

Special Session Proposal

Smart specialisation strategy and macro-regional strategies

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Abstract

In the programming period 2014-2020 EU countries and regions have embarked on the design and implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3), at the crossroads of innovation policy and regional development. S3 has become a guiding concept to make Europe more cohesive and, at the same time, to foster regions' competitiveness. It has been adopted by some 180 national and regional institutions within the EU as well as candidate countries and regions. It will remain at the basis of national and regional innovation policy in the new programming period.

Macro-regional strategies (Baltic Sea Region, 2009; Danube Region, 2010; Adriatic and Ionian Region, 2014; Alpine Region, 2015) emerged as a way of addressing common challenges faced by defined geographical areas, including EU members and third countries to strengthening cooperation and contributing to achieve economic, social and territorial cohesion. The EU's macro-regional strategies have pioneered a unique kind of cooperation based on the idea that common challenges facing neighboring regions are best tackled collectively.

Exploiting the potential synergies between these two strategies may foster inter-regional cooperation while contributing to regional growth and economic and social cohesion.

The session is aiming at exchanging experiences and views on how to build synergies and embed cooperation in the overlap between the 4 existing macro regional strategies and the S3 policy at regional level. It will review the past achievement (2013-2020 programming period) as well as the challenges and opportunities that are arising in the new programming period (2021-2027). In the post covid-19 crisis and the challenges brought about by the digital and environmental revolution it would be important to capitalise on the synergies between the two main pillars of the EU regional development strategy.

The session will address both the theoretical underpinnings of these two strategies as well as the problems arising from their practical implementation and integration.