



## IncoNet EaP: STI International Cooperation Network for the Eastern Partnership Countries

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<b>Author(s)</b>	Tigran Arzumanyan (NAS RA)
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<b>Abstract</b>	WP 5 has its main aim the promotion of Innovation in the EaP countries in order to create synergies between relevant stakeholders in the EU MS/AC and EaP, and promote the up-taking and exploitation of research results. Thus, the project proposed a series of innovation actions that were implemented by partners. This report summarises the results of these innovation actions and presents a series of recommendations for future actions based on the activity outcomes.
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## **List of Abbreviations**

**CIS – Community Innovation Survey**  
**EEN - Enterprise Europe Network**  
**EIS - European Innovation Scoreboard**  
**EIP – European Innovation Partnership**  
**ETP – European technology Platform**  
**EU AC - European Union Associated Countries**  
**EU MS – European Union Member States**  
**JTI – Joint Technology Initiatives**  
**KIC – Knowledge Innovation Community**  
**NAS RA - National Academy of Sciences of Armenia**  
**SC - Societal Challenges**  
**SET Plan - Strategic Energy Technology Plan**  
**STI – Science, Technology & Innovation**  
**UNIDO – United Nation’s Industrial Development Organization**

## Executive Summary

One of the main objectives of the IncoNet EaP Project is the promotion of innovation in the EaP countries for which a special Work Package was dedicated including four different tasks. The general objectives of these actions were to:

- promote innovation in the EaP countries in order to create synergies between relevant stakeholders in the EU Member States (MS)/Associated Countries (AC) and the EaP;
- identify and share good practices in order to foster public-private partnerships;
- organise activities to bridge the gap between public and private innovation actors and to support the dissemination/exploitation of research results;
- and provide training to local innovation agencies on general issues of innovation policies, launching calls for proposals, evaluating proposals, monitoring, etc.

The four innovation-oriented activities were: (1) Cooperation with EU Innovation Platforms; (2) Cooperation with Enterprise European Network; (3) Training in the field of innovation; and (4) Exploring the extension of the European Innovation Scoreboard in EaP countries.

### Cooperation with EU Innovation Platforms

This activity was dedicated to the establishment and/or enhancement of links between organised 'Platforms' in EU MS/AC and the countries in the EaP region in the area of 3 Societal Challenges (SC), namely, Energy, Health, and Climate Change. Individual actions included: (a) Promoting the potential and the needs of the EaP countries: through the organisation of one EaP session for each of the 3 SCs at the occasion of important EU Platform events; (b) Invitation of EU Platforms to EaP countries; (c) Supporting policy learning via informing and coaching stakeholders from EaP countries.

Towards **promoting the potential and the needs of the EaP countries and supporting policy learning**, EaP representation has been ensured in seven events, alongside the SET-Plan Conference 2014 (December 2014, Rome, Italy), the 6<sup>th</sup> European Bioremediation Conference (June-July 2015, Crete, Greece), 10<sup>th</sup> Conference on Sustainable Development of Energy, Water and Environmental Systems (September 2015, Dubrovnik, Croatia), Climate-KIC Innovation Festival 2015 (October 2015, Birmingham, UK), 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the International Society of Oncology and Biomarkers (October 2015, Zakopane, Poland), and Stakeholders Conference on STI Cooperation in Addressing Health Research and Innovation (April, 2016, Budapest, Hungary).

Towards **invitation of EU Platforms to EaP countries**, representatives of relevant EU Platforms were present in three events organised in the EaP, particularly, the Policy Stakeholders Conference on EU-EaP STI Cooperation in Addressing Climate Change (May 2014, Yerevan, Armenia), the Policy Stakeholders Conference on Energy Research and Innovation (October 2015, Minsk, Belarus).

### Cooperation with Enterprise Europe Network

Towards implementation of the task a workshop on Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) was organised on 26 February 2015, in Kiev, Ukraine, to reflect on successful examples of cooperation of the network with EaP countries, particularly, with EEN Network members of

Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus, and to share the experience and ways of more active use of existing resources towards promoting innovation and technology transfer, as well as extending the network to other EaP countries.

### **Training in the Field of Innovation**

Within this activity a training on innovation was organised on 26-28 May 2015 in Minsk, Belarus, involving 38 participants, including 30 trainees from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as EU trainers from Portugal, USA, Austria, Belgium, Romania and Greece. The trainees represented ministries, agencies, academies and universities involved in applied or collaborative research and/or focused on support measures at state or organisation level, and research coordination units, departments or intermediary organisations dealing with commercialisation of research results. The 3-day event has provided to all of them the unique opportunity for sharing experience, setting up direct contacts and networking. On special request, the local organisers assisted the guests with developing a side agenda to set up or re-start links with Belarusian research centres. The training focused on innovation definitions, financing innovation, commercialisation and technology transfer issues, international assessments and examples from the region. The training ended by visit to a Belarusian innovative science-based private company specialised in the R&D and manufacturing of hi-tech equipment for medical radiology, X-ray security screening, and radiation control. 79% of attended participants evaluated the event as positive.

### **Exploring the extension of the European Innovation Scoreboard in EaP**

This task of the IncoNet EaP project was focused on exploring the chances and challenges for an extension of the EU's European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) activities to Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. A related Workshop entitled "From Innovation Performance Assessment to Innovation Policies" was held in Yerevan, Armenia, on 3-4 May 2016, organised by the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia together with involved project partners.

The main objective of the Workshop was to present the EIS to stakeholders and decision makers from the EaP countries as an adequate tool for comparative assessment of research and innovation performance. The workshop also aimed at identifying the needs and gaps, and highlighting recent developments in including EaP countries in the EIS studies.

The two-day workshop was attended by around 50 participants, including high level officials from EaP countries – Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, responsible for STI policy making and innovation statistics, EU experts involved in EIS activities from Austria, Germany, Luxemburg and Italy, representatives of EU Delegation to Armenia, Armenian innovation support structures, national experts, researchers and SME representatives.

The agenda of the second day included special session on Tackling the Research-to-Innovation Gap in Eastern Partnership Countries, organised jointly with FP7 SECURE-R2I Project and Enterprise Europe Network. It was aimed at focusing on innovation policies as the driver for strategic positioning in the international economic arena and policy responses to support technology transfer and innovation in EaP countries. 97% of participants evaluated the event as positive.

# 1. Introduction

This deliverable D5.1: Assessment of Innovation activities and recommendations for future actions is focused on assessing the various innovation support activities carried out by the partners and puts forth recommendations for future actions based on analysis of the activities.

The general objectives of these actions were to:

- promote Innovation in the EaP countries in order to create synergies between relevant stakeholders in the EU Member States (MS)/Associated Countries (AC) and the EaP;
- identify and share good practices in order to foster public-private partnerships;
- organise activities to bridge the gap between public and private innovation actors and to support the dissemination/exploitation of research results;
- provide training to local innovation agencies on general issues of innovation policies, launching calls, evaluating proposals, monitoring, etc.

The following chapters describe in more details the outcomes of particular tasks and activities carried out in accordance with the DoW, as follows:

- Chapter 2 on Cooperation with EU Innovation Platforms;
- Chapter 3 on Cooperation with Enterprise European Network;
- Chapter 4 on Training in the field of innovation;
- Chapter 5 on Exploring the extension of the European Innovation Scoreboard in EaP countries;
- Chapter 6 on General observations and conclusions on the impact of the activities and innovation in the EaP.

Each of the Chapters 2-5 includes a brief description of the action, a description of results and a series of recommendations for future activities.

## 2. Cooperation with EU Innovation Platforms

### 2.1 Description of the action

According to the DoW, this activity is dedicated to the establishment and/or enhancement of links between organised ‘Platforms’ in EU MS/AC and the countries in EaP region, in the 3 SC. Thus, the objective of the associated Task 5.1 was threefold, as follows:

1. **Promote the potential and the needs of the EaP countries.** For achieving this objective it was planned to organise one EaP session for each of the 3 SC at the occasion of important EU Platform events. Appropriate events were thus identified, disseminated among the partners and discussed with the coordinator.
2. **Invitation of EU Innovation Platforms to EaP countries.** For achieving this objective, missions with representatives from the EU Innovation Platforms were planned to be organised and linked to important events taking place in the EaP countries. These missions were also to include meetings with policy makers, innovators and professional associations.
3. **Support to policy learning via informing and coaching stakeholders from EaP countries.** For this, a group of stakeholders from EaP countries dealing with innovation issues (infrastructures, clusters, inter-sectoral mobility, exploitation of research results, IPR, etc.) was selected following an application/evaluation process, in order to attend an information mission to Innovation Platforms in EU MS/AC. In certain cases, the action could be upgraded to a coaching activity of the EaP stakeholders.

### 2.2 Results and assessment of the actions

Towards implementation of this action, the following activities were carried out:

1. Performance of a mapping exercise related to the relevant EU Innovation Platforms (*i.e.* ETPs, JTIs, EIPs, and KICs, among others) and stakeholders in EU and EaP countries.
2. Identification of events in the EU and EaP suitable for cooperation activities: missions, sessions, dedicated to EaP, and study visits.
3. Organisation of several EaP sessions on the occasion of important EU Innovation Platform events.

<i>Date and Location</i>	<i>Event</i>
December 10-12, 2014, Rome, Italy	Organisation of participation of 10 EaP researchers in the field of energy in <b>SET Plan 2014 Conference</b> (The European “Strategic Energy Technology Plan” (in synergy with IncoNet CA). <i>Summary report is available at the link: <a href="http://www.inco-eap.net/en/419.php">http://www.inco-eap.net/en/419.php</a></i>
June 29 2015, Crete, Greece	Organisation of <b>EaP Sessions on Bioremediation and Phytoremediation at the 6<sup>th</sup> European Bioremediation Conference</b> in Crete, Greece.

<i>Date and Location</i>	<i>Event</i>
	Summary report is available at the link: <a href="http://www.inco-eap.net/en/439.php">http://www.inco-eap.net/en/439.php</a>
September 27, 2015, Dubrovnik, Croatia	Organisation of <b>EaP Session on Energy at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference on Sustainable Development of Energy, Water and Environment Systems</b> in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Summary report is available at the link: <a href="http://www.inco-eap.net/en/441.php">http://www.inco-eap.net/en/441.php</a>
October 3, 2015, Zakopane, Poland	Organisation of <b>EaP Session “Towards Molecular Oncology”</b> at the 42 <sup>nd</sup> Congress of the International Society of Oncology and Biomarkers in Zakopane, Poland. Summary report published under the link: <a href="http://www.inco-eap.net/en/442.php">http://www.inco-eap.net/en/442.php</a>
October 29, 2015 Birmingham, UK	Organisation of the <b>Eastern Partnership session at the Climate-KIC Innovation Festival 2015</b> (in synergy with IncoNet CA). Summary report published under the link: <a href="http://www.inco-eap.net/en/388.php">http://www.inco-eap.net/en/388.php</a>

4. Organisation of missions with EU stakeholders to EaP.

<i>Date and Location</i>	<i>Event and results</i>
May 15-16, 2014 Yerevan, Armenia	Presence at the Stakeholders Conference on <b>EU-EaP STI Cooperation in Addressing Climate Change</b> , Yerevan, Armenia. The mission included representatives of Climate –KIC France and Climate – KIC Lower Silesia RIC.
October 12-13, 2015 Minsk, Belarus	Presence at the EU-EaP Policy Stakeholders Conference “ <b>Energy Research and Innovation in the EaP</b> in Minsk, Belarus. The mission included representatives of the KIC InnoEnergy and European Biofuels technology Platform. The event was adjusted to ENERGY EXPO-2015, the largest expo in the energy sector in Belarus.

5. Organisation of missions with EaP stakeholders to the EU.

<i>Date and Location</i>	<i>Event</i>
December 10, 2014 Rome, Italy	A group of 10 EaP representatives attended the <b>SET-Plan Conference 2014</b> and visited the ENEA Research Centre in Casaccia (a common activity with IncoNet CA). Summary report is available at the link: <a href="http://www.inco-eap.net/en/419.php">http://www.inco-eap.net/en/419.php</a>
October 28-30, 2015 Birmingham, UK	Participation of EaP stakeholders in the <b>Climate KIC Innovation Festival 2015</b> .
April 19-20, 2016 Budapest, Hungary	Participation of EaP stakeholders in the <b>Policy Stakeholders Conference “EU-EaP STI Cooperation in Addressing Health Research and Innovation”</b> . Summary report published under the link: <a href="http://www.inco-eap.net/en/522.php">http://www.inco-eap.net/en/522.php</a>

The work carried out to establish and/or enhance links between relevant EU Innovation Platforms and the countries in the EaP region proved to be challenging. One of the main challenges was related to the identification of relevant events which would provide first-hand information on the EU Innovation Platforms. Also challenging was to convince the event organisers to introduce dedicated EaP sessions in the event. Furthermore, ETP websites were found to often lack information. This made the search procedure challenging, as well as the evaluation and comparison of events.

The communication process with KIC InnoEnergy, Climate-KIC and EIT Health Innostars Innovation was good. Though, the internationalisation of the KIC platforms beyond EU/AC are limited and not primarily oriented towards EaP countries, openness for cooperation was observed. This is especially true in the case of newly associated to H2020 EaP countries. For instance, a Moldovan organisation recently joined the European Innovation Partnership on Water and benefits from joint activities to tackle water problems. This process has a potential to be more intensified in light of conclusion of EU Association Agreements by three EaP countries, particularly, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, and the association of Armenia to EU Horizon 2020 programme.

### ***2.3 Recommendations for future actions***

Based on the analysis of this action, the following recommendations have been derived:

#### ***Recommendation 1:***

##### **Implementation of cluster support programmes in EaP countries**

In the EU, the Research Intensive Clusters, like, the European Technology Platforms (ETPs), the Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI) and Knowledge Innovation Communities (KIC) are state-of-the-art activities and structures bringing together the private and academic sectors as well as national and regional authorities. During implementation process of the activity it came out that similar structures in EaP are absent or in embryonic state. Thus, the initiation and implementation of cluster support programmes in individual EaP countries with strong involvement of private sector is of high importance. The process can start with pilot actions in a single priority area based on analysis of research, technological and industrial strengths of a given EaP country.

The initiation of focused EU assistance programmes directed to development of clusters in EaP and cooperation with similar structures in EU is also important. As an example it can be mentioned German GIZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation) managed programme “Private Sector Development South Caucasus”, co-funded by the EU, which is directed to support SME Development in South Caucasus with a focus, among others, on improved design and management of economic clusters.

#### ***Recommendation 2:***

##### **Further replicate and promote established links between EaP stakeholders and EU Innovation Platforms**

The implemented networking support activities show that there is interest from EaP stakeholders towards development of cluster-like structures in their own countries and more active cooperation with EU Innovation Platforms. Similar interest was observed from some EU Innovation Platforms, like KIC InnoEnergy and Climate-KIC. Thus, it is important to further replicate and promote established links between these platforms and EaP country stakeholders in the future as well.

### **3. Cooperation with Enterprise Europe Network**

#### ***3.1 Description of the action***

In line with positive tendencies towards closer cooperation of EaP countries with Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) there is a need to further reflect on these successful examples, to share the experience and ways of more active use of existing networking resources towards promoting innovation and technology transfer in the region, as well as implementing a coaching scheme to facilitate the entering process.

#### ***3.2 Results and assessment of the actions***

During the project implementation period positive tendencies have been observed towards promoting cooperation and more active participation of EaP countries in Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). To a great extent this can be attributed to dedicated awareness and support activities within the previous IncoNet Projects (IncoNet EECA, IncoNet CASC), activities within this particular task and coaching scheme to facilitate cooperation with EEN. At present, Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine are full members of the network, and Georgia and Belarus are associated members with operational business cooperation centres taking full advantage of services and tools to promote innovation and technology transfer, provided by the network. To further share the experience of cooperating with EEN, explore additional opportunities and ways of extending the network activities, a workshop on Enterprise Europe Network was organised by TBI Kharkov Technologies (KT) from Ukraine and the Institute of Technological Research PAN (IPPT PAN) from Poland on 26 February 2015, in Kiev, Ukraine, which was attended by 55 representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Poland. The representatives of EEN member organisations from EaP countries presented their activities, reflected on successful examples of cooperation within the network, shared on the experience and ways of more active use of available instruments towards promoting innovation and technology transfer, as well as extending the network to other EaP countries. One of the major concerns expressed by representatives of EaP countries was the lack of innovation management and entrepreneurial skills at company level and low number of research-intensive and innovative companies and SMEs in EaP countries, capable of taking full advantage of services provided by EEN members. It was also stressed the importance of using the network for promotion of cooperation between EaP countries.

#### ***3.3 Recommendations for future actions***

Reflecting on the positive tendencies in promoting cooperation of EaP countries with EEN and highlighted issues, the following recommendations have been derived:

***Recommendation 3:***

**To further increasing awareness on EEN activities in EaP countries and regional networking**

The EEN network is the world's largest support network for SMEs with international ambitions which help local research-intensive SMEs to innovate and grow internationally. It is important for policy makers in EaP countries and innovative SMEs to be better aware of provided by the network business opportunities to promote innovation and technology transfer. Hence, the organisation of annual events on EEN in EaP could be recommended, with invitation of EU counterparts to raise awareness on provided services and foster international partnerships. Regional networking can be better used for promotion of innovation and technology transfer with involvement of innovative SMEs from EaP countries without national EEN nodes. Institutions from EaP can express their interest to constitute a Network Business Cooperation Centre for EEN (2015 - 2020), through an open call for third countries (COS-Art-7-001, <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/node/22>).

***Recommendation 4:***

**Introduction of support mechanisms for increasing innovative companies in EaP countries**

Though, most of the EaP countries have joined the EEN network, the provided opportunities and business services are not adequately utilised by these countries due to the low number of research-intensive and innovative companies. In this respect, incentives and skill development measures have to be set up in EaP countries in order to further develop entrepreneurship and innovation management abilities along with intensification and extension of EEN networks. Therefore, in the context of further cooperation with EEN network and better use of available innovation and technology transfer mechanisms, increasing the number of innovative companies in EaP should constitute a priority. This can be supported also by closer cooperation between established EEN centres in EaP countries with their counterparts in EU.

## **4. Training in the field of innovation**

### ***4.1 Description of the action***

Under this task a training seminar on innovation management and entrepreneurship was organised in Minsk, Belarus, during May 26-28, 2015, focused on how to apply the best instruments and to implement coherent processes of technology transfer for the successful exploitation of research results.

### ***4.2 Results and assessment of the actions***

The training on innovation was organised by Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação Ltd., Portugal and the Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support for Scientific and Technical Sphere with the assistance of the project partners from Austria, Germany and EaP countries on 26-28 May 2015 in Minsk, Belarus.

The workshop involved 38 participants, including 30 trainees from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as EU trainers from Portugal, US, Austria, Belgium, Romania and Greece. The trainees represented ministries, agencies, academies and universities involved in applied or collaborative research and/or focused on support measures at state or organisation level, and research coordination units, departments or intermediary organisations dealing with commercialisation of research results. The 3-day event has provided a unique opportunity for sharing experience, setting up direct contacts and networking. On special requests, the local organisers assisted the guests with developing a side agenda to set up or re-start links with Belarusian research centres.

The core part of the training included the introduction to key innovation topics and definitions, IPR issues, and financial innovation which covered two levels – private early-stage financing of innovative enterprises and public policy initiatives to address the early-stage financing needs of innovative firms. Complementary to the training, experiences of different countries in financing of innovative enterprises have been presented. The session was finalised by an interactive exercise implemented in 6 national groups: the task was to develop and defend in public the most urgent measures to overcome existing challenges and boost innovation processes in each EaP country. The next part of the training centred on commercialisation and technology transfer issues, including practical support for commercialisation.

The final session of the training was devoted to international comparative assessments and examples from the region. A visit to ADANI Ltd., the innovative science-based private company specialised in the R&D and manufacturing of hi-tech equipment for medical radiology, X-ray security screening, X-ray non-destructive testing, radiation control and ESR spectrometry has been organised. According to the participants, this visit has become one of the most exciting parts of the training.

The networking event in the end of the training in the historical part of Minsk has united the participants of the training and the partners of another regional EU-supported project NoGAP that is focused on promoting innovation in the energy sector. The event was evaluated positive by 95% of participants.

### **4.3 Recommendations for future actions**

Based on the outcomes of this action, the following recommendations are proposed:

#### **Recommendation 5:**

##### **Support the development of EaP's innovation capacity through setting up a Research and Innovation Centre of Excellence**

Through a recent H2020 opportunity on 'Centres/Networks of European research and innovation' the EU aimed to "create a network of centres in the world's most dynamic and innovative countries and regions that will connect and support European researchers and entrepreneurs globally, in order to strengthen the position of Europe as a world leader in science, technology and innovation". This creates great opportunities for the regions in which the Centres will be established.

The EaP stakeholders could join forces and aim to establish their own Research and Innovation Centre of Excellence. Experts from the EU could join in the beginning to help establish the Centre and contribute to its long-term sustainability. Other EU experts could join through secondments and bring their expertise. When fully established, it would be expected that the Centre should be able to provide:

- An infrastructure (physical or virtual) to host individuals from all EaP countries and the EU, offering secondment opportunities to European organisations that want to be represented in EaP.
- Networking services for EaP organisations: partnering and matchmaking events, workshops, best practice exchange, visits and tours, etc.
- Advice and support to EaP academic and industrial/private sector actors on how to internationalise by engaging in R&I in the desired international partner country/region.
- Training activities on STI strengths and actors, cooperation opportunities and funding opportunities for EaP organisations through national and international programmes.

#### **Recommendation 6:**

##### **Develop a common and improved framework for monitoring innovation activities in EaP countries**

To better understand the level of innovation performance and the forms of innovation within EaP countries, namely for SMEs and other organisations, efforts should be taken to develop a common framework and methodology for assessing innovation. Inspiration can be taken from the current EU frameworks, such as the Community Innovation Survey (CIS) or the European Service Innovation Scoreboard (ESIS) or the European Innovation Scorecard (EIS).

Relevant representatives from each of the EaP countries are encouraged to discuss and foster a common approach to assess innovation and they can capitalise on existing European frameworks to initiate this process. By analysing these examples, with the support of EU experts, it will be then possible to establish a common framework for monitoring innovation within each EaP country and consistently across the region.

## **5. Exploring the extension of the European Innovation Scoreboard in EaP**

### ***5.1 Description of the action***

This task of the IncoNet EaP project was directed towards exploring the opportunities and challenges for an extension of the EU's European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) activities to Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries. A related Workshop entitled "From Innovation Performance Assessment to Innovation Policies" was held in Yerevan, Armenia, on 3-4 May 2016, organised by the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia together with involved project partners.

### ***5.2 Results and assessment of the actions***

The main objective of the Workshop was to present the EIS to stakeholders and decision makers from the EaP countries as an adequate tool for comparative assessment of research and innovation performance. The workshop also aimed at identifying the needs and gaps, and highlighting recent developments in including EaP countries in the EIS studies.

The European Innovation Scoreboards provide a comparative assessment tool for research and innovation performance in Europe. The scoreboards help countries and regions identify the areas they need to address towards development and implementation of more adequate innovation policies.

The two-day workshop was attended by around 50 participants, including high level officials from EaP countries – Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, responsible for STI policy making and innovation statistics, EU experts involved in EIS activities from Austria, Germany, Luxemburg and Italy, representatives of EU Delegation to Armenia, Armenian innovation support structures, national experts, researchers and SME representatives.

The agenda included presentations on the objectives, methodology and country coverage criteria of the EIS, country specificities and lessons learnt from innovation indicators projects from EU, examples of STI sector and country studies, as well as situation with innovation statistics in each present EaP countries, followed by panel discussion on state-of-the-art and perspectives based on recent developments and EU country experiences.

All the presenters, in particular from EaP countries, stressed the importance of harmonisation of national innovation statistics in accordance with EIS methodology and implementation of pilot project with the involvement of all EaP countries. Participants agreed to establish contacts and explore the possibilities within H2020 and other international programmes for preparation and submission of joint proposal on EIS studies.

The agenda of the second day included special session on Tackling the Research-to-Innovation Gap in Eastern Partnership Countries, organised jointly with FP7 SECURE-R2I Project and Enterprise Europe Network. It was aimed at focusing on innovation policies as the driver for strategic positioning in the international economic arena and policy responses to support technology transfer and innovation in the EaP countries. The session included

presentations on innovation support mechanisms under implementation in all present EaP countries, highlights on innovation policy choices and approaches across Europe, as well as panel discussions on the interplay between research/innovation and industry, and policy support measures and mechanisms to sustain the research-to-market process adopted in Europe and EaP countries. It was also stressed that objective assessment of innovation performance based on EIS methodology could be considered as a necessary tool to ensure adequate policy responses in EaP countries. 97% of participants evaluated the event as positive.

### ***5.3 Recommendations for future actions***

Based on the outcomes of the event, the following recommendations are proposed:

#### ***Recommendation 7:***

**Using an internationally comparable innovation survey as a common framework for identifying weaknesses of the innovation system in EaP, the results of which could serve as a basis for designing policy measures to tackle the identified weaknesses**

Objective assessment of innovation performance based on internationally adopted methodology could be considered as a necessary tool to assess relative strengths and weaknesses of national innovation systems and thus provide the grounds for designing adequate policy responses in EaP countries. In spite of clear progress on implementation of research and technology initiatives in EaP countries, there are still few measurable impacts and results of innovation-related policies – partly due to the lack of internationally comparable statistical data. Existing EU frameworks, like the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), could be inspiring for better understanding innovation developments in EaP. A forum for discussing common frameworks was considered to be very useful and could be encouraged in the future as well so as to discuss common approaches. Improved statistical system and robust policy evaluation based on performance indicators could be a relevant tool to tackle weaknesses of the innovation system and to adopt corrective measures on policy level.

#### ***Recommendation 8:***

**Initiation of pilot project on assessment of innovation performance according to EIS methodology involving all EaP countries**

The EU is using European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), which provides a comparative assessment of the innovation performance of EU. There is no available data for the EaP countries to measure the innovation performance within the same criteria, except Global Innovation Index which is not identical. The National Committees of Statistics collect data on a limited number of indicators in the innovation domain and it is thus difficult to make a comprehensive analysis of the EaP countries vis-à-vis the EU member states. Work on distinguishing these indicators and harmonising them with the corresponding EU indicators should become a key task to be addressed and accomplished in the near future. Thus, exploring the possibilities for preparation and implementation of a pilot project on assessment of innovation performance according to EIS methodology, involving all EaP countries, would be relevant. Possible framework for such a common activity could be dedicated calls within current H2020 or other EU programmes, other international programmes, like, UNIDO, World Bank, etc.

## 6. Final Considerations

Considering the feedback from the participants and analysis of evaluations received, in particular, as a result of events organised within Activity 2, Cooperation with Enterprise Europe Network, Activity 3, Training in the field of Innovation and Activity 4, Exploring the extension of the European Innovation Scoreboard in EaP, it can be mentioned that there was a clear demand for aforementioned innovation support activities in the EaP countries.

All the dedicated activities were considered to be very relevant and important for promotion of various aspects of innovation and EU-EaP cooperation. Though appearing to be somewhat challenging, Activity 1, **Cooperation with EU-Innovation Platforms**, contributed to raising awareness on cluster-like activities in EU among EaP stakeholders, allowed representatives of selected EU platforms to visit EaP countries, share experiences and be more informed about the situation in EaP and initiate contacts. It also allowed identifying certain cluster-formation-support EU initiatives in EaP which could be replicated in other EaP countries and regions. Moreover, a number of EaP stakeholders were provided an opportunity within this activity to visit selected platform events in EU, acquire adequate knowledge and contacts for better understanding innovation related trends in specific thematic priorities.

Along with obvious positive tendencies, the Activity 2, **Cooperation with Enterprise Europe Network**, was directed to further discussion of possibilities and measures towards taking full advantage of provided by the EEN network services and tools to promote innovation and technology transfer in EaP countries - members of EEN Network, and promoting the network to non-member EaP countries.

In light of shortage of innovation managers being one of the evident bottlenecks of the innovation systems in most of EaP countries, Activity 3, **Training in the field of Innovation**, was focused on improving innovation management knowledge and skills of representatives of various stakeholder organisations from EaP countries dealing with innovation policy-making and implementation. The training proved to be very useful also in terms of establishing contacts for further cooperation and mutual learning.

Activity 4, **Exploring the extension of European Innovation Scoreboard**, allowed to present EU innovation measurement methodologies to EaP stakeholders as relevant tools for assessing innovation performance and innovation measures, and alignment of innovation policies accordingly.

All the aforementioned innovation promotion activities were well received in the region and provoked adequate interest. Recent closer integration processes between EU and EaP region, marked by the concluded Association Agreements with three EaP countries and association of four EaP countries to H2020, provide the grounds for closer political, economic and scientific integration processes. At the same time, certain room for improvement and intensification of activities is obvious, particularly, in the field of innovation and technology transfer. Therefore, continuation and intensification of similar activities in the future is deemed to be necessary.