

Smart Regions 2019 Conference Transformation through Smart Specialisation

EGG Centre, Brussels, Belgium
14-15 November 2019

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Changes in climate, technology and demography are transforming our societies and way of life. Europe must lead the transition to a healthy planet and a new digital world. The Smart Regions conference 2019 will be a good occasion to strengthen the links between people, nations and institutions. Between expectations and delivery of smart specialisation strategies. Between words and deeds. We will listen to the people of Europe who design, implement and master regional economic development through innovation and discuss where and how it makes sense for public authorities to act, leaving European, national, regional and local actors to deliver where they are best placed to do so.

The third edition of the high-level Smart Regions event will take place this 14-15 November in Brussels. The European Commission, Member States and Regions will present achievements in the current financial period 2014-20 and key directions for smart specialisation as a tool for an effective economic transformation in 2021-27. It will focus on three topics:

- Boosting innovation-led growth in the EU industrial transition regions
- Supporting the catching up EU regions to close the innovation gap
- Integrating regional economies in the global value chains

The Conference will provide the opportunity to national and regional authorities to share experience of how smart specialisation has been implemented in their countries and regions. In 2014, smart specialisation strategies were introduced in the EU's Cohesion Policy as the basis for research and innovation investment. As a result, over 180 strategies have been established to shape investments between 2014 and 2020. It is now time to assess what has been achieved, exchange experience and reflect on how the impact of projects can be maximised on the ground.

The event will provide the opportunity to share experience between projects supported by the European Structural Investment Funds and other EU programmes and policies in the areas of research, industrial policy, education and skills. It will also enable regions and their project promoters to find cooperation partners across EU in areas such as energy, agri-food, industrial modernisation, digital, health, and the maritime industry.

As well as highlighting good practices and lessons learnt, there will be an opportunity to debate the future of innovation in the context of European regional development with senior representatives from the European institutions and national and regional governments. The conclusions of the discussion will be an important contribution to the implementation of the future Cohesion Policy post-2020.

Moderator: Karen Coleman

THURSDAY, 14 November 2019

Registration and welcome coffee from 8am
Venue: EGG Brussels Bara Street 175, 1070 Brussels, Belgium

9:00-10:30
Opening: Auditorium (600 pl)

10:30-12:00
Plenary Session: **Smart specialisation in the age of rapid change** Auditorium (600 pl)

12:00-14:00 Networking Lunch (exhibition & matchmaking & press conference)

14:00-16:00 Session 1 - Riverside Venue (300 pl)

Parallel session 1: Boosting innovation-led growth in the EU industrial transition regions

This session will be the opportunity to reflect on the actions needed to address industrial transition and the challenges that Europe faces like globalisation, automation, robotisation, digitisation, carbon neutrality, energy efficiency, circular economy as well as ageing and migration.

- **Presentation**
- **Panel debate**
- **World café**

14:00-16:00 Session 2- Studio Venue (300 pl)

Parallel session 2: Supporting the catching up EU regions to close innovation gap

This session will reflect on the significant divide between the European Union countries with the greatest capacity to innovate, and those with the least capacity to innovate. The convergence process in some regions proceeds only very slowly and unevenly, while other regions are catching up and need further support to keep the momentum.

- **Presentation**
- **Panel debate**
- **World café**

16:00 – 18:00 Open activities – Riverside, 8 meeting rooms

Side events/workshops/ project presentations/ exhibition by regions on smart growth projects and networking
Project visits for journalists (tbd)

From 18:00 Closing of the 1st Day and Official Dinner

Moderator: Karen Coleman

FRIDAY, 15 November 2019

Registration and welcome coffee

Venue: EGG Brussels Bara Street 175, 1070 Brussels, Belgium,

9:30-11:30 Session 3 - Studio Venue (300 pl)		9:30-11:30 Session 4 - Riverside Venue (300 pl)	
Parallel session 1: Investments in interregional innovation projects		Parallel session 2: Development of value chains in catching up regions	
<i>This session will focus on supporting partnerships to develop, connect or make complementary use of testing and demonstration facilities to accelerate market uptake and scale up of innovation solutions in shared specialisation priority areas.</i>		<i>This session will focus on increasing the capacity of regional innovation eco-systems in catching up regions to participate in partnerships with other regions, creating linkages between catching up regions with those in lead regions.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Panel debate• World café		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Panel debate• World café	
12:00 – 13:00 Closing session: Auditorium (600 pl)			
Key policy challenges			
13:00 – 15:00 Networking Lunch (exhibition & matchmaking)			
15:00 – 18:00 Open activities – Riverside, 8 meeting rooms			
Side events/TED talks/pitches/ workshops/ project presentations etc. Continuous exhibition by regions on smart growth projects and networking			