



Editorial

Dear readers,

We are happy to present to you the **5th edition of the WBC-INCO.NET Journal** on Co-ordination of Research Policies with the Western Balkan Countries, published on the occasion of the 8th meeting of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries on June 24 in Belgrade, Serbia.

Following an update on the conclusions of the past **Steering Platform meeting**, we are presenting you the **new European Commission** and its focal points on page 2. Concerning **news from WBC-INCO.NET**, we would like to point out our articles on the take-up of WBC Research Priorities by relevant funding programmes and the presentation of one of our project partners, the South-East European Research Centre.

As usual, one page each in this journal is dedicated to **S&T news from the Western Balkan countries**. Furthermore, this edition covers the **international cooperation strategies** for the Danube region and the Mediterranean. An additional page is dedicated to **research policy and capacities in Kosovo** (under UNSCR 1244). Last but not least, we are updating you on the preliminary outcome of the **SEE-ERA.NET PLUS Joint Call** (see p.15).

We are always happy to hear from you, to receive your **feedback** as well as your **input** for possible news articles and event announcements. Please feel free to **contact us at** office@wbc-inco.net.

To register for our biweekly WBC-INCO.NET eJournal, please go to:
<http://www.wbc-inco.net/ejournal/list>.

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Imprint

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7th Steering Platform Meeting: Conclusions

The Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries (WBCs) met in Zagreb on October 29, 2009. The meeting was co-chaired by the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Republic of Croatia on behalf of the Western Balkan countries – which hosted the event – and the European Commission.

The presentations of the progress reports allowed for a stock-taking of the activities recently undertaken with respect to S&T policy and research cooperation in and with the Western Balkan region. Many actions relate to the participation in the Seventh Research Framework Programme, but also other targeted actions have been organised by Member States and other stakeholders – and notably the Regional Cooperation Council, aiming at strengthening research capacities in the region.

The Platform welcomed the fact that a number of WBCs had made progress towards strengthening their national research capacities and designing or implementing their national research policies.

The Platform recognised, in particular, the important role of the WBC-INCO.NET project in supporting and carrying forward the work of the Platform and in helping consolidate research capabilities and cooperation opportunities in the Balkan region. This was well illustrated by the presentation of Work Package 2 of the project on regional priority setting. The Steering Platform also welcomed the conclusions of the regional dialogue meeting on the Regional Strategy on Research and Development for Innovation.

The Platform agreed to continue relying on the analytical outcomes of Work Package 2 of WBC-INCO.NET with respect to research priority setting and particularly, the priority areas identified. It will consider both through all possibilities offered by the EU Framework Programme and through other means as appropriate, how this work can foster the research cooperation. The Steering Platform took note of the wish of the Western Balkan countries to explore further opportunities to support enlargement countries. *Continued on page 2.*



Participants at the 7th Meeting of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries.

... continued from page 1

The Platform also supported the initiative to enhance and prolong the WBC-INCO.NET project in response to the FP7 INCO-2010-1 call under the International Cooperation programme in the Specific Programme Capacities. The Platform further acknowledged the positive role played by the SEE-ERA.NET project and welcomed the fact that its activities continue with SEE-ERA.NET PLUS, which offers additional research cooperation opportunities of interest to the region. In this regard, the updated Joint Action Plan is also a useful source of guidance for future work.

The presentation of the European Research Area (ERA) Vision 2020 by the Swedish Presidency and the ensuing discussion showed both the magnitude of the challenge and the potential of the endeavour of building a broad, cohesive, open and effective ERA. With respect to the engagement of the WBCs countries in the ERA, it was noted that the WBCs should take advantage of the ERA opportunities and the possibilities already existing to participate in various ERA governance structures. The WBCs were encouraged to designate their representatives and participate actively in the relevant bodies of ERA initiatives. As demonstrated by the presentation from Croatia on their experience with preparing for the accession to the EU, participation in the ERA activities can help in pursuing the compliance with the EU acquis on Science and Research (chapter 25).

The large participation of Western Balkan research institutes in the recent FP7 targeted call on Research Potential shows that there is a strong need for support to research capacity building in the region.

The study on opportunities to access S&T infrastructures demonstrates that many opportunities already exist to access research infrastructures in the Balkan region. The report was welcomed and seen as a useful source of information on the existing infrastructures in the region. Regular dissemination of information and creating awareness of existing facilities would be instrumental to the optimisation of their use. Further efforts to share facilities and equipment and facilitate access to infrastructure in the region should be considered, including the possibility of virtual infrastructures. The work in the ESFRI Regional Work Group could contribute to pursue these objectives.

The Steering Platform agreed to have a discussion about its priorities for the coming years in the light of the work so far at its next meeting in Belgrade, Serbia on June 24, 2010.

LINK

Steering Platform Meeting in Zagreb ■

<http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/71888.html>

A New Commission: New Faces – New Focuses!

On February 9, 2010 the new European Commission started its mandate for a period of 5 years until 2014.

The European Commission is composed of 27 Commissioners, of which ten already had a mandate in the Barroso I Commission. For us the most familiar face is Commissioner Janez Potočnik who is now responsible for Environment. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Potočnik for all the support we received from him in strengthening research cooperation in and among the Western Balkan countries. His commitment to the region has been instrumental in what has been achieved. We are also confident that with him our environment and thus our lives, including those of the Balkan citizens, are in safe hands. Thank you and congratulations on this new challenge. We are fully aware that a lot of research efforts will be necessary to comply with the EU acquis on Environment, so we hope that in the very near future we can continue to rely on you.



The new European Commission

After less than a month in office, the new Commission adopted the so-called Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Some consider this strategy as re-packaging the Lisbon strategy, others qualify it as being too ambitious and not concrete enough.

But whatever the judgement, the attention and importance attached to research and innovation in the strategy is impressive:

five targets, to achieve by 2020, have been identified. Research and innovation is one of them and in fact one could argue that to achieve the other targets on employment, climate change and energy, education and combating poverty, and increased research efforts are also necessary. Research and innovation has thus become a real cross-cutting issue.



Maire Geoghegan-Quinn is the new Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science.

As to the new faces, we would like to welcome Commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, who is now responsible for Research, Innovation and Science. We hope that she will continue to support research cooperation with the Western Balkan countries and see them as privileged partners, given the EU perspective. This brings us to Commissioner Štefan Füle, on whom we very much rely on to continue the close cooperation between research and the enlargement process, not least to ensure a good synergy between the Research Framework Programmes and the Pre-Accession Instrument (IPA).

WBC-INCO.NET welcomes very much, as identified in one of its Work Packages, that innovation should receive much more attention and be closely associated to research efforts. Since the Commission proposed its EU 2020 Strategy, some concrete proposals have been worked out. At the Spring Council in March 2010 the Commission proposed an "Innovation Union" flagship initiative refocusing R&D and innovation policy on the major societal challenges, which is expected to be adopted by the European Council in June.

We should therefore not lose any time and take the new focuses afforded by this new Commission and new Commissioner as an occasion to seek further research opportunities in the Balkan region with the EU and see how we can contribute to the "Innovation Union".

LINK

European Commission ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/98.html>

The South-East European Research Centre

The South-East European Research Centre (SEERC) is an international, multidisciplinary, not-for-profit research centre based in Thessaloniki, Greece and one out of 26 project partners of WBC-INCO.NET. It was established in February 2004 as a joint venture of the University of Sheffield and City College of Thessaloniki. SEERC works on a wide range of projects and its activities are multifaceted. Two of the projects are described in detail in the following article.

SEERC's mission is to support the stable and peaceful development of South East Europe (SEE) by conducting pure and applied research in, and for the region. SEERC's main goal is to promote an independent, objective analysis and public discussion on issues related to the development of South East Europe and to provide a forum for researchers in the SEE region. For this reason, SEERC works with and within, but not exclusively, in the South East European region. It engages in research, training, networking activities and the composition of a series of publications, strongly supported by its core staff of researchers, and the collaboration with University of Sheffield staff and an extended network of academics and professionals.



SEERC currently has twelve ongoing projects funded by various EU and other donors' programmes. Among them is the case of the INTERVALUE project funded by the South East Transnational Cooperation Programme. Through this project, SEERC contributes to the formation of a South East European platform that sets up a mechanism, which allows the recording, sharing and dissemination of key R&D results from the region and helps to establish supply chains between the R&D institutions and the business sector. It is a project that aims to enhance interregional cooperation by creating a critical mass of R&D results in selected areas and by enlarging the marketability of R&D results through joint actions. The project, in a direct effort against academic and research isolation, also seeks the dissemination and commercial exploitation of research outcomes delivered from the SEE research centres; in the long-term, the activities are expected to bring forward and to improve the capabilities of R&D organisations in SEE to demonstrate their research outcomes and at the same time will facilitate the access of companies to innovative results. The INTERVALUE project includes partners from Greece, Italy,

Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and the FYR of Macedonia. Another project impacting the SEE region from a different viewpoint is the YOU RESPOND project (funded by the DAPHNE III programme of DG Justice, Freedom and Security). The project is the outcome of a seminar organised by SEERC and the University of Sheffield in Thessaloniki exploring the concept of a "child at risk" in South East Europe. Based on the principles outlined in the UN Convention of the Child 1989, the project's focus is to develop a good practice guide and training materials designed to ensure the effective participation of young people in relation to identifying and addressing the needs of children at risk, concerned by violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking. It stresses the need to enhance the capabilities of all who work with and for children and to increase their expertise on children's rights through training and better co-operation with key stakeholders. The findings of the YOU RESPOND project, together with the accompanying educational materials, will assist those working to develop preventative measures against all forms of violence and for support to victims and groups at risk, most specifically children and young people, to ensure the voice of the child is heard by increasing the capacity and expertise of young people in this field.

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LINKS SEERC ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/1128.html>
 Intervalue project ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/72186.html>
 Intervalue collaborative platform ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/link/83978.html>
 YOU RESPOND project ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/link/83980.html>

Register as an Evaluator for FP7

Becoming an expert evaluator for the Framework Programmes is an excellent possibility to learn more about programmes and projects, to network and to receive first-hand information on current trends in European research.

It is possible both for organisations to register their key staff, and for researchers to register individually. Once one is registered in the pool of experts, the EC can select one as an evaluator for FP7 proposals, or (less likely) as an expert advisor on a new or current project or as a monitoring and evaluation expert. Project proposals are usually evaluated remotely in the first instance, followed by a consensus meeting in Brussels or Luxembourg (about once a year). Travel costs and a daily remuneration of € 450 are covered by the EC. Please note that being registered as an expert in no way prevents you from being involved with any proposal or project in the Framework Programme. The registration process is open for all researchers from the Western Balkan countries (please follow the link below). The EC particularly welcomes applications from suitably qualified women.

LINK CORDIS expert evaluation page ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/link/84312.html>

Scholarship Database

Regular visitors of <http://www.wbc-inco.net> may have noticed that the scholarship database, containing information for outgoing students and researchers on scholarships in the EU and EFTA countries, has moved to a stand-alone web portal (<http://www.scholarshipsforwesternbalkans.eu/>).

Originally established by the Stability Pact for SEE, this interface was temporarily made available on the WBC-INCO.NET website in March 2008. In 2009, a lasting solution for further maintenance had to be found. The Scholarship Database was finally taken over by SPARK, commissioned by the Belgian Kind Baudouin Foundation.



LINKS Scholarship database ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/scholarship.html>
 SPARK ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/653.html>

WBC Research Priorities Monitored

After the identification of research priorities for the Western Balkan countries (WBCs) through the workshops held in the framework of the WBC-INCO.NET project, TÜBİTAK has been monitoring the take-up of these priorities by the relevant science and technology programmes. The second monitoring report, which has been published in December 2009, revealed significant correspondance between the science and technology priorities identified for the WBCs in 2009 and the call topics in the relevant programmes for 2010.

One of the objectives of WBC-INCO.NET is to screen and identify research cooperation and funding possibilities for the WBCs and to monitor the take-up of the identified research priorities by various research programmes. Therefore, specific information on possible funding opportunities for which WBC researchers and institutions may apply is consistently being screened and published on the WBC-INCO.NET website.

Through the periodic circulation of e-newsletters and the raised awareness of researchers and institutions in the WBCs the overall knowledge about the available science and technology funding opportunities has been increased. According to the final monitoring report prepared by TÜBİTAK, 77 specific calls accessible for participants from the WBCs have been published on the WBC-INCO.NET project website as of December 2009. The published funding opportunities cover calls of the following programmes:

- FP7 Cooperation, Capacities, People and Ideas Specific Programmes
- EUREKA Network for Market Oriented Industrial R&D
- European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST)
- South East Europe (SEE) Transnational Cooperation Programme
- Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Cross-Border and Global Programmes
- Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP)
- FP7 Project Calls, ERA-NET Joint Calls, Network of Excellence Calls, ETP Joint Undertaking Calls, Bilateral Cooperation Calls, Research Funding Calls by universities

The monitoring of the take-up of scientific priorities determined for the WBCs in the fields of ICT, Agrofood, Health, Transport and Environment has revealed a certain correspondance to the topics called for. The following results have been derived from the analysis of the take-up of WBC S&T priorities in the FP7 2010 Cooperation Work Programme.

- The FP7 KBBE (Knowledge Based Bio-Economy) 2010 Work Programme is responsive to the priorities identified in the Agro-Food field, as both of two priorities identified in this field have been taken up by the KBBE 2010 Work Programme.
- The FP7 ICT 2010 Work Programme is less responsive to the priorities identified by the WBC-INCO.NET project in this field, as only two of the seven identified priorities have been taken up in the 2009–2010 ICT Work Programme. This low level of responsiveness can be attributed to the merger of the ICT Work Programmes for 2009 and 2010, and the lack of a new ICT Work Programme for 2010.
- The FP7 Health 2010 Work Programme has taken up four of the five priorities identified for the WBCs, which indicates a good rate of responsiveness.
- The FP7 Transport 2010 Work Programme has taken up three of the five priorities, which reflects a fair rate of acceptance and responsiveness.
- The FP7 Environment 2010 Work Programme has taken up four priorities out of the six identified priorities for the WBCs, which mirrors a fair rate of take-up and responsiveness.
- Identified priorities for biodiversity in the field of Agro-Food have neither been taken up in the 2009 Work Programme nor in the 2010 Work Programme. This counts for both the theme of KBBE and the theme of Environment. The take-up of the two biodiversity priorities remains to be initiated and improved.
- A particular take-up of the Agro-Food and ICT priorities has been manifested in the joint call launched in the framework of the SEE-ERA.NET PLUS project with the participation of six WBCs and eight EU Member States and Associated Countries.

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LINK TÜBİTAK ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/95.html>

ASO Ljubljana: Results of the Call for Proposals Available

The Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office in Ljubljana (ASO Ljubljana) has evaluated the project proposals received under its call for proposals for projects in research cooperation and networking between institutions in Austria, Slovenia and the Western Balkan countries.

The focus of this year's call was "Changing Identities in South East Europe: Between Europeanisation, Globalisation, Regionalisation and Nationalism". Funding is provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research (bmf) within the framework of its South East European Science Cooperation Initiative.

The deadline of the call was February 23, 2010. The ASO received a total of 28 project proposals; the six best rated proposals including research institutions from Austria, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Croatia, the FYR of Macedonia, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) and Serbia will be funded. The total funding available for this call for proposals is € 120,000. More information on the funded projects will be available soon on the ASO website.

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LINK ASO Ljubljana ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/509.html>

WBC Research Programmes on Climate Change: Report Available

The report on national RTD policies and programmes with regard to research on climate change in the WBCs has been completed. The study was carried out by the Centre for Social Innovation in the context of its task to implement a “common database on national science policies towards global issues” of WBC-INCO.NET.

For the collection of data a special internet platform and online questionnaire was developed. The online database provides a directory of submitted research programmes and other relevant documents (e.g. national strategies), which can be accessed online at <http://www.global-issues-rtd.info>.

The WBC-INCO.NET deliverable D3.15 is based on information received from correspondents in the WBCs through a web-based online questionnaire, as well as on information gained through desk research carried out by staff of the Centre for Social Innovation Vienna.

Gathering all the information turned out to be a big challenge, which could be accomplished only partially. The general problem is that in the research area of climate change, specific programmes do not exist in the WBCs so far. None of the WBCs has implemented a special national research programme on climate change until now. Further information can be found on <http://www.global-issues-rtd.info/programmes/list>

However, some WBCs have formulated several governmental climate change strategies, which are often directly linked to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change UNFCCC. Some of those strategies have already been adopted or are still in preparation. Currently, several RTD projects related to climate change are carried out in the WBCs. However, specific programmes including a coherent set of RTD activities over a wider area of scientific disciplines, clear sources of funding and long-term plans could not be identified in the WBCs.

A positive development in this regard was the establishment of the South East European Climate Change Framework Action Plan for Adaption (SEE/CCFAP-A) platform in cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Council and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe in November 2008. SEE/CCFAP-A intends to intensify the cooperation between all participating countries in the development of regional programmes concerning climate change issues. This could also foster the development of national climate change research programmes and strategies.

This study is a pilot case in the development of a common database on national science policies dealing with global issues with “climate change” as a major “global issue” in this case. This first exercise with a manageable number of countries has been very useful, unveiling very valuable insights and potentials for improvement of the approach in the collection of data. This experience is also useful for the other INCO-nets such as SEA-EU-NET and IncoNet EECA.

The first draft of the report was available in December 2008 and is updated annually for the duration of the project. The next update will be available in September 2010.

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LINK Report/Database ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/74585.html>

Comprehensive Support for Young Researchers Regional Research Promotion Programme | Western Balkans

Limited career opportunities and restricted mobility hinder the development of many young researchers in the WBCs. The Swiss-funded Regional Research Promotion Programme in the WBCs (RRPP) is supporting the new generation of researchers in the field of social sciences.

Brain drain is one of the major problems the WBCs are facing today. The situation is especially alarming considering the continuous lack of opportunities, even for the best educated. Young researchers and scientists are also affected, particularly those engaged at public universities. According to the assessments the RRPP has carried out during the last two years, the opportunities for young promising researchers in the field of social sciences to further develop and advance in their careers in their home countries are scarce.

An additional problem is restricted mobility. Even today, visa restrictions create a barrier for international networking, especially for researchers and scientists coming from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), differentiating them also from their colleagues from the FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and thus, marginalizing them even more.

The RRPP has been supporting the new generation of social scientists and researchers in the WBCs for almost two years now, paying special attention to the inclusion of female researchers. The programme covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), the FYR of Macedonia and Serbia and finances innovative country-related and regional projects

that deal with transformation-relevant topics such as social cohesion, governance, state and nation building, civil society, impact of EU democratisation processes, gender equality, media, identities and conflict management, development and migration.

As of today, the RRPP has been supporting 21 research projects across the region, mainly involving the younger generation, many of whom have studied abroad and have returned to their home countries. Furthermore, the RRPP provides methods and thematic seminars, which gather researchers from the entire region and thus, also enable their networking in a politically tense region, where communication channels and cooperation are still developing. During the last two years, seven trainings have been organised with over 100 participants, involving mainly MA graduates and PhD candidates, who wish to strengthen their research capacities, discuss topics of common interest and establish partnerships with colleagues from the region and beyond.

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LINK Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/22167.html>



News from Albania

Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation Established



In March 2010, the Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation (ARTI) has started its activity as a public, legal institution under the competences of the Council of Ministers. ARTI aims at building a modern system of science and strengthening the role of S&T in Albania.

The establishment of the Agency was approved by the Albanian government in August 2009 soon after the launch of the cross-cutting Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation.

ARTI operates as a coordinating structure for national, bilateral and international programmes and projects and cooperates with different institutions in the field of R&D. Its mission is to evaluate, finance, monitor and manage programmes and projects in the fields of science, technology and innovation in Albania. ARTI contributes to the establishment of infrastructure and instruments, which implement S&T policies by playing a leading role in the creation of a science and technology culture. Among others, the Agency also aims to fund projects of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and the renewal of technological equipment of SMEs.

The Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation organises its work based on seven main programmes:

1. National R&D programmes

National Programmes for Research and Development (NPRD) are implemented in accordance with the national priority areas, specifically social sciences and Albanology, Information Technology Systems, Biodiversity and Environment, Agriculture / Food and Biotechnology, Health, Water and Energy, and Materials. National programmes are implemented through projects that achieve the objectives of the programme and are based on the cooperation of one or more institutions or groups of experts.

2. Bilateral and Multilateral Scientific and Technological Cooperation Programmes

Scientific and technological bilateral cooperation agreements with other countries are an expression of shared common interests in specific areas. Albania has signed bilateral agreements with Italy, Greece, the FYR of Macedonia and Slovenia.

As of January 1, 2008 Albania holds the status of an Associated Country in FP7. ARTI will act as a national coordinating structure for the EU Framework Programme.

3. Research Infrastructure Programme

The Research Infrastructure Programme aims to improve and facilitate equipment available in public research institutes and universities, in order to enable the development of research projects according to international standards.

4. Centers of Excellence Programme

This programme aims to create five centres of excellences including a minimum of 20 researchers (leading researchers, postgraduate researchers and PhD candidates) from at least two research institutes involved in national and international cooperation.

5. Programme for Technology Transfer and Innovation

This programme aims to promote technology and innovation and the establishment of a society open and conducive to innovation. It shall stimulate the active participation of the private sector in scientific research in collaboration with universities through the provision of grants.

6. Programme for Young Researchers

This programme aims to increase the number of experts that complete Master and PhD programmes in science and engineering fields, giving priority to those who conduct research or postgraduate studies and projects in Albania.

7. Brain Gain Programme

The Brain Gain Programme supports the Albanian government in creating laws and institutional structures that enable talented scholars to return to Albania. This programme helps universities and public administration to employ qualified individuals, who have graduated abroad. Those talents are selected in a transparent competition.

LINK

Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation ▪
<http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/84792.html>

Round Table: Strengthening Research and Higher Education in SEE

A high-level round table and expert meeting organised by the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science with the support of the UNESCO Venice Office took place in Tirana on May 21 and 22, 2010.

The event gathered ministries and high-level representatives responsible for science and higher education from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the FYR of Macedonia, Greece, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey as well as representatives from other European countries and European and international organisations (such as the EU, RCC, ESF and COST).

The event's main goal was to contribute to fostering regional and international cooperation to enhance the competitiveness of SEE countries in the European and international research arena. One of the key questions discussed was how bilateral agreements can be expanded to foster European and regional partnership in order to strengthen the performance and competitive basis of scientific research in SEE. The event was concluded with a Round Table of SEE Ministers responsible for Science and Higher Education.



News from Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnian Policy Makers Visit EU Institutions

In the framework of the project “Capacity building and institutional strengthening of science and research in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, policy makers from the state, entities and cantons have paid a study visit to the European Commission and the EUREKA and COST Secretariats in Brussels. Furthermore, the policy makers visited Belgian institutions that are responsible for Science, Technology and Innovation policy to gather information on how Belgium manages its STI policy. This study visit gave the representatives a chance to learn more about current RTDI issues under preparation by the Commission. It was also an opportunity to inform the Commission on recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to discuss the cooperation.

Capacity building and institutional strengthening of science and research in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the first project under the EU assistance programme to Bosnia and Herzegovina that is aimed at the overall improvement of the Bosnian RTDI system.



Policy Makers from Bosnia and Herzegovina Visiting EU Institutions

38% of the proposals are projects in the field of engineering and technology; they relate to industrial chemistry, mechanical, chemical and materials engineering, including electronics and specialised technology. This demonstrates the considerable interest of researchers in these fields. 15% of the proposals are projects in the area of medical sciences such as internal medicine, pathology, radiology and health sciences. Finally, the selection also shows the interest in and research potential for scientific and technological cooperation in social, natural and agricultural sciences.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Sets Up Council on Science

On April 22, 2010 Bosnia and Herzegovina set up a Council on Science of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This Council is the first state-level advisory body that is responsible for making recommendations to the government (in particular to the Ministry of Civil Affairs) concerning all issues related to research, technology and innovation policy. The Council will draw up guidelines for RTD strategy and monitoring its implementation. It is also expected to contribute to the wider aim of including Bosnia and Herzegovina's science and humanities in the European science and technology system. Finally, the Council will pave the way for a continuous dialogue between the scientific community and policy makers on the subjects mentioned above. 13 university professors, who have been working as partners with representatives from the state government and the entities' governments, have been appointed as members of the Council for a four-year term of office.

Joint Scientific and Technological Committee Selects 26 Projects

The Agreement on bilateral scientific and technological cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia has produced substantial results for the cooperation between the research communities of the two countries. Regular calls for co-financing joint research projects have been launched and ideas for financing particular projects have been selected. These ideas will be materialised into concrete results for the benefit of science in Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The eighth session of the Joint Scientific and Technological Committee was held in December 2009 in Sarajevo. The Committee assessed a total of 67 project proposals that had been submitted during the Open Calls for the period of 2010 to 2011. A total of 26 projects were given the go-ahead for financing. The proposals were selected on the basis of several criteria, which included scientific significance, their relevance for economic and social development, and the potential to include the projects in EU programmes and cooperation mechanisms.

Strategy for the Development of Science in Bosnia and Herzegovina Adopted

The Strategy for the Development of Science in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period of 2010 to 2015 and the action plan for its implementation were adopted in December 2009. The documents prepared by the Ministry of Civil Affairs have specified the role of the public authorities at each level. The Strategy identifies priorities for the RTDI policy for the next five years. It provides an in-depth assessment of the current legal, institutional and financial framework for RTDI in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The assessment shows that science and technology were considerably more developed in the pre-1990's period than today. Although the statistical data on expenditure are missing, the assumption based on available parameters says that Bosnia and Herzegovina today spends 0.1% of its GDP for RTDI. Thus, the expenditure per capita would be only € 3.1.

The figures show that the scientific potential is lagging far behind the potential of other EU countries. Activities to aid scientific and technological development are urgently needed.

One of the short-term priorities for Bosnia and Herzegovina is to set up a Scientific and Research Information System (NIIS BiH). NIIS BiH will contain a scientific data base, statistical indicators and other instruments for statistical research that will be in line with international standards.

A five-year aim is to raise the expenditure on RTDI by 1%. This ambitious goal is the only way to keep up with European science and to prevent brain-drain of researchers to other countries.

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LINKS Ministry of Civil Affairs – Bosnia and Herzegovina ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/527.html>
Download the Research Strategy ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/84322.html>
Download the Action Plan ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/84316.html>



News from Croatia

Bilateral Cooperation with Serbia

The Croatian Minister of Science Radovan Fuchs and his Serbian counterpart Božidar Đelić met in Zagreb on May 13, 2010 to discuss bilateral cooperation and joint scientific projects. 21 bilateral initiatives are currently being implemented, mainly in the field of biotechnology. Several workshops as well as a joint Science Day will be held in the following months in order to review the results achieved.

The two countries are also planning to hold regular meetings at ministerial or state secretary level and to establish a regional technology fund to attract research funding for companies. Fuchs suggests exploiting further opportunities such as joint applications for FP7 projects and loans by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Lisbon Review 2010:

Croatia Outperforms Lowest-Ranked EU Members

The final assessment of the progress made in reaching the Lisbon goals shows that Croatia has outranked four EU Member States, namely Bulgaria, Italy, Poland and Romania.

With a score of 4.18, it is only second to Montenegro (score: 4.19) among the eleven candidate and neighbourhood countries assessed. Among this group, Croatia holds rank one in the fields of information society, sustainable development and network industries as well as the second place in the field of innovation and R&D.

LINK

More information is available at ▪
<http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/news/84603.html>

ERAWATCH Country Report 2009

The ERAWATCH Country Report 2009 assesses the policy mixes to foster R&D investment in Croatia and the country's contribution to the European Research Area as an Associate Country. The report concludes that ERA-related policies play an increasingly important role in Croatia. Most progress has been made in the field of researchers' mobility, while there remain considerable challenges in the areas of governance of research infrastructure and the opening of national research to other countries.

A stronger participation of Croatian scientists in the European Framework Programme is among the strategic goals of Croatian S&T policy. It is supported by a number of capacity-building measures, such as the establishment of the Agency for Mobility and European Programmes, the European Integration Department with six national contact points and the National Committee for the monitoring of FP implementation.

Euroinvent: Croatian Inventors Win 18 Awards

Inventors from Croatia won the Grand Prix for best group performance and 17 other awards at Euroinvent, an exhibition of innovations and new technologies held in the Romanian city of Iași from May 7 to 9, 2010.

LINK

Download the report at ▪
<http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/71001.html>

The Ruđer Bošković Institute

The Ruđer Bošković Institute (RBI) is the largest Croatian research centre for basic sciences, participating also in science applications and higher education. It provides high-quality infrastructure in the fields of biology, biomedicine, chemistry, physics, oceanography, computer science and electronics/engineering and is involved in numerous research projects giving support to industry and academia.

The Zagreb-based institute was founded in 1950 as a centre for advanced research and named after the famous Croatian 18th century scientist Josip Ruđer Bošković (1711–1787). RBI gathers an academic staff of 530, including 375 researchers and 155 PhD students. Since its inception, it consistently has endeavoured to provide high-quality support to industry and academia and to increase the number of qualified graduate students for the "knowledge economy".

RBI is involved in numerous research projects, mostly national projects funded by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. Furthermore, RBI scientists are involved in 41 international projects funded by the European Commission, COST, NATO and others.

Facilities and Services for Researchers

Due to its manpower and well-organised infrastructure, the institute is able to maintain its activities at the highest level, benchmarking itself against leading research institutes in the European Union and forming an essential part of the European Research Area.

Facilities and services for researchers include twelve divisions, three centres, the largest library in natural sciences in Croatia, a computing centre, animal facilities and a large number of valuable experimental devices: An Xcalibur Nova R – Diffractometer System, a RIGAKU D/MAX Ultima IV Theta-Theta X-ray Diffractometer System, a Typhoon 9200 Phosphoimager, an Atomic Force Microscope (AFM), a Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM), a Tandem Van de Graaff Accelerator, Fourier Transform Electron Paramagnetic Resonance (FT-EPR), Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) as well as HPLC/MS/MS, IR and Raman spectrometers.

Adherence to the highest scientific standards, an open-access infrastructure and collaborative spirit provide an unparalleled scientific environment. While the level of scientific investigation is intense, the atmosphere at RBI is collegial and motivating. Technicians, postdoctoral fellows and administrative support staff are all considered part of the team and are given the latitude and responsibility to accomplish their tasks to serve the best interests of science. The pursuit of scientific excellence is paramount and all efforts are directed toward that end.

LINK

Ruđer Bošković Institute ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/921.html>



News from the FYR of Macedonia

First Joint Committee Meeting

The first Joint Committee Meeting on the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concerning the association of the FYR of Macedonia to FP7 will take place on July 13, 2010 in Brussels. Representatives of the Ministry of Science are going to meet the European Commission representatives in order to discuss relevant topics related to the MoU. Issues to be tackled are the participation in FP7 and its evaluation, stimulative and supportive activities to foster the participation in the 7th Framework Programme, the design of related processes and the operating mode of the national NCP system. Furthermore, respective questions, problems or possible complications shall be identified.

New Series of Events to Promote FP7 Calls

At the last NCP meeting in April 2010, the NCPs agreed to organise a series of events in June 2010 to promote the forthcoming calls in the framework of FP7. These info events only serve as a first opportunity to learn about the content and topics of the calls. In the period between autumn and winter 2010 several brokerage events, expert visits and workshops have been planned to give a deeper understanding of the diverse possibilities of participation.

The Operating Mode of the NCP System

In the FYR of Macedonia, all NCPs meet on a monthly basis discussing all relevant issues related to the implementation of FP7 in the FYR of Macedonia. This has proven to be an effective process guaranteeing an equal level and exchange of information, the build-up of a network and support and cooperation between the NCPs. The friendly atmosphere and efficient team work have shown to be additionally valuable to produce results of high quality.

Secondary, the cooperation of the NCPs from the FYR of Macedonia with NCPs from other EU countries is continuously improving enhancing the integration of the NCPs in the international network. The NCPs regularly attend the international meetings and events and actively contribute to and support the successful results of international NCP work.

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The Research Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology – RCGEB

The Research Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (RCGEB) is a research unit of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of the FYR of Macedonia, founded in 1986/87. Its main goal is to promote the scientific field of genetic engineering and biotechnology in the FYR of Macedonia through research, education and training. Furthermore, the National Reference Laboratory for Hemoglobinopathies, at the same time an international reference laboratory and international hemoglobin information centre, is part of the RCGEB.

Since its establishment, the primary interest of the RCGEB has been the molecular basis of the most common monogenic diseases. The RCGEB is the first institution in the FYR of Macedonia that started to use the techniques of recombinant DNA technology in the diagnosis and prevention of inherited, malignant and infectious diseases and in forensic medicine. The DNA methods for prenatal diagnosis of the most common monogenic diseases and chromosomal aneuploidies or the determination of the origin of biological materials were used in the RCGEB since its foundation.

The RCGEB has participated in many quality control programmes for molecular DNA testing of the most common inherited diseases, as well as in the quality assessment of forensic DNA. During the past 20 years, more than 30 research projects dealing with the molecular characterisation of monogenic diseases, the molecular epidemiology of infectious diseases, the molecular basis of the most common malignancies and DNA markers for human identification were completed or are in progress of completion in the RCGEB.

Diverse Forms of Cooperation

One of the main goals of the Centre is to foster collaboration with institutions from the region, from Europe, and the USA and to train its employees in world leading institutions. Almost all scientists that were employed in the RCGEB in the late 1980s and early 1990s spent one or two years abroad – as research

fellows in leading European or US institutions. The RCGEB collaborates with numerous institutions from the FYR of Macedonia, medical institutions from neighbouring countries and with over 30 other scientific institutions from over 20 different countries. The collaboration encompasses joint research activities, specialisation and training, lectures and the exchange of literature.

The RCGEB was a focal point of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) Trieste from 1994 to 1998. Moreover, the RCGEB has been coordinating the activities for the creation of the SEE Network for molecular biology and genetics. These activities were also supported by UNESCO-ROSTE within the framework of its programme “Support to Scientific Networking in SEE countries”. The network was created with the goal to organise and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and training of young scientists in the field of molecular biology and genetics.

Since 1998, the RCGEB is the coordinator of postgraduate studies in molecular biology and genetic engineering, organised by the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje. Since 2000, the RCGEB is also the publisher of the international “Balkan Journal of Medical Genetics”.

LINK Research Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/research/83278.html>



News from Montenegro

Montenegro Joins EURAXESS

In January 2010, Montenegro has joined the Euraxess scheme with the project "Euraxess Montenegro – Montenegrin Researchers Mobility Network". The University of Montenegro (UoM) was appointed as the bridgehead organisation and the central service centre for incoming researchers. The kick-off meeting was held in Podgorica on February 8, 2010 and gathered national mobility stakeholders, the government, EU high officials, and guests from EC and the region.

Vision of the UoM's Future Research Profile

The Evolunimont project, financed under call FP7 REGPOT-2008-2, has been completed recently at the UoM, resulting in the adoption of UoM's research strategy for the period from 2010 to 2013. The plan positions research as an equal to teaching and provides an institution-wide research plan and actions to meet university goals to transform itself from a comprehensive university to a more research-intensive institution with a stronger research profile. The plan attempts to address key issues such as strengthening the research culture, building research capacity and capabilities, adapting infrastructure and designing training opportunities, increasing the involvement of undergraduates, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the research enterprise, increasing research funding and promoting interdisciplinary and international research, strengthening and expanding research partnerships and establishing a fully operational research administration and research priorities.

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Flash news from Montenegro

The Montenegrin Ministry of Education and Science was engaged in normative development in the period from November to March 2010. New rulebooks for the financing of research activities, licencing of research institutions, maintenance of the register of research institutions, the nomination of evaluators and the procedure for evaluating national projects were developed and adopted.

The annual call for co-financing scientific-research activity was announced in April. The instrument covers stimulations to participate in FP7, career development of researchers through short mobility, and stimulations for scientific output, science promotion and cooperation with the diaspora. One part of the call for research equipment is also going to be announced in 2010, while there will be no funding for new national projects this year.



Slavoljub Stijepović – Appointed Minister for Education and Science

Slavoljub Stijepović, who has graduated from the Law Faculty of the University of Montenegro (UoM), was appointed Minister of Education and Science in April 2010. From 1991 to 1996 he was a high official in the Parliament and Government of Montenegro. Since 1996 he has been holding four different ministerial mandates, science being in his portfolio for the first time now, in 2010.

Continuation of CEEPUS Ensured

In March 2010, the Montenegrin Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Central CEEPUS Office organised the 16th Ministerial Conference within the Central European Programme for University Studies. At the conference, the agreement on the 3rd phase of the programme, which guarantees the continuation of this very successful mobility scheme between 14 participating countries in the period until 2018, was signed.

The call for proposals for bilateral projects between Montenegro and Slovenia resulted in 14 projects approved for financing in 2010 and 2011. The call for proposals for bilateral cooperation with Croatia was announced in May, while the call for Austria is expected to be announced in autumn 2010.

<http://www.mpin.gov.me/ministarstvo/konkursi>

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Project Montenegro in the XXI Century – in the Era of Competitiveness

The project "Montenegro in the XXI century – in the era of competitiveness" has been initiated on the basis of the Memorandum, signed by the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Montenegrin Government on April 14, 2009.

The document "Montenegro in the XXI century" aims to suggest the main directions of development of Montenegro by recognizing new knowledge as the key factor for innovation and therefore, for the competitiveness of Montenegro within the region and in Europe. In that scope, different subjects have been examined, such as education, functioning of the state, the economic development, science, population aspects, the environment and sustainable development, values and many other issues related to the future development of Montenegro.

The document is supposed to give answers within the examined topics related to their effects on the competitiveness of Montenegro. The answers should be given possibly for a short, medium and long term period. The team

engaged in the project is composed of 140 scientists, professionals and other competent individuals, mainly from Montenegro.

The first version of the final document is in course. The document is supposed to be finished in October 2010, and it will be finalised in the book of statements, which will include the present state of art, threats and possible activities to be undertaken regarding each topic treated in the project.

The text of the document will be translated into English.

LINK *Academy of Science and Arts – Montenegro* ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/84513.html>



News from Serbia

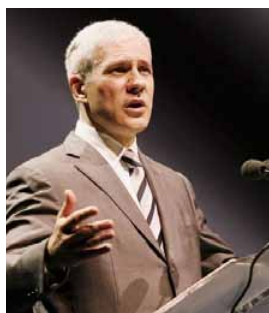
Scientific Community Shaping the Future of Serbia

The conference “The scientific community shaping the future of Serbia” was held on May 23, 2010 with an opening speech made by the President of the Republic of Serbia Boris Tadić. During the plenary session, attended by Prime Minister Mirko Cvetković, a number of Ministers, and 2,500 researchers, scientists, representatives of the industry and foreign partners, the Head of Delegation of the European Union to Serbia Ambassador Vincent Degert and Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Science and Technological Development Božidar Đelić addressed the audience.

Đelić also signed an Act on the Selection, Assessment and Financing of Programmes for the 2011–2015 Research Cycle, envisaging the beginning of a new stage for science in Serbia and its clear orientation towards a knowledge-based economy. Đelić stated that funds for scientific projects must be used in line with the law and in a transparent manner, since these funds belong to all Serbian citizens. Thus, the allocation of these funds is a huge responsibility and it must be ensured that the investment project is pragmatic and cost-effective, the Deputy Prime Minister reiterated.



The audience listening to the speech of Božidar Đelić



Serbian President Boris Tadić stresses the importance of investments into Science and Research.

Serbian President Boris Tadić stressed that the investment in science and education is an investment in the economic development and the future of Serbia, announcing that the government will invest € 400 million in this sector over the next five years. Tadić added that according to the assessment of international institutions, Serbia is “a scientific star in the rise”.

A Serbia that does not lag behind, but is at the forefront of scientific and technological development in certain areas is a Serbia from which its citizens, the region and Europe will benefit, the President said. He noted that

Serbia does not lack human resources and by investing in them it can overcome its limited energy and natural resources. Serbia has a huge capacity when it comes to scientists, but it must invest in science to improve research conditions and the cooperation with international institutions, Tadić stressed. The Head of the European Union delegation to Serbia Vincent Degert said that research and innovation will be of paramount importance to overcome challenges that lie ahead of Europe. The future of the EU and Serbia must be based on knowledge, Degert said, noting that it is therefore crucial to improve competitiveness and the living standard of citizens, which requires investments in science.

Over 2,500 scientists, researchers, representatives from the economy, state officials and foreign partners took part in the conference in Sava Centre, discussing national priorities defined by the Strategy for Scientific and Technological Development.

Agreement of Scientific Cooperation with the United States of America

Serbian Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Science and Technological Development Božidar Đelić and US Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs María Otero signed an Agreement on Scientific and Technological cooperation between the Republic of Serbia and the USA on April 23, 2010.

The goal is to support and enhance cooperation between researchers and scientific institutes of both countries. These scientific and research organisations will also be the carriers of the future cooperation through joint projects, scientific and expert trips and training, consulting missions, and the exchange of documentation and S&T information.

MPs Adopt Set of Bills in the Area of Science

On February 25, 2010 the Members of Serbian Parliament adopted 37 bills aiming at enhancing the scientific system of Serbia and stopping brain drain to other countries, including the strategy of scientific and technological development of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2015 and a set of bills in the area of science and intellectual property.

LINK

Ministry of Science and Technological Development – Serbia ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/91.html>

University of Novi Sad Signs the European Charter for Researchers

On February 5, 2010 during the 26th Annual Meeting and General Assembly of the Danube Rectors' Conference in Novi Sad, Serbia, the University of Novi Sad signed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković, Rector of the University of Novi Sad and Dr. Dagmar Mayer, European Commission Policy Officer from the Directorate General for Research, officially signed the “Charter and Code” and thus, formally endorsed the commitment of the university to the idea behind this important European document.

The University of Novi Sad was the first Serbian university to sign the “Charter and Code” and by doing so showed awareness and respect for the roles, responsibilities and rights of researchers, as well as of their employers and

fundors. The University of Novi Sad strongly votes in favour of stimulating a favourable working environment for researchers and improving employment and working conditions. It strives to actively support a change in working culture and become a multiplier in promoting the principles of the “Charter and Code”. Besides, the University is very much aware of the clear benefit of becoming internationally visible and thus, raising its overall attractiveness.

LINK

University of Novi Sad ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/1168.html>

FYR of Macedonia Hosts High-Level Conference on “Entrepreneurship in Higher Education”

Entrepreneurial learning is very high on the political agenda. On November 20, 2009 high-level experts and representatives from diverse research institutions gathered at a meeting in Bitola, FYR of Macedonia, to provide feedback on the first stage of a project aiming to raise the awareness of the potential of promoting entrepreneurship within universities.

By the 2009 definition of the European Training Foundation (ETF) entrepreneurial learning includes “a form of education and training, both formal and non-formal, which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurial behaviour with or without a commercial objective.”

In 2008, the ETF, in partnership with the governments of the Southern Mediterranean and pre-accession regions, facilitated a group of higher education experts to develop a set of indicators designed to raise awareness and understanding of the potential of promoting entrepreneurship across all faculties within a university setting.

These indicators were pre-piloted at two universities (University of Sfax, Tunisia and the University of Bitola, FYR of Macedonia) between February and April 2009, followed by a more developed piloting exercise involving six further universities in the second half of 2009. The project's second phase in 2010 will involve 13 further universities from both regions, and involve four universities from the Euro-Mediterranean University network.

On November 20, 2009 representatives from 22 institutions came to a meeting in Bitola, FYR of Macedonia, to provide feedback on the first stage of the



Speakers at the conference

project. The event was organised by the ETF and hosted by the St Kliment of Ohrid University in Bitola and the Mayor of the City of Bitola. The Bitola Conference was attended by the Deputy Minister of Economy Metodij Hadzi-Vaskov and Nikola Todorov, Minister of Education and Science. “Boosting the entrepreneurial spirit and including entrepreneurship in higher education is a serious mission for our ministry,” said Mr. Todorov. In June 2009, both Ministers signed a declaration to promote entrepreneurial learning in higher education. Addressing

the declaration, Mr. Hadzi-Vaskov stressed during his speech: “This is sending a strong policy message to universities into which direction they should go. And that is clear – an entrepreneurial university should be our future.”

During the Bitola meeting a new organisation was unveiled – the National Centre for Promotion of Innovations and Entrepreneurial Learning. NCDIEL is established with the financial support of Austria Development Cooperation (ADC) in the FYR of Macedonia for the period of 2009 to 2011.

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Workshop: The Role of Public Research Institutes in the Development of Countries

The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) have co-organised an SEE Regional Workshop on the “Role of Public Research Institutes in the Development of Countries” in Istanbul on March 8, 2010 under the auspices of the Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECPP). The workshop was followed by site visits to the TÜBİTAK research institutes in the Marmara Research Centre on March 9, 2010.

By sharing Turkish experience, the event aimed to contribute to the enhancement of the scientific and technological competitiveness of the WBCs analysing the impact of public research institutes on the technological development of these countries and their integration into the European Research Area.

55 representatives of the WBCs from the fields of science and technology management and TÜBİTAK as well as representatives of other relevant international organisations and respective stakeholders participated in the event, which was supported by TÜBİTAK, the RCC and TURBO.

The workshop started with the opening speeches of TÜBİTAK Vice President Prof. Dr. Ömer Anlağan, SEECPP representative of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Güçlü Kalafat and the Head of the RCC Building Human Capital Unit Mladen Dragašević and continued with discussions about the contribution of public research institutes to the overall progress of a society. Furthermore, the participants shared good practices and lessons learned and identified strengths, but also the challenges the WBCs may encounter when



Participants at the workshop in Istanbul

developing research infrastructures.

The workshop stressed that the cooperation between R&D, higher education and businesses of the WBCs should be fostered. Moreover, it was highlighted that research institutions in the region should focus either on an extensive specialisation or comprehensive integration of diverse research areas. Also, research institutes and universities in SEE should explore and make use of the benefits of regional cooperation by participating in the EU R&D programmes, especially the EU Framework Programmes.

The WBCs acknowledged the Turkish experience in developing research institutes. Turkish representatives expressed interest in sharing their best practices and participating in the development of similar models for the WBCs.

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LINKS TÜBİTAK ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/95.html>
Workshop on Public Research Agencies ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/calendar/80121.html>

GITR: National ICT Governance and Innovation in the Danube Region

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region is an initiative of the European Commission drawing on the experience of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, and is expected to yield an action plan and a governance system for the countries and regions along the Danube by the end of 2010.

Although ICT plays an increasingly important role for enterprises and citizens in Europe, digital gaps continue to exist in infrastructure, regular use of the Internet and digital skills, both across countries and socio-economic groups. While the individual internet usage increases, ICT in enterprises should be deployed even more intensely to increase the capacity of the business sector to generate innovation and technology. To this end, governments have to move beyond providing online services (traditional e-government boundaries), to provide more effective governance as a foundation for innovation policies.

The World Economic Forum's "Global Information Technology Report" (GITR) includes a benchmark study that reflects national progress and performance in various ICT domains. Out of a total of 68 ICT-related variables assessed in the GITR, eight variables were selected that best encapsulate factors related to national ICT governance. The tables plot the score of each of the eight variables per Danube Region country for the two latest GITR editions (2008–9 and 2009–10); a colour index is used to graphically represent each country's standing (green denoting best performance, and red worse performance).

As can be inferred, the eight EU member countries occupy the best eight positions (Austria and Germany being the clear leaders), with the exception of Romania and Slovakia, which are surpassed by non-EU Danube Region countries Montenegro and Croatia. A divide between the regions of North West and

NON-EU COUNTRIES						
	BIH	Croatia	Moldova	Montenegro	Serbia	Ukraine
Government prioritization of ICT	3,36	4,55	4,66	4,52	4,16	3,95
Gov't procurement of advanced technology products	2,60	3,28	2,42	4,07	3,34	3,35
Importance of ICT to government vision of the future	2,39	3,93	3,71	4,45	3,62	3,15
Capacity for innovation	2,33	3,23	3,27	2,94	2,77	3,67
Extent of business Internet use	3,73	4,71	3,87	3,75	3,60	4,62
Government success in ICT promotion	2,73	4,17	3,90	4,27	3,73	3,91
ICT use and government efficiency	2,43	3,92	3,42	4,14	4,16	3,60
Presence of ICT in government offices	2,98	4,06	4,17	4,04	3,68	4,09
Average Score (2009–2010)	2,82	3,98	3,68	4,02	3,63	3,79
Average Score (2008–2009)	3,05	4,06	3,68	3,63	3,64	3,91
Rank among Danube Region 14 Countries	14	6	12	5	13	11

EU COUNTRIES								
	Austria	Bulgaria	Czech Rep.	Germany	Hungary	Romania	Slovak Rep.	Slovenia
Government prioritization of ICT	5,22	3,97	4,80	5,20	4,13	4,10	4,13	5,02
Gov't procurement of advanced technology products	3,81	3,27	4,21	3,93	2,90	3,44	3,05	3,67
Importance of ICT to government vision of the future	4,79	3,80	4,25	4,43	3,75	3,84	3,72	4,69
Capacity for innovation	4,81	2,87	4,20	5,87	3,31	3,02	3,14	4,46
Extent of business Internet use	5,63	4,85	5,68	5,79	4,66	4,35	4,84	5,11
Government success in ICT promotion	4,67	3,65	3,95	4,76	3,55	4,08	3,52	4,35
ICT use and government efficiency	5,41	3,86	4,44	4,94	4,24	3,66	3,90	5,34
Presence of ICT in government offices	5,99	4,36	4,70	5,33	4,51	4,10	4,08	5,28
Average Score (2009–2010)	5,04	3,83	4,53	5,03	3,88	3,82	3,80	4,74
Average Score (2008–2009)	5,12	3,78	4,28	4,99	3,93	3,98	3,88	4,56
Rank among Danube Region 14 Countries	1	8	4	2	7	9	10	3

South East Europe is clearly evident, with the countries of Central Europe (with the exception of Slovakia) performing better in comparison with the Danube Region periphery (with the exception of Montenegro).

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The Union for the Mediterranean and Its Research Agenda

The cooperation between the EU and the Union of the Mediterranean (UfM) is multifaceted and includes a wide range of joint programmes. A special priority is set in the areas of science, innovation and research.

The EU policy toward the Mediterranean countries became a priority and developed a clear profile during the Barcelona Process. The EU and the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) expressed their shared wish for a Mediterranean space of security, economic development and socio-cultural exchange, implemented through Association Agreements between the EU and the MPC. Since 2008, the UfM intends to rebuild the EU-MPC cooperation on the basis of a co-presidency.

The European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) through the ENPI Regional Indicative Programme for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is one of the most important tools for funding EU-MPC cooperation and is supported by a total of € 343.3 million for the period 2007–2010, following the priorities defined in the Barcelona Process. The cooperation in the fields of research, development and innovation is materialised in numerous instruments. FP7 is open to partners from all MPC in most of its actions, with a special targeted Call for Proposals addressing "Specific International Cooperation Actions" covering topics of mutual interest. The Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation Programme is an instrument created in the Barcelona Process and is

financed by the provisions of the Bilateral Association Agreements and the ENPI. Further instruments are the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme and the EUREKA Intergovernmental Programme – both open to the participation of the MPC.

RTD cooperation is a high priority in several actions of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, notably the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, including the project Horizon 2020 aimed at decontaminating the Mediterranean Sea, and the integration of the energy, transport, ICT and research markets. Other concrete priority areas promoted and specific projects are Maritime and Land Highways, Civil Protection, the Mediterranean Solar Plan, Higher Education and Research, Euro-Mediterranean University and The Mediterranean Business Development Initiative.

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LINK INCO.Net MIRA (Mediterranean Innovation and Research Coordination Action) ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/43664.html>



News from Kosovo (Under UNSCR 1244)

Research Programme of Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244)

The Research Council of Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) recently developed the Research Programme 2010–2015 and submitted it for approval to the Kosovar Parliament. RTD is still a marginal undertaking in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244). Until recently, the general expenditure on R&D in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) amounted to only approximately 0.1% of its GDP. This is a ratio significantly below the European average, and even well below the average of the regional neighbourhood and many developing countries. The absorptive knowledge and technology capacities in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) are severely limited in size, scope and quality. A reason for this deficit is the absence of any critical mass of research and technological development (RTD) funding for at least the last 20 years.

The present Research Programme of Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) aims to counterbalance these deficits by providing a conceptual orientation frame for upgrading scientific capacities in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244). Clearly, the research sector per se is not the only beneficiary of this approach; other policy areas, such as economic policy, health policy, environmental policy, agricultural policy, urban and rural planning, foreign policy and European integration policy do immediately benefit from an upgraded knowledge base of the research capacities of Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244).

Specific science and technology (S&T) targets, which are needed to support the socio-economic development of Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) towards a knowledge society, have been identified and need to be managed systematically:

- Development of human capacity for research activities
- Development of research infrastructure
- Internationalisation of scientific research activity
- Strengthening the links between science and society and economy for enhancing economic and social development
- Excellence in research and scientific activity

For each objective the targets and most crucial activities to achieve them are outlined.

Furthermore, research priorities have been identified in a participatory process to which funding from Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) as well as international RTD funding should be channeled. The range of identified research priorities reflects the generic thirst of Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) to catch up in the area of S&T across different disciplines. Priorities were set and led to the following five research priorities:

1. Natural Resources, Energy and Environment
2. Agricultural Production and Food Safety
3. Medical Research
4. Social and Economic Studies
5. Linguistic, Cultural and Historic Studies

In addition, the field of Information and Communication Technologies is considered as a cross-horizontal priority that may occur in any of the above-mentioned fields.

The Research Programme also contains an implementation plan indicating the responsibility, timing and the budgets for each planned activity. The necessary budget to implement the instrumental activities stipulated in the present Research programme in order to meet the objectives of the Law on Scientific Research and to serve the identified priorities is characterised by a steep yearly increase from € 1 million in 2010 to more than € 6 million in 2015.

The planning process involved more than 100 researchers and policy makers from Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) and was supported by the Kosovo-Austria Partnership Project in the field of Higher Education and Science (KAIP).

AUTHOR Dukagjin Pupovci ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/users/2764.html>

LINK Read the full programme at ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/83972.html>

Assessment of Research Capacities in Social Sciences

Report on Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) Now Available

Three new reports on research capacities in the field of social sciences have recently been published by the Regional Research Promotion Programme for the Western Balkans (also see page 5). The assessments have been compiled in cooperation with local partners, such as the Riinvest Institute for Development Research in case of the report on Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244).

According to Riinvest's analysis, the social science research landscape in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) is characterised by the following features:

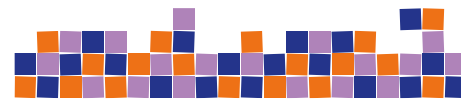
1. **Donor driven:** Financial sources are mostly provided by international donor organisations such as the World Bank, USAID, the UNDP, the OSCE and the European Commission.
2. This leads to a **lack of individual/free research**, as topics are mostly set by the abovementioned donor organisations.
3. A **trend of business orientation** can be observed, as international funding triggered the establishment of a great number of private, commercially oriented research institutes.
4. A **low number of researchers with PhD degrees** is especially character-

istic for the private institutes. Moreover, journals and scientific papers are rarely published.

5. There is also a **lack of institutional framework** for social science research. However, priority setting for the Science Strategy was a significant step in this respect.
6. **Availability of Publications:** Furthermore, research output is mostly published online, but there is a lack of initiative to make reports available in international libraries such as the Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL).

LINK Download the report at ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/84166.html>

SEE-ERA.NET PLUS



Joint Call for European Research Projects Exceeds All Expectations

On September 1, 2009 a Joint Call for European Research Projects has been published within the SEE-ERA.NET PLUS project. Eligible countries were the six WBCs, EU MS (Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Romania and Slovenia), and Turkey as an FP7 Associated Country.

Until the closure of the call for Expressions of Interest (Eoi) on November 3, 2009, a total of 190 Eoi were received by the Joint Call Secretariat at DLR. This high number indicates very impressively the huge interest in the cooperation in R&D between the 14 SEE-ERA.NET PLUS countries and the strong demand for a funding instrument as it is offered to scientists with the SEE-ERA.NET PLUS Joint Call.

The submitted 190 Eoi are distributed among the thematic subfields as follows:

- In the field of AgroFood:** 80 Eoi for **a.** Preservation of indigenous species and traditional food products (in SEE/WBC)
 32 Eoi for **b.** Interdisciplinary field: Land use impact in agriculture on biodiversity.
- In the field of ICT:** 46 Eoi for **c.** Software systems for learning process management and support
 32 Eoi for **d.** ICT for energy efficiency.

163 out of these 190 Eoi were eligible and evaluated by two evaluators. According to the broad scope of the call, 97 evaluators from 23 different EU Member States, the WBCs and Turkey have been involved in the evaluation process of the Eoi. Finally, after consultation with the Scientific Council composed of renowned scientists of all 14 SEE-ERA.NET PLUS countries, 75 project consortia were invited to hand in a full proposal until March 15, 2010.

Finally, 71 full proposals have been submitted from which 70 turned out to be eligible (23 in the field of ICT and 47 in the field of AgroFood).

The final funding decision will be taken by the SEE-ERA.NET PLUS project consortium together with the European Commission in June 2010. The funded projects will start shortly after the decision and are expected to run for one to two years.

AUTHORS Martin Felix Gajdusek ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/users/287.html>
 Ralf Hanatschek ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/users/183.html>

LINK SEE-ERA.NET PLUS ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/organisation/44489.html>

COUNTRY	PARTNER / COORDINATOR	TOTAL
Total	594 + 190	784
Serbia	116 + 37	153
Croatia	74 + 11	85
FYR of Macedonia	70 + 10	80
Slovenia	50 + 21	71
Greece	34 + 35	69
Bosnia and Herzegovina	59 + 5	64
Germany	34 + 17	51
Bulgaria	28 + 18	46
Romania	20 + 24	44
Albania	37 + 1	38
Montenegro	33 + 1	34
Austria	14 + 7	21
France	8 + 3	11
Turkey	8 + 0	8
Armenia	2 + 0	2
Russian Federation	2 + 0	2
Finland	1 + 0	1
Hungary	1 + 0	1
Italy	1 + 0	1
Spain	1 + 0	1
United States of America	1 + 0	1

Details about the country-specific participation in the Eoi.

COUNTRY	PARTNER / COORDINATOR	TOTAL
Total	257 + 75	332
Serbia	46 + 10	56
Croatia	38 + 9	47
FYR of Macedonia	30 + 5	35
Slovenia	20 + 7	27
Greece	14 + 12	26
Germany	14 + 11	25
Bosnia and Herzegovina	23 + 1	24
Albania	20 + 0	20
Bulgaria	13 + 6	19
Romania	8 + 8	16
Austria	9 + 5	14
Montenegro	14 + 0	14
France	3 + 1	4
Armenia	2 + 0	2
Finland	1 + 0	1
Russian Federation	1 + 0	1
Spain	1 + 0	1

Details about the country-specific participation in the invited Full Proposals.

Close-Up: The NCP System

For the new structures and funding schemes of FP7, providing appropriate information and assistance to potential participants is vital for assuring transparency and equal access. The NCP network can contribute significantly to the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA) and is considered as an important partner for the implementation and management of FP7 by the EC.

The tasks of NCPs, who are nominated by the respective national authorities, include informing and raising the awareness of the opportunities given by FP7, advising, assisting and training potential FP7 participants in the respective country, and giving them feedback on the participation in FP7. An NCP co-ordinator should be nominated in each country, with the task of the overall coordination of all national NCP activities.

The existing NCP systems show a wide variety of architectures, from highly centralised to decentralised networks, and consist of a number of very different actors, from ministries to universities, research centres and special agencies to private consulting companies. This reflects the different national traditions, working methodologies, research landscapes and funding schemes. The unifying element of the different NCP systems is the capability of ensuring both competence in the different thematic and horizontal priorities of FP7 as well as the coherence of approaches and the high-level of service.

LINKS **CORDIS – Search for National Contact Points** ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/link/685.html>
Guiding principles for setting up NCPs ■ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/3249.html>

2009 SME Policy Index



The SME Policy Index is an analytical tool designed by the OECD Investment Compact for South East Europe and the European Commission. Building on the previous 2007 index, the study sees SMEs as the “backbone of Western Balkan economies” and shows the progress made in the implementation of the European Charter for Small Enterprises in the WBCs.

The study provides further comparative analysis as well as a detailed assessment of Western Balkan country performances over the past two years, using collaborative benchmarking to measure progress in the ten different dimensions of the Charter, such as “education and training for entrepreneurship”, “taxation and financial matters” and “strengthening the technological capacity of small enterprises”. The report also contains a special section on supporting high-growth and innovative SMEs (HGSMES), including case studies on the FYR of Macedonia and Serbia.

LINK Download the policy index at ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/78920.html>

The OECD Innovation Strategy

The OECD Innovation Strategy provides analysis and policy guidance on a broad range of issues relevant to innovation. It may support government efforts to develop effective innovation strategies and to achieve key economic and social objectives.

The strategy is built around five priorities for government action, which together can underpin a strategic and broad-based approach to promoting innovation for the 21st century:

- empowering people to innovate;
- unleashing innovation in firms;
- creating and applying knowledge;
- applying innovation to address global and social challenges; and
- improving the governance and measurement of policies for innovation.

LINK Download the OECD Innovation Strategy at ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/85058.html>

ICT 2010

Brussels, September 27 to 29, 2010

ICT 2010 is a unique gathering point for researchers, business people, investors and high-level policy makers in the field of digital innovation. The two main themes for the event will be “ICT for sustainable growth in a low carbon economy” and “ICT for and by the citizen”. ICT 2010 will consist of three key elements: a conference programme featuring high level speakers, networking sessions and an exhibition of Europe’s latest cutting edge ICT research with over 100 stands.

LINK ICT 2010 ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/calendar/78969.html>

European Innovation Scoreboard 2009



Since 2001, the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) has been providing an annual assessment of innovation performance across the EU under the EU Lisbon Strategy.

The EIS 2009 includes innovation indicators and trend analyses for the EU27 Member States, but also for Croatia and Serbia as catching-up countries, growing at a rate above average.

Based on a revised set of 29 indicators covering seven dimensions of innovation, the report now better recognises the importance of service sectors, non-technological innovation and innovation outputs.

LINK Download the European Innovation Scoreboard at ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/82792.html>

5th South East European Doctoral Student Conference (dcs2010)

dcs2010 will take place on September 13 and 14, 2010 in Thessaloniki, Greece. The conference aims at facilitating the exchange of knowledge between young researchers and at consolidating the established network of scholars undertaking research in and around the topic of SEE.

The conference covers topics from “Enterprise, Innovation & Development” to ICT and from “Democratic Governance, Education and Society” to psychology. The conference programme consists of presentations of research papers, a discussion session addressing various issues on PhD work and carrying out research as well as a number of general presentations focusing on useful skills development for doctoral students. The participation fee is € 50.

LINK dcs2010 ▪ <http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/calendar/80390.html>
<http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/84166.html>

Imprint



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