



## Conclusions of the Conference on ‘Sharing experiences from the Association to H2020’

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<b>Responsible author(s):</b>	Serkan Karas, George Bonas (CeRISS)

**Short abstract (max. 500 characters):**

The deliverable reports the practical details of the Conference on ‘Sharing experiences from the Association to H2020’ which was organized on 30-31st May 2017 in Chisinau, in the framework of the H2020-funded EaP PLUS Project. The report documents the key points from the presentations of the representatives from non-EaP Associated Countries, i.e. Serbia, Israel and Turkey, on national measures and instruments implemented to support association to H2020 and integration to ERA, in their respective countries. The deliverable concludes with possible interventions or measures that can be taken under the EaP Plus Project in themes concerning NCP structures, Incentives for Applications, Programme Committees for H2020, KICs and COST Actions.



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<b>Main author</b>	Serkan Karas (CeRISS), George Bonas (CeRISS)
<b>Contributors</b>	Diana Grozav (CIP)
<b>Quality Assurance (if applicable)</b>	Piotr Swiatek, German National Contact Point for Energy in H2020 PTJ/FZJ

## Versioning and Contribution History

Version	Date	Author/Editor	Contributors	Description/Comments
_v01	08.06.2017	Serkan Karas, George Bonas		First draft of the deliverable
_v02	16.06.2017	Serkan Karas, George Bonas	Diana Grozav	External circulation of the draft and review by the partner
_v03	20.06.2017	Serkan Karas, George Bonas		Last round of circulation before QC

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***List of Abbreviations***

EaP PLUS	STI International Cooperation Network for Eastern Partnership Countries - PLUS
DoA	Description of Action
WP	Work Package
NCP	National Contact Point
KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community

## **Executive Summary**

The deliverable aims i. to inform about the content of the Conference and its relevant presentations ii. to report the challenges faced by Associated Countries and the measures taken for their mitigation iv. to draw up conclusions from the experience of Associated Countries v. to provide recommendations to EaP countries based on the experiences of the Associated Countries.

### **1 Introduction**

The deliverable is prepared to report the practical details of the Conference, presentations and the main conclusions drawn from the panels. In addition the deliverable aims to document the possible interventions or measure that can be taken under the EaP Plus Project.

### **2 Methodology**

Conclusions were prepared from the notes taken during the Conference.

## **3 Conclusions of the Conference on 'Sharing experiences from the Association to H2020'**

### **3.1 Overview**

The Conference on 'Sharing Experiences from the Association to H2020' was organized by the Center for International Projects, Moldova and CeRISS, Greece on 30-31st May 2017 in Chisinau, in the framework of the H2020-funded EaP PLUS Project. There were over 35 policy-makers, NCPs and government/EU officials from EU and EaP countries attending, while the Moldovan participation numbered around 85, including representatives from national research institutes, SMEs and SME support organisations.

During the conference, representatives from non-EaP Associated countries, Victor Nedović, Assistant Minister (Ministry of Education of Serbia), Ebru Imamoglu, Coordinator of national support mechanisms of H2020 (TUBITAK) and Ruth Friedel, Israel Innovation Authority (ISERD), presented national measures and instruments implemented to support participation to H2020 and integration to ERA, in their respective countries.

From these presentations we could observe that Serbia, Israel and Turkey have established different organizational structures and working procedures concerning their NCP systems. There are certain particularities of each case which deserve to be noted for insight and inspiration.

In the Turkish case, the NCPs are structured according to the Horizon2020 themes while they are centralized under TUBITAK in Ankara. The geographic coverage of the country is assured

through missions of the qualified NCP staff members to make presentations during numerous events organized throughout the country.

Israel also has a thematic NCP system in which all NCPs are concentrated under one roof for securing fast access to multiple-expert competence. Another aspect of Israeli approach is integrating all stakeholders (i.e. Consultancy Companies, Researchers, and SMEs) involved in the proposal preparation process into NCPs' institutional practice. Organized as service providing body, the whole system approaches every applicant as a client.

In Serbia the Ministry of Education, through the Science and Technological Development Department, has undertaken the decisive role in setting up the NCPs and training the first managers which are spread over several institutions like the Chamber of Commerce, research institutes and the Ministry itself. In addition to NCPs, the Ministry established a Consultative Bureau for International Projects in order to assist particularly researchers and SMEs.

Following experiences from Serbia, Turkey and Israel, representatives of Associated EaP Countries made presentations both on the progress of establishment activities for facilitating participation to H2020 and integration into ERA, and the challenges they are facing.

The Conference continued with sessions on additional possibilities arising from the Association to H2020 such as participation to the SME Instrument, to Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), Innovfin, etc. Examples and best practices of cooperation activities of the aforementioned Programmes and initiatives towards EaP countries have been highlighted, as well as the benefits from the participation in COST Actions in paving the way for joining H2020 consortia.

## **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The conference ended with the open discussion which focused on the challenges and possible measures that can enhance the participation of the newly Associated Countries to H2020. The major conclusions are summarized as follows:

### *4.1.1 NCP structures*

In most Associated EaP countries the NCP system is still under organisation: although experts have been (or are currently) nominated as NCPs, they are often belonging to different organizations and in most of the cases they are undertaking the NCP duty as an additional activity beside their regular job

In view of the forthcoming last H2020 Work Programme to be published coming fall, there is an urgent need to setup a robust NCP system in the Associated EaP Countries (and also in Azerbaijan and Belarus).

Certainly 'one size does not fit to all', however the following guiding principles need to be considered when organising the NCP systems:

- thematic versus geographic coverage: A thematic coverage of all H2020 programmes by corresponding NCPs should be the first priority. Well trained thematic NCPs can then travel in the country to cover the geographic dimension.
- Under one roof: Having the NCPs under one roof allows synergies and exchange of experience among them. It also constitutes a 'one stop shop' for the scientific community.
- Professional NCPs: The NCP should see her/himself as a service provider towards the scientific community and in that respect the ideal situation would be to setup an NCP system of professionals.
- Quality Indicators: to assess NCPs for their efficiency the development of quality indicators is necessary. Such indicators could include: number of events organized and number of participants in these events; geographic coverage of the country; individual face-to-face or via phone consultations; number of proposals that have been submitted to H2020; etc [1][2].

It is important for the NCPs to participate to Support Actions (projects) addressed to the EU NCPs. However, since these projects are already running, the participation of NCPs from the Associated EaP countries is often without funding. A solution to that should be found by the National Authorities and a request highlighting this issue could also be addressed to the European Commission.

In view of the forthcoming last H2020 Work Programme, the organization of Trainings for the NCPs and of Info Days should be envisaged and the EaP PLUS project can be instrumental in that. The type of activities to be implemented (NCP Trainings or Info Days) should be tailor-made to correspond to each country's needs. In that respect a consultation will be promptly implemented between the EaP PLUS project and the relevant national stakeholders.

When considering the highly competitive character of H2020, it is important to mobilise especially the most capable researchers from the Associated EaP Countries (they should be targeted in addition to the 'general' information to be provided to whole research community). In that respect, the mapping and networking exercise of the most active grant writers and successful scientists that takes place in Georgia can be considered as a best practice example. Such targeted approaches could also be linked to the incentive schemes that several countries are putting in place (see below).

#### *4.1.2 Incentives for Applications*

Providing incentives for H2020 applicants constitutes a valuable tool for increasing the number of high quality proposals submitted. During the conference the impressive system of

incentives put in place by TUBITAK in Turkey has been presented, as well as similar schemes under development in some Associated EaP countries.

The incentives in place or under development can reward the researchers either before or after the submission of a proposal. In the latter case, the size of the reward is increasing depending on the score (from eligible to ranked or funded proposals) and the role in the project (partner or coordinator).

Incentives in the form of financial support in the preparation phase of the proposal (e.g. travel grants for proposal preparation meetings) are extremely important in order to increase in the number of applications from the Associated EaP countries. However, in such grant schemes a clear link to a specific H2020 call for proposals should be ensured.

#### *4.1.3 Programme Committees*

The nomination of Programme Committee (PC) members (delegates and experts) in the Associated EaP Countries is still not fully completed.

It is important to highlight the dual role of the PC members: they should not only be experts in the respective field but also service providers towards the scientific community of their country by organizing internal consultations and by conveying the information from the PC meetings in Brussels to their country and vice-versa.

It has been highlighted that important financial and procedural problems concerning the travel expenses of the PC members exist (no more than 2 requests for travel reimbursement by country, no daily allowances are paid). The Associated EaP Countries should take all the necessary measures to solve these problems, keeping in mind that the additional financial effort is minor when compared to the overall national effort related to the association..

It should also be noted that the most important internal consultation work should not be hampered by the aforementioned problems, i.e. it should start independently from the possibility to participate at the Brussels PC meetings.

Last but not least, the EaP PLUS project is planning next fall a training Workshop for the nominated PC members that will give them the possibility to exchange best practices with PC members from EU.

#### *4.1.4 KICs*

There is certain interest both from the European Institute of Technology (EIT) but also from the EaP Associated countries to develop closer links, especially in the framework of EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS). However, the initiative should come from the EaP Associated countries on a country-by-country basis. In case such an interest and initiative arises, the EaP PLUS project could contribute to the process through (e.g.) the co-organization of an awareness event in the respective Associated EaP country.

#### *4.1.5 COST Actions*

The participation in COST Actions constitutes an extremely important way for networking and for ultimately preparing H2020 proposals. Israel, Serbia and Turkey actively promoted the participation of their researchers in COST Actions.

However, despite the importance of COST, the participation of the Associated EaP countries in COST Actions is rather limited and certainly not proportional to the national effort to become Associated to H2020. In that respect, the Associated EaP countries are urged to disseminate information about COST and to take all the necessary measures for increasing their participation in COST Actions.

## **5 Bibliography**

[1] Minimum Standards for NCPs (EU, 2014)

[2] Horvath assessment of the NCP academy and NCP networks (EU, 2017)

## **Annexes**

## ANNEX I



### Conference on 'Sharing experiences from the Association to H2020'

## AGENDA

### Date

30-31 May 2017

### Venue

Codru Hotel

Chisinau (Republic of Moldova)

Day 1: Tuesday, 30 May 2017	
9:00 am to 9:30 am	<i>Registration and Welcome Coffee</i>
9:30 am to 10:15 am	<p><b>Conference Opening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Acad. Gheorghe DUCA, President of ASM</li> <li>- Thierry DEVARS, Policy Officer , DG Research and Innovation, EC</li> <li>- George BONAS, Coordinator, EaP PLUS Project</li> </ul> <p>Introductory Note: <b>Opportunities &amp; Challenges of Association to H2020</b> Thierry DEVARS, Policy Officer, DG R&amp;I, EC</p>
10:15 am to 10:35 am	<p><b>The EaP PLUS Project: Overview</b></p> <p>George BONAS, Coordinator, EaP PLUS, Managing Director, CeRISS</p>
10:35 am to 11:05 am	<i>Coffee Break</i>
<p><b>Session I: Experience of the Associated countries: National measures and instruments to support association to H2020 and integration to ERA. Achievements and common challenges</b></p>	
11:05 am to 11:35 am	<p><b>Experiences from Serbia</b></p> <p>Victor NEDOVIĆ, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development</p>
11:35 am to 12:05 pm	<p><b>Experiences from Turkey</b></p> <p>Ebru IMAMOGLU, Coordinator of national support mechanisms of H2020, TUBITAK</p>

12:05 pm to 12:35 pm	<b>Experiences from Israel</b> Ruth FRIEDEL, Israel Innovation Authority, Israel
12:35 pm to 12:55 pm	<b>Experiences from Moldova</b> (measures taken and difficulties) Lidia ROMANCIUC, Director, Centre of International Projects, ASM
12:55 pm to 14:00 pm	<i>Standing Lunch</i>
14:00 pm to 14:20 pm	<b>Experiences from Ukraine</b> (measures taken and difficulties) Stella SHAPOVAL, NCP Coordinator, Ministry of Education and Science
14:20 pm to 14:40 pm	<b>Experiences from Georgia</b> (measures taken and difficulties) Ketevan GABITASHVILI, Chief Specialist – Programme Coordination, SRNSF
14:40 pm to 15:00 pm	<b>Experiences from Armenia</b> (measures taken and difficulties) Tigran ARZUMANYAN, NCP Coordinator, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia
15:00 pm to 16:15 pm	<b>Open Discussion: Check-list for maximizing the impact of Association &amp; support from available instruments</b> Moderator: George Bonas, CeRISS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme Committees;</li> <li>- NCP Structures;</li> <li>- H2020 Association Promotion Measures;</li> <li>- Participation in ERANETs and JPIs;</li> <li>- Screening of active players &amp; co-publication analyses;</li> <li>- Actions for Cooperation with Scientific Diaspora;</li> <li>- Twinning Grants through available instruments;</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>
16:15 pm to 16:45 pm	<i>Coffee Break</i>
<b>Session II: Best practices of international cooperation activities towards EaP Countries</b>	
16:45 pm to 17:05 pm	<b>International Cooperation activities of KU Leuven with EaP countries</b> Jef SCHROOTEN, International Policy Officer, KU Leuven University, Belgium
17:05 pm to 17:25 pm	<b>International Cooperation activities of IAMO with EaP countries</b> Axel WOLZ, Senior Research Associate, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), Germany
17:25 pm to 17:55 pm	<b>The ESFRI Roadmap and opportunities for the Associated countries</b> Octavi QUINTANA-TRIAS, DG R&I, EC
17:55 pm to 18:15 pm	Questions and Answers
18:30 pm	<i>Departure to Working Dinner</i>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Day: Wednesday, 31 May 2017**

9:00 am to 9:30 am	<i>Registration and Coffee</i>
<b>Session III: Additional possibilities from the Association to H2020</b>	
9:30 am to 9:50 am	<b>SME Instrument</b> Ruth FRIEDEL, Israel Innovation Authority, Israel
9:50 am to 10:10 am	<b>InnovFin</b> Antonio CASTILLO, Head of the European Investment Bank Representation in Chisinau
10:10 am to 10:30 am	<b>Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)</b> Katerina SERETI, Seconded National Expert, Policy Support & Stakeholder Relations, EIT
10:30 am to 10:50 am	<b>Open Access and IPR as framework conditions for the integration into the ERA</b> Joern GRUENEWALD, Senior Scientific Officer, DLR, Germany
10:50 am to 11:20 am	<b>EU-STRAT: Towards Assessing the Impact of Scientific Co-operation with the EU on the Eastern Partnership Countries</b> Dimitar TOSHKOV, Associate Professor, Institute of Public Administration, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden University
11:20 am to 11:50 am	<i>Coffee Break</i>
<b>Session IV: Optimizing framework conditions for the Association to H2020 and for integration in the ERA</b>	
11:50 am to 12:10 pm	<b>COST Actions</b> Katalin ALFÖLDI, Policy Officer, COST Association, Belgium ( <i>through video-conference</i> )
12:10 pm to 12:30 pm	<b>Activities of the Policy Support Facility</b> Thierry DEVARS, Policy Officer, DG R&I, EC
12:30 pm to 13:15 pm	<b>Open Discussion:</b> Moderators: George BONAS/CeRISS & Thierry DEVARS/EC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Which are the most pressing needs for the success of the Association?</li> <li>- How the EaP PLUS project can address these needs?</li> <li>- How to better exploit other instruments and opportunities?</li> </ul>
13:15 pm to 13:30 pm	<b>Wrap-up</b> Thierry DEVARS/EC & George BONAS/CeRISS
13:30 pm to 14:30 pm	<i>Networking Lunch</i>
14:30 pm	<i>Departure of Participants</i>

