

PANTERA PANEL

Boosting the R&I of Smart Grids, Storage and Energy communities

The 13th Mediterranean Conference on Power Generation, Transmission, Distribution and Energy Conversion

Country: Valletta - Malta

8th of November 2022 from 14:00 to 17:30 hrs CEST

Malta is an active member of the EU since 1st May 2004 and actively works in the success of the energy transition objectives to achieve the declared policies for achieving a low carbon economy. However, the following areas are still a concern in achieving carbon neutrality and we would like to address them in this panel that brings together stakeholders in the field of smart grids, storage and local energy systems:

- R&I activities in the field are weak calling for more national and European support to raise opportunities, bring closer to the wealth of EU knowledge and offer the means to address local needs with the support of the industry and broader communities.
- Enabling technologies like digitalisation, storage, smart grids, e-Mobility and reliable communications are not adequately addressed to facilitate the much-wanted transition for the effective use of emerging technologies that include distributed RES, e-mobility with smart charging and V2G attributes and demand flexibility.
- End users and citizens are not adequately empowered through codes, appropriate regulation and market instruments to build and operate effective energy management systems utilizing the emerging technologies that can grow into efficient energy communities with appropriate technologies in place to facilitate optimal use of local resources for the benefit of the citizens.

The panel was intended to bring the stakeholders of Malta actively participating in the proceedings to address all the above issues and together try to pave the way forward for helping the country to move faster toward the much-wanted energy transition to the low carbon economy.

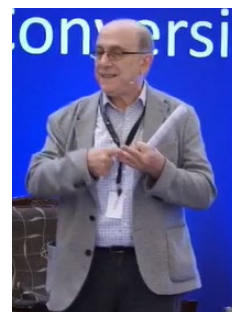
Time (CEST)	Topics	Description	Presenter
14:30 14:50	The PANTERA project and the regional approach	Opening the workshop and setting the scene for open dialogue on the role of the PANTERA process in helping Malta to grow stronger in sustainable energy R&I	Dr. Venizelos Efthymiou(FOSS)
14:00 14:30	SUPEERA	The SUPEERA project: Mobilization of EU-13 national public research resources in the Clean Energy Transition: challenges and opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SET Plan and CET - benefits and engagement possibilities Investment and reform measures for	Dr Ivan Matejak, SUPEERA coordinator, EERA, Belgium

		Malta for CET	
14:50 15:10	Malta: Energy and R&I landscape	Malta's Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for the period 2021-2030 and beyond.	Ing. Abigail Cutajar (Advisor to the Minister on Energy and Sustainable Development)
15:10 15:30	EIRIE at your service	EIRIE: The multifunctional platform that can make the difference: Step-by-step introduction to its capabilities that serve your needs	Dr. Venizelos Efthymiou (FOSS) and Dr Anna Mutule (IPE)
15:30 15:50	Coffee Break		
16:20 17:20	Panel Discussion and Q&A session	<p>How to accelerate the R&I activities of Malta in support of the energy transition?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Collaboration • National regulations • Policy issues • Financing opportunities • good practice 	<p>Moderator: Dr Venizelos Efthymiou</p> <p>Panelists (TBC): Ing. Abigail Cutajar (Advisor to the Minister on Energy and Sustainable Development)</p> <p>Dr Brian Azzopardi (Senior Lecturer II at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST))</p> <p>Prof. Natalija Lepkova (Professor (Associate) at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University)</p>
15:50 16:20	SUPEERA	<p>Norway/EEA Grants</p> <p>R&I opportunities for collaboration and funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizon Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clean Energy Transition Partnership ○ Widening Calls 	<p>Berta Matas Güell, Senior Researcher, SINTEF, Norway</p> <p>Spyridon Pantelis, Project Manager, EERA, Belgium</p>
17:20 17:30	Closing Remarks	Wrap up giving emphasis to the outcomes of the workshop	Dr Shafi Khadem (IERC)

Opening of the workshop:

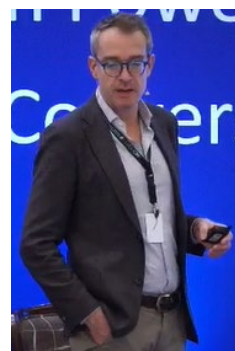
The role of the PANTERA process in helping Malta to grow stronger in sustainable energy R&I

Dr Venizelos Efthymiou (PANTERA project coordinator -FOSS - Cyprus) opened the workshop welcoming all the participants. After having briefly introduced the PANTERA project, its main goal and mission, he presented the developed EIRIE platform. After that he presented regional desk approach with 6+1 regional desks, and described the PANTERA process. After that, Dr Efthymiou mentioned that the relation of projects with the different technologies and solutions is very important and indicates that a common taxonomy on how to relate projects to technologies, systems and solutions has been agreed. Finally, he concluded the presentation by informing the audience on the rich activities of the consortium in relation to the many workshops organised so far.



Ivan Matejak: Mobilization of EU13 national public research resources in the Clean Energy Transition: challenges and opportunities

The second presentation of the workshop has been given by Dr **Ivan Matejak**, SUPEERA coordinator and Operations Director at the European Energy Research Alliance. During his presentation, Dr Matejak presented the EERA and SET Plan and gave an overview of the current energy status of EU. Furthermore, he presented the most important initiatives to be expected in 2023. He continued by presenting Malta's energy sector and an overview of Malta's involvement in the SET Plan Implementation Working Groups (IWGs), underlining its participation in only one Implementation Working Group, Batteries. Regarding Malta's performance in Horizon 2020 projects, he projected statistical data that indicates that Malta receives the lowest net contribution Among EU13. Finally, he concluded by analysing the opportunities that arise through the active participation in the SET Plan and the added benefits of being an EERA member.



Abigail Cutajar: The Vision and Opportunities amidst an Energy Crisis

The workshop continued with a presentation by Ing. Abigail Cutajar, the Advisor to the Maltese Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Sustainable Development responsible for projects in the Energy, Electrification and Sustainable Development areas. Ing. Abigail with through her presentation addressed the vision, objectives and targets of Malta with regards to the energy sector and energy transition. Among others, Ing. Abigail focused on the importance of energy efficiency in buildings and indicated that it is vital that all the countries should support schemes for energy efficiency in



households and businesses. Finally, she presented the government financial commitment for 2023.

EIRIE platform at your service

Dr Venizelos Efthymiou (FOSS) presented in detail the EIRIE platform functionalities starting from the EIRIE “mission statement”:

A reference platform and one-stop shop for information sharing, collaboration and knowledge creation aiming at evidently supporting the advancement of R&I activities in Smart Grids at national, regional and pan-European level and, subsequently, facilitating the energy transition.

He then went on to identify the value propositions for having a fully functional platform accessible by all R&I community:



To researchers

- Access to a pan-European data base with analytical and exploitable information on smart grid projects
- Information about best practices in R&D sector
- First-hand insights into interesting smart grid projects, results, ideas, initiatives
- Access to SotA Training Material and Education Programmes

To R&I Organizations

- Cross-promotion opportunities, encouraging synergies with projects and initiatives through information sharing and promotion opportunities through highlighting key achievements as best practices
- Making feasible for the low spending, in R&I, countries to be engaged in a more active manner in EU R&I activities

To Policy makers

- Define inefficiencies of R&I activities at national, regional and EU level and prioritization of policy actions towards advancing R&I in low-performing thematic

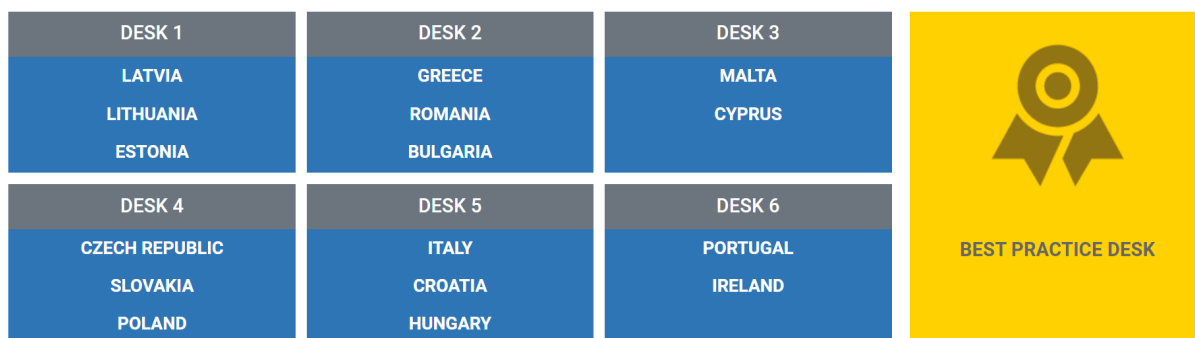
Pooling together different available instruments into one platform, in such a way that it will effectively contribute to the increase of knowledge, coordination of R&I activities and networking.

Dr Anna Mutule, took the floor and continued the EIRIE coverage with the vision to create, through the planned multi-functional collaborative platform, a reference operational point to:

- Unify European activity
- Incentivize further investments in smart grids
- Support access to exploitable results
- Spark further work and cooperation capable of bridging the existing gaps.

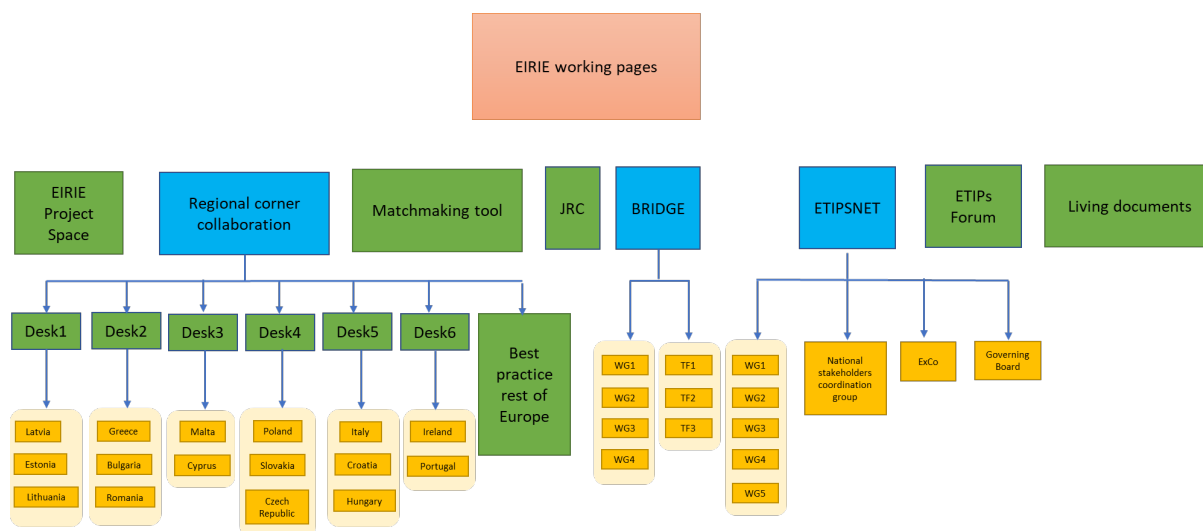


Building on the wide benefits that EIRIE is offering to its users, has given further insights on the wealth that the current design of the regional corner offers, allowing all countries in Europe to create and nurture successful collaborations that strengthen the R&I activities throughout the EU.



Particular emphasis was given to the versatility given by the CONFLUENCE platform generated for further enhancing the collaboration work on EIRIE:

- Confluence is a collaboration wiki tool used to **help teams to collaborate and share knowledge efficiently**.
- Confluence is a **team workspace** where knowledge and collaboration meet by creating, collaborating, and organising all the work done within EIRIE in one place.
- Confluence is for teams of **any size and type**, from those with mission-critical, high-stakes projects that need rigor behind their practices, to those that are looking for a space to build team culture and engage with one another in a more open and authentic way.

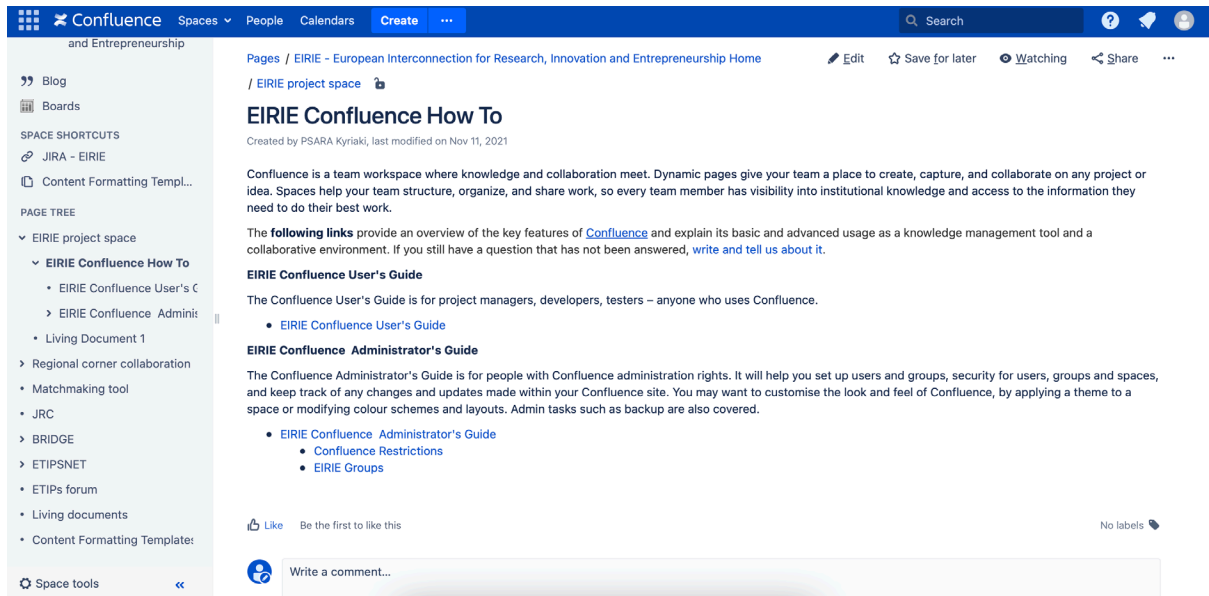


Anna has analysed the developed architecture on EIRIE / CONFLUENCE giving evidence that all are welcome to strengthen their widening possibilities for enriched R&I work in Europe:

The EIRIE space in CONFLUENCE has been designed and it is ready for all to use for enhanced collaboration. Building on well-designed CONFLUENCE pages this is achievable with universal benefits:

- All content resides in **pages** – composing living documents created on EIRIE Confluence site.
- Different **types of pages** can be created such as project plans, meeting notes, troubleshooting guides, policies, and more.

- Confluence comes bundled with **templates** that can be used as a basis for almost any kind of content.
- In case none of the existing templates can be used for a specific type of content you want to create, a **blank page** can be used and adjusted accordingly.



Panel Discussion and Q&A session

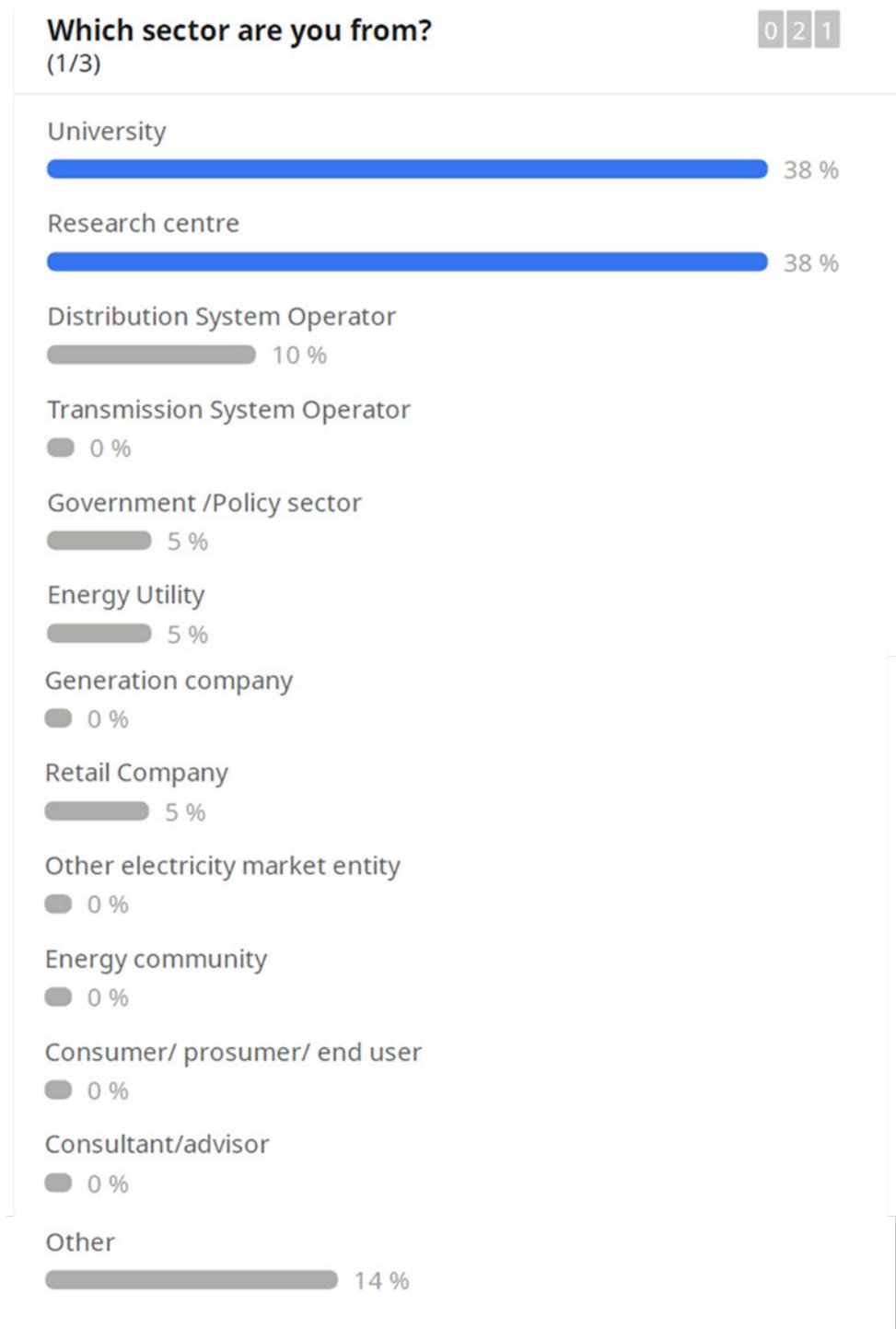
The panel was coordinated by Dr Venizelos Efthymiou (FOSS) taking care of introducing the themes to be addressed to help the participants in following and contributing.

In order to help the contribution of the participants in the discussion, use was made of the online tool SLIDO through which the response is imminent on posed questions and thus useful for the conducted discussion.

As a warmup question to the participants to learn to use the SLIDO online tool the question of “Which is your country of residence?” was asked. The interesting results are the following:



As a follow up question, the participants were asked the question: **Which sector describes best your affiliation?** The results were revealing, and they were as follows:



The following question triggered interest among the participants and their responses were highly relevant to the panel discussion with the panellists positioning themselves on the noted outcome:

What barriers do you see in being actively involved in R&I in your country? Please choose 3 out of the following:
(1/2)

020

Lack of coordination between private and public investments in R&I.

30 %

No access to research infrastructure.

0 %

Low country budget in R&I.

55 %

Universities do not relate their R&I work to the needs of local industry.

45 %

Public authorities do not include R&I in their scope of work / needs.

40 %

Universities don't equally value local achievements Vs international.

25 %

No easy access to R&I results, data, information & knowledge.

25 %

No adequate public support / guidance to R&I work / needs.

35 %

Panel discussion: How to accelerate the R&I activities of Malta in support of the energy transition?

- Research Collaboration
- National regulations
- Policy issues
- Financing opportunities
- good practice

Moderator:

Dr Venizelos Efthymiou (FOSS)

Panellists:

Ing. Abigail Cutajar (Advisor to the Minister on Energy and Sustainable Development)

Dr Brian Azzopardi (Senior Lecturer II at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST))

Prof. Natalija Lepkova (Professor (Associate) at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University)



As input to the discussion, the results of the third question were noted and the panellists were asked to position themselves. The responses to the third question about the barriers to R&I activities in your countries, has given the highest score to the following:

- Low country budget in R&I
- Universities do not relate their R&I work to the needs of the local industry and communities
- Public authorities do not consider R&I as inherent to their daily activities

Discussing on the results, Ing. Abigail indicated that she is not surprised at all. Then she continued by mentioned that this doesn't apply only on R&I. There are a lot of R&I funding at EU level that as a country we are not stepping into. As a Country we obviously support the energy sector however we might need to give more attention to R&I.

Then, Dr Brian took the floor to indicate that one of the ruling problems is that the funding allocated though projects is limited in time (2-3 years) and this has a negative effect in attracting the best talents. So as a country it is important to "sustain the talents" and we need to address this issue.

Prof. Natalija, said that same problems are in her native country Lithuania and maybe true in every European country. She indicated also that the results of this poll reflect the situation prevailing in many countries, adding to the identified list the common problem that many face and is related to the high bureaucratic practices in dealing R&I activities.

After that the moderator of the panel Dr Efthymiou, mentioned that ministries put a lot of effort on this and set the question if the panellists think that the support they receive from Ministries in Malta is adequate, and if there is any sector that is lacking?

Responding, Ing. Abigail said that R&I is vast and wide, we have to segregate the issue. The water and energy agency open different calls for R&I. Normally there are two calls per year, there are certain requirements, but they are not bureaucratic as at EU level. She continued saying that Malta aims to invest heavily on R&I especially in new technologies such as offshore renewables etc.

Then, Dr Brian mentioned that there is a lot of potential untapped in the Maltese island. In the PV sector every surface could be covered by PVs. Offshore there might be more difficulties, and therefore before going offshore we should deplete any onshore resources.

Following to Dr Brian's comment, Ing. Abigail wanted to make clear that the vision of the government is not to fill each space with renewables, but to give better quality of life to people. Moreover, Dr Efthymiou set the following question to the panellists: Do ministries rely on the academia of Malta, using them as a source of scientific evidence that helps R&I to take effective decisions?

Ing. Abigail stressed the importance of the interrelation of the government and energy and water agency with the universities and research centres. She mentioned that it is important to act on scientific evidence, underlying the importance of close collaboration between industry and the Maltese universities. She believes that there is a lack of knowledge for blue collar jobs and concluded by saying that the government trusts universities and try to have close communication with them.

Furthermore, a representative of ENE Malta (audience), indicated that as ENE Malta, they are collaborating with the industry and they need to invest more to improve their network. There are a lot of challenges, and the involvement of the universities is crucial.

Finally, Dr Efthymiou indicated that the EIRIE platform is giving the possibility of strong collaboration between researchers in Europe, opening the door for collaboration possibilities with experts from all over Europe. Ending this panel session, Dr Efthymiou thanked all the panellists and the participants, and he underlined the importance of the EIRIE platform and how it can help R&I community to work together and collaborate transforming it into a real tool for the benefit of R&I community in Europe as a whole.

Berta Matas Güell: The EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

After the roundtable discussion, the workshop continued with two presentations for SUPEERA project. Miss Berta gave a virtual presentation on the topic of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. She started her presentation by mentioning that this funding mechanism was mainly established to reduce the economic and social disparities between the regions of the EU13 countries and at the same time to strength the relations beneficiary states with donor states. After that she presented briefly the funding programme and presented the funding of beneficiary countries from 2014 to 2021 from EEA grants and Norway grants. Then she presented in detail the programme design process and how it works and gave an overview of EEA/Norway grants 2014-2021 in Malta.

New cooperation agreements with Malta on a number of new programs on February 2017

Areas of support

- Alleviating poverty and supporting local and regional development Facilitating bi-communal cooperation.

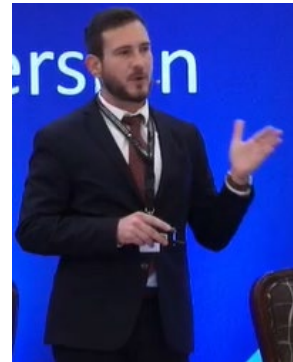
- Supporting vulnerable children and youth at risk of social exclusion and poverty
- Strengthening civil society and empowering vulnerable groups, including refugees and migrants
- Support for cultural tourism and public access to culture

Programmes

- Active Citizens Fund
- Local development and Poverty Reduction
- Social Dialogue –Decent Work
- Bilateral Fund

Spyridon Pantelis: Clean Energy Transition and main funding opportunities

The final presentation of this workshop was given by Spyridon Pantelis (EERA) presenting the Clean Energy Transition and main funding opportunities. He started his presentation with a general overview of the Horizon Europe.



- EU's most ambitious R&I framework programme ever and largest transnational programme of its kind worldwide
- Budget of **EUR 95.5 billion** to be distributed between 2021 and 2027
- Provides new instruments such as the **European Innovation Council, Research Missions and Partnerships** to boost the EU R&I landscape.

After that, Spyridon presented the Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETP) and the CETP transition initiatives on a joint programming platform with the involving stakeholder groups:

- ERA-NETs
- SET Plan IWGs
- EERA
- ETIPs
- Representatives of MS/AC

Then he presented the procedure and the current deadlines for proposal submissions and the main project requirements.

After that he proceeded with a presentation on **R&I opportunities for collaboration and funding Horizon Europe (Cluster 5)**, and finished his presentation by presenting the Widening calls. More specifically he presented the 3 destinations of Horizon Europe:

- **DESTINATION 1: IMPROVED ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE**
 - Aims at underpinning geographical diversity, building the necessary capacity to allow successful participation in the R&I process and promoting networking and access to excellence
- **DESTINATION 2: ATTRACTING AND MOBILISING THE BEST TALENTS**
 - Aims at reverting the brain drain from widening countries, emphasis on intersectoral mobility, better exploitation of existing research infrastructures
- **DESTINATION 3: REFORMING AND ENHANCING THE EU RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SYSTEM**
 - Four objectives: Prioritise investments and reforms, improve access to excellence, translate R&I results into the economy and deepen the EERA

Outcomes of the workshop and concluding remarks

Dr Shafi Khadem (IERC) concluded the workshop by summarizing the most important points and conclusions of the workshop and underlined the importance and the benefits of connecting to the EIRIE platform.

Then Dr Shafi thanked all the participants to the workshop and especially the panelists for their time to be with us in this useful workshop and for sharing their thoughts and knowledge about this topic.

