



S&T International Cooperation  
Network for Eastern European and  
Central Asian Countries



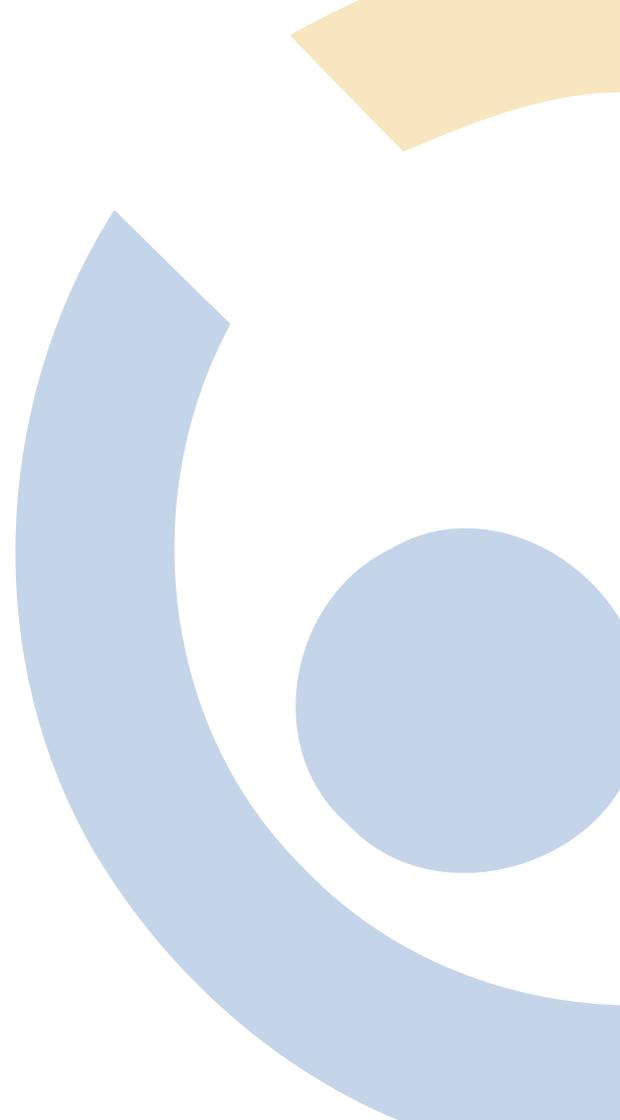
## Stakeholders Conference

“EU-EECA Cooperation in the Innovation  
Sector: Bi-regional Responses to Major  
Societal and Economic Challenges”

A satellite map of Europe is shown, with a large magnifying glass overlay. The magnifying glass has a blue handle and a yellow frame. The lens of the magnifying glass is positioned over the Eastern European region, specifically highlighting Ukraine. The text "Kiev, Ukraine" and "25 - 26 April 2012" is overlaid on the map.

Kiev, Ukraine  
25 - 26 April 2012

## Conclusions



## Content

- Introduction 4
- Innovation – major policy objective in both EU and EECA 6
- Good practice examples and lessons learnt 7
- Recommendations for a stronger EU-EECA Cooperation in Innovation 9
- Shaping the future – next steps 11

IncoNet EECA is a project funded under the 7th European Framework Programme for Research – project number 212226. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



## Introduction



The Policy Stakeholders Conference that took place in Kiev on 25-26 April 2012 was the fifth in a series of Conferences organized in the framework of the *IncoNet EECA* and *IncoNet CASC FP7* projects. The focus of the event was on the *EU-EECA Cooperation in the innovation sector with a focus on the bi-regional responses to major societal and economic challenges*.

---

<sup>1</sup> The presentations made during the event are available at: <http://www.inco-eeca.net/en/371.php>

The Conference involved competent actors and stakeholders active in the Innovation field and focused on the reviewing of the state of the EU- EECA STI cooperation providing a forum for exchanging good practices, collecting information on present trends, initiatives, capabilities and needs in both EU and EECA in the innovation sector.

About 80 policy makers and representatives of the academic and private sectors from 11 EECA countries and 13 EU MS and AC, as well as representatives of



the EC and UNECE attended the conference and expressed their interest and commitment in an enhanced bi-regional EU-EECA cooperation in innovation<sup>1</sup>.

The Conference in Kiev followed a similar event in Warsaw (November 2011) where the “White Paper on Opportunities and Challenges in View of Enhancing the EU Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South Caucasus” was first presented. Jointly prepared by experts from EU and EECA countries and resulting from a wide stakeholder consultation pro-

cess, the White Paper provides a knowledge base on the state of affairs in STI policies, identifies a series of Challenges and Recommendations on Enhancing the EU-EECA STI Cooperation, many of which touch directly or indirectly the issue of Innovation. In addition, the White Paper proposes a short-term implementation scenario, including also a Joint Implementation Roadmap and a qualitative impact assessment for each recommendation.

## Innovation – major policy objective in both EU and EECA

Innovation is a key parameter for economic growth, while being a major component in STI policies in EU (Horizon 2020, Innovation Union flagship) and in the EECA countries (national STI strategies, CIS Programme for Cooperation in Innovation etc.).

On the whole, Innovation is seen as a key response in addressing core social and economic challenges such as low growth rate, environmental threats, etc. Strengthening innovation is one of the answers to weak patenting performance and to limited development of new products, processes and services.

Specific attention was given to the role and potential impact of social innovation on various areas of societal development including education and training, work and employment, social and health care systems.

Similarly, core challenges in the EECA region, such as the significantly weak productivity growth widespread across countries and industries and the shrinking labor force especially for high skills, could be addressed through Innovation.

Promotion of Innovation is increasingly becoming a priority in most of the EECA countries, where new laws on stimulating innovation activities exist and



state bodies responsible for innovation policy development and implementation are created. National strategies are fostering in priority capacity building and infrastructure development.

At the level of the EC, strengthening the role of Innovation in particular with respect to societal challenges is at the core of the H2020 and already appears a major objective in the proposed orientation of the 2013 FP7 International Cooperation Work Programme. A dedicated new tool (R2I- ENP) will be introduced with the objective to bridge the gap between research and innovation in ENP countries and to improve the performance in transferring and using knowledge resulting from research.

## Good practice examples and lessons learnt

A number of good practice examples in both EU and ECEA countries have been highlighted with regards to innovation policies and funding mechanisms, development of innovation structures and successful academia-industry partnerships that could spread to many other countries.

Significant insight was provided on the necessary steps for the maturation of a national research and innovation system, in particular with reference to the prerequisite to have all system components (including government, intermediary actors, R&D organizations) in place and cooperating among each other. It has been emphasized that a national strategy and an action plan need to be developed, followed by the definition of priorities, often based on smart specialization, while the results of the implementation of such policy initiatives should be assessed frequently.

Particular attention was placed on the role of international reviews as a tool for improved national innovation policies. Such is the case of the UNECE innovation performance reviews recently conducted in ECEA countries (BY, KZ). In this regard, the need to ensure the cooperation and support of the national stakeholders in the implementation of the recommendations arising

from the country reviews has been emphasized.

Several successful initiatives for supporting enterprises involved in R&D have been highlighted:

- direct public funding support for research and innovation (with a preference on research addressing societal challenges);
- revolving instruments for technology absorption and new pre-commercial procurement schemes;
- simplification of procedures for taking part in support programmes;



- involvement of broader expertise in the process of evaluation of the applications.

The experience shows that the following could be taken abroad as lessons learnt:

- The implementation of innovative programmes requires cooperation between entrepreneurs and research community, but the support of public institutions is very important;
- Innovation structures that are being set up at the local/national level, need a global perspective and international linkage.

In younger EU MS and AC (Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Turkey) but also in several EECA countries (such as Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan) activities that stimulate innovation have been distinguished as good practice examples. It is worth mentioning the new support tools for start-ups and the increased number of Techno Parks in Kazakhstan, the set-up of Innovation Centers in Armenia (with priority in the ICT field) and the creation of new Techno Parks on High Technologies and Industrial High Tech in Uzbekistan.



## Recommendations for a stronger EU-EECA Cooperation in Innovation

Despite the encouraging emergence of best practices in the field of Innovation in both EU and EECA countries, the need for additional efforts for catching-up with international competitors is widely recognized as a priority in both regions. In that respect, the recommendations of the White Paper, as a result of broad consultation among policy makers and the science and innovation communities from both EU and EECA regions, constitute a solid basis for joint actions that can directly impact Innovation. In particular, attention should be given to recommendations addressing:

### I. The policy strategy level, i.e.:

- to implement policy mix reviews of national STI policies;
- to strengthen the knowledge-based cross-sectoral policy approaches at governmental level;
- to assess and advance the national regulatory framework for IPR according to international standards.

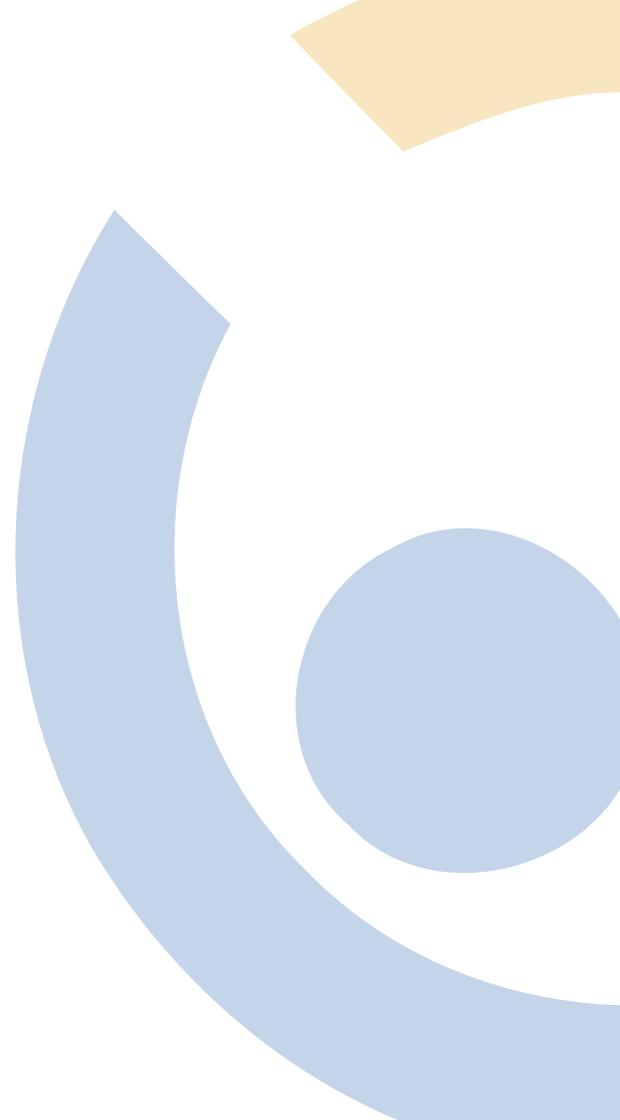
Governmental action in the aforementioned topics is highly desired, in particular for setting the Innovation framework (IPR, taxation, legislation).

### II. The strengthening of the role of the private sector in research and innovation, i.e.:

- Involving the private sector in STI policy dialogue processes from the very beginning;
- Supporting the setting up of innovation clusters and technological platforms in EECA and enhancing the participation of private companies from EECA in such structures by sharing the best EU practices;



- Launching Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and engaging them in co-financing programmes;
- Continuing and/or extending mutual learning activities among transition economies in the newer EU MS and EECA countries;
- Organizing training courses on innovation management and entrepreneurship and supporting the SMEs in recognizing the needs of the market;
- Creating collaborative competitive R&D and innovation funding programmes involving enterprises, based on excellence and deploying open and transparent selection procedures;
- Promoting investments from EU in the innovation sector in EECA;
- Stimulating mutual learning activities in the field of international standards;
- Simplifying the procedures for the creation of innovative start-ups stemming from universities and research institutes.



## Shaping the future – next steps

In the frame of the EU-EECA cooperation in the field of Innovation it is important to agree on a **joint implementation road map**, focusing on specific **priorities** to be implemented on the short, medium and long term, taking also into account the **expected impact** of every priority to implement.

Further, it is important to identify the potential **stakeholders** to be involved (policy makers, scientists, private sector and industry) from both EU and EECA (on the principle of variable geometry) and to recognize the adequate sources of **funding** (National, Bilateral, FP7/H2020, ENPI, DCI, other) for the actions to be undertaken. Last, but not least there is a need for motivated and high-skilled **volunteers** that will set-up and implement suitable projects.





## Imprint

International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)

Print: Citronio, Athens

Greece, April 2012

### PROJECT & CONTACT DATA:

S&T International Cooperation Network for  
Eastern European and Central Asian Countries

Websites: [www.inco-eeca.net](http://www.inco-eeca.net)  
[www.incrEAST.eu](http://www.incrEAST.eu)

Start date: 1 January 2008

End date: 30 June 2012

Coordination: International Centre for  
Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)  
4 Xenophontos St.  
10557 Athens, Greece

Dr. George Bonas  
Project Coordinator  
Phone: +30 210 3242 321  
E-mail: [gbonas@ie.gr](mailto:gbonas@ie.gr)