

Press release

Bratislava re-industrialisation agenda boost for EU's industry

The international conference Re-industrialisation of the EU 2016 (REinEU2016) opened on Wednesday October 26 in Slovakia's capital Bratislava. This prestigious event of the Slovak EU Council Presidency in the field of nanotechnologies, advanced materials and manufacturing technologies aims to emphasize and discuss the role of science, research and innovation in sustainable development of the European economy and the re-industrialisation of Europe. The three-day event focuses on the impact of research and innovation on the support and growth of production in the more "traditional" manufacturing sectors. The conference includes a matchmaking event, exhibition, poster sessions, site visits around Bratislava, workshops and competitions.

An important conference outcome will be a final strategy document – the "Bratislava Agenda". The document, a joint initiative of the Dutch and Slovak Presidencies, will be finalized with active participation of the European and international community of researchers, innovators and business sector representatives at the event. A ceremonial handover of the Bratislava Agenda will take place at the end of the conference to representatives of Malta as a basis for policy-making during the Maltese EU Presidency.

"Commission proposes increase of €400 million for Horizon 2020 to further boost growth and jobs," was the first breaking news from the Commission announced by Robert-Jan Smits, Director General of the Directorate of Research and Innovation of the European Commission. "Big data, the internet of things, robotics and quantum computing offer enormous opportunities for our industry. But to use these opportunities to their full extent, both the private and the public sector need to engage in a constructive, future oriented dialogue on topics such as: investments, skills, regulations and innovation," pointed out Robert-Jan Smits further in his speech highlighting the unique opportunity represented by the Bratislava agenda: "This week's conference in Bratislava, organised by the Slovak Presidency, provides an excellent occasion for stakeholders and policymakers to meet and agree on actions to be taken. The European Commission is fully committed to contribute to this".

European re-industrialization is of paramount importance, emphasized also former Prime Minister of Poland and member of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek in his video message: "Re-industrialization of Europe must be the overarching goal in most of our policy areas if we are to create highly-skilled jobs, ensure technological progress, or benefit from the digital revolution. Only with effective reindeer industrialisation will the EU remain globally competitive and relevant."

The event was opened by Professor Peter Plavčan, the Slovak Minister of Education, Research, Science and Sport. In his speech he stressed the problems of the EU 13 member states – brain drain of talented researchers and the fact that they fall under the category of "low performing countries" in the Innovation Union Scoreboard. Minister called upon co-operation between researchers from both parts of the innovation divide to make the European Union stronger and more coherent.

"The Slovak government has approved a new national strategy for smart industry," announced the State Secretary of the Slovak Ministry of Economy Rastislav Chovanec at the beginning of his address.

He expressed the Government's obligation to set out the framework for industrial transformation: "Slovakia is a highly industrial country where government has to play a crucial role in facilitating collaboration and encouraging early adoption of innovative products and services. Setting out the framework to enable digital transformation of industry is our responsibility."

The Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information was entrusted by the Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Sport to implement the project together with Neulogy, a.s. and BIC Bratislava as consortium partners. Implementation began in September 2015 in close co-operation with the European Commission and organisers of similar events during the Luxembourg and Dutch Presidencies. The event is funded by a grant from the Horizon 2020 programme.

The Conference represents a unique opportunity for Slovakia to present a local view of the Horizon 2020 calls as a new EU Member state and bring forward solutions tailored to similar countries.