

Universities as Drivers of European Innovation Ecosystems

Committee of the Regions

Batiment Jacques Delors,
Rue Belliard 99/101, 1040 Bruxelles
(Room JDE 52)

6 November 2019

Preliminary Programme

Background

Universities are at the centre of European knowledge-intensive ecosystems. By fostering multidisciplinary, attracting human talent, and stimulating entrepreneurial mindsets, they generate the knowledge that is vital to innovation. In order to fulfil this mission, universities should engage deeply in developing common national and regional strategies, working for the political, cultural coherence of innovation ecosystems as well as coherence in the physical innovation space. These developments happen within the framework of European policies in a range of areas from regional development to industrial strategy. As the new European Commission is defining its policy priorities, and the negotiations of the next long-term EU budget are underway, this event offers an opportunity to reflect on the necessary framework conditions to fully unlock universities' potential in innovation ecosystems.

Building upon examples of successful partnerships between universities, industry, and public authorities, the event seeks to build bridges between various actors and discuss the European Union's new priorities for research and innovation.

The conference will be of interest to policy makers, university leaders, regional stakeholders, and all others interested in innovation.

Preliminary Programme

08.30-09.00 Registration and welcome coffee

09.00-09.15 **Opening addresses**

- **Markku Markkula**, European Committee of the Regions First Vice-President
- **Prof. Peter Haring Bolívar**, Vice-Rector for Research, University of Siegen, Germany; Chair of the EUA-Expert Group on Innovation Ecosystems

09.15-09.30 **Keynote speech**

- **Mariya Gabriel**, Nominee for EC Commissioner for Innovation & Youth (tbc)

09.30-10.30 **EU conditions for innovation**

This session will provide different perspectives on the role of universities in the new European innovation landscape and the necessary framework conditions to unlock their potential for innovation. These conditions stem from the interplay of regional development and adequate policies for research, education, and innovation, which will be presented by each of the panellists.

- **Christophe Clergeau**, Member of the European Committee of the Regions
- **Prof. Silvia Lenaerts**, Vice-Rector for Valorisation and Development, University of Antwerp, Belgium
- **Daria Tataj**, World Expert on European Innovation and Network Thinking, Tataj Innovation, Barcelona, Spain

Session Chair: Prof. Marcin Pałys, University of Warsaw, Poland; EUA Board Member

10.30-11.00 *Coffee break*

11.00-12.30 **Innovation ecosystems and universities engagement**

This session will elaborate on the need for coherence in devising policies for the good development of innovation ecosystems. The panel will focus on the cultural and spatial facets of this need, by highlighting how universities' engagement with regional authorities can drive innovative projects across Europe. It will consist of two sets of presentations and a moderated discussion.

- **Aalto University, Finland** – highlighting cultural coherence
Prof. Taina Tukiainen, Professor of Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Aalto University
Päivi Sutinen, Director for City as a Service, City of Espoo, Finland

- **University Paris-Saclay, France** – *highlighting spatial coherence*
Philippe Watteau, Chief Executive Officer of VEDECOM Institute
Fethi Ben Ouezdou, Scientific Director of VEDECOM Institute

Session Chair: Prof. Peter Haring Bolívar

12.30-12.45 **Keynote speech**

12.45-13.30 **Concluding remarks**

The final session will be an opportunity to take stock of universities' achievements in the realm of innovation and to develop adequate strategies in a context of new policy trends and shifting European priorities. It will provide a set of conclusions on the extent to which universities' leadership of innovative partnerships should be reconceptualised against this changing backdrop.

- **Minna Kivimäki**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland to the EU (tbc)
- **Prof. Ray O'Neill**, Vice-President for Research and Innovation, Maynooth University, Ireland

Session Chair: Prof. Toril Nagelhus Hernes, Pro-Rector for Innovation, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway

13.30-14.15 *Farewell lunch*