

THE DUBROVNIK INITIATIVE

The International Conference on *Contribution of Research and Technology Development (RTD) to Developing Sustainable Knowledge-Based Economies in Central and South East Europe* was held in Dubrovnik on May 22/23 2009. The Conference was organized within the framework of formal collaboration between the three research institutes in the region, the Ruđer Bošković Institute, Zagreb, the Joanneum Research, Graz and the Jožef Stefan Institute, Ljubljana, together with the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office in Ljubljana and the University of Dubrovnik. More than 60 participants from Austria, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Hungary and Kosovo, as well as from Finland and the European Commission took part in the Conference. The speakers at the conference represented academic organizations (RTO's and universities), industry, governmental institutions as well as national and international organizations.

The conference was aimed at better understanding of the role of the Research and Technology Organizations in the development of sustainable knowledge-based economies in Central and South East Europe in line with the Lisbon Strategy and with a special focus on the challenge of strengthening the links between science and industry. The conference dealt with various policy aspects supporting the sustainable economic growth in Central and South East Europe, in particular with regard to the strengthening of national resources and potentials in the fields of RTD and education, as well as in relevant economic sectors on national, regional and European levels.

The participants in the conference formulated several important conclusions, hereinafter denoted as the ***Dubrovnik Initiative***. These conclusions are:

1. The proclaimed development of the Knowledge-Based Society can be achieved only if respective European and national policies will provide sufficient budgetary support for networking collaborations between RTOs, industry and public sector.
2. The development of the Sustainable Knowledge-Based Economies can be achieved only if collaborations between RTOs, industry and public sector will target R&D as primary task to provide benefits for all.
3. In the Central and South East Europe development of the Knowledge-Based Society and Sustainable Knowledge-Based Economies must be supported by European Commission providing novel, specific granting instruments for regional R&D and international collaborations between RTOs, industry and public sector.
4. The term West Balkan Countries (WBC) is no longer appropriate. Namely, regional development should involve the local national as well as broader Central East and South East Europe (CEE&SEE) regional aspects. Therefore, we suggest to refer in future to CEE&SEE region. The North-Western part of this region denoted as Adria-Alps-Pannonia should be considered as the "R&D driving force" linking EU and non-EU countries.
5. International organisations/institutions, such as EARTO, technology parks, as well as R&D companies, should contribute to the regional CEE&SEE development supported by novel programs of the European Commission and respective governments in the region.

6. Financial institutions, including banks, should be partners in this process providing functional support to link RTOs, industry and public sector that will target R&D as primary task to provide benefits for all.
7. RTOs and industry should be encouraged to participate in the higher education and in development of the life-long learning for the benefit of all.
8. The *Dubrovnik Initiative* will establish the Working Group that will work on the implementation of the initiative. The Working Group will involve representatives of the EC, the representatives of the governments of participating countries from CEE&SEE, representatives of industry, RTOs, networking organisations and academic institutions.