



WESTERN BALKANS - STEERING PLATFORM ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
Brussels, 25 June 2018

Conclusions

- The Western Balkans are committed to continuing the work of the Steering Platform for aligning policies and exchanging best practices at regional level
- Policies to strengthen open science, open innovation and technology transfer, research capacities and to implement smart specialisation are essential for WBC research communities but also to increase the competitiveness of the region and therefore Europe as a whole
- The WBs welcome the Commission's proposal for Horizon Europe and look forward to contributing to the definition of the first work programmes
- The WBs support the proposal to double the Sharing Excellence / Widening budget



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- Regarding Horizon 2020, the WBs are encouraged by an improved - although variable - performance compared to the beginning of Horizon 2020 and FP7
- There is however need for increasing performance further through trainings for proposal writing, networking events and other measures
- Active participation in the ERA Committees is essential to shape European R&I framework conditions; active participation in Programme Committees is also essential to shape future R&I work programmes



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- Smart Specialisation efforts have been launched and expectations are high
- Smart Specialisation Strategies are expected to guide capacity building and prioritisation of national investments and will inform sectoral and cross-sectoral industrial strategies (cross-policy strategies). Budget for the implementation of smart specialisation strategies will need to be sought from all possible sources including IPA
- There is a continued need for support to STI capacity building, both national and regional, using national budgets, IPA, and other sources of support. This may include research infrastructures, centres of excellence and social sciences and humanities, in agreement with the smart specialisation strategies
- There is a need to integrate WBs research communities into the European communities and knowledge networks, but also to increase cooperation among countries in South Eastern Europe. “Brain circulation” is essential both for integration as well as for strengthening excellence in the region