

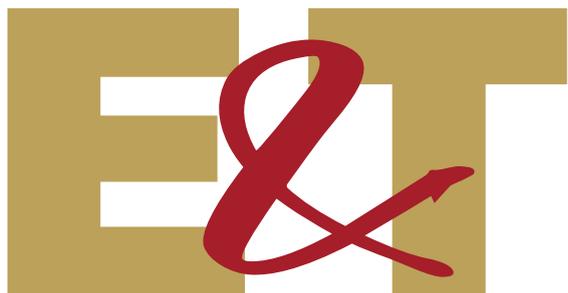
SPECIAL ISSUE FOR THE HELLENIC PRESIDENCY  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2014

SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE HELLENIC PRESIDENCY 2014



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Hellenic Presidency of the Council  
of the European Union



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Special issue of the Hellenic Presidency



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# Máire Geoghegan-Quinn

## on achievements by the Hellenic Presidency

*Statement by the Commissioner  
on Research and Innovation  
Issues for the Hellenic  
Presidency of the EU*

I would like to express my appreciation for the achievements of the Hellenic Presidency and excellent collaboration with the Greek Government during the six months of the Presidency.

The EU's biggest challenge during this period was, and continues to be, the encouragement of growth, competitiveness and jobs and to ensure prosperity for all. The Hellenic Presidency tackled these challenges head on with its priorities that focused on invest-

ing in research, innovation and education to encourage economic recovery. In that sense Horizon 2020, the EU's new programme for Research and Innovation, could hardly have come at a better time.

Greece was instrumental in helping the Council reach key milestones on the road to implementing Innovation Union and achieving the European Research Area.

I note, in particular, the tremendous efforts that led to the adoption of the Innovation Investment Package, less than one year after the Commission tabled its proposals, and to the successful launch of the Joint Technology Initiatives.

The Hellenic Presidency advanced the research agenda in Europe by helping the Council to reach conclusions on the European Research Area progress report and the ESFRI prioritisation process in the field of research infrastructures.



I am also grateful to the Hellenic Presidency for devoting a great deal of attention to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, taking various steps to strengthen the role that research and innovation plays in supporting EU policies in the region, including conferences and formal and informal meetings with ministers. This attention is only natural, since the EU and other countries bordering the Mediterranean are facing common challenges in areas such as climate change, energy, water and food security.

I wish to congratulate the Presidency for organizing several important events, some of which I had the pleasure to attend.

In particular, I recall the fifth edition of the 'Week of Innovative Regions in Europe', better known as WIRE V, that developed the important work of the previous conferences by focusing on the concept of smart specialisation.

Another key conference was on 'Growth-Enhancing Financial Instruments for Research, Development and Innovation' to identify ways to improve our efforts, via the use of financial

instruments, to encourage smart, green and inclusive growth in Europe. Holding this conference in Athens sent a strong signal of the support of the EU and the international community for Greece during this critical period for its economy.

Recognising the importance of international cooperation, I would also like to thank the Hellenic Presidency for organising the successful 'International Conference on Research Infrastructures' that took place in Athens at the beginning of April. I am very pleased that this conference put the international dimension of research infrastructures high on everyone's agenda.

***Máire Geoghegan-Quinn***

*Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science*

Minister

# Andreas Loverdos

## on the Hellenic Presidency of the EU

*Introductory Note by  
the Minister of Education  
and Religious Affairs on  
the special issue of  
the Hellenic Presidency*

Greece took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the 1st of January 2014, during a period of national effort towards economic recovery and the reconstruction of our country with a long-term perspective; at a time, when in order to achieve this objective a strict fiscal policy programme was and is still being implemented, that affects all sectors of society and the productive procedure.

During the six-months of our Presidency we worked hard in order to lead our country towards a more optimistic and promising future, which all the people and citizens of Europe deserve. And

despite the particularly difficult circumstances, we achieved our primary goal which was to find realistic solutions to real problems, and to take new initiatives with a European added value.

Research and Innovation are the key drivers and the tools towards achieving a long-term and viable growth in these particularly difficult and demanding international financial circumstances. Investment in these sectors is one of the primary priorities of our national planning for the next programme period of 2014 - 2020.

A combined use of all available resources, both domestic and European, in the context of an integrated development planning, is the objective for Greece. Key targets, always in the framework of our Presidency, were to provide comprehensive information to stakeholders, help them interact with others on a community and international level and for our country to take initiatives.



I am convinced that these targets were met to a significant degree. My wish is that the research and productive infrastructure will utilise the experience gained as well as the psychological boost, albeit small, which the successful outcome of the Presidency offered us, and we are working towards this direction with the General Secretary for Research and Technology, Mr. Christos Vasilakos, and our partners.

With our view on a close cooperation and acceleration of the implementation of our targets, I would like to thank everyone who worked with us both for the successful completion of the Hellenic Presidency and for this publication.

*The Minister of Education and Religious Affairs*  
**Andreas Loverdos**

# Introductory Note

by  
**Dr. Christos Vasilakos**

*The General Secretary  
on the special issue and  
the successful six-month  
Hellenic Presidency  
of the Council of  
the European Union*

The successful Presidency of the Council of the European Union by Greece during the first half of 2014 became one of my main priorities from the moment I was appointed General Secretary for Research and Technology. Over the long, and difficult for Greek citizens, period of reconstruction of the Greek economy, the creation of a sustainable and innovative productive fabric was the main pillar of the General Secretariat's strategic planning. Therefore, the importance of actions in the areas of Research and Innovation is self-evident. Throughout the Hellenic Presidency, other than striving for its successful conduct, our key objectives in our

planning at the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs were to demonstrate:

- ▶ That our country is capable of organizing international, high profile and scientifically noteworthy, scientific events, thanks to its exceptional scientific and research work force employed in the public sector, in research organisations - higher education institutions, technological education institutions, research centres, technological organisations - as well as in the private sector.
- ▶ That Greece, in parallel to the multifaceted and painful effort for its recovery, is functioning as a European country, a conscious member of the European Union, with the ability to carry out, complete and advance the European issues of its Presidency, something which I believe was achieved to a significant degree.



As you will see in this special issue, throughout the duration of our Presidency we worked on Research and Innovation issues, as well as Space-related subjects.

***In brief I mention:***

■ The three **Competitiveness Councils/ Area of Research, Technology and Space**, that were held successively on 21/2/2014 in Brussels, on 13/5/2014 in Athens (informal meeting) and on 26/5/2014 in Brussels, where conclusions were adopted in relation to:

■ The Innovation Investment Package - 9 Legislative Initiatives on the basis of Articles 185 and 187 of the TFEU

■ The Annual Growth Survey for Member States

■ The progress in the establishment of the European Research Area (ERA)

and the need for a Roadmap with the appropriate actions in order to accelerate the procedure

■ The implementation of the ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) Roadmap of European Infrastructures through their prioritisation and the favourable welcome of the plans to update the ESFRI in order to meet the constantly emerging needs of the European and global civil society

■ The common vision for the European Union and the European Space Agency to enhance the competitiveness of both

A flagship initiative of the Hellenic Presidency in the area of Research was to include in the agenda the discussions on a European level and to promote the initiative for an upgraded Partnership for Research

to be continued 

## Introductory Note

by Dr. Christos Vasilakos

and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), in the form of an action-programme on the basis of Article 185 TFEU, noting that Greece is both a country of the Mediterranean and a Member State of the European Union. The European Union has also played a decisive role in upgrading a series of successful, in their majority, actions in Research, Technology and Innovation in the Mediterranean, such as ERANets, INCONets, targeted growth programmes, etc. The states of the Mediterranean – belonging to three Continents – in their turn have developed successful bilateral R&T partnerships, constructively investing on their common features, which are many and significant.

Greece, taking the above into consideration, and wishing to use them at an upgraded level, especially now when there is political unrest in the region, worked systematically with the cooperation of its partners, wishing to use **Research and Innovation as diplomacy tools**. The discussion at the Informal Council of Athens was particularly encouraging, while at the Council of 26/5/2014 in Brussels there was a focused discussion, and the Italian Presidency and coordinator-country of the initiative undertook to continue and prepare a proposal for the European Commission.

Moreover, I would like to refer to the importance of our country's involvement in the area of Space and its applications. The significance of this involvement by our country is proven by our political choice to become a member state of the European Space Agency (ESA) back in 2005, a choice which up to now requires a significant and serious effort and mobilisation mainly of our country's private sector. As I mentioned above, our country, as a conscious Member State of the European Union, holds the belief that there is room for improvement and for a strategic partnership between the EU and



ESA, through which human and financial resources will be optimally used, in due time, in relation to the European Launch schedule. The adoption of the relevant conclusions of 26/5/2014 at the Competitiveness Council in Brussels was a significant advancement of a process that has been on-going for a number of years.

During our Presidency exceptional **scientific events** were organised on cutting edge sectors of Research, Innovation and Space. Apart from the organisers, coordinators and scientific supervisors of the events that were held, our work was strongly supported by:

- The Committee of Permanent Representatives of the European Council in Brussels on Research and Technology issues, which processed all the issues forwarded to the Council.
- The European Research Area Committee (ERAC ERA), a Consulting committee of high ranking officers on Research and Technology issues, and during its meeting in Crete (5&6/6/2014), the ERA Roadmap mentioned above was actively promoted.
- Our representatives in all the groups and Committees in the framework of the European Union and the European Space Agency, who did their utmost and worked diligently during our Presidency.

Finally, allow me to thank the political leadership, and especially the former Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Professor Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos, for his trust and support, the Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Ms. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the Director General of the Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission, Mr. Robert-Jan Smits, the Deputy Permanent Representative Ambassador Papastavrou and the members of the Permanent Greek Representation in Brussels, my colleagues from the General Secretariat for Research and Technology, the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Research Cen-

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# Introductory Note

## by Dr. Christos Vasilakos



tres and Universities that organised most of the events, the representatives of the National Contact Points, as well as everyone who participated as speaker or coordinator, and all those who attended the events of the Greek Presidency.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union successfully completed its mission in all fields, during a period that has been especially critical for our country. Throughout this time our cooperation with the European Commission and the European Union was exceptional. I hope that these six months of our Presidency remain in our memory **primarily as a European and secondarily as a Greek Presidency**. And as such it had an undisputed European added value.

*The Secretary General for Research and Technology*  
**Dr. Christos Vasilakos**

# Mr. Robert-Jan Smits

## on the Hellenic Presidency of the EU

*Statement by  
the Secretary General  
of the Directorate General  
for Research and Innovation  
of the European Commission*



I would like to congratulate the Hellenic Presidency for its achievements and thank in particular Secretary General Dr. Christos Vasilakos for his excellent work as chairman of the Competitiveness Council, during the six months of 2014.

Greece's continuous work and dedication has helped achieve important results with regard to the Innovation Investment Package, which represents a significant milestone towards setting up innovative and improved forms of public-public and public-private partnerships.

These important new initiatives promise to play a major part in reinforcing Europe's international competitiveness and creating growth and jobs.

I also welcome very much the conclusions of the Competitiveness Council on the 2013 ERA Progress Report and on the ESFRI prioritisation process, which Greece has driven forward, and which mark a significant advance in these areas. The informal Competitiveness Council, held in Athens also provided an excellent forum to discuss the European Innovation Partnerships with Mr Esko Aho, the Chair of the independent export group that was tasked with assessing progress on these Partnerships.

**Robert-Jan Smits**

# Achievements of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Council

*The priorities  
in the areas of Research  
& Innovation and Space  
and other events  
in the framework of  
the Hellenic Presidency*



The Hellenic Presidency of the European Council, in cooperation with our partners in the areas of Research & Innovation and Space, had the following priorities:

## **Research and Innovation:**

- The smooth launch of the new seven-year Framework Programme for Research and Innovation "Horizon 2020"
- The completion of the Innovation Investment Package (IIP) that includes 9 Legislative Initiatives based on Articles 185 and 187 TFEU (Legislative Dossier/LD)
- The promotion of an Initiative in the framework of Article 185 TFEU on the upgraded cooperation in the Mediterranean in the R&I sectors, called PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area)
- A new framework for the safety of Nuclear Infrastructures in Europe

## **Space:**

- COPERNICUS earth observation and surveillance programme (LD)
- Framework for Space Surveillance Tracking, SST/(LD)



- Promotion of the partnership framework between the European Union and the European Space Agency (ESA) (Policy Dossier/PD)

During the Greek Presidency of the European Council, three Competitiveness Councils on Research and Space were held:

- ⊙ *21 February 2014 in Brussels*
- ⊙ *13 May 2014 in Athens, informal, and*
- ⊙ *26 May 2014 in Brussels*

The Informal Council was chaired by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs at the time, Professor Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos, while the other two Councils were chaired by the General Secretary for Research and Technology, Dr. Christos Vasilakos.

The following subjects were discussed:

### **Competitiveness Council/Research and Space, 21 February 2014, Brussels, Justus Lipsius**

- **Research:**

- *Political consultation based on a relevant document of the Presidency on the progress report of the Commission regarding the*

# Achievements of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Council

*2014 Annual Growth Survey (AGS), which is the basis for a common understanding between the member states with regard to the priorities and the actions that must be taken on a national and community level in the framework of the EU's effort to achieve growth and create permanent jobs. Among others, the purpose of writing and presenting the AGS is to assist Member States in setting out the priorities and investment in the fields of Research and Innovation in their annual National Reform Programmes. The (national) programmes will serve as the basis for the Country Specific Recommendations which the Commission is preparing for each Member State.*

The AGS recommends a series of measures and actions to be taken, enhanced or accelerated, as the case may be, by the Member States, which include proposals for: fiscal consolidation, restoration of easier access to loans for Member States with borrowing needs, battling unemployment and the economic consequences of the crisis, modernisation of public administration, and pursuit of sustainable development.

Research and Innovation are a **key** for growth. Investment in these sectors must be combined with the modernisation of the R&I Systems of Member States, the modernisation of public administration and the best possible combined use of resources, such as HORIZON 2020, COSME and the Structural Funds. This of course requires a coordinated and holistic approach Growth Programme by the Member States.

The consultation focused on three areas: **a)** the need of a coordinated and improved approach between R&I and other policies on a national and European Level, **b)** the need to bring the innovation results close



to the market and **c)** the reform of the National Research & Innovation Systems and Public Administration (on a national level).

It is worth noting that these sectors have also been priorities for Greece these past years, together with the implementation of the stability programme. The results of the consultation were forwarded to the President of the European Council as a contribution of the Competitiveness Council to the Spring Summit.

► *The conclusions on the progress of the European Research Area (ERA) were also adopted on the basis of the Progress Report prepared by the Commission and presented in September of 2013. The report presented for the first time a picture of the steps taken towards the integration of ERA, the achievements to date in the Member States and some of the associated countries. The European Research Area Committee (ERAC) has previously expressed a positive opinion on the matter. The report acknowledges the efforts made by Member States on a national level for the implementation of the ERA, while the need to reform the national R&I systems (as in the previous one) and the need to exit the crisis are stressed. Also, just like in the AGS, the need is highlighted for (national) investment in the R&I sectors and for support of international cooperation.*

Moreover, Member States were invited by the Commission, on the basis of the ERAC opinion, to consult and reach a decision up to mid-2015 on producing a Roadmap which, at a community level, could facilitate member states by setting common goals and a package of measures for the upcoming years towards the implementation of the

## Achievements of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Council

ERA. The Commission mentioned as important factors for the implementation of the ERA, among other things: the progress noted in the implementation of the ESFRI Research Infrastructures, the upcoming prioritisation/classification of the R.I.s (see next chapter) and the new mandate of the ESFRI, the alignment and/or compatibility of the R&I national strategies with those developed in the framework of initiatives, such as the Joint Programming Initiative, so that they contribute in addressing Societal Challenges, supporting the mobility of researchers, the systematic implementation of gender equality, the support of Infrastructures, Open Access to publications and scientific data, etc.

The Ministers were also informed about the completion of the tri-lateral negotiations between the Council, Commission and Parliament on the Innovation investment package, which was legislated and entered into force during the Hellenic Presidency of the Council. This package will include 9 legislative acts by which 4 large Public-Public and 5 Public-Private partnerships will be established or continue their operation. It is expected that through them Europe will enhance its global competitiveness and that thousands of jobs will be created in cutting-edge sectors, such as: bio-based industries, innovative drugs, fuel and hydrogen cells, aeronautical technology, electronic components and systems, metrology, active and assisted living, mainly for the elderly, clinical trials and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

- **Space:**

- *A working lunch preceded the meeting organised by the Hellenic Presidency for the Ministers responsible for the Space Sector, attended by the General Director of ESA, Mr. Jean-Jacques Dordain,*



as a special guest. Mr. Jean-Jaques Dordain delivered a speech-presentation regarding the significance of the partnership between the EU and ESA, and the room there is for its improvement based on the consultations and the progress report to be discussed during the session to follow. The presentation was followed by an exchange of opinions, during which the significance of the EU-ESA cooperation in the Space sector and its applications were noted, mainly as tools for the implementation of the European programmes, taking into consideration mechanisms that facilitate the development of industrial activities which result in the creation of jobs.

- During the session that followed there was political consultation based on a relevant document of the Presidency. The results of the discussion that followed also served as the basis for the Conclusions of the Council of 26 May 2014.
- The Ministers were also briefed about the completion of the tri-lateral negotiations between the Council, the Commission and the Parliament on the SST (Space Surveillance Tracking) dossier, which was legislated and entered into force during the Hellenic Presidency of the Council. This piece of legislation is expected to lay the foundations for mitigating the risk of collision of satellite infrastructures, as it will allow the creation of services for satellite and space debris tracking and surveillance, the recording of their positions and the monitoring of their trajectories when there is potential risk of collision in order to warn the satellite management organisations so that they move them. It is noted that the geographical location of Greece provides ideal conditions for surveillance, both with regard to visibility in the field of vision of space by telescopes and from a geopolitical aspect.

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# Achievements of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Council

## Informal Competitiveness Council/Research, 13 May 2014, Athens, Zappeion Megaron



The main item on the agenda was the promotion of an Initiative for an enhanced cooperation in the R&I sectors in the Mediterranean called PRIMA (Programme for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area). After nearly 2 years, the Hellenic Presidency brought again to the table this issue which had been discussed at the Informal Competitiveness Council during the Cypriot Presidency (The Limassol Declaration) and at the “Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona on Research and Innovation”, on 2-3 April 2012, convinced that circumstances were now ripe for it. The Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Professor Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos, who also chaired the meeting, by introducing the matter as a **priority** of the Hellenic Presidency confirmed **Greece’s political commitment**, highlighting the serious technical work done by the Team established for this purpose and the maturity of the circumstances. He mentioned that Greece, also on a national level, is constantly active in the Mediterranean area, and as regards the promotion of the PRIMA initiative, has been utilizing on a union level its double capacity: both as a Member State of the European Union and as a Mediterranean country. Greece, apart from a broad network of transnational R&I bilateral partnerships in the Mediterranean also participated and still participates in the vast majority of ERANets, and in any initiative that aims to enhance the R&I partnership between countries of the Mediterranean that belong to three different geographical Continents (Europe, Asia, Africa).

Professor Stefania Giannini, Minister of Education, Universities and Research of the Italian Presidency, spoke in the same spirit and ex-



pressed the commitment that PRIMA will also be a priority of the Italian Presidency.

In the past twenty years the role of the European Union has been truly *catalytic* in the framework of this effort and the aforementioned *maturity* of the circumstances.

Closely cooperating with its partners, the countries of the Mediterranean which are not members of the EU and the EU Services, and investing on the remarkable work that followed after the Beirut meeting, on 12/7/2012, the Hellenic Presidency prepared a working paper of the Competitiveness Council on the subject, which Dr. Christos Vasilakos, General Secretary for Research and Innovation, introduced during the meeting, highlighting as the main motive of this effort, ***the importance of cooperation in the sectors of Research and Innovation as effective tools of diplomacy and peaceful coexistence in the Mediterranean area.***

This importance has become apparent more than ever today, with a social and political mobilisation and instability in the broader Mediterranean area which may potentially put at risk its stability during a period when its financial importance has dramatically increased due to the energy sources that have been confirmed in its submarine area. Greece has historically, culturally and commercially been close to all these countries, and supports with all its forces efforts and measures to enhance prosperity and security in the entire area.

In its effort to present the dimensions of the initiative's significance to the Ministers, the Greek Presidency organised three presentations by three experts from Mediterranean countries: **Dr. Vasileios Lykousis**, president of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, professor **Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry** Senior Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education

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## Achievements of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Council

and Scientific Research, Egypt President of the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI), professor **Angelo Riccaboni** Chair of PRIMA Core Group, Rector of the University of Siena, Italy. The presentations were related to the feasibility of the promotion-approval of the Initiative, the maturity of the circumstances, mainly seen from the aspect of non-EU member states, and the scientific areas of priority for all participating countries **which also** have a future momentum, which are **Food systems and Water management**, in close relation and interaction with the areas of Energy, Climate, Environment, Health, etc.

A strong and broad political support was ascertained through the exchange of views for the proposed initiative based on: **equal participation and shared responsibility of the countries and mutual interest/benefit**, as set out in the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona (April 2012). Based on the above, the working paper was prepared, which was forwarded to the Council of 26 May 2014, on the conduct of a “focused dialogue” on the subject.

- *Commissioner Maria Damanaki presented the proposal/initiative “Blue Innovation: Realising the potential of our seas and oceans for jobs and growth”. The Commissioner also proposed an action plan, which, among other things, will promote in the near future (up to 2020) the free exchange and access to oceanographic data.*
- *Mr. Esko Aho, the former Prime Minister of Finland, presented and elaborated on the results of the Expert Group set up for this purpose, which he headed, titled “Outriders for European Competitiveness-European Innovation Partnerships as a Tool for Systematic Change”. During the ensuing discussion and based on a relevant document of the Presidency, the ministers exchanged views on the current situation of European Innovation Partnerships and possible scenarios for their outcome.*



**Competitiveness Council/Research and Space,**  
*26 May 2014, Brussels, Justus Lipsius*

• **Research:**

- *The conclusions titled “Towards a shared EU-ESA vision for space fostering competitiveness” were adopted, further to the Progress report of the Commission of 6 February 2014 titled “Establishing appropriate relations between the European Union and the European Space Agency”, the political consultation of the Ministers as well as the working lunch mentioned above in the framework of the Council of 21 February 2014. The conclusions that were approved were in fact a step of progress in the relations between the two international entities that are still generally governed by the Framework Agreement of 2004, which was renewed until 2016. The goal of the two Intergovernmental Organisations is the progressive development of an integrated European Policy that will provide a common basis and legislative framework for a programmatic cooperation that will benefit all. An essential element of this Agreement will be the role of ESA as an implementing Agency for the relevant programmes of the European Union.*
- *A progress report was presented by the Commission on the implementation of the Copernicus programme which was legislated and entered into force during the Greek presidency. The ministers were informed about the important launch of the first satellite (Sentinel 1A). It should be noted that this satellite, which will have an Earth surveillance antenna with a 10 meter resolution, will be followed by a second identical satellite within a one-year period. This will offer the capability of an enormous volume of data, its main application being natural disasters and the safety of marine transportations. During the Presidency, an agreement was signed with Greece on the*

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## Achievements of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Council

supply of data in the wider south-eastern Mediterranean region. According to the Copernicus programme, a series of Earth observation and surveillance satellites are scheduled to be launched, their data requiring numerous applications for the environment and safety, and which will contribute towards the creation of jobs.

- *The Conclusions on the implementation of the Roadmap for the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) were also adopted. The Hellenic Presidency underlined the importance of Excellent Research Infrastructures in developing and making use of the Knowledge Triangle and ensuring the socio-economic growth and competitiveness of Europe and its regions. The Roadmap being prepared reflects the new landscape emerging both in Europe and internationally. The European Commission invited Member States to invest on a national level on ESFRI Research Infrastructures, at the same time using resources from the Structural Funds and including the Research Infrastructures in their national Smart Specialisation Strategies. The European Commission welcomed the decision of the ESFRI FORUM for the update of the Infrastructure Roadmap in 2015-16.*
- *The General Secretariat for Research & Technology, the State's agency responsible for the planning and implementation of the Research, Technological Development and Innovation policies, is completing the development of the **National Strategy and the Research Infrastructures Roadmap**, which will highlight the country's priorities for long-term investments in Research Infrastructures. At the same time, it is examining the creation of **a limited number of Centres of Competence**, which may potentially be connected to points of establishment of Research Infrastructure nodes, on condition that they address well-defined market failures and system failures. The priorities and infrastructures to be included in the Roadmap are selected through a complex process, based on scientific evaluation and*



*the country's strategic priorities, in correlation with the priorities set out in the framework of the Strategy of Smart Specialisation on Research, Technological Development and Innovation*

- *During the Council meeting of 26 May 2014, as has already been mentioned, and further to the Informal Council of Athens, there was a political, focused dialogue based on the working paper prepared by the Presidency, after the positive outcome of the Informal Council of Athens. Dr. Christos Vasilakos, General Secretary for Research and Technology, while introducing the issue during the session underlined the need for its use also by the Italian Presidency, and reconfirmed that he believes that an Initiative/Programme on the basis of Article 185 TFEU is the **most appropriate measure for the intended enhanced R&I cooperation in the Mediterranean**. The Ministers of the Mediterranean Member States of the EU stated that they strongly support the implementation of an Initiative of Article 185 TFEU, and repeated that they consider the circumstances ripe from every aspect. Italian Minister Ms. Giannini stated that **PRIMA will be a key priority of the Italian Presidency, and that her country will work towards relevant conclusions in the Competitiveness Council of December 2014**. France, Spain and Portugal also strongly supported the initiative and expressed their commitment to work towards the same direction.*

#### Other events in the framework of the Hellenic Presidency

- **European Research Area Committee (ERAC):** Three meetings of the European Research Area Committee (ERAC) were also held during the Hellenic Presidency: On 6 February and 27 March in Brussels and 5-6 June in Crete parallel to the session of the Permanent Representatives for Research and Technology.
- **Joint Research Centre Information Day, 1 April 2014, National Centre for Scientific Research DEMOKRITOS:** An Information Day was held in the framework of the Hellenic Presidency at the National Centre for

## Achievements of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Council

Scientific Research DEMOKRITOS attended by the former Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, professor Konstantinos Arvanitopoulos, the General Director of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) Mr. Vladimir Sucha and the General Director for Research and Technology, Dr. Christos Vasilakos. The purpose of this Day was the presentation of actions of the JRC and Agencies supervised by the GSRT/Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs on the themes of Marine Affairs, Energy, Food and Bio-Economy. It was attended by a large number of mainly researchers and scientists. After the end of the Day, during which actions of the JRC and Greek Agencies (HCMR, CERTH) were presented, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the GSRT and the JRC, in relation to the above thematic areas. The Memorandum set out the framework for the cooperation between the GSRT and the JRC as well as the common actions to undertake on the themes mentioned above between Greek Agencies supervised by the GSRT and Institutes of the JRC.

► **Euro-Mediterranean Workshop ERANETMED, Athens, 27 February 2014:** Organised in the framework of the Hellenic Presidency by the GSRT with the cooperation of the Agronomic Institute of Bari, with the participation of Inter-Institutional Stakeholders from nearly all the countries of the Mediterranean and the European Union. More than 30 institutions participated, such as universities, funding bodies, research centres and other governmental institutions. They discussed themes that were to be included at the upcoming (at the time) 1st Joint Call of ERANETMED in relation to the main societal challenges in the Mediterranean region in general.

Information about the Call to be published on 1 November 2014 has already been posted on the GSRT website, <http://www.gsrt.gr/central.aspx?sId=11914281108916461488772@JScript=1>.

► **DARIAH-GR Development of the Greek Research Infrastructure for Humanities (kick-off event) at the Hall of the Academy of Athens, 7-8 April 2014:** DARIAH-GR is a project for the development of Greek



Research Infrastructure for the Humanities, in the form of the National Infrastructure Network (DYAS) in the framework of the corresponding ESFRI Research Infrastructure of the 2006 Roadmap.

The National Research Infrastructure is in a phase of full development.

In the next stage of its operation, digital resources being developed by the research community (data, terminology, models, software) will be accessible with the possibility of their use and development by stakeholders, facilitating the development and use of digital resources for the humanities.

The event signalled the start of the implementation phase of the Research Infrastructure which was highlighted even more in the framework of the Greek Presidency with the aim of informing Humanities scientists and research/cultural institutions on the support which they can receive from the Research Infrastructure under development and to invite them to actively participate in its creation.

Moreover:

- It supports the creation of local mechanisms and systems for the reliable management of research data
- It ensures the creation of a dynamic single information area for humanities through the interoperability of systems and data
- It supports the dissemination of the use of open tools for research and the development of cooperation environments
- It contributes towards the dissemination of the knowledge and skills required for the effective use of digital resources and information technologies in humanities
- It contributes towards the development and establishment of mechanisms and systems for the management of intellectual property rights
- It investigates and promotes methods for the broadest possible social use of the digital resources of humanities

# Kick-off meeting of the new European Programme for Research & Innovation “Horizon 2020”.

## Under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic

### Purpose

The Purpose of the Flagship Event of the Hellenic Presidency was to present the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation “HORIZON 2020”. The event was held in the presence of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias, and it was organised by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology.

*N.C.S.R. Demokritos*

*Athens, 10 January 2014*

European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Ms. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn and Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Ms. Maria Damanaki presented the programme, which is the largest public funding programme for Research and Innovation globally with a budget of around 80 billion euros. Part of these resources are intended for the financing of actions to support the synergy between research institutions and SMEs, whereas the key objective of all of the programme’s actions, as the European Commissioners stated, is innovation.

The HORIZON 2020 programme includes “new instruments” for the support and financing of small and medium-sized enterprises, the mobility of researchers, European Excellence and future and emerging Technologies.



Important opportunities were underlined, among other things, for the recovery and support of research and technology in Greece, both with financing from the resources of the 2014-2020 Structural Funds and with the new HORIZON 2020 EU Framework Programme for research, in combination with the planning of a National Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation (ESFRI) 2014-20. (Combined utilisation of resources in the framework of a “holistic” strategic approach oriented towards growth and the creation of permanent jobs).



At the same time extensive reference was made to the National Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation 2014-2020 as well as the GSRT programme under development for the National Roadmap of Research Infrastructures; our country’s main focus and vision within the 2014-2020 Programme Period being the transition from the Crisis Triangle: Debt-Deficit-Lack of a strong production base to the Knowledge Triangle: Education-Research-Innovation.

During the event and the Press conference that followed, it was underlined that even though Greece spends only 0.67% of its GDP on scientific research, it is ninth in the absorption of the relevant European programmes. The research activities of Greek researchers led to an in-

# Kick-off meeting of the new European Programme for Research & Innovation “Horizon 2020”. Under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic



flow of 1 billion euros in funds into Greece from the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the EU during the past years, ranking it among the first places in absorption in proportion to its population and the number of its researchers, proving the high quality and competitiveness of Greek researchers.

What still remains problematic both at an EU and especially at a national level, is the low expenditure for research in the private sector. Enterprises spent only 0.23% of the GDP in 2011 for research, resulting in the Greek economy having a low innovation index for its products and services.

## Co-organisers

- General Secretariat for Research and Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- NCSR DEMOKRITOS

## + Info

More information and photographs are available here:

<http://goo.gl/ENCac7>

<http://www.demokritos.gr/Contents.aspx?lang=gr&CatId=1029&View=8>

**Conference:**  
“Research and Innovation  
to foster the competitiveness  
of the European  
Agri-Food sector”

**Purpose**

The objective of the conference was to promote research and innovation, as valuable tools for fostering the competitiveness of the European Food Sector and the balanced and safe nutrition of European citizens.

*Athens Concert Hall,  
10-11 March*

The conference, with more than 240 participants from all across Europe, provided the opportunity to the academic and research community of Europe, food companies and officers of the EU to meet, be informed about the new HORIZON 2020 Framework Programme and about the new technological and research developments, discuss

matters of common interest and lay the foundations for future partnerships and synergies.

The Conference works, related to issues of food, nutrition, primary production, aquaculture and consumers, led to the following conclusions:

- *The main challenge for the Food Sector is to increase its competitiveness both in the internal market and at a global level, through research and innovation actions.*
- *The technology transfer mechanism must be improved and research and market must be interconnected through the development of targeted actions, mainly for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.*
- *There is a need to restore healthy dietary models for the European population, which could be based on the principles of the Mediterranean diet, and to find solutions for addressing the special needs of an ageing population.*

**Conference:**

## “Research and Innovation to foster the competitiveness of the European Agri-Food sector”

- *There is a need for a holistic approach to the waste of food, through the development of research and innovation actions and the exchange of best practices.*
- *There is a need to continuously inform farmers about the promotion of innovation in the primary sector.*
- *European aquaculture requires support, in order to meet the increased needs for animal protein and investigate the relationship between marine and coastal areas and the effect they have on each other.*
- *It is especially important to educate consumers about the production of food.*
- *All competent bodies must cooperate in order to bridge the gap between research and the market, and address any obstacles to innovation.*

Two very important meetings also took place during the Conference:

- *The Board of the European Technology Platform “Food for Life” which will determine to a great extent the research agenda of “Horizon 2020” for the Food Sector and*
- *The 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Network of National Technology Platforms “Food for Life” which are working on a national level to set research priorities.*

The works of the Conference closed with the conclusion that the new European programme for research and innovation, “Horizon 2020”, was designed to address all the above challenges faced by Europe and these sectors.

All these reasons advocate towards the success of the conference as regards the content and the networking achieved. It was the first time that stakeholders from the country’s knowledge triangle participated to such a degree: researchers, producers, organisations from the primary



agricultural production and foodstuffs. Noteworthy networks were established, providing the ground for achieving targets for the new programming period in Europe and the country for greater participation in the HORIZON 2020 programmes.

Three large sectors of the country's production, primary agricultural production, foodstuffs and aquaculture, met for the first time with European policies.

The foundation has now been laid for launching a new productive model that will be based on research and innovation.

### **Co-organisers**

- General Secretariat for Research and Technology/ Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- European Commission
- Federation of Hellenic Food Industries (SEVT)
- Greek Technology Platform "Food for Life"
- European Technology Platform "Food for Life"

### **+Info**

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/news-events/news/20140402\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/news-events/news/20140402_en.htm)

# “Annual Meeting of the Future Internet Assembly”

## Purpose

The annual meeting of the Future Internet Assembly (FIA) focused on all projects and initiatives financed by the European Commission in order to support European actions to keep Europe in the forefront

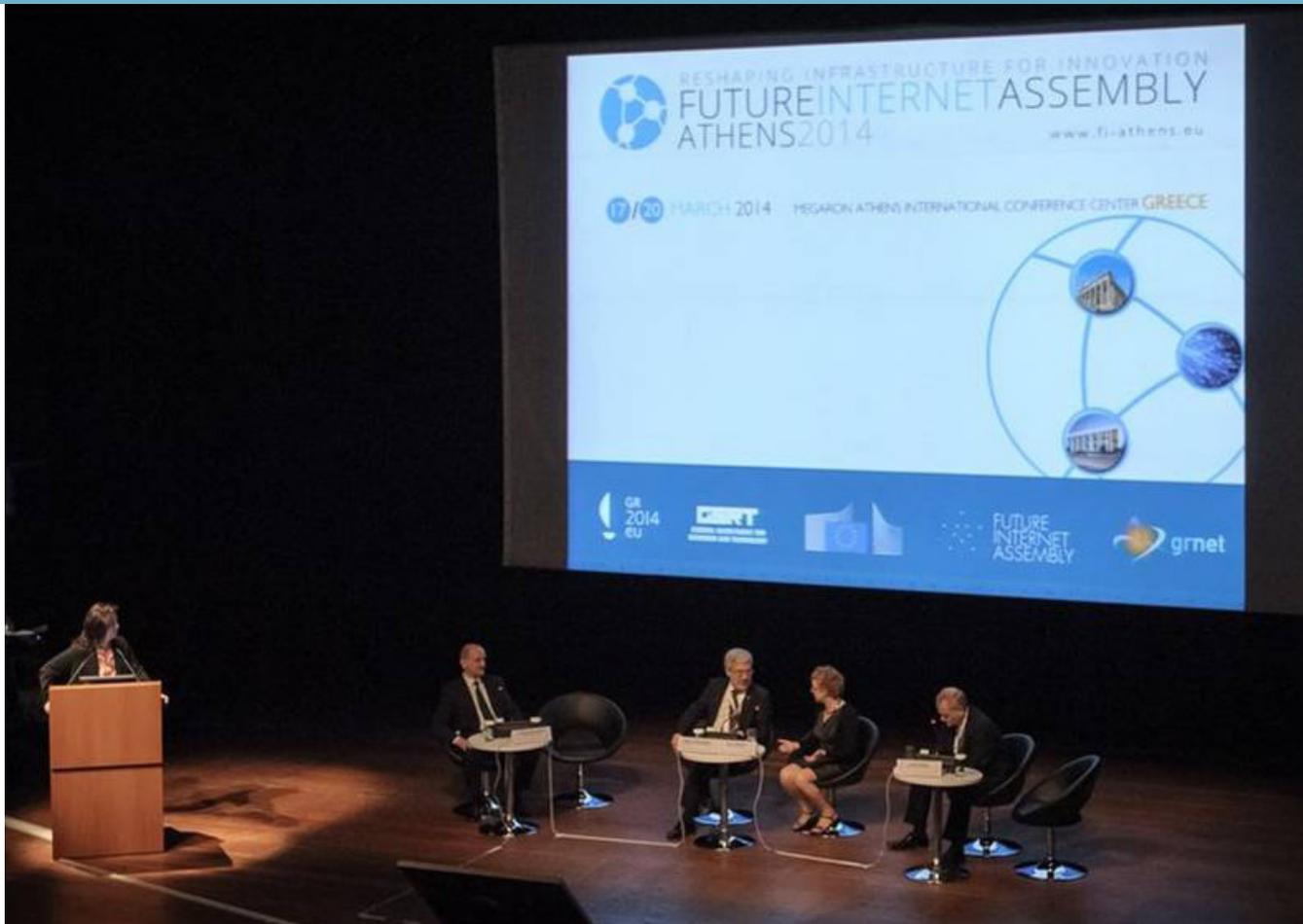
of shaping the Internet of the Future. This pertains to approximately 150 projects and actions financed by the 7th Framework Programme of the EU in the following areas: the internet of the future, cloud computing, internet of services and advanced software technologies, Internet-connected objects, trustworthy ICTs, networked media and search systems, socio-economic considerations for the future internet, application domains for the future internet, future internet research and experimentation.

*Athens Concert Hall,  
17-20 March 2014*

The event organised in the framework of the Hellenic Presidency had as its main theme the reshaping of Future Internet infrastructures to support innovation in the light of the integration of software, network and cloud, for developing innovative applications.

It was attended by more than seven hundred representatives of academia, companies, officers and experts from public and private organisations from across Europe, and from 43 countries in total.

On the 1st and 2nd day of the event thirteen workshops-seminars were held, with subjects proposed by the project teams of FIA, and they presented innovative research results, in several cases with direct application in industry and the services market, in cloud services,



mobile communications, social networks and crowd sensing, the Future Internet, and the Internet of Things.

An extensive exchange of ideas took place during these meetings, and the results – to date – of the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission were presented and discussed.

Particularly important was one of the thirteen sessions organised by GRNET S.A. between leading representatives of start-ups, SMEs and representatives of academia, on the subject of the developments related to the Future Internet in Greece.

Significant achievements, both technological and business-related, by Greek companies and entrepreneurs were presented during this meeting, while it offered an opportunity for important networking and the launch of partnerships between the participants.

During the 3rd and 4th day of the meeting there were 9 parallel sessions on the separate themes of the Future Internet: network and cloud computing infrastructures and services, innovative software, digital social networks, open data, energy efficiency and public-private partnerships in the area of Information and Communications Technologies.

to be continued 

# “Annual Meeting of the Future Internet Assembly”

## Conclusions - results

Below are some of the conclusions reached at the end of the event:

- ▶ *The leading position of Europe in new Internet Technologies, which must however be enhanced through the flexible management of available resources, the reinforcement of security, the standardisation of interfaces for interoperability between systems, new entrepreneurship models.*
- ▶ *The necessity for the creation of innovation ecosystems between SMEs and start-ups of the World Wide Web with the use of open source software and general purpose content.*
- ▶ *The importance of public-private partnerships.*

Overall, this was an important event for investigating the establishment of partnerships between the Greek teams and their associates in Europe in the framework of the EU's invitations for the financing of new initiatives for the Future Internet, with the goal of retaining Europe's competitiveness in the global market during the 2014-2020 Programme Period.

## Co-organisers

- ▶ General Secretariat for Research and Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- ▶ European Commission (Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology – CONNECT)
- ▶ National Research and Education Network (GRNET) S.A.

## + Info

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here: [www.fi-athens.eu/program](http://www.fi-athens.eu/program).

# “Potential health effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields”

## Purpose

In the framework of the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the EU, an event was held in Athens on the 27th and 28th of March 2014, on the subject of electromagnetic fields and their potential health effects.

*Athens, 27-28 March 2014*

It was organised by the Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) of the European Commission, the General Secretariat for Research and Technology and the Greek Atomic Energy Commission, the competent regulatory authority for issues of nuclear safety and radiation protection, including protection from electromagnetic fields.

On the 27th of March, in the context of the event, a public hearing took place of the new opinion of the special SCENIHR committee (Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks), in relation to the effects of electromagnetic fields on human health. After the chairman and the members of the SCENIHR Committee presented the conclusions and the recommendations of the report for each thematic unit, participants had the opportunity of asking relevant questions and presenting their opinion. The active participation of the audience gave the meeting a participatory and pluralistic dimension, rendering obvious the value of a high-level dialogue on the subject.

On March 28, a workshop was held on the subject of “Electromagnetic fields and health effects: from science to policy and public awareness-Conciliating scientific findings and uncertainties in policy making”. The meeting’s programme included speeches by distinguished Greek and foreign experts and scientists regarding the latest scientific data on the possible health effects of electromagnetic fields, the implementation of a regulatory framework in member states and the communication of the issue to the wider public.

to be continued 

## “Potential health effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields”

At a European level, the presentation of the new scientific opinion of SCENIHR is considered a milestone, since it is expected to signal future initiatives at an EU level (e.g. legislative/regulatory decisions, research financing). Moreover, from the meeting of the stakeholders and the exchange of opinions, good practices emerged which are implemented on a national level in the area of public awareness about electromagnetic fields, as well as different approaches regarding the implementation of EU directives and recommendations.

On a national level, the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (EEAE), as the authority responsible for informing citizens and the authorities making the political decisions regarding risks from all types of radiation, approached in a transparent manner an issue where there is increased social concern due to the increasingly higher exposure of citizens to electromagnetic fields daily (stores, airports, building entrances, etc.). The issue of the management of the risks connected to electromagnetic fields, which is a daily concern of citizens, local authorities, public agencies and private enterprises, was comprehensively approached, with emphasis on its European and international scientific, political and communication dimension.

### **Conclusions – results**

The event offered the opportunity to stakeholders active in Greece (research teams, companies, agencies) to actively participate in the public hearing of an important scientific opinion and to come in contact with the respective agencies of the other EU Member States. Moreover, it brought closer to home the European decision-making processes (e.g. public hearing) and the experience of other countries.

Raising public awareness by offering complete and updated information on the subject of exposure to electromagnetic fields and the subsequent protection of the population from them, is especially important, with



strong interest recorded on the subject on a global and European level. The organisation of the public hearing and the meeting of the stakeholders in Athens is deemed particularly important, because :

1. It was the first time such an event was held outside of Brussels, in an EU Member State and
2. The inclusion of the subject of electromagnetic fields and their potential health effect in the events of the EU Council Presidency was an original initiative.

Finally, in the framework of the event:

- *the opportunity was offered to highlight the complexity of the issue through a comprehensive approach of the potential risks of electromagnetic fields (science, regulatory framework, communication)*
- *trust was built in the national regulatory framework*
- *transparency was enhanced through the use of open and participatory policy-making methods, such as the public hearing*

### **Co-organisers:**

- European Commission (Directorate General for Health and Consumers)
- Greek Atomic Energy Commission
- General Secretariat for Research and Technology/ Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

### **+ Info**

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific\\_committees/emerging/docs/ev\\_20140328\\_sumrecord\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/ev_20140328_sumrecord_en.pdf)

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific\\_committees/events/ev\\_20140328\\_presentations\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/events/ev_20140328_presentations_en.htm)

# “International Conference on Research Infrastructures - A flagship event of the Greek Presidency”

## Purpose

The 2nd International Conference on Research Infrastructures (ICRI 2014), one of the most important international scientific conferences, defining for this critical area of research for the years to come, was successful held, with the best possible scientific results, on 2-4 April, at the Megaron Athens International Conference Centre.

The conference, a flagship event of the Hellenic Presidency of the European Union, was coordinated by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, and was organised by “Athena” Research and Innovation Centre in Information, Communication and Knowledge Technologies.

The objective of ICRI 2014 was to highlight how infrastructures, in which more than one EU Member States as well as non-EU countries participate, can meet the grand societal challenged faced by the citizen today nationally or internationally (environment, poverty, sustainability, security), can identify teachings of the past and set priorities and guidelines for the future.

The main thematic areas of the Conference focused on Research Infrastructures for Global Challenges, the Governance of Research Infrastructures, their Innovation Potential and Big Data Management, while a panel of internationally acclaimed experts in the area examined the “next day”.

*Megaron Athens International  
Conference Centre,  
2-4 April 2014*



IRI 2014 had 763 participants, representing more than 60 countries, as well as dozens of organisations, institutions and Research Infrastructures from around the world. Prominent names of the international research community, such as the coordinator of the Human Brain Project, Henry Markram, from the Swiss Federal Institute for Technology, professor of Edinburg University Geoffrey Boulton, expert in open data and advocate of “Open Science”, Fran Berman, co-chair of the Research Data Alliance Council and an expert in the management of Big Data and Franco Ongaro of the European Space Agency, analysed the innovation potential of Research Infrastructures. The participants worked on a number

of other issues, while the works of a series of parallel thematic units focused on the environment, with emphasis on marine research infrastructures and the Arctic, palaeoanthropology and cultural heritage, food safety and the field of electronic research infrastructures.

The majority of the participants (79%) came from European Union countries, with a significant participation of women (34%), and representatives (21%) from non-EU members.



IRI 2014 was accompanied by an exhibition with booths of research organisations and projects, as well as an exhibition of 53 artworks which were selected after an international “Research & Art” competition.

# “International Conference on Research Infrastructures - A flagship event of the Greek Presidency”

## Conclusions - results



In conclusion, the participants of ICRI 2014:

- presented the main features of the Research Infrastructures where they work, and clearly defined the challenges and incentive for international cooperation
- demonstrated the key role of research infrastructures, on a global level, with regard to addressing the great challenges of humanity at every level, national, regional and international
- studied the needs and challenges which emerge during the development and operation of international research infrastructures
- took forward the proposals made during ICRI 2012
- ICRI 2016 will take place for the first time outside of Europe, in Cape Town, South Africa

## Co-organisers

- General Secretariat for Research and Technology/ Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- European Commission and “Athena” Research Centre

## + Info

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

[www.icri2014.eu/sessions-videos](http://www.icri2014.eu/sessions-videos)

**Conference:**

# “Industrial Technologies 2014 - Smart Growth through Research and Innovation”

**Purpose**

The “Industrial Technologies 2014” Conference, third in a series of conferences that take place two times a year, was held in Athens on 9-11 April. The event had more than 1300 participants, among them 150 leading international speakers in the sectors of nanotechnology, biotechnology, advanced materials and new production technologies.

The purpose of the Conference was to attract high-profile speakers from industry, research and politics, to discuss the visions for European industry and research up to 2020, as well as the creation of new opportunities for growth through partnerships.

*Megaron Athens International  
Conference Centre,  
9-11 April 2014*

Presentations, workshops, exhibitions, poster sessions and competitions during the three days demonstrated the importance of Nanotechnology Materials Production (NMP) and the assurance that Europe steadily maintains its place at the forefront of global manufacturing. Indeed, the importance of European re-industrialisation through research and innovation was a key point of the Conference, which was constantly emerging during its three days. Additionally, the importance of innovation in SMEs through the commercialisation of the results arising from research and smart specialisation, especially in the Balkan and Mediterranean countries, was repeatedly stressed also by participants from beyond these borders. The enthusiastic participation of so many participants in the events for the conclusion of agreements and the preparation of proposals showed great willingness on their part to establish new partnerships.

The programme of the conference included the latest developments on Nanotechnology Materials Production (NMP), technologies from

**Conference:****“Industrial Technologies 2014 -  
Smart Growth through  
Research and Innovation”**

many pioneering Research Centres and Universities, giving practical information about industrial applications by European companies.



The focus was also placed on how the progress achieved in the Nanotechnology area will lead to products capable of changing the daily life of people. The Conference, apart from its informative dimension, was also addressed to sectors where Nanotechnology can be implemented and utilised, with an aim also to demonstrate how companies can go in those directions, depending on their individual needs. Other issues, related to the safety of advanced materials, were also discussed. Finally, the impact of Nanotechnology on a sustainable health system, biotechnology as

well as water supply systems were areas that attracted the interest of many participants.

**Conclusions - results**

The Conference served as a platform for investigating new approaches to the development of human resource skills (in the area of Nanotechnology) and to the building of skills, in the light of the important role of innovation, for future manufacturing. It also highlighted the changes already starting to appear in the labour market, mainly in the industrial sector, where the demand is mostly for people with specialised knowledge and skills

In conclusion, the match making event that was held during the last day of



the Conference contributed towards the establishment of effective communication between Academia and Industry, supporting the endeavour to commercialise the so-called key enabling technologies (KETs).

### Co-organisers

- General Secretariat for Research & Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- European Commission
- Foundation for Research and Technology / Institute of Chemical Engineering Sciences (FORTH/ICE-HT)
- Spinverse
- Laboratory for Manufacturing Systems & Automation (LMS), University of Patras.
- SEV – Hellenic Federation of Enterprises
- Achaia Chamber
- “Athena” Research Centre
- Institute of Industrial Technologies & Automation
- Frigoglass
- NEORION Shipyards - Syros

### + Info

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

<http://www.industrialtechnologies2014.eu/presentations/>

**Conference:**

# «COPERNICUS - Sentinels Serving Society and the Environment»

**Purpose**

The idea of organizing an event dedicated to the Copernicus programme, was the result of Greece's participation in the European Space Agency, for which responsible is the General Secretariat for Research and Technology, also with the opportunity of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union by Greece.

*Evgenidis Foundation, Athens,  
12-13 May 2014*

Copernicus is a flagship European programme for space and the foremost Earth Observation programme in Europe. The programme is at a turning point at present, as it is moving from the development phase to a fully operational phase, with the aim of serving a multitude of different users of satellite data. Decisive for this transition were two events that took place in 2014, and in particular: the entry into effect of the Copernicus Regulation at the European Union level, and the successful launch of the Sentinel-1A satellite by the ESA.

Europe is expected to benefit greatly as a "user" of the programme, which will allow it to closely and continuously monitor environmental conditions and the effect they have on our daily life. By ensuring customised, timely and sustainable Earth Observation measurements, the Copernicus programme constitutes the European answer to crucial environmental protection issues and to addressing the challenges, such as emergencies, the monitoring of the atmosphere and forests, the protection and surveillance of the sea, border control, climate change, offering solutions that are adapted to the special



characteristics of each country and each Region. The programme is further expected to create a momentum for tangible financial benefits for EU Member States, as it will offer invaluable possibilities for sustainable development and the creation of specialised jobs in Europe, serving as a significant driver for growth on a local, national, European and international level.

The purpose of the Conference was to inform, promote and use Copernicus, a program with multiple benefits for European citizens, while also showcasing it as a Pillar Programme of the partnership both at a European level in general and between the EU and ESA in particular. Moreover, this event was an ideal opportunity to highlight the transition of European geo-observation to the fully operational era, among other things, also with the projection of data from the Sentinel-1A satellite during the event. Another important goal of this event was to acquaint the potential users of the Copernicus data and services with the capabilities offered by the programme both in the short-term and in the long-term, at different geographical levels (local, national, cross-border) and at various administration levels (central administration, regions, local administration), depending on their needs.

to be continued 

**Conference:**

# «COPERNICUS - Sentinels Serving Society and the Environment»

**Conclusions-results**



The Copernicus programme is oriented towards potential users and the services that interest them. Correspondingly, the “COPERNICUS – Sentinels Serving Society and the Environment” Conference served as a forum for representatives from different governmental agencies, European

institutional bodies and services, academia and research organisations, data and service providers and representatives of business, for discussing the opportunities created from the programme and the earth observation data.

**Co-organisers**

- General Secretariat for Research & Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- ESA
- European Commission

**+ Info**

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

<http://congrexprojects.com/2014-events/Copernicus>

**European conference on**  
**“Renaturing Cities:  
Addressing Environmental Challenges  
and the Effects  
of the Economic Crisis through  
Nature-Based Solutions”**

**Purpose**

The conference was organised on the basis of a systemic and multi-disciplinary approach in order to link the concept of the renaturation of cities with other key issues, such as the resilience of cities, urban risks, adaptation to climate change, restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, sustainable development and land use planning, human health and well-being.

*MADOU Auditorium,  
Brussels, 13-14 May 2014*

During the conference, the focus was on innovative solutions adopted by European cities, in order to combine tradition and modernity in addressing environmental challenges and the effects of the economic crisis. The conference was structured in four thematic units:

1. To show how renaturing of cities can lead the greening of the European Economy, making use of available innovative financial instruments.

2. Innovative practices: To present how urban developers, planners and the construction sector are innovating European cities with nature.

## **European conference on** **“Renaturing Cities: Addressing Environmental Challenges and the Effects of the Economic Crisis through Nature-Based Solutions”**

- 3.** Practices for adapting to climate change: How European cities are adapting to climate change and natural disasters by using nature-based solutions in order to increase the resilience of cities .
- 4.** Current initiatives for promoting nature-based solutions in European cities: Brussels and the Flanders Region (BE), Almada (PT), Copenhagen (DK), Ljubljana (SI) and Bilbao (ES).

### **Conclusions - results**

The Conference reached the following important conclusions:

Resolution of compromises:

- *through the renaturing of cities compromises must emerge between nature, society and the economy*
- *these innovative solutions for the renaturing of cities must be economically efficient, have a strong added value for human health and well-being and contribute towards sustainable management*
- *cities play an important role in creating of multiple values, encouraging the adoption of new business models for renaturing and attracting private financing through public-private partnership initiatives*

The organisation of the Conference had the following added positive results for Greece:

- *A discussion was held on a new thematic area which is important for the Ministry of Environment, Energy & Climate Change (Renaturing cities, economic crisis and environmentally-friendly solutions).*



- *Scientific priorities were proposed to be financed in 2016-2017 by the “HORIZON 2020” programme.*
- *Greek scientists participated who will lead the thematic area.*
- *Active participation of Greece in policy-making at European level.*

### **Co-organisers**

- General Secretariat for Research & Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- European Commission DG Research and Innovation, Technical University of Crete

### **+ Info**

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index\\_en.cfm?pg=land](http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/index_en.cfm?pg=land)

# International Conference – Flagship Event: “Research and Innovation in the Service of the Economy and Society European Neighbourhood and the Black Sea Region”

## Purpose

The objective of the Conference was to highlight the important role of International Cooperation in the fields of research and innovation, between the European Union, the countries of the European Neighbourhood and the Black Sea region. These countries include: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel (associated country), Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Turkey (candidate country), Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Belarus, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

*Thessaloniki Concert Hall,  
29-30 May 2014*

This collaboration is based on two main thematic areas:

- *sustainable energy applications and clean technologies, aiming at an energy future with a low/zero carbon footprint, and*
- *marine research and strategy, in the framework of the sustainable management of ecosystems, marine resources and offshore renewable sources of energy.*

These two thematic units are included in the modern Societal Challenges in the framework of the “Horizon 2020” programme.

The Conference was addressed to research and academic organisations, businesses, professional organisations, local government or-



organisations, and the wider public. During the two-day Conference, the representatives of these organisations and businesses had the opportunity of actively participating in networking with representatives of important companies and large research centres from the above countries, which are actively involved in the research fields of clean energy and marine research.

Over the course of the Conference, the general policy framework was presented in the area of Research and Innovation in the European Neighbourhood and Black Sea regions, including opportunities for financing research and innovation in the area and good practices for success, as well as good “examples” of actions in the framework of International Collaboration in the thematic areas of Energy and Marine Research in the countries of the European Neighbourhood and the Black Sea.

Two parallel thematic sessions were held, dedicated to energy and marine research, during which there was substantial discussion and an approach between European R&T bodies (STI) with entrepreneurship. Moreover, emphasis was placed on the support of less developed regions with regard to Science, Research and Innovation.

The Conference also focused on marine activities and sustainable energy technology, aiming at developing an economy that is based on clean, carbon-free, technology.

to be continued 

## International Conference – Flagship Event: “Research and Innovation in the Service of the Economy and Society European Neighbourhood and the Black Sea Region”

### Conclusions - results

The “Thessaloniki Declaration” was signed during the Conference, which is accompanied by a Roadmap regarding the further steps to be taken in regard of the above societal challenges in the specific regions, while it can also be used by the European Commission in its future policy moving towards Europe 2020.

The Conference also offered an opportunity for informal discussions or bilateral meetings between the main bodies and stakeholders of the EU and the countries in regions neighbouring to the EU, in the framework of the INCO programme. Thus, the options were investigated for further collaboration on common plans under “HORIZON 2020”, therefore promoting the Framework Programme in the target countries.

At the same time, the Conference facilitated the political dialogue between the main participating countries of the EU and the target countries of the investments, which are expected to be enhanced with innovative approaches.

### Co-organisers

- ▶ General Secretariat for Research & Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- ▶ European Commission with the collaboration of the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research
- ▶ Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH)

### + Info

Presentations: The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

[www.rines.gr](http://www.rines.gr) (<http://rines.gr/node/11>)

# MEDCITY - “Adaptation Strategies to Global Environmental Change in the Mediterranean City and the Role of Global Earth Observation”

## Purpose

The Conference was an opportunity to analyse the impact of climate change on cities with a Mediterranean climate all over the world and to present the key information necessary for policy-making with regard to adapting to the new conditions that have emerged on a global scale.

*Divani Caravel,  
Athens, 10-12 June 2014*

Urban areas barely cover 3% of the planet's surface and are inhabited by nearly half the population of the earth, produce 80% of the global GDP and contribute by 70% to global carbon emissions. Accord-

ing to the United Nations, the population of urban areas is expected to reach five billion in 2030 and exceed six billion in 2050. The areas with a Mediterranean climate are the most vulnerable of the planet to the global climate change, and the need of adaptation is directly linked with their economic and social development.

During the Conference, in combination with successful examples in support of political adaptation, the following issues were also presented: Global and Local Earth Observations, Water, Energy, Biodiversity and Open Space, Coastal Areas and Marine Environment, Built Environment, Public Health and Governance

The contribution of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) was also investigated regarding the improvement of climate information and

to be continued 

# MEDCITY - “Adaptation Strategies to Global Environmental Change in the Mediterranean City and the Role of Global Earth Observation”

their role in the development and application of adaptation measures at a national and local level. The great possibilities offered by the environmental observation systems and services were presented, for supporting adaptation globally at the level of cities. The available environmental observation tools demonstrated the great progress made in this area in the service of cities and citizens. A successful example of the use of environmental data is the water quality measurement service in the coastal areas of Barcelona.

The Conference works focused on the advantages of short-term and long-term adaptation planning, whereas strategy examples that have been successfully implemented were also noted, such as the Australian area with a Mediterranean climate and the city of Canberra, with the Canberra Urban and Regional Futures (CURF) plan. Furthermore, the best adaptation programmes and approaches were identified, and their usefulness and suitability for Mediterranean cities was evaluated. These actions and their processing can contribute greatly in establishing an extensive adaptation strategy for Greece.

## Conclusions - results

The Conference was an opportunity for the further reinforcement of partnerships both in Europe and globally, contributing in raising the awareness of the communities of urban areas and in the formulation of proposals for designing an adaptation plan for Greece, the Mediterranean, Europe and other areas across the globe with a Mediterranean climate.

At the same time, the prerequisite for actions at a local level was underlined, as well as the need for the participation of all players, from citizens to adaptation policy-makers, scientists and businesses. The interdisciplinary audience identified the existence of a gap, both on



scientific issues and communication-wise, between adaptation policy-makers and the scientific community.

Participants recognised the need for the transfer of knowledge and experience on issues of adaptation to climate change and for the support and strengthening of partnerships between continents with Mediterranean climate areas.

### **Co-organisers**

- General Secretariat for Research & Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- European Commission, Mediterranean Consortium for Climate Change (MC-4),
- Mariolopoulos-Kanaginis Foundation for the Environmental Sciences
- Research Centre for Atmospheric Physics and Climatology
- Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany

### **+ Info**

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

[www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/files/ProgramMedCity2014.pdf](http://www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/files/ProgramMedCity2014.pdf)

[www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/program-agenda.html](http://www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/program-agenda.html)

[www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session1.html](http://www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session1.html)

[www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session2.html](http://www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session2.html)

[www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session3.html](http://www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session3.html)

[www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session4.html](http://www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session4.html)

[www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session5.html](http://www.mariolopoulosfoundation.gr/medcity2014/break-out-session5.html)

# WIRE V “Week of Innovative Regions in Europe 2014”

## Purpose

The "Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE)" Conference, the most important European discussion forum for Regional Strategies, Innovation and Growth was organised for the fifth consecutive year, on the subject of “rebooting” regional strategy for Innovation and Growth. The conference coincided with the completion of the design of the Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) of the Regions of Europe, as well as the launch of the “Horizon 2020” European Programmes for research and innovation and the new Structural and Investment Funds.

*Aegli Zappeiou, Athens,  
12-13 June 2014*



The purpose of the Conference was to better understand RIS3 from the viewpoint of the Regions, to present instruments that help in policy-making, to create opportunities for partnerships and

synergies between European Regions, to present the opportunities offered by the EU for financing Research and Innovation and in general to create a climate for the exchange of knowledge and experience between the Regions.

During the Conference, 60 speakers and 350 participants from 30 countries discussed about new policies, goods practices and instruments that covered a broad range of subjects and issues, the most important of them presented below.

The European targets for research, innovation, entrepreneurship and



regional growth for the next 2014-2020 programme period were also presented, and the policies were underlined which the European Commission is promoting through its programmes, their complementarities, the opportunities offered to the Regions to use the funding possibilities for their policies through the new EU instruments.

Emphasis was also placed on rebooting Regional Policies. The Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) and its correct implementation is now the key policy instrument of the Regions, especially the less developed ones, for boosting their competitiveness and exiting the crisis. Specialised scientists elaborated on theoretical approaches and highlighted the points where special attention must be paid, especially during this period of crisis, in the various stages of its planning and implementation, while examples of planning and implement of the RIS3 were presented at a regional level.

Entrepreneurship - and its contribution on regional growth and the creation of new knowledge-based jobs - was recognised as a key pillar. The necessity for the widespread involvement of enterprises in the Smart Specialisation Strategy was highlighted, and good practices and opportunities for funding the innovation of enterprises through EU financial instruments were presented.

Inter-regional cooperation in the era of the knowledge economy has an important role to play, in particular as regards partnerships between developed and less developed regions.

to be continued 

## WIRE V

# “Week of Innovative Regions in Europe 2014”

At the same time factors for success and the problems emerging in intra-regional partnerships were reviewed, and examples were presented of broader entities with a multi-regional composition, such as the regions of the Adriatic-Ionian Sea and the Danube regions.

Quantitative measurements and data uses were extensively discussed during the Conference. Methodologies and tools for the planning and monitoring of Regional Programmes and the Smart Specialisation Strategy were presented. Furthermore, the difficulties and problems that emerge when measuring knowledge and innovation and other concepts and creating harmonised indexes were noted.

Open data were viewed by all as a primary material of key importance for regional planning and growth of the Regions.

The re-use of knowledge in the Smart Specialisation Strategy and regional growth and entrepreneurship in general, and the opportunities offered by modern technologies are rapidly changing the business environment and traditional business models.

New entrepreneurship models (business cooperation), and technologies (3D printing) were also presented, that offer new opportunities to businesses for economic growth and escaping the crisis.

### **Conclusions - results**

In conclusion the conference offered the opportunity to participants to attend high-level presentations and discussions on issues of Regional Policy and Smart Specialisation Strategy.



Common ground of the presentations and discussions was that the exit from the crisis requires a proper Smart Specialisation Strategy and speed in its implementation.

The conference offered the opportunity to the Regions to develop greater extroversion, better networking and to seek partnerships with other Regions of the EU.

### **Co-organisers**

- ▶ National Documentation Centre
- ▶ European Commission
- ▶ General Secretariat for Research and Technology/Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

### **+ Info**

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

<http://www.wire2014.eu/agenda/>

Interviews are available at:

<http://www.wire2014.eu/interviews/>

# “Access to finance for Research, Development and Innovation”

## Purpose

The purpose of the conference was to raise awareness, on a European level, of the potential of the new financial instruments, facilities and all accompanying measures launched under the “Horizon 2020” programme, whose object is to support the access of enterprises and SMEs to finance for research, innovation and development. Good practices, the experience of intermediaries and of the final recipients of the (previous) instruments were presented, discussed and examined, and the possible synergies-interactions between the finance instruments and facilities of the EU

programmes Horizon 2020 and COSME with the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) were referred to, as well as the available financial instruments on a national or regional level.

In the framework of the conference, the new EU program “InnovFin - EU Finance for In-

novators” for the activation of the new financial instruments was also presented. The “InnovFin - EU Finance for Innovators” programme is expected to make available to small, medium and large enterprises and to research infrastructure development organisations more than 24 billion euros. These funds will be supplementary to other funding, which in total is expected to exceed 48 billion euros.

*“Growth Enhancing European  
financial instruments for  
Research, Development  
and Innovation”*

*Athens,*

*Athenaeum Intercontinental Hotel,*

*12 @ 13 June 2014*





## Conclusions – results

The Conference works were marked by the signing of two particularly important agreements:

- *The first agreement concerns the delegation of the “Horizon 2020” financial instruments, and was signed by Philippe de Fontaine Vive, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, and Pier Luigi Gilibert, Chief Executive of the European Investment Fund.*
- *The second framework agreement is for the 2014-2017 period and focuses on the technical and economic support of actions for research, development and innovation. The agreement was signed by the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank and the competent Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science.*

## Co-organisers

- PRAXI Network of the Foundation for Research and Technology
- General Secretariat for Research and Technology/Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- European Commission (Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the EU)

## + Info

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/access-risk-finance>

# “Social inequalities in Europe”

## Purpose

The situation today, as concerns social and economic inequalities in the European Union is reflected in certain indicative numbers: approximately 27 million men and women are unemployed in the 28 EU

Member States, 19.5 million of them living in euro area countries. 24% of the young people in the EU are unemployed, and many are speaking about the “lost generation of Europe”. In the south things are must worse. For the past four years, Greece has been going through a serious social and economic crisis, which has affected daily life in many ways.

*Acropolis Museum, Athens,  
20 June 2014*



The national economy is in its worst phase since the restoration of Democracy in 1974 and the prospects for its short-term or mid-term recovery are rather weak.

At a European level, the austerity policies being implemented, if they remain as they are and are not accompanied by other measures, could put by 2025 another 15-25 million Europeans, almost the entire population of the Netherlands and Austria, at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Europe is expected to reach 146 million. Σήμερα, το 8,4% του πληθυσμού της γης κατέχει το 84,3% του παγκόσμιου πλούτου (Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2013).



Today, 8.4% of the earth's population is holding 84.3% of the world's wealth (Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2013).

Inequalities were reduced in the post-war period through the redistribution and transfer of resources.

In many countries there were minimum wages which had either been stipulated by law or through collective negotiation procedures. There was also intervention in the capital market, which was highly regulated.

The OECD in 2012 noted that income inequality in most countries is significantly higher than it was thirty years ago (Employment Outlook 2012) in the sense that the labour share (salaries, wages and benefits) in total national income has been declining in nearly all OECD countries. This is mainly the result of fiscal management, flexibility and automation, which as a rule lead to jobless growth.

Today, many in the EU – including Christine Lagarde in a speech in Davos in 2013 - acknowledge that a decrease in unemployment and an increase of the growth rate is of maximum importance so that income inequality does not lead to further harming the social capital and interpersonal trust, especially since, apart from income inequality and gender inequalities, there are also inequalities and discrimination observed in the areas of health, education, communication, etc., at an intra-generational and inter-generational level, both between and inside each EU Member State.

to be continued 

## “Social inequalities in Europe”

### Conclusions - results

Taking into consideration the picture of the crisis given above, on a National and European scale, the importance and impact of the conference were self-evident. With a significant number of representatives of stakeholders attending and participating, it served as a forum for the discussion and resolution of problems and for social policies based on documented evidence.

### Co-organisers

- ▶ General Secretariat for Research and Technology/  
Ministry of Health and Religious Affairs
- ▶ European Commission (DG Research and Innovation)
- ▶ National Centre for Social Research
- ▶ Panteion University

### + Info

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

<http://www.gsrt.gr/inequalities/speakers.html>

# “Space and Security”

## Purpose

*Saroglio Mansion  
Athens, 19-20 June*

Europe is facing serious security threats that are growing in scale and sophistication. These challenges are related to emergencies, such as natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, landslides, heat waves, tsunamis, hurricanes, dust transfer, etc.),



and disasters possibly caused by human activity in different sectors (forest fires, oil spills, marine pollution, air pollutants harmful to human health, etc.). It is also facing at a growing rate, due to the improvement in all types of transportation, problems of internal national security.

Global stability (control of land and maritime borders for illegal migration, maritime piracy and maritime safety, management of international aviation, electronic interferences, etc.), nowadays requires integrated and mainly modern solutions, proportional to the threats posed.

## “Space and Security”

Obviously, many of these challenges are cross-border and inter-sectoral in nature.

Space technology systems for the prevention, management and handling of security challenges are of paramount importance but at the same time require protection in order to operate seamlessly. Space devices worth hundreds of millions of euros, and sensitive, manned or unmanned, space missions are at risk from extreme phenomena of the hostile space weather (magnetic storms, solar wind and high energy cosmic radiation, strong inductive currents that destroy power distribution systems and disrupt telecommunications, a growing amount of space debris and meteorites, etc.). That is why global cooperation is required to protect those space infrastructures that play an important role in the economy but are at risk from hostile phenomena in Space.

The European Union has launched two major space programmes for security services – “Galileo” for European navigation and satellite positioning as well as for the European strategic needs for a common foreign policy and security policy, and “Copernicus” for continuous Earth observation, long-term surveillance and data analysis. Especially as regards the “Copernicus” programme, the National Observatory of Athens hosts the first mirror site of the Sentinel high-definition satellites for the continuous observation of the Earth.

### Conclusions – results

Based on the conclusions of the European Council, which since December 2013 set out the policy of the European Commission “towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector”, the Hellenic Presidency decided to contribute to the general discussion, the synergies on Security and Space issues, and the mobilisation of the public and private sector in the direction of Space.



In this framework, during the Conference space technology synergies were investigated, with a civil and defence use in mind, both for space infrastructures and space services that aim to improve the daily life of citizens, their peace and security.

### Co-organisers

- ▶ General Secretariat for Research and Technology / Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- ▶ National Observatory of Athens
- ▶ National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- ▶ Ministry of National Defence
- ▶ European Commission

### + Info

The programme of the event and the names of the speakers can be found here:

- <https://space-security-conference.teamwork.fr/en/home>
- <https://space-security-conference.teamwork.fr/en/programme>
- [http://www.esa.int/ell/ESA\\_in\\_your\\_country/Greece/Oi\\_prhotes\\_eikhones\\_ranthar\\_gia\\_to\\_Copernicus](http://www.esa.int/ell/ESA_in_your_country/Greece/Oi_prhotes_eikhones_ranthar_gia_to_Copernicus)
- [http://www.esa.int/Our\\_Activities/Observing\\_the\\_Earth/Copernicus/Sentinel-1/Sentinel-1\\_performs\\_opening\\_dance\\_routine](http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Observing_the_Earth/Copernicus/Sentinel-1/Sentinel-1_performs_opening_dance_routine)

Event organised by  
the **General Secretariat for  
Research and Technology:**  
“The Hellenic Presidency of the Council  
of the European Union: **A new beginning  
for Growth based on Research  
and Innovation**”

*Zappeion Hall,  
Thursday, 3 July 2014*

The end of the highly successful six-month term of the Hellenic Presidency was marked by a major event hosted by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) at the Zappeion Hall on Thursday, 3 July 2014, titled: “The Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union: A new beginning for Growth based on Research and Innovation”.

The event covered the significant legislative and political work that took place during the Hellenic Presidency by the GSRT, in cooperation with the competent Greek and EU bodies, for the promotion of the issues within its competence, as well as the launch of new initiatives with a European added value, while focusing on the experience and the momentum gained during the Hellenic Presidency, as drivers for recovery and growth.

Mr. Nikos Dendias, Minister of Development and Competitiveness addressed the event as a representative of the Prime Minister. Dr. Christos Vasilakos, the General Secretary for Research and Technology, then took the floor to present the important legislative and political work that took place during the six-month term of the Hellenic Presidency, in the areas of Research, Innovation and Space. A flagship initiative of the Hellenic Presidency was the proposal for a Euro-Mediterranean partnership in the areas of food and water, which are important areas for Research, Technological Development and Innovation, not only for the European Union, but for Greece itself, which has significant competitive advantages.



In his speech, Dr. Vasilakos, among other things, said: “These past six months we were called upon, in cooperation with our European partners, to implement the policy targets of the European Union and to promote the European initiatives for the new 2014-2020 Programme Period, during a critical time, as our country continues to make significant efforts to overcome the economic crisis [...]. Despite the difficulties however, we succeeded in the most effective and efficient manner”.

Dr. Vasilakos also noted that the Presidency offered important experiences and good practices for the integration of the political priorities for research and innovation. “And now that our country is slowly leaving behind the crisis of the past years, our goal is to capitalise on all the experience, the lessons of the past and the present, the best practices, the know-how we have gained, and to move forward towards a new model for growth, that will be based on Research and Innovation, and naturally on our available human resources”, stated the Head of the GSRT.

### **Support for research**

Mr. Roger Kornberg, professor of Stanford University, USA, and Nobel Laureate in Chemistry 2006, one of the 23 leading scientists who in 2012 signed an article in support of financing Research and Technology actions in Greece (Science magazine), mentioned during his speech “The talent pool in Greece is very large, especially if conditions are created for retention of the best and brightest young people (...) Governmental support should be possible because a relatively small amount is required to raise the level from the minimum required for maintenance to an amount sufficient for world class research. As little as \$50 – 100

to be continued 

## Event organised by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology: “The Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union: A new beginning for Growth based on Research and Innovation”

million (€37-74 million approximately) per year, allocated on the basis of exceptional merit, to the most worthy individuals and to centres of excellence, will fund dozens of world class laboratories. Not only is this a trivial amount in comparison with other national spending, but the return on such an investment will, in time, exceed that obtainable by any other means” Mr. Kornberg concluded.

### **The traditional diet**

Ms. Artemis Simopoulos, professor, MD and former president of the Centre for Genetics, Nutrition and Health, Washington (USA), then went on to talk about the contribution of the traditional diet of Greece to health and economic growth. According to Ms. Simopoulos “the traditional diet of Greece – and more specifically the diet of Crete before 1960 – is the only diet that is medically proven to be linked to lower percentages of heart disease and cancer, as well as a greater life expectancy”.

“The European Union must change direction and take initiatives. Greece must support the establishment on its territory of a European Centre or Foundation that will link genetic nutrition with physical exercise for health, as originally developed by Hippocrates”, Ms. Simopoulos underlined.

### **Innovation strategies**

After that, Mr. Dimitrios Lakasas, in his double capacity as chairman of the Board of the Alexander Innovation Zone S.A. and as an entrepreneur, stressed that innovation is the economic model that Greece must adopt on a strategic level in order to enter a new virtuous circle of economic



growth. Now, after the GREXIT era, we find ourselves at GRECOVERY and we can go forward to the GRINNOVATION era. The new growth model of the economy is based on the following 3 pillars:

- 1.** *Rebirth of the Greek productive base with innovation as its driver*
- 2.** *Extroversion and*
- 3.** *Innovation*

Finally, the event closed with a speech by Mr. Joseph Sifakis, academic and president of the Greek National Council for Research and Technology, who underlined “the need for the formulation of a national innovation strategy that will be based on the creation of ecosystems through the synergy of research centres, large companies and start-ups”.

“The development of a national strategy, he noted, is the result of coordinated action based on three pillars. First, the establishment of the appropriate framework for promoting a series of necessary structural changes that aim at restructuring research and facilitating the cooperation of all key actors for the creation of innovation ecosystems. Second, the determination of priorities for a set of strategic sectors of the economy, where either our geopolitical location ensures competitive advantages or the development of technology serves vital national needs. Finally, the recognition of distinct roles for each of the innovation development bodies and the promotion of incentives for their smooth cooperation”.

The event held at the Zappeion Hall was attended by representatives of the political leadership, as well as the academic, research and business community.



SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE HELLENIC PRESIDENCY 2014





Ελληνική Προεδρία του Συμβουλίου  
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

Hellenic Presidency of the Council  
of the European Union

Présidence Hellénique du Conseil  
de l'Union Européenne

SPECIAL ISSUE  
OF THE HELLENIC PRESIDENCY 2014



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs



GSRT

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Hellenic Presidency of the Council  
of the European Union