



University of Ljubljana



Unique Brainstorming Event: **Slovenian Innovation Hub**

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On the 26th of May 2015, the Slovenian Business & Research Association and the University of Ljubljana held a unique brainstorming event at the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia to the European Union to mark the special occasion of the inauguration of the Slovenian Innovation Hub (SIH). The keynote speaker was Prof. Dr. Pejovnik, the Hub initiator, followed by Prof. Dr. Györkös, director of Slovenian Research Agency. The event was addressed also by high representatives from the European Commission and representatives from the Permanent Representation of Republic of Slovenia to EU.

SIH will actively encourage knowledge-based development in fields where Slovenia has comparative and competitive advantages. To achieve this, the Hub will provide support to develop connections between Slovenia's research excellence and the economy with the goal of diversifying into new technologies, services and commercially successful products and consequently creating new high value-added jobs, growth and development.

To ensure the success of the Hub's primary mission - establishing and promoting connections between various Slovenian stakeholders - projects will be organized as separate legal entities to ensure their optimal implementation. These projects will be coordinated with the help of the Hub, an office located at the University of Ljubljana.

Almost 50 high profile participants attended the brainstorming event, which discussed new systemic and organizational solutions for better valorization of knowledge and commercialization of research outcomes; as well as necessary steps needed to create a stimulating business and research environment in order to attract European and international investors to Slovenia.

During the lively discussion, the following key points were made:

- Smart specialization is of paramount importance not only for the EC but more importantly for the country itself; the capacity to develop innovative products and services for specific market and international value chains is key.

- Whilst technological innovations lead to incredible productivity gains, non-technological innovations are of vital significance for both - improving productivity (e.g. process innovation) and to help companies differentiate themselves from competitors (e.g. new branding strategy or innovative products).
- The Hub should put greater emphasis on design, which is an important element of innovations that is often overlooked. After all, it helps determine how we interact with, and experience, products and services.
- The Hub must promote the country's competitiveness around high value added models that will sustainably develop or enhance areas of its leadership and excellence. More so, one has to carefully choose areas of excellence and its comparative advantages in order not to overlap and duplicate certain areas of development and their research and production factors.
- Participants expressed that it is also important that civil society and citizens – especially young people – are involved in the innovations and consequently the Hub. The innovation hub must be the catalyst for all citizens interested in contributing their skills and time to solve social challenges.
- The Hub should include all actors of the innovation ecosystem, including regional development agencies, SME clusters to centers of excellence and competencies.
- Many successful projects and ventures happen by chance. The Hub must help provide the infrastructure and opportunities for Slovenia's businesses, research communities and entrepreneurial talent to cross-pollinate and succeed in the market, also for those who are not on the 'radar screen'.
- The Hub must further strengthen its ties between its neighboring regions and countries. Although universities are undoubtedly good initiators, they should and must not be the only ones. It is extremely important to include all stakeholders within the innovation ecosystem. Technology parks, centers of excellence, and so forth must have a greater internationalization focus.

For further information about the discussion, or future events, please write to info@sbra.be