

## **Clusters and Innovation Policy discussed at the international conference co-organized by ClusteriX in Bucharest, 30th October 2012**

Opened by Gelu-Stefan Diaconu, State Secretary of the Romanian Ministry for Economy, Trade and Business Environment, the event brought together representatives of the European Commission – Dimitri Corpakis, Head of Unit Regional Dimension of Innovation in DG Research and Innovation, World Bank – Marina Iooty, economist at the Financial and Private Sector Department and the University of Edinburgh – Alessandro Rossiello, Senior Research Fellow at the School of Social and Political Science, as key note speakers, with national and regional policy makers as well as with a large spectrum of Romanian cluster players and stakeholders.

During the conference “Innovative clusters – key to success in international business and R&D cooperation”, a topic of particular attention for the Romanian and European cluster policy experts and stakeholders was handled by Alessandro Rossiello, senior researcher at the Innogen Institute at the University of Edinburgh: namely how clusters are related to the innovation policy under the perspective of smart specialisation strategies.

After an interesting introduction through the history of the idea of “smart specialisation” the clusters as defined by Michael Porter as “an agglomeration of firms/institutions in a particular field, performing related activities (...)” under certain externalities, Mr. Rossiello approached the central issue of the cluster life cycle, questioned if the “particular field” is still valid under the current technological and economic developments, whereas the externalities, earlier much regionally seen, are now blurring, when the sources of knowledge are not necessarily in the region and when the market is not prevalently local.

A current issue to be found on the various European and national political agendas is that related to the linking of clusters globally – an issue lying at the heart of the ClusteriX project. Based on an OECD study in 2011, there are 4 strategies: connecting globally, cluster-building, sustaining momentum and deepening pipelines.

When smart specialisation is brought into play there were several factors to take into consideration:

1. Too much specialisation carrying the danger of locked-in dead-ends
2. Too much diversity with the risk of fragmentation and/or lack of critical mass
3. The knowledge/asset variety as key driver for cluster emergence and growth
4. The diffusion of multi-purpose technologies and their potential to cross-link industrial sectors
5. Targeting areas of strength without picking winners!

The ClusteriX partners shared their knowledge and experience from their regions not only through presentations, but also by interacting with the audience.

Lennart Svensson – Head of Department of Economic Development & Innovation, President of the European Forum of Clusters in Emerging Industries, Sweden – presented “the Innovation Strategy of Region Skåne”

Steffen Buhl from the Economic Development Karlsruhe, Germany spoke about the “Roadmapping for Strategic Regional Development”

Andreas Winkler from the South Tyrolean TIS Innovation Park explained in “Clusters 4 Innovation” how 4 sectors (winter sports and technologies, wood, construction and civil protection & alpine safety) are melted together into one single cluster “Alpine Technologies”.

Sandrine Hurion from ERAI France demonstrated in “Internationalisation of clusters” how the instruments developed by the region Rhône-Alpes are supporting the cluster companies go international and last but not least, Simone Hagenauer from ecoplus, Lower Austria described the methodology developed by the region to perform “Competence Mapping and Diversification in Clusters” at company level, in order to identify the cross-linking potentials to other sectors for a plus of innovation.

Other experts from Bulgaria, Germany and Austria contributed with their comments to a successful conference. More than 100 participants were present and actively engaged in discussions with the speakers.

Presentations from the conference can be found [here](#)

### **Interregional exchange of experience: 2nd peer group meeting in Bucharest**

During 29-31 October 2012 Bucharest was the hosting place of the 3rd ClusteriX partners' meeting and of the 1st international and inter-regional dissemination event. On the first day the partners presented their good practices related to cluster strategic analysis and regional financing instruments and discussed them in detail:

- Inter-cluster co-operation in Romania,
- Cross-Cluster Innovation in Alpine Technologies in South Tyrol,
- Cross linking the agro-tech sector with related industries in Romania (IND-AGRO pole),
- Cooperation of agro-resources, chemical and plastics clusters in "France Green Plastics",
- Strategic Roadmap Plastipolis and
- Financial instruments to support cross-innovation and Clusters in South Tyrol.

The opportunity to see the own methodologies questioned by other partners with various regional experiences in peer-groups is of particular added-value for the participants.

On 31 October the ClusteriX partners had the opportunity to learn in a study tour more about the newly developed national cluster programmes, to visit the research units of the National Institute for Agricultural Machinery (the Romanian project partner) and to experience the facilities of the IMT and the Science and Technology Park for Micro- and Nanotechnologies MINATECH-RO as well as members of ROMAEROSPACE- Cluster.