



The RegHealth-RI project has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 Programme under the grant agreement No 643574.

CELEBRATION OF THE REGHEALTH-RI FINAL CONFERENCE 20 OCTOBER

On 20 October, after two years of implementation, the European Regions' Network for Health Research and Innovation (RegHealth-RI), celebrated its Final Conference "Bridging the Divide in European Health Research and Innovation" in Brussels. The conference was co-hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Brussels and the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the EU. During the conference, the findings of the RegHealth-RI project were presented, including the outcomes of the three international workshops, the updated and improved version of the report "State of the Art of Health Research and Innovation (R&I) in EU regions" and a set of policy recommendations building on the project's results. The event gathered 80 attendees, including project partners, high level representatives and key stakeholders working in the fields of health, research, innovation, and regional development to discuss the gaps in health R&I across Europe.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Poland and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Representation of Poland, welcomed participants and stressed the perfect timing of the project conclusions and recommendations to improve and widen future funding opportunities in health R&I. Mr Arnd Hoeveler from the European Commission (DG RTD) showed figures on EU13 participation in projects and funding per sector, and presented the Widening Programme under Horizon2020. MEP Lambert van Nistelrooij stressed the importance of research and innovation for the future of our society.

Following the introductory session, the RegHealth-RI project consortium partners introduced the main results of the project, the updated and improved version report on the state of the art of health R&I in European regions, including the developed Composite Indicator for Health Research Excellence. The main results presented were the following:

- ***Most significant factors hindering participation in Horizon2020 of EU less-performing regions/countries:***
 - Extremely populated scientific field generating a high competition to get funding.
 - Discouragement coming from low success rate.
 - Lack of expertise to prepare consistent proposals.
 - Large and complex topics more suited for the participation of reputed organizations from elite EU regions.
 - Lack of specific support to prepare the proposals.
 - Low expected reward in relation to the effort for preparing and implementing the projects/proposals.



The RegHealth-RI project is coordinated by Innovatec, with EUREGHA and University of Trieste as consortium members.

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- **Negative factors hindering health research and innovation progress of in EU less-performing countries/regions:**
 - Brain drain in the field of health research in a region/country.
 - Low understanding of specific research and innovation issues by policy and decision makers.
 - Insufficient knowledge transfer from public research organizations to interested stakeholders.
 - Poor investment in public research and, above all, in private research.
 - Insufficient linkages with excellent organizations, companies, etc., from advanced and leading European regions and countries (international collaboration).

- **Factors hindering synergies between Horizon2020 and European Structural and Investment Funds:**
 - The very high difficulty in obtaining H2020 funding from EU less performing regions institutions (Public Research Centres, Universities, Hospitals, Industry, etc.) is probably the main trouble for reaching such synergies. It seems obvious that without H2020 funding there is not possibility of synergies.
 - Significant conceptual and strategic differences between H2020 (excellent research) and ESIF (regional capacity building and overcome structural difference) make those synergies also difficult to achieve.
 - There are also important organizational and administrative differences between H2020 and ESIF in terms of timing, different cost definitions and financial management rules, etc., which makes synergies a rather complicated business.

A set of potential actions for their remedy were also introduced during the session, which concluded with a presentation about [DanuBalt](#) project and its main results, interaction and common findings with RegHealth-RI. This presentation was performed by Jonathan Watson, member of the Advisory Board of RegHealth-RI and, at the same time, member of the DanuBalt consortium.

The final part of the conference was a roundtable discussion that gathered distinguished experts from different EU countries. The discussion centred around synergies between H2020 and ESIFs, proposals on how to widen the participation of EU less-performing regions and countries in Societal Challenge 1 "Health, Demographic change and Well-being" of Horizon2020 and new approaches to improve Health R&I in less-performing regions and countries in the EU.

For further information about the RegHealth-RI project, please consult the [project website](#) or contact reghealth-ri@rhing-net.eu.