**Synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) &**

**Research and Innovation Funding: The Stairway to Excellence**

**Date**: 03. March 2016

**Venue**: Zlatý sál Lichtenštejnský palác

U Sovových mlýnů 506/4, 118 00 Praha

***Rationale***

The development of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) requires that European regions and Member States identify a limited number of research areas and industrial activities with high innovation potential at the Regional or National level. These strategies have to be implemented using European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), which can also be combined with other types of funding. Supporting synergies between funding sources (also including COSME, ERASMUS+, and Creative Europe etc.) should deliver additional gains in terms of competitiveness in Horizon 2020 calls, innovation results that could contribute to closing the innovation gap in Europe and therefore promote economic growth, and overall have greater efficiency in the use of public funding.

The "Stairway to Excellence" project is centred on:

* The provision of assistance to Member States (MS) who joined the European Union since 2004 with the aim of closing the innovation gap and promoting excellence in EU regions and Member States;
* Stimulating the early and effective implementation of national and regional Smart Specialisation Strategies.

***Objectives of the Conference***

The principal objectives of this national event are:

* A better understanding of the Czech national (and regional) innovation ecosystem(s) with a special emphasis on the identification of obstacles, barriers and potentials to innovation.
* Raising awareness of the actions needed to enable synergies between European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and other programmes for research and innovation.
* Sharing experiences in combining Structural Funds and Framework Programmes (FP) (including Horizon 2020) to improve excellence in R&I systems.
* Drawing lessons for the future and identifying follow-up actions to enhance the potential synergies between different EU funds in the Czech Republic.

***Who should attend?***

* *Planned Participants: 60 to 70 people*
* Czech national and regional managing authorities involved in the implementation of the Smart specialisation strategy.
* Czech national contact points from the past Framework Programmes and Horizon 2020 and other EU-funded programmes.
* Czech national and regional authorities in charge of smart specialisation strategies.
* Members of the Horizon 2020 programme committee.
* Selected national and international experts on EU funding programmes and regional policy.
* Selected representatives from businesses.
* Selected representatives from universities, research centres and other organizations with experience and/or interest in EU-funded programmes.

***Organisers***

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General Joint Research Centre (DG JRC - S3 Platform) and the Government Office the Czech Republic.

**Agenda**

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| 8:30 – 9:00 | Registration and welcome coffee |
| **WELCOME SPEECH** | |
| 9:00 – 9:10 | MVDr. Pavel Bělobrádek, Ph.D. MPA (Deputy Prime Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, Government Office of the Czech Republic)**in)** |
| **OPENING SESSION – *The Research and innovation context and the implementation of synergies*** | |
| 9:10 – 10:10 | **Moderator :** *Colin Wolfe (Head of Competence Centre Smart and Sustainable Growth), European Commission, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy)*   * **Synergies with Research & Innovation Funds: Stairway to Excellence** (15 min)   Andrea Conte (European Commission, DG JRC)   * **Czech profile in terms of FP participation and ESIF** (10 min)   Mathieu Doussineau (European Commission, DG JRC) (10 min)  **The Czech Research & Innovation Ecosystem (**15 min)  Arnost Marks (Deputy Director for science, research and innovation, Government Office of the Czech Republic)   * **Factors facilitating and hindering the implementation of Synergies in Czech Republic** (15 min)   Pavla Zizalova, Country expert for the Stairway to Excellence initiative   * ***Questions & Answers*** |
| ***Synergies in Practice and table discussion* Part 1** | |
| 10:10 – 10:45 | **Moderator:** *Nida Kamil Ozbolat (European Commission, DG JRC)*   * **The Central European Institute of Technology (CEITEC) Case: Translating Infrastructure into Capacity Development**   Markus Dettenhofer (Executive Director of the CEITEC) (10 min)   * **Synergies and large infrastructures**   Louis Philippe Carrier, JASPER, European Investment Bank **(10 min)**   * **Implementation of synergies of EU funding at the Jožef Stefan Institute**   Špela Stres (Center for Technology Transfer and Innovation - Jožef Stefan Institute in Lubjana)0 min)   * ***Clarification Questions*** |
| 10:45-11:00 | Coffee break |
| **Synergies in Practice and table discussion Part 2** | |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | **Table discussion topics**   * *Upstream activities and how to build capacity (25 minutes discussion)* * *Downstream activities and how to better exploit research results (25 minutes discussion)* * *Knowing each other's view: incentives, obstacles and opportunities by policy makers and innovation stakeholders for maximising societal impact of EU R&I funding instruments (25 minutes discussion)* |
| 12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch Break |
| ***Policy debate on the Czech research and innovation ecosystem*** | |
| 13:30 – 15:00 | **Moderator:** *Andrea Conte (European Commission, DG JRC)*   * ***Reporting on the morning parallel tables discussion (3***   **0 min)**   * **State of play of the smart specialisation strategy (RIS3) implementation in Czech Republic (15 min)**   Jitka Vocaškova (European Commission, DG REGIO)   * **Czech activity for the implementation of the new EU funding programmes**   Tomáš Novotný, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the CR/OP Enterprise and Innovations for Competitiveness  Václav Velčovský, Ministry of Education Youth and Sports of the CR/Programme of Research, Development and Education   * ***Questions & Answers*** |
| 15:00 – 15:30 | Coffee break |
| ***Cases of Synergies implementation and related initiatives*** | |
| 15:30-16:45 | **Moderator:** *Mathieu Doussineau (European Commission, DG JRC)*   * **Example of synergy implementation**   Jan Džugan - COMTES FHT Inc. **(15min)**  Zdeněk Kůs-Czech Chamber of Rectors, **(15 min)**   * **The Seal of Excellence initiative (15 min)**   Mersia PANAGIOTAKOU (European Commission, DG RTD)   * **MIRRIS roadmap and recommendations for better participation to the ERA (10 min)**   Anita Tregner-Mlinaric (META- GROUP)   * ***Questions & Answers*** |
| 16:45 – 17:00 | ***Conclusions and ways forward*** |