

## **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**

### **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.

## Programme

**08.30-09.00** Registration and welcome coffee

**09.00-09.30** **Opening addresses**

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

**09.30-09.45** **Keynote speech**

- **Mariya Gabriel**, European Commissioner-designate for Innovation & Youth

**09.45-10.30** **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.*

- **Alexandre Affre**, Director for Industrial Affairs, Entrepreneurship & SMEs, BusinessEurope
- **Christophe Clergeau**, Member of the European Committee of the Regions
- **Isidro Laso Ballesteros**, Deputy Head of Innovation Ecosystems, European Innovation Council, European Commission
- **Prof. Silvia Lenaerts**, Vice-Rector for Valorisation and Development, University of Antwerp, Belgium

**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  
**Dr. Ville Taajamaa**, SDG Manager, 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**

### **12.30-13.30** Conclusions

*The final session will be an opportunity to take stock of the discussions of the morning. It will provide a set of different perspectives on the future of European innovation policies and the role of universities.*

#### **Opening remarks**

- **Themis Christophidou**, Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

#### **Panel debate**

- **Pirita Lindholm**, Director, European Regions Research and Innovation Network
- **Prof. Ray O'Neill**, Vice-President for Research and Innovation, Maynooth University, Ireland
- **Dorte Stigaard**, Director of Innovation, Aalborg University, Denmark

**Session Chair: Dr. Thomas Jørgensen**, Senior Policy Coordinator, EUA

### **13.30-14.15** Farewell lunch