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EU project CIMULACT comes to a successful conclusion

The Slovenian Business & Research Association was one of 24 partners in the EU project CIMULACT. CIMULACT – which stands for Citizen and Multi-Actor Consultation on Horizon 2020 – which engaged citizens, along with a variety of other actors, in redefining the European research and innovation agenda and thereby making it relevant and accountable to society. The project began in October 2015 and came to a successful conclusion on April 2018.



Thousands of Europeans were actively engaged with the project. Over the course of the project, more than 1,000 citizens met during the winter 2015-2016 at national vision workshops where they expressed their dreams for a sustainable and desirable future. Thereafter a variety of actors including citizens, stakeholders, experts and the project partners translated these visions into 23 suggestions for Horizon 2020 topics along with policy recommendations. The results have been validated, enriched and prioritised by more than 3,400 people consulted online.

CIMULACT major achievements:

- 23 citizen-based suggestions for Horizon 2020 topics;
- Mentioned as source of input in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme (2018-2020);
- Presented in the Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020 as significant contributor to Horizon 2020
- Was chosen by OECD as good practice case for engagement of citizens in science;
- Outcome remain relevant for the preparation of Framework Programme 9 – Horizon Europe;
- Developed 11 new or adjusted methods for engaging citizens in R&I.

"Projects like CIMULACT have made interaction with citizens possible" is written by the EU Commission in the introduction of the Research and Innovation (R&I) Work Programme Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 expects to invest 30 billion Euros in R&I over the period 2018-2020 and is hereby the most powerful programme for setting directions for R&I in the EU. With the statement the Commission indicates to have integrated central aspects of visions for sustainable and desirable futures developed by citizens across Europe during the CIMULACT project. "We are happy to see that the EU Commission has listened to what European citizens find important to prioritise in research and innovation", says CIMULACT's project coordinator Lars Klüver, Danish Board of Technology, who is proud to see three years of interaction with citizens, experts and stakeholders in EU's R&I agenda settings have been useful and appreciated by the Commission.

CIMULACT is a lynchpin in making EU research agendas open to society being grounded in societal needs and demands. But also OECD has chosen CIMULACT as one of 6 good practice cases for engaging citizens in science. CIMULACT has in other words shown that it is relevant to engage citizens in defining R&I agendas, and not least that it is possible.

For more information about the project, go to www.cimulact.eu

Photo: Second consultation phase held in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Participants providing feedback on the first draft of the research programme scenarios developed during the Scenario Co-creation Workshop.



Editorial



After parliamentary elections in June, Slovenia needed little time to form a governing coalition, which is comprised of five center left parties. Additionally, they are supported by a

non-coalition ultra-left party. The governing coalition does not include the party, which won the largest share of the vote - the center right Social Democratic Party (SDS).

The new government has ambitious economic plans, as well as placing emphasis on a variety of social improvements. Important message for the international community is that the construction of the Divača - Koper second railway track will continue. More so, by end of 2020 science and research will receive direct government financing of 1% of GDP (currently it stands at 0.4%, while the private sector contributes 1.8% of GDP).

While it should be noted, that the outgoing government was to a degree lucky to lead the country in a time of global economic growth, nevertheless it has left a very good economic legacy: €21,000 GDP per capita (up from app. €18,000 four years ago). GDP growth in 2017 stood at 5%, and is forecast to remain the same for this year. The treasury recorded a budget surplus. The country has lowered foreign debt to 20% of GDP (in 2014 it was more than 40% of GDP). The minimum net salary is approaching €850 per month (in 2014 it was €790), while the average net salary is close to €1,100 per month (in 2014 it was app. €1,000). Employment is close to 70% (63% in 2014). Unemployment is down to 76,700 people (from 120,000 in 2014) in a country of 2 million.

These substantial economic improvements rightly place Slovenia at the very top of the best performing EU countries.

Dr. Draško Veselinovič
President, Management Board

SBRA co-organizes high-level conference on EU Funding for Defence and Security

The Slovenian Business and Research Association (SBRA) and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia coorganised the conference on EU Funding for Defence and Security on 8 March 2018. The objective of the



conference was to present the EU defence policy and the landscape of different EU funding opportunities for defence industry and research. The conference focused on the European Defence Fund, which includes a "research window" to fund collaborative research in innovative defence technologies in the amount of EUR 90 million until 2020 and 500 million EUR per year post 2020 and a "capability window" which would act as a financial tool allowing participating Member States to purchase certain assets together to reduce their costs. This window should be able to mobilise about 5 billion EUR per year.

The conference showcased the capabilities of Slovenian defence companies and institutions, including: Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia; National Institute of Biology; National Institute of Chemistry; Jozef Stefan Institute; University of Maribor; L-TEK Electronics, Smart Data Security Adriatic; Arctur; SkyLabs; Guardiaris; among others.

SBRA and Ministry of Infrastructure successfully co-organized the second Transport & Logistics Conference 2018

On 22 March 2018, the Slovenian Business and Research Association (SBRA) and the Ministry of Infrastructure co-organised the Transport & Logistics Conference 2018; a follow-up conference to the very successful event organized in early 2016. Over 100 participants, including Prime Minister of Slovenia Dr. Miro Cerar – one of the keynote speakers - as well as the European Commissioner for Transport Ms.



Violeta Bulc and Dr. Peter Gašperšič, the Slovenian Minister of Infrastructure. Although the event covered the wider EU agenda on transport and logistics, a special emphasis on the central European region will be given, including the construction of the second track of the Slovenian railway line Divača-Koper.

The conference also covered important subjects such as e-mobility, digitalization of transport and logistics, decarbonising the European transport sector, as well as touch upon 'Europe on the Move', a wide-ranging set of initiatives. The event brought together high-level speakers from the European Commission, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Association of Public Transport, Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies, among others.

Business Briefs

Digital Innovation Hub DIGITECH SI-East

TCS – Toolmakers Cluster of Slovenia with LENS Living Lab, founding partners of Competence Centre ROBOFLEX, which is developed within EU H2020 »HORSE« project, are included in EC DG CONNECT activities on Digitising European Industry – Working group on DIHs - Digital Innovation Hubs.

They have participated in Working group meetings, presenting DIGITECH SI-East with CC ROBOFLEX as best practice case in the implementation of DIHs. The themes were: how DIHs can reach out to the SMEs in their own region, access to finance for SMEs and Hubs and networking among DIHs. Presentation of best practice included concept of DIGITECH SI-East and Project office services with consulting SMEs on funding opportunities. Participation in DIHs working group meetings will enable broader presence of DIGITECH SI-East on European level, contributing to the development of DIHs on mentioned areas.

Massive InteGRATion of power Electronic devices



Since January 2016, ELES has been involved in the MIGRATE (Massive InteGRATion of power Electronic devices) project. The H2020 project focuses on issues relating to the operation of the future electricity system in which the predominant share of generation sources will be connected to the grid via power electronics. By 2020, several areas of the trans-European transmission system will be predominantly or exclusively supplied for some parts of the day or year from renewable sources employing elements of power electronics. This will consequently lead to increased difficulties in ensuring dynamic stability of the electricity system, a greater need for upgrading the existing security systems, and the implementation of measures for mitigating the degradation of power quality due to propagation of

higher harmonics.

The expectations of the project are that the partners will, by means of innovative solutions, gradually find answers to questions related to new concepts of operation, protection, and ensuring power quality in changing conditions. ELES will mostly contribute to the fifth work package of the project with the aim to develop a simulation platform for studying the origin, propagation and consequences of higher harmonics, and improving power quality in power-electronics networks in future so as to ensure safe operation of the grid and adequate quality of power supply to grid users.

For more, go to: www.h2020-migrate.eu

DRI performs consulting and engineering services in many railway and road projects



DRI Investment Management plays an important role in the process of implementing large infrastructure projects in Slovenia. The consulting and engineering company offers full support in the process of planning and implementing investments in road and railway infrastructure to the state. In addition, it carries out consulting and engineering services in water and other public utility infrastructure, buildings and transport.

In the past decade, Slovenia has directed the majority of its investments into the road network; today, with the co-financing of the EU, the railway infrastructure is being intensely modernized. DRI provides consulting and engineering services on a number of railway projects which are co-financed by European funds (CEF, Cohesion Fund, EFRD). Currently, the largest projects are the upgrading of sections on the TEN-T network: Zidani Most-Celje, Maribor-Šentilj and Ljubljana-Divača, the arrangement of the Pragersko hub, safety and technical upgrades to the Karavanke railway tunnel, the implementation of ERTMS/ETCS to Dobova-Zidani Most and Pragersko-

Maribor-Šentilj lines and the introduction of remote transport management on the sections Zidani Most-Ljubljana and Zidani Most-Šentilj-state border. One of the company's largest projects is the 27km-long second track of the Divača-Koper railway line, which is a part of the Mediterranean and Baltic-Adriatic Corridor.

Research Briefs

Study visit within the BioEnergyTrain project



Between 8 and 19 January 2018, two PhD students from the Bavarian School of Public Policy at the Technical University of Munich did an internship at ELES within the BioEnergyTrain project. Their doctoral dissertation focuses on the integration of scientists from social sciences and humanities into energy related research, especially research of the use of renewable energy sources and the socio-economic implications of the use of biomass. They conducted interviews with the BioEnergyTrain project partners and also met with experts from ELES.

The main aim of their visit was to gain knowledge of the Slovenian internal energy market, interconnectors with neighbouring countries, the impact of market coupling with Italy on activities of ELES, the security of supply, and network security. They devoted special attention to renewable energy sources and the challenges of their integration into the energy systems, as well as to constant grid overloads and the need to develop Smart Grids and the impact of the latter on revenues. Whilst taking into consideration different political and business cultures of the member states, they also examined the impact of EU legislation concerning Smart Grids on Slovenia and ELES. The result of their visit, first of a kind for ELES within an EU funded project, will be a paper on the

interdisciplinary aspect of cooperation within the BioEnergyTrain project, where participants from different sectors are shaping new study programmes.

For more, go to: www.bioenergytrain.eu

Transforming Consumer and Health-Oriented Society through Science & Innovation



On 20 June 2018, the Slovenian Business & Research Association (SBRA) organised a conference on future trends in the innovation in healthcare sector with the focus on benefits for consumers and society and the importance of the cooperation between public and private research. Renowned experts from business, European health associations, the European Commission presented innovation funding in EU research and innovation funding programmes; as well as importance of disruptive innovation in the healthcare sector.

With over 100 participants and best practice presentations from European, as well as Slovenian healthcare players, it proved to be an extremely successful. The Slovenian Innovation Hub and the Jožef Stefan Institute were presented alongside start-ups Dia-Vit and Iryo, developing solutions for non-invasive measuring of blood sugar and for transparent and safe storage of medical data, respectively.

Regional Briefs

BeePathNet: Enriching the Urban Jungle with Bees

The BeePathNet project aims to upgrade and transfer the BEE PATH concept, solutions, and results from Ljubljana to other EU cities. It will address urban environmental, biodiversity, and food self-sufficiency challenges linked to urban beekeeping through integrated and participative approaches, and build key stakeholders' capacity to influence relevant policies, and develop and implement efficient solutions.

The BeePathNet project partnerships connect three cities: the City of Ljubljana, Slovenia as lead partner, the City of Bydgoszcz, Poland, and the City of Cesena, Italy.

For more, go to: <http://urbact.eu/bee-path-net>

Project APPLAUSE- Alien Plant Species from harmful to useful citizens' led activities



City of Ljubljana has just launched the APPLAUSE pilot project, which introduces a new approach to Invasive alien plant species (IAPS), which are considered a resource and a starting point of a new business model. Through educational and awareness raising campaign, citizens are encouraged to participate in IAPS harvesting and use. Collected IAPS will undergo further transformation at home (e.g. food, dyes), at tutored workshops (e.g. to produce wood or paper products) and in craftsman laboratories (e.g. to manufacture innovative products with market potential in social enterprises, employing vulnerable groups).

The main change is to shift from linear treatment of IAPS to circular use of their economic potential and development of an original, comprehensive and transferable response to IAPS challenges.

For more, go to: <https://www.ljubljana.si/en/applause/>

SINCRO.GRID project



The SINCRO.GRID project is a smart grid investment project of European importance in the territory of Slovenia and Croatia, co-financed from the Connecting European Facility fund. It aims at solving network voltage, frequency control and congestion issues enabling further deployment of renewables and displacement of conventional generation.

The project is first of a kind for Slovenia and for ELES and will reduce dependence on imported energy sources, reduce impact of fossil fuels to the environment and respectively achieve decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, increase

security of supply, improve voltage quality within the electrical power systems of Slovenia and Croatia, increase transmission capability in existing lines, increase cross-border capacities, improve observability of transmission and distribution networks using advanced forecasting tools, and develop new technologies and local economy as a whole.

For more, go to: www.sincrogrid.eu

Urban development through integrated territorial investments in Slovenia



The Association of Urban Municipalities of Slovenia (AUMS) acts as an intermediary body for the selection of urban development projects in the integrated territorial investment (ITI) mechanism in Slovenia. 11 Slovenian urban municipalities, that adopted sustainable urban development strategies, are eligible for 139 million EUR in grants, provided by ERDF, Cohesion fund and funds from the Republic of Slovenia. AUMS combines experts from all 11 cities that are tasked with the selection of projects in the so-called first phase, while projects need to be approved by state ministries in the second phase.

Three public calls for projects were published in 2017 and 59 projects were selected in the first phase. The total value of selected projects is 160 million EUR, while the contribution from the ITI mechanism is expected to reach 102 million EUR. These projects will contribute to the revitalization of urban areas, development of sustainable mobility and energy efficiency of public housing.

In April 2018 first projects received the final approval from state bodies. The city of Ljubljana will receive over 13 million EUR from ITI mechanism for its 23 million EUR worth project of "Gallery Cukrarna" that will transform a sizeable abandoned former sugar factory in an art centre. The city of Koper was successful with the project of "Olympic pool Koper" that will contribute to the development of sports tourism and the revitalization of a degraded urban area, with ITI contribution of 6 million EUR of the overall 8 million EUR project.