

Sofia, 18 April 2018

# Calling Bulgarian innovators: join the EIT Community and innovate with us!

Bulgaria, Sofia, 18 April 2018 – innovators in Bulgaria are set for new innovation cooperation opportunities. These are being discussed today during an Awareness Day in Sofia, organised by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science and European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in the Sofia Tech Park.

Europe's future is connected to its power to innovate. The EU is facing an 'innovation emergency' with its global economic ranking changing rapidly. We need to do much better at turning our research into new and better services and products if we are to remain competitive and improve the quality of life of citizens across Europe. The EIT was created in 2008 to do just that.

**Martin Kern**, EIT Interim Director, remarked: *'We are the EU body that drives Europe's ability to innovate. In Sofia, we are encouraging Bulgarian stakeholders from education, business and research to cooperate with us by highlighting how the EIT Community accelerates job creation and economic growth. Some Bulgarian students and ventures that want to make innovation happen are already working together with the EIT Community on finding solutions to global challenges. We will explore how others can join us and how Bulgaria can strengthen its innovation capacity with the EIT's support.'*

The EIT Awareness Day in Sofia will showcase the EIT's unique innovation model that sets up dynamic pan-European partnerships between leading universities, research labs and companies (programme of the day). These are called Innovation Communities and they support entrepreneurs and innovators in bringing ideas to market, turning students into entrepreneurs and, most importantly, stimulating innovation. The EIT's six Innovation Communities tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing our societies from climate change to sustainable energy to healthy living and active ageing. They will present how organisations and innovators and Bulgaria can join their wide range of activities to boost innovation.

Looking at the European Innovation Scoreboard Bulgaria ranks as a modest innovator. According to the scoreboard, relative strengths of the Bulgarian innovation system are in intellectual assets, employment impacts, and human resources. Relative weaknesses are in innovators, finance and support, and attractive research systems. **Martin Kern** added: *'Bulgaria is at the crossroads of European innovation and our message at the Awareness Day is simply 'We are here to innovate with you – let's get started now''*.

## The EIT – Making Innovation Happen!

For more information visit [eit.europa.eu](http://eit.europa.eu) & follow the EIT on Twitter @EITeu #EITCommunity #EUinnovation

For photos from the event: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/eiteu/albums>.



The EIT is a body of the European Union

**EIT BACKGROUND: Europe's future is connected to its power to innovate!****What is the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)?**

The EIT was created in 2008 to strengthen Europe's ability to innovate. The EIT is a unique EU initiative, the only one to fully integrate business, education and research. The Institute supports the development of dynamic pan-European partnerships between leading universities, research labs and companies. These are called Innovation Communities and each focuses on a specific global challenge.

**What challenges do the EIT's Innovation Communities focus on?**

The first six Innovation Communities work to mitigate and adapt to climate change (*EIT Climate-KIC*), create sustainable sources of energy and increase its supply (*EIT InnoEnergy*), accelerate the digital transformation (*EIT Digital*), support healthier and longer living (*EIT Health*), including the provision of sustainable and healthier food (*EIT Food*), and manage our planet's raw materials in an efficient, secure and sustainable way (*EIT Raw Materials*). Together with their partners, they offer a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities. This includes education courses that combine technical skills with entrepreneurial ones, business creation and acceleration services, run innovation driven research projects.

**What has the EIT Community achieved?**

Some of the EIT Community's achievements and impact so far:

- We are the **largest innovation community in Europe**, with 40 innovation hubs across Europe that have brought together over 1,000 partners, more than half of whom come from business, both large corporates and a very strong SME participation rate of 25%.
- With our support, 800 start-ups created over **6,100 highly skilled jobs created**.
- Venture capitalists have invested **more than EUR 600 million** in companies supported by EIT Community accelerators. By doing so, they have expressed strong confidence in the entrepreneurial activities of the EIT Community.

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