**Committee of the Regions EWRC 2022**

**Friends of Smart Specialisation Seminar (on-line)**

**Smart specialisation and ERA Hubs: a new and winning combination?**

**Thursday 13th October 2022 14.00-15.00**

**Event description**

This event will examine the changing role of smart specialisation within Cohesion Policy and beyond in the context of the New European Innovation Agenda where a stronger focus is placed on place-based innovation ecosystems. S3 is also gaining relevance to the European Research Area (ERA) with the emergence of new smart intermediaries like ERA Hubs and experiments such as the Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI) where a strengthened territorial link to research and innovation is sought.

**Speakers**

• Dimitri Corpakis, PhD, Friends of Smart Specialisation (FoSS) Co-founder and member; former EC

official (Moderator)

• Mr Markku Markkula, Former President of the CoR, President of the Helsinki Region

• Mr Patrick Brenier, Advisor to the Director of the ERA and Open Science, DG Research and

Innovation, European Commission

• Ms Pirita Lindholm, Director ERRIN

• Ms Fatime Barbara Hegyi, PhD, Independent Researcher and formerly at EC Joint Research Centre

**Draft Agenda (all session titles are provisional)**

14.00 Welcome and introduction to topic – Dimitri Corpakis

14.05 Place-based innovation ecosystems providing synergies - Markku Markkula

14.15 The new Innovation Agenda: Smart specialisation and ERA Hubs – Patrick Brenier

14.25 Linking S3 and ERA Hubs – the regional challenges – Pirita Lindholm

14.35 The role of the PRI in integrating policies – Fatime Barbara Hegyi

14.45 Panel Discussion (with Dr Taina Tukiainen, Research Director, University of Vaasa (FI) and

 Christophe Clergeau (FR), CoR member, PES/FR, CoR rapporteur on ERA) TBC

15.20 Concluding remarks from speakers

15.30 Close

**Background**

Smart specialisation has been a key driver for Cohesion Policy since 2014 and has stressed the need for priority setting, a stronger emphasis on research and innovation and better and wider governance structures at the regional level. Twelve years on from the launch of this policy approach in two emblematic EC Communications: ‘Innovation Union’ and ‘Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe’, smart specialisation now plays a key role in territorial development within the EU and beyond and has the potential to become a leading concept for several other related policies (notably industrial policy) in the context of the Green and Digital Transitions. But all policies and methodologies change, adapt and improve to face new challenges. Certainly, smart specialisation (S3) is now moving to S4 to encompass a stronger focus on sustainability (linked to the overarching EU policy drivers of Green and Digital). But also, smart specialisation can and needs to add another S – synergies and how to make a stronger link between research and innovation in Cohesion Policy (€80? billion), in Horizon Europe (€95 billion) and the Recovery Plans (€44 billion), all driven by common missions and objectives.

This workshop with expert speakers will open this discussion with reference to two important areas of policy development. Firstly, the European Commission’s new Innovation Agenda, published in July (see below), places a stronger emphasis on place-based innovation through its proposed ‘flagship’ on ‘accelerating and strengthening innovation in European Innovation Ecosystems across the EU and addressing the innovation divide’ and this is where the future role of smart specialisation needs to be examined as a tool for synergies in transformation policies, driven by European strategies (deep tech). Secondly, new thinking on European Research Area smart intermediaries such as ERA Hubs provides a stronger emphasis on both depth and direction by means of an integrated place-based policy approach, based on regional research and innovation ecosystems where ERA Hubs will play a key role. But how can they make a difference? What is the missing link between the top-down and bottom-up drivers in our European Eco-innovation system? Can ERA Hubs catalyse ‘smart complementarities’ across the regional innovation eco-systems?

The workshop will examine success conditions for this ERA Hubs experiment and conclude with

recommendations and possible next steps that regional authorities and others can take to move-on to a real multi-level European Innovation System.

**References**

COM(2020)628, Commission Communication, A new ERA for Research and Innovation

COM(2022)332 final, Commission Communication, A new European Innovation Agenda