus sessions; discussions and debates; as well as best practice showcases and practical demonstrations throughout the two-day main conference. A unique pre-conference workshop day comprised small, intensive sessions that offered attendees a one-of-a-kind opportunity to fine-tune and acquire skills.

Rich Networking Opportunities

The manifold networking opportunities, such as informal gatherings and special events, as well as the quality of discussions, surpassed those of any other related industry conference. ONLINE EDUCA BERLIN understands and enables attendees' need to make the right connections, making it the most important networking venue for experts, practitioners and newcomers from all over the world.

New Products and Trends

A sophisticated exhibition and demonstration area allowed leading international e-learning manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers to present their latest developments, products, and services. The area also served as a central meeting place for all conference delegates.

For more information go to <http://www.online-educa.com/>

The First Pan-European Programme to Recognize Enterprise in Universities and Research Institutes.

Location: Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm. **Date:** 2 December, 2008.

Innovation helps create jobs and spur economic growth – and governments across Europe are pushing to improve the system for innovation. A vital component is enterprise at universities: Creating spin-out companies, selling licenses, performing contract research for industry. That creates opportunities for all: industry, investors, universities, researchers and engineers. But it also creates risks.

The conference examined the policy, practice and tactics of university enterprise. The conference, at Karolinska Institutet, one of the world's leading medical universities and nominator of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, is associated with the ACES Academic Enterprise Awards – the first pan-European programme to recognize successful academic entrepreneurs.

Who participated:

- Researcher/Entrepreneurs – already in business, or thinking about it
- Private investors
- Industrial R&D managers
- Technology transfer experts, at universities and companies
- Policy makers in technology, enterprise and education
- IP experts
- Consultants to technology companies

For more information go to http://sciencebusiness.net/aces/aces_conferences.php

International Conference on the Careers and Mobility of Doctorate Holders

Location: Brussels. **Dates:** 1 – 2 December, 2008.

The event was jointly organised by the OECD, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and Eurostat with the support of the European Commission DG RTD.

Objective: It brought together policy makers and analysts interested in the monitoring of employment, scientists and engineers holding an advanced research degree and discussed the results of the first wave of pilot surveys on this subject at the international level.

Background: Human resources are recognised as being key to the creation, commercialisation and diffusion of innovation. Among them, doctorate holders are not only the most qualified in terms of educational attainment, but also those who are specifically trained to conduct research. Not much is known however about their career and mobility patterns on the labour market. This is why the OECD launched in 2004 a collaborative project with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Eurostat aimed at developing internationally comparable indicators on the careers and mobility of doctorate holders. An expert group with representatives from national statistical bodies was formed to develop the technical components of the project and start compiling data at national level. The results of the first wave of pilot surveys are becoming available for about 20 countries around the world in 2008. The conference served as a forum which diffused and discussed these results with interested stakeholders, academics and policy makers.

For more information go to <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/38/42/39949360.pdf>

Beyond 2010: Are you a Key Player in the European Higher Education Area

Location: Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya, Barcelona. Dates: 16-18 November 2008.

Higher Education operates in a **globally competitive environment** in which HEIs are competing for students, academic staff, researchers and finance. National and worldwide **rankings** of HEIs are outcomes of this more competitive environment and of greater public and government calls for **quality assurance, transparency and accountability**.

To meet these challenges, the **Lisbon Agreement** declared support for the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area. Europe's competitiveness and long-term economic growth depends on its capacity to innovate.

Across Europe, national governments are **reviewing the structure** of their **higher education systems** and questioning whether the variety and number of their HEIs is appropriate to respond to the challenges of the global knowledge society.

What is the best mechanism for **ensuring diversity of institutional mission** and widening access for students while also striving for excellence? Should some HEIs concentrate on research and others on teaching, be mainly responsive to the regional demands or engage at global level?

Bologna is creating an open space for students to move around for studies. Practical tools such as ECTS, the diploma supplement, the European qualification framework and the standards for quality assurance support these aims. These changes will make Europe an attractive destination for the wider world, but also increase competition between European HEIs.

Is European higher education prepared to respond to this new environment and new demands?

The two-day DEAN Conference was an excellent opportunity **to take stock of developments in Higher Education** in the last few years and to find out **how to position oneself beyond 2010**.

For more information go to <http://www.esmu.be/index.php?id=236>

First World Summit on the Knowledge Society

Location: Open Research Society, Athens. Dates: 24-28 September 2008.

The World Summit on the Knowledge Society, was an international attempt to promote the dialogue for the main aspects of the Knowledge Society towards a better world for all. The World Summit on the Knowledge Society brought together Academics, People from Industry, Policy Makers, Politicians, Government Officers and active citizens to look at the impact of Information Technology, and the knowledge-based era it is creating, on key facets of today's world: the state, business, society and culture.

Five general pillars provided the constitutional elements of the Summit:

- **Information Technologies - Knowledge Management Systems - E-business & Enterprise Information Systems for the Knowledge Society**
- **Knowledge, Learning, Education, Learning Technologies and E-learning for the Knowledge Society**
- **Social & Humanistic Computing for the Knowledge Society - Emerging Technologies for the Society and the Humanity**
- **Culture & Cultural Heritage - Technology for Culture Management - Management of Tourism and Entertainment - Tourism Networks in the Knowledge Society**

- **Government and Democracy in the Knowledge Society**
- **Research and Sustainable Development in the Knowledge Society**

For more information go to <http://knowledge-summit.org/>

Relevant Institutions and Networks in South Eastern Europe

This section will present Institutions and networks active in knowledge society issues. In this issue those institutions and networks have been selected who pay particular attention to the region of South Eastern Europe.

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is the Community's financial instrument for the pre-accession process for the period 2007-2013. Assistance is provided on the basis of the European Partnerships of the potential candidate countries and the Accession Partnerships of the candidate countries, which means the Western Balkan countries and Turkey . The IPA is intended as a flexible instrument and therefore provides assistance which depends on the progress made by the beneficiary countries and their needs as shown in the Commission's evaluations and annual strategy papers.

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/e50020.htm>

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE)

The UNESCO Office in Venice - UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE) focuses its action in SCIENCE and CULTURE on Member States of South-East Europe as a priority, and develops initiatives in favour of Central Europe and the Mediterranean basin in close consultation with the other UNESCO offices concerned. Its programmes seek to build human and institutional capacities in the basic and engineering sciences, foster collaborative research in the field of the environment, especially in ecological and water sciences, contribute to the protection of cultural heritage, and promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

www.unesco.org/venice

Regional Cooperation Council

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) was officially launched on 27 February 2008, as the successor of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The RCC is intended to sustain focused regional cooperation in Southeast Europe through a regionally owned and led framework that also supports European and Euro-Atlantic integration. It is turned to developmental projects and creation of a political climate susceptible to implementing projects of a wider, regional character, to the benefit of each individual country.

The work of the RCC focuses on six priority areas: economic and social development, energy and infrastructure, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, building human capital, and parliamentary cooperation as an overarching theme. The Regional Cooperation Council opened its Brussels Liaison Office in October 2008.

www.rcc.int

South East European Educational Cooperation Network (SEEECN)

The South East Europe Education Cooperation Network (SEE-ECN) is a broad-based, low-cost regional initiative that supports the exchange of information, ideas, and know-how for the reform and quality improvement of education in 11 countries in South East Europe. It provides an example of capacity mobilization and of east-east cooperation achieved through virtual networking.

SEE-ECN is a project within the framework of the Stability Pact for South East Europe (Task Force Education and Youth). The network is jointly run by Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS) at the University of Ljubljana and KulturKontakt (Vienna). CEPS as the host institution is responsible for implementation of networks' policy at the executive level and for coordinating its basic activities.

www.see-educoop.net

Research Innovation and Business Network (RIBN)

The mission of the Research, Innovation and Business Network (RIBN) for Central and South-Eastern Europe is to act as an interface between the various levels and types of stakeholders along the value chain of the economies of Central and South-Eastern Europe. In line with the objective of enhancing knowledge-based competitiveness: The Network is to encourage and facilitate interaction between its members and related bodies at local, regional, national, cross-border and pan-European levels.

The Network aims to mobilize and combine dispersed efforts and realize synergies of expertise and resources particularly from economic actors and research bodies in the region. The three most useful services available to RIBN members are; the EU Funding Roadmap, RIBN Bulletin, RIBN Partner Search.

www.ribn.eu

3ENet - The Network of Emerging European Economies

The Network of Emerging European Economies (3ENet), an entity established in 1997 to unite the non-profit think tanks" for economic research of Central, East and South European countries. The Members of 3ENet are; from Albania the Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER), from Bulgaria the Institute for Market Economic (IME), from Croatia the Institute for International Relations (IMO), from the Czech Republic the Center for Liberal Studies (CLS) and the Liberal Institute, from Hungary the Foundation for Market Economy (FME), from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the Association for Modern Economy (AME), from Montenegro the Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognosis (ISSP), from Kosovo the Institute for Development Research (RIINVEST), from Poland the Institute for Private Enterprise and Democracy (IPED) and the Gdansk Institute for Market Economics, from Romania the Center for Political Studies and Comparative Analysis (CPSCA), from Slovakia the Institute for Liberal Studies (ILS), from Slovenia the Institute for Economic Research (IER), from Serbia the Economics Institute and the Institute for Economics of Investment, lastly, from the United States the Chesapeake Associates.

<http://www.balkannetwork.org/3enet.htm>

Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All)

The "Adriatic-Ionian Initiative" is based on the idea that international crises are not resolved through violence but through a mutual cooperation among the various peoples, in order to identify and jointly define a range of common interests, in all sectors.

From a modern perspective, these interests are coincident with: security, economics, trade, scientific and technological research and development, environment conservation, and, finally, preservation of cultural heritage and values, which are plentiful in this region. Therefore the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (All) is an extraordinary and useful tool to strengthen and widen the already existing links among the Countries of the Adriatic-Ionian Basin, increasing in this way the collaboration on fields of common interest.

The seven countries of the Adriatic Ionian Basin, namely, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, launched the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative, signing the Ancona Declaration in the occasion of the Ancona Conference on "Development and Security in the Adriatic and the Ionian" (March 20, 2000).

<http://www.uniadriion.net/initiative.php>

Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC)

On 25 June 1992, the Heads of State and Government of eleven countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine signed in Istanbul the Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement giving birth to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

It came into existence as a unique and promising model of multilateral political and economic initiative aimed at fostering interaction and harmony among the Member States, as well as to ensure peace, stability and prosperity encouraging friendly and good-neighbourly relations in the Black Sea region. The BSEC Headquarters - the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS) - was established in March 1994 in Istanbul.

With the entry into force of its Charter on 1 May 1999, BSEC acquired international legal identity and was transformed into a full-fledged regional economic organization: Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. With the accession of Serbia and Montenegro in April 2004, the Organization's Member States increased to twelve.

www.bsec-organization.org

Central and Southeast European Innovation Area (CEIA)

The "Central- and Southeast European Innovation Area" initiative aims at revitalising the innovation potential of Central- and Southeast Europe that has always been remarkable throughout the history. It will help the involved countries to become strong partners in the European Union.

The initiative should: lead to more and better job opportunities; help the new EU Member States and countries with accession status to efficiently contribute to the successful implementation of the Lisbon Agenda; and assist the future enlargement by facilitating the accession countries' participation in regional and European innovation projects and activities.

Emphasizing trans-border regional co-operation among the new EU Member States and, whenever possible, be extended to regions in the Applicant Countries and other parts of Southeast Europe. Moreover, whenever possible, appropriate partners should be invited from regions in Austria, Bavaria, Greece and Italy. Networking with centres of excellence in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia might be useful.

www.ceia.hu

Central European Initiative (CEI)

The CEI was established in 1989 as an intergovernmental forum for political, economic and cultural co-operation among its Member States. Its main aim was to help transition countries in Central Europe come closer to the EU. It is composed of 18 countries; 9 EU and 9 non-EU Member States.

In this regard, the CEI Plan of Action 2007-2009 outlines the organisation's current intentions. Although the CEI is not a major donor organisation, it disposes of several funds which are used to promote projects in its various sectors of activity. The CEI cooperates with other international organisations and institutions.

With the last EU enlargements, the CEI's interest shifted towards the 9 Member States staying outside the EU. Indeed, a new CEI programme is to facilitate and co-finance the transfer of know-how on "fresh" transition and negotiation experience.

www.ceinet.org

European Center for Peace and Development

The European Center for Peace and Development (ECPD) is an International Regional European Center of the University for Peace established by the United Nations. The Proposal on establishment

of the European Center for Peace and Development (ECPD) as an European regional centre of the University for Peace (UP) with headquarters in Belgrade.

ECPD was established with the main tasks and objectives of organising and carrying out "the corresponding postgraduate studies, research activities and dissemination of knowledge", which contribute to the promotion of peace, development and international cooperation. These basic tasks and objectives have been further elaborated and defined as "bringing together the intellectual potentials from the East and West, the North and South in the implementation of ECPD programmers of education and research projects devoted to the; promotion of peace and development and international understanding and cooperation.

It is involved in the following activities: postgraduate studies; research projects and studies; scientific and other meetings; publication of books, studies, proceedings etc.

www.ecpdorg.net

Economic Reconstruction and Development in South East Europe

The countries of the Region are expected to develop and implement their reform programs based on national strategies that also foster regional cooperation. The objective here is not to recreate the former Yugoslavia but to develop regional perspectives on inter alia trade, energy, environment, and water resource management, which can offer political benefits and large welfare increases for all countries of the region. Moreover, a regional approach facilitates allows for adequate prioritization of regional infrastructure investments in South East Europe. The regional approach and the need to enhance regional cooperation is a cornerstone of the Stabilization and Association Process, as it is an integral part the preparation for integration of the countries of SEE into European structures.

The new phase of medium term development will require sustained and coordinated efforts by the international community to assist the countries of SEE to further enhance cooperation among themselves. In this context, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe has proved to be able to provide crucial impetus for bringing together the countries of the region and main partners on key regional priorities and for helping the countries to cooperate efficiently under its umbrella.

www.seerecon.org

European Stability Initiative (ESI)

ESI is a non-profit research and policy institute, created in recognition of the need for independent, in-depth analysis of the complex issues involved in promoting stability and prosperity in Europe. ESI was founded in July 1999 by a multi-national group of practitioners and analysts with extensive experience in the regions it studied.

ESI's experienced and multidisciplinary team is committed to provide policy makers with relevant strategic analysis. In its nine years of operation, ESI has had a substantial impact on international policy towards South Eastern Europe. Its advice was sought regularly by a range of policy makers across the region. In order to promote discussion and debate among the policy community all ESI publications are widely distributed and available on its website free of charge. ESI's efforts depend on the contributions of governments, corporations and private individuals to fund its activities.

www.esiweb.org

International Center for Economic Growth (ICEG), European Center

ICEG European Center is an independent economic research institute, focusing its activities on research, macroeconomic and sectoral analyses and forecasts, policy advice and the dissemination of its research output through conferences and publications. While research in ICEG European Center has European-wide orientation, it is focused on analysing economic developments in Central and Eastern Europe.

Economic research in ICEG European Center has five priorities. The first is the analysis of European macroeconomic issues with particular attention to the New Member States (NMS) and Southeast Europe (SEE). The second major topic is empirical and policy oriented research on economic growth, competitiveness and their major determinants. The third area of interest is research on the diffusion of information and communication technologies in the economy and in the society, with particular attention to European, NMS and Southeast European trends. Another key research area is public economics with particular attention to the analysis of tax systems, healthcare and public administration. The fifth area of research is economic geography and regional economics.

www.icegec.hu

South East European Network for Professionalization of Media

The network promotes excellence in journalism through policy initiatives, research and training. SEENPM unites fifteen non-for-profit media centers from eleven South East European and neighboring countries. Its activities are based on the belief that joint commitment and cooperation are pivotal to the development of independent media, the strengthening of relations among journalists, and overall progress in the region.

Since its establishment in February 2000, SEENPM has implemented a wide range of journalism training, exchange, and media policy research and advocacy projects. Several thousand media professionals have benefited from these opportunities.

www.seenpm.org

South-east European Network of Associations of private broadcasters

The network was established in 2000 with the support of Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As of today it brings together 8 broadcasters' associations from the SEE region, representing almost 800 broadcasters. Members of SEENAPB are national broadcasters' associations in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Members of SEENAPB were broadcasters' associations from Moldova and Romania.

SEENAPB is a network of dedicated professionals who believe in the power of media to bridge various cultures, promoting the idea of peace and tolerance. We exchange and broadcast unbiased and timely information that combats prejudices. We protect the interests of private broadcasters in SEE.

www.seenapb.org

South-east European Research Centre

SEERC is an international, not-for-profit research centre jointly established by the University of Sheffield and CITY Liberal Studies; it is located in one of the ancient hubs of South-East Europe, Thessaloniki, Greece. The Centre and its activities are founded on the belief that by supporting the peoples, economies and political institutions of South-East Europe through the conduct of research and policy analysis, the dissemination and application of findings and the facilitation of open and informed discussion, a significant contribution can be made to the development of a stronger, more stable and more prosperous European community.

SEERC's mission is to support the stable and peaceful development of South-East Europe by conducting pure and applied research in and for the region. To accomplish this, SEERC will employ the existing research capacities of the University of Sheffield and CITY Liberal Studies by facilitating collaborations between their research staff and by developing multi-disciplinary networks of researchers from across South-East Europe.

www.seerc.org

Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)

The Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative Regional Center for Combating Trans-border Crime, the SECI Center, is a unique operational organization which facilitates the rapid exchange of information between law enforcement agencies from different countries regarding trans-border criminal cases.

The SECI Center coordinates regional operations, putting together the resources of the 12 SEE member countries in order to dismantle organized crime networks. The operational activities are conducted within the frames of seven Task Forces addressing issues of drugs and human beings trafficking, stolen vehicles, smuggling and customs fraud, financial and computer crime, terrorism and container security. It issues analysis and reports on specific areas targeting organized crime, and organizes trainings for member countries' law enforcement representatives.

www.secicenter.org

Southeast European Era-Net (SEE-ERA.NET)

The Southeast European Era-Net SEE-ERA.NET is a networking project aimed at integrating EU member states and Southeast European countries in the European Research Area by linking research activities within existing national, bilateral and regional RTD programmes.

It is financed by the European Commission and managed by a consortium of 17 institutions from 14 European countries. The objectives are to; enhance research cooperation in Europe by fostering integration of Southeast Europe into the growing European Research Area, add value to existing bilateral S&T agreements through multilateral coordination; improve interregional research cooperation following the principles of the Stabilisation and Association Process in Southeast Europe; contribute to the EU-Balkan countries Action Plan in Science & Technology adopted at the Thessaloniki Ministerial Conference in 2003.

www.see-era.net

The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE)

Comprising a diverse range of people, backgrounds, faiths, ideas, genders, ages and skills, the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE) is one small group of people, in cooperation with considerable networks of groups of people, whose intent is to support and encourage democratic change in Southeast Europe. We at the CDRSEE believe that the key to a stable and peaceful region is the foundation of robust democracies and genuine peace; peace that has been constructed through reconciliation, discussion, open participation and agreement, rather than an imposed solution.

We are committed to investigating specific ways of enhancing and encouraging social dialogue and building social cohesion in this part of Europe. The CDRSEE activities raise awareness via publications, workshops, textbook analysis, academic conferences, opinion polls, training sessions, and cultural and artistic programmes. An increased exchange of information between the countries of the region via textbooks, school lessons, media, popular culture, art, and regional youth initiatives is essential to lasting peace.

The CDRSEE is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation advocating the principles of social responsibility and fostering civil society.

www.cdsee.org

Task Force for Human Resource Development in Western Balkans

Useful links

- + Your Europe – <http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope>
- + CORDIS – <http://cordis.europa.eu>
- + EUREKA – <http://www.eureka.be/home.do>
- + TechWeb – http://ec.europa.eu/research/sme-techweb/index_en.cfm
- + CIP – http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index_en.htm
- + EU funding for SMEs – http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sme/funding_en.htm
- + Welcome Europe – <http://www.welcomeurope.com/default.asp>
- + Grants of the European Union – http://ec.europa.eu/grants/index_en.htm#econ
- + The Seventh Framework Programme – http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html
- + Scadplus – <http://europa.eu/scadplus>
- + EUR-Lex – <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>
- + Marie Curie Actions – http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/home_en.html
- + European Investment Fund – <http://www.eif.org>

Annex I



EREF-2008 Forum Recommendations

Recommendations		Stakeholders/ Policy Makers		
		Academia Business	Regional, National Authorities	European Union
General				
1	Knowledge society requires radical changes in policies, behaviour and institutional setups at all levels and in all domains; from individual stakeholders to the highest European authorities. From being a general policy framework the knowledge-society has to be translated into visions, policy priorities, and operational rules of implementation.	√	√	√
2	Knowledge-based competitiveness in Europe will not be achieved without establishing the single market of knowledge, to be elaborated within the concept of ERA (the Ljubljana Process). ERA can only be achieved with intensified RTD cooperation among local, regional and national research entities and businesses across Europe, with upgrading of European RTD funding, with productive linking between RTD and structural funding, as well as with gradual opening up of national research programmes for all European researchers.	√	√	√
3	Regulatory and fiscal environments undoubtedly contribute to corporate RTD investment but for achieving their knowledge-based competitiveness companies, including SMEs, have to increase their own RTD investment substantially (recommended average level of at least 3 – 5% of turnover, depending on sector).	√	√	
4	PPP can be a very productive instrument for combining public and private RTD funding, it is strongly recommended that various types of stakeholders and public authorities achieve synergies of their respective innovation efforts by using this instrument.	√	√	
5	Although faced with critically low demographic growth most European countries fail to develop comprehensive human capital development strategies, including migration management. Particularly since human capital is relatively the most		√	√

	abundant resource in Europe such a situation is completely unacceptable and requires urgent action.			
6	Regional and national innovation support systems need to become more productive and efficient, and should be defined in a long-term, strategic pattern, and should cover the entire innovation cycle.		√	
7	European regions should pursue more selective development strategies, exploiting their strengths and support excellence, based on promising potential identified through a bottom-up process taking account of realistically assessed comparative advantages. This also broadens the scope for a competitive European single market and contributes to better utilisation of readily available human and economic resources.		√	
8	For a knowledge-based competitive Europe, the overall regulatory, fiscal and political environments should be geared much more to support entrepreneurship and SMEs in all possible forms.		√	
9	Closer integration of Lisbon and cohesion policies can be achieved starting at local and regional level, and requires greater flexibility in combining several EU funding sources for the support of individual, high quality projects.		√	√
10	RTD funding should not be labelled and treated as “spending” but rather as “investment” at all levels and by all policy makers and stakeholders. This will contribute to the successful implementation of Barcelona targets – being an essential condition for achieving knowledge based competitiveness.	√	√	√
Sector specific				
1	Systemic and sustainable support to SMEs’ internationalisation and innovation efforts is vital and can be provided most effectively through an integrated, one-stop-shop service which can be organised by a single entity with adequate mandate, resources and institutional position. ¹		√	
2	In line with the Bologna process universities and other institutions of higher learning should be more closely integrated into their regional and national environments - interacting with relevant stakeholders and taking an active role in addressing their vital issues. Therefore, universities need to modernise their management structures, create technology transfer and IPR offices, as well as incubators. ²	√		
3	Full participation in FP7 by stakeholders of Western Balkan countries could contribute essentially to their economic and technological development and therefore		√	

¹ “Regional support to innovation and internationalization of SMEs” Workshop, Graz, 11 April 2008, Internationalisierungs Center Steiermark, rapporteur: Michael Azodanloo

² “Business – Academia Collaboration” Workshop, Istanbul, 30 April 2008, Turkish Business and Research Association, rapporteur: Mehmet Gokgoz

	respective authorities should provide necessary information and financial support to project proposers. ³			
4	Stronger involvement of the corporate sector, including energy companies, is required in selecting priorities in the regional and national research programmes. ⁴	√	√	
5	Science and Technology Parks and Research Intensive Clusters need to properly define their role as agents of RTD synergies, management and marketing-promotion services. Such an active role can only be achieved with adequate support environment, to be created by local, regional and national authorities. ⁵	√	√	
		(8)	(14)	(5)

• ³ “*Benefits and Opportunities of Participation in EU programmes for Western Balkan Countries*”
Workshop, Novi Sad, 7 May 2008, ECPD, rapporteur: prof. Aleksandar Sedmak

• ⁴ “*PPP in Research Priority Setting – particular emphasis on Energy*” Workshop, Prague, 12 May 2008, ČEZ Group, rapporteur: dr. Ivo Vaša

• ⁵ “*Role of Science and Technology Parks in Boosting Regional Knowledge-based Competitiveness*”
Workshop, Trieste, 22 May 2008, Science Area Park, rapporteur: Gabriele Gatti