

## S3 PLATFORM NEWS

### NEW MEMBER STATES AND REGIONS REGISTERED

151 EU regions, 14 EU countries and 2 non-EU regions are now registered in the S3 Platform. Latest newcomers: Keski-Suomi (FI), Centru (RO), Thüringen (DE) and Värmland (SE). **Welcome!** More info [here](#).

### SMART SPECIALISATION AND SPARSELY POPULATED REGIONS

**REGISTRATION OPEN:** On **17-18 June 2014** the Smart Specialisation Platform (S3P) together with the region of Lapland arrange a workshop in Rovaniemi (Finland) on the topic of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (S3) in **Sparsely Populated Regions**. The event will explore what challenges are in developing RIS3 strategies in sparsely populated areas and especially in the sustainable management of natural resources. [Register here](#).

### NATIONAL PEER REVIEW WORKSHOP: LOOKING OUTWARD

The Smart Specialisation Platform together with the Irish authorities is organising a national peer review on the **3-4th of July in Dublin**.

The event will focus on the outward looking dimension of RIS3 that is discovering the possibilities of one of the major novelty of the smart specialisation approach as regards to making its strategic decisions taking into account its position relative to other regions / Member States of Europe.

Five national level RIS3 strategies will be peer reviewed: **Ireland, Slovakia, Poland, Romania** and **Bulgaria**. Link to registration will be available soon.



### S3P PEER-REVIEW WORKSHOP FOR NATIONAL RIS3, PORTOROZ, SLOVENIA

**LAST MINUTE – REGISTRATION STILL OPEN:** The S3 Platform and the Slovenian national ESIF Managing authorities are co-organising a [peer-review workshop](#) on the national research and innovation strategies for Smart specialisation of some of the EU countries - Croatia, Slovenia and Cyprus. The workshop will take place in a coastal town of Portoroz (Slovenia) on **15-16 May 2014**. The additional information and the draft agenda are available [here](#).



### HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON “MOBILISING UNIVERSITIES FOR SMART SPECIALISATION”

**REGISTRATION OPEN:** We are pleased to inform you about a [High Level Conference on “Mobilising Universities for Smart Specialisation”](#) to be held in Brussels on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The conference follows a workshop of university leaders and S3 Platform members in February 2013 that was organised in partnership with the European University Association (EUA). You can register for the conference by following this [link](#).

The S3 Platform has been working with the **European University Association (EUA)** to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges for regional – university collaborative partnerships. This conference will bring together all those interested in this opportunity to mobilise European universities to contribute to smart specialisation and the EU’s Innovation Union agenda, since universities are important employers and service providers that are an integral, permanent part of most regional economies. Yet they can be much more influential and the Smart Specialisation agenda calls for universities to take on a more pro-active role in regional development. A significant amount of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are now concentrated on research and innovation activities providing a vehicle to mobilize universities.

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## S3 EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

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### THE WORKSHOP CONNECTING RIS 3 IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: TRANS REGIONAL COLLABORATION WITHIN RIS3 HAS BEEN MOVED TO OCTOBER 2014.

The event will explore cooperation opportunities within smart specialisation across the BSR, both vertically in specific areas as e-Health, food technology, open innovation platforms etc. and horizontally related to funding mechanisms and synergies with H2020. The event is a follow up to the Malmö conference in November 2013 and organised in together with Estonian authorities. Further information [here](#).

### S3 FOR DANUBE: DEVELOPING DANUBE R&I PROJECTS ACROSS BORDERS – HOW TO MAKE THE JOINT USE OF EU-FUNDS A REALITY?

The Directorates General DG REGIO and DG JRC have organised the workshop on mobilising EU instruments for the financial design of transnational R&I projects in the Danube region. The workshop was held on 03 April 2014 in Brussels (BE). The **presentations from the workshop are now available** and may be found [here](#). Thank you for participating on the event!

### DIGITAL AGENDA NEWS

DG CONNECT in cooperation with the Smart Specialisation Platform (S3P) arranged a **training of trainers session** on the topics of assessment of Operational programmes, Partnership Agreements, Digital growth Strategies and Smart Specialisation strategies. The trainers participating at the event will assist the relevant services in the Member States to help them with the finalisation of preparation of their programmes. To read more and access presentations use the [link](#).

If your region is interested in having an independent expert informally assessing the DAE components of your RIS3 and (if appropriate) the related sections of your draft OP, please contact us.

The Digital Agenda Toolbox provides support to regional and national authorities to develop a thorough understanding of the digital growth potential stemming from the Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE). On the Digital Agenda webpage, there are regular updates of information concerning Digital Agenda Issues, read [here](#).

### BENCHMARKING REGIONAL STRUCTURE: NEW INTERACTIVE TOOL ON BENCHMARKING

A key to build sound innovation strategies for smart specialisation at the regional level is to identify opportunities for learning policy lessons and transferring practices from other regions. These are fundamental questions at the foundation of any policy learning process or benchmarking exercise.

In our [methodological proposal](#), we define as reference regions those that share similar structural conditions relevant for innovation-driven development. Looking at regions with similar structures in terms social, economic, technological, institutional and geographical characteristics makes it easier to understand what policies and practices can effectively be transferred and what effects they could have on a similar region. The comparison is not based on performance nor it is aimed to select "best performers" as peers. The idea is rather that (i) policy learning is most likely to be effective if and only if your peers are similar to you, and (ii) you can learn both from others' successes and failures, provided that peers are sufficiently similar to you.

Structural similarity is evaluated on the basis of [42 variables](#) representing socio-demographic characteristics, sectoral structure, technological specialisation, economic openness and outward linkages, business size, type and quality of institutions, social and entrepreneurial attitudes, human capital. The variables are composed into a synthetic index that provides a unique measure of structural "distance" between regions.

The [interactive tool](#) generates a list of regions sorted in descending order from the ones that are more similar (top) to the less similar (bottom) to a given region previously selected. The order is given by the structural distance index (lower value=structurally closer to the selected region) whose technical specification you can find in the methodological paper.

### REGIONAL POLICY FOR SMART GROWTH IN EUROPE 2020

This publication by the EC Directorate-General for Regional Policy, being largely based on the Smart Growth Communication and the accompanying Staff Working Paper, is intended to help policy-makers and stakeholders in their efforts to enhance regional innovation potentials, invest in smart growth and build synergies between different policies and funding instruments.

Smart specialisation will be instrumental in helping Europe's regions concentrate resources on strategic priorities and design the right policy mix to unleash smart growth. To concentrate resources on areas of comparative advantage is not only a question of more coherence and impact of EU action, it is also vital in times of budgetary restraint. Please read the complete publication [here](#).

### S3 PUBLICATION SERIES UPDATED!

The S3 Platform publishes a series of working papers and policy briefs in collaboration with prominent international scholars. Check out the latest publications in the [S3 Policy Briefs and Working Papers](#) section of the S3 Platform web site.