

Commission acts to help regions build resilient economies in the era of globalisation

Globalisation has brought enormous benefits to the less-developed economies of the world and many opportunities for Europeans; but while the benefits are widely spread, the costs are often borne unevenly as the Commission's [reflection paper on harnessing globalisation](#) highlighted.

To take up the challenge of economic modernisation, Europe needs to empower its regions and help them create value. This means embracing innovation, digitisation, decarbonisation and developing people's skills.

Today, the Commission is proposing a new set of actions to further help Europe's regions invest in their niche areas of competitive strength ("[smart specialisation](#)") and generate the innovation, resilience and growth needed.

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness said: *"To reap the benefits of globalisation we need to create enabling environments, where the advances from trade and technology can materialise. Locally-led and locally-owned investment and innovation strategies are key to take up this challenge and empower our regions."*

Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"We have entered the 'glocal' era, as President **Juncker** said, whereby the impact of global challenges is felt first at the local level. Our economies are undergoing deep changes; we can't reverse that process. But we can help our regions equip themselves with the right tools for robust and lasting growth – this is what smart specialisation is about."*

Introduced in 2014 in all regional policy programmes, the smart specialisation approach has proven to deliver. The Commission intends to build on this positive experience with two pilot projects:

- **Tailored support for the specific challenges of regions facing industrial transition:** on their request, certain regions can work in partnership with teams of Commission experts to boost their innovation capacity, remove investment barriers, equip citizens with the right skills and prepare for industrial and societal change, on the basis of their smart specialisation strategies.
- **Interregional innovation partnerships supported by EU funds:** inspired by the success of the [Vanguard initiative](#), the aim of this pilot project is to identify and scale up 'bankable' interregional projects that can create European value chains in priority sectors such as big data, bioeconomy, resource efficiency, connected mobility or advanced manufacturing.

In parallel, the Commission will step up its efforts to help Member States

address remaining bottlenecks to growth and establish business-friendly environments. Particular attention will be given to the quality and openness of public research, cooperation between businesses and universities and the alignment of local skills-bases with market demands, with the help of Commission support facilities.

The Commission will also look at ways of facilitating further synergies and combinations between the different innovation, growth and competitiveness EU programmes and instruments that currently exist.

Next steps

The calls for interest for the industrial transition regions pilot action will be launched in the autumn this year. The interregional partnerships will be set up during 2017 and run throughout 2018.

The experience acquired so far with current Cohesion policy programmes, together with the actions and policy solutions put forward in this [communication](#), will provide useful input in preparing the next budget framework, in the context of the [ongoing reflection on the future of EU finances](#).

The Commission will consider stronger linkages between existing EU instruments with the common objective of responding to new industrial challenges. Smart specialisation could be scaled-up, to make it a comprehensive tool to help all regions take advantage of the changes brought by globalisation.

Background

Introduced as a [prerequisite](#) to ensure effective Cohesion Policy spending in research and innovation, smart specialisation has required all regions to design investment strategies based on their own competitive assets – from agrifood specialties and tourism to nanotechnologies and aerospace.

Under these strategies, local businesses are receiving financial support to develop innovative products and expand beyond local markets. These strategies have also resulted in better links between science and business as well as improved coordination at all levels of local governance.

For more information

[Communication – Strengthening Innovation in Europe’s regions](#)

[MEMO – Challenges ahead: boosting innovation-led growth in EU regions](#)

[Factsheet – Smart specialisation pilot actions](#)

[Factsheet – what is smart specialisation?](#)

[Country fiches – Smart specialisation in your country](#)

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