



EU-DRIVERS ANNUAL CONFERENCE BRUSSELS, 1 DECEMBER 2011

Final Programme

The EU Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) Initiative

Understanding the critical role of universities to support strategic regional developments



This is the second conference organised by the EU-DRIVERS European regional innovation platform. EU-DRIVERS is a three-year EU-funded structural project in the EU Lifelong Learning Programme developed under the leadership of the European Centre for the Strategic Management of Universities (www.esmu.be), in a consortium of 10 partner European associations, networks, universities active in regional development and 9 regional pilot partnership projects initiated by EU-DRIVERS.

For further information see www.eu-drivers.eu

Europe will not remain competitive if it does not transform into a powerful **knowledge economy** in which all stakeholders are engaging in **broadly based innovation** through strong strategic partnerships. Only such strong partnerships can make it possible to build significant capacity to support economic growth and address the many societal problems of our times such as growing unemployment, an ageing society and increasing immigration. The Flagship initiative “**Innovation Union**” stresses the need for an integrated approach between EU, national and regional policies for strategic and focused innovation.

European regions have a strong role to play in this process since “*they are the primary institutional partners for universities, other research and education institutes and SMEs, which are key to the process of innovation, making them an indispensable part of the Europe 2020 strategy*” (COM(2010) 553 final).

In this context the new **Smart Specialisation Strategy Initiative** of **DG Regio** of the European Commission aims to support European regions in focusing their innovation on a clear “niche” and sector where they can be most successful in developing sustainable growth and stability in society, building on their regional assets, human capital and infrastructure.

The aim of the conference is to:



EU-DRIVERS
European Drivers for a
Regional Innovation Platform



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

- Discuss EU policies, EU programmes and the practical initiatives of the European Commission to support regional specialization
- Debate on the mechanisms and critical success factors to support regional performance, specialisation and competitiveness in a globalised world, building on universities as the driving force in the process
- Look into the current obstacles and opportunities for strong regional partnerships and capacity building which require “collaborative leadership” between all stakeholders to implement “make things happen”.

The conference will enable participants to:

- Gain thorough understanding of the S3 Initiative, its implications and the opportunities it can offer
- Understand the importance of engaging into the S3 Initiative as a critical success factor and pre-condition to maximize chances of success in the new EU regional and other EU-funded programmes from 2014
- Learn about the mechanisms and good practices for effective regional strategic interactions and the major contributions which universities can make in the process
- Engage in a high level dialogue with senior officials from four DGs of the European Commission, i.e. DG Education and Culture, DG Research, DG Regio and DG Enterprise
- Show-case their regional initiatives among others with our poster session initiative

All registered conference participants receive a copy of the ***EU-Drivers background report on the Smart Specialisation Strategy Initiative*** and can obtain on request the ***guide “Connecting Universities to regional growth”*** which is currently produced by DG Regio.





Final Programme

Chair: Mr. Paul Callaghan, Chairman of the Leighton Group, UK

08:30	Registration
09:00 – 09:30	Introduction , Prof. John Goddard, ESMU EU-DRIVERS Academic Leader; Ms. Nadine Burquel, ESMU Secretary General and EU-DRIVERS Project Director
09:30 – 10:15	Critical success factors in regional specialization , Mr. Mikel Landabaso, Head of Unit “Thematic Coordination and Innovation”, DG Regio
10:15 – 10:45	The role of universities in shaping and contributing towards the delivery of regional smart specialisation strategies , Prof. John Goddard, ESMU EU-DRIVERS Academic Leader
10:45 – 11.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15 – 13:00	Theme 1 – Governance and regional leadership to support S3: The perspective of the European Commission, universities and regional development agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DG Education and Culture, Mr. Peter Baur, Deputy Head of Unit, "European Institute for Innovation and Technology, economic partnerships"• Universities, Prof. Maria Helena Nazaré, President-Elect EUA (European University Association); Former Rector University of Aveiro• Regional development agencies, Mr. Christian Saublens, Director EURADA (Association of Regional Development Agencies)
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00 – 15:30	Theme 2 – The challenges in practice: Engaging regional partners in regional strategic choices: Three examples from the EU-DRIVERS platform <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tarragona (Spain) – Prof. Josep Ricart, Vice-rector for academic and scientific policy, Universitat Rovira i Virgili and Mr. Ramón Fontboté, General Director of the Chemical Business Association of Tarragona (AEQT)• Turku (Finland) – Prof. Jyrki Heino, Director of Biocity Turku and Vice-Director of the Department of Biochemistry and Food Chemistry, University of Turku and Mr. Esa Höglblom, Special Planner, Regional Council of Southwest Finland• Aalborg (Denmark) – Ms. Birgitte Gregersen, Associate Professor, Aalborg University and Mr. Morten Lemvig, Head of Section, Regional Development, North Denmark Region <p>Panel response from DG EAC, DG Enterprise and DG RTD of the European Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DG RTD, Ms. Adeline Kroll, Unit “Universities and Researchers”• DG Education and Culture, Mr. Peter Baur, Deputy Head of Unit, "European Institute for Innovation and Technology, economic partnerships"• DG Enterprise, Ms. Katja Reppel, Deputy Head of Unit “Innovation policy development”
15:30 – 16:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Theme 3 – Designing and implementing strategies for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Mikel Landabaso, Head of Unit “Thematic Coordination and Innovation”, DG Regio• Prof. John Goddard, ESMU EU-DRIVERS Academic Leader• Mr. Paul Callaghan, Chairman of the Leighton Group
17:00 – 17:15	Concluding remarks and future plans , Ms. Nadine Burquel, EU-DRIVERS Project Director and Prof. John Goddard, EU-DRIVERS Academic Leader