



Republic of Albania
Ministry of Education and Science



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Venice Office
Regional Bureau for Science
and Culture in Europe

Ministerial Round Table and Expert Meeting

Science and Higher Education - From Bilateral to Pan-European Cooperation

21-22 May 2010, Tirana, Albania

Official Conclusions and Recommendations

The participants in the South Eastern European (SEE) Expert meeting and Ministerial Round Table 'Science and Higher Education - From Bilateral to Pan-European Cooperation', held in Tirana, Albania, on 21-22 May 2010:

1. extend their sincere thanks to the Ministry of Education and Science of Albania and to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the hospitality and the excellent organization of the event;
2. underline the relevance of strengthening cooperation in South Eastern Europe in the fields of scientific research and higher education through bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation;
3. acknowledge the crucial importance of European Union (EU) Framework Programmes and other funding schemes of the European Commission: Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), Enterprise Europe Network, as well as of the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), European Science Foundation (ESF), UNESCO, World Bank (WB), etc.;
4. recognize the importance of further development of agreements of cooperation for the advancement of education, research and innovation.

The participants recommend to national governments and concerned European and international organizations:

- to consolidate the scientific communities for increasing their capacities and enhancing their role in the process of countries' general development;
- to establish cooperation agreements, within the SEE region, on specific scientific fields defining clear targets and outcomes;
- to open bilateral and regional cooperation to pan-European dimension and beyond;
- to simplify the use of the different funding schemes and better coordinate the support to researchers;

- to promote cross-border cooperation between researchers through specific schemes and open access to research facilities and infrastructures;
- to increase the utilization of, and enhance synergies between, different instruments and Programmes (IPA, EIB, bilateral, etc.) for facilitating capacity-building and sharing of research infrastructures;
- to develop evaluation and monitoring of regional cooperation in research, utilizing all significant indicators;
- to focus the attention on a limited number of common priority areas and the support to research centers able to participate in networks of centers of excellence;
- to favour partnership between public and private sectors while taking into account their needs and specificities;
- to motivate scientists and create more awareness and understanding on the existing funding schemes, in particular EU Research Framework Programmes, towards scientists, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and others;
- to improve the capacities of administrative structures in supporting scientists as well as SMEs; in this connection, due attention should be paid to the right profile of staff and its training.

The participants recommended to UNESCO, other European and international organizations:

- to continue supporting the strengthening of scientific cooperation in the SEE region and beyond;
- to create follow-up working groups to ensure implementation of the recommendations made above.

The participants thanked Moldova who invited the next Ministerial Round Table to be held in Chisinau in 2011, and Serbia who proposed to host the event in 2012.