

# Commission experts support the development of 13 Bulgarian research and innovation centres

Commission experts from the [Joint Research Centre](#) will provide support and guidance to 13 Bulgarian research and innovation centres to help them bring their innovative ideas to the market, facilitate the transfer and dissemination of knowledge and strengthen both their ties with businesses and their participation in European and international cooperation projects.

The experts will also help the 13 centres improve their legal, managerial and operational frameworks, deal with state aid issues and identify financing opportunities including through EU funds.

Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy, Enlargement Negotiations and Regional Policy, Johannes **Hahn** said: *“The development of these 13 EU-funded centres and the support provided by the Commission will improve the performance of Bulgaria’s innovation system. This will help local researchers turn their work into projects with high value added, for the economy and for the people, and offers them the potential to promote their innovative approach at a global scale.”*

Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, responsible for the Joint Research Centre, said: *“Bringing together local authorities, academia, business and civil society is key to identify the best ways for EU funds to boost local economies and foster development. This evidence-based, inclusive approach to policy-making has an excellent track record in enabling Europe’s regions to focus on their strengths and priorities.”*

The 13 centres include four “centres of excellence” i.e. fundamental research institutions and nine “centres of competence”, focused on applied research activities with potential for industrial uptake. It concerns sectors such as mechatronics, digital technologies, creative and gaming industries and biotechnology and other areas in line with the priorities of Bulgaria’s [smart specialisation strategy](#), its industrial and innovation strategy based on local competitive strengths.

This support project will be carried out until June 2020, with an additional budget of €250,000 from the European Regional Development Fund, in addition to the €170 million, earmarked for research and innovation under from [the 2014-2020 Bulgarian ‘Science and Education for Smart Growth’ EU funds programme](#). The results of the initiative will contribute to the design of the new [Cohesion Policy programmes for 2021-2027 period](#) and to Bulgaria’s efforts to modernise its research and innovation ecosystem.

## **Background**

The Commission, through the Joint Research Centre, has previously helped improve the operational capacity of the [Sofia Tech Park](#), a science and technology park in Bulgaria, also co-financed by the EU budget.

The Commission is assisting Member States and regions in designing and implementing their [smart specialisation strategies](#) and through the [smart specialisation platform](#). In addition, in 2017 the Commission launched [an initiative](#) supporting 12 Member States and regions in industrial transition. Commission experts sat down with national and regional authorities to help them diagnose what was holding back job creation and growth and embrace the innovation needed to hold their own in a globalised economy.

The project [EU4TECH “Capacity building in Technology transfer for the Western Balkans”](#) funded through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance is helping 15 local universities develop capacity for innovation and technology transfer.

**For More information**