



SOFIA UNIVERSITY ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI

TRANSFORM4EUROPE

TRANSFORM4EUROPEAN RESEARCH & INNOVATION

“UNIVERSITIES AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT”

14-16 NOVEMBER 2022

SOFIA UNIVERSITY “ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”

1504, Sofia; 15, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., Bulgaria

INVITATION

The growth and significance of universities and education more widely, has become ever more important in stimulating innovation, cultural, social and economic developments across nations and regions in the European context in the beginning of the 21st century. On the other hand, our regions are facing deep transformation in almost all aspects: climate, geography, economy, society, politics and technology. Graduates also need to find new occupations to deal with the complexity and evolution of global society facing the challenge in this new era of Anthropocene.

The role of universities in regional and local development is a major focus of the European University Alliance Transform4Europe, covering a wide range and types of regions.

Universities and their academics engage with regional actors in multiple ways in which university knowledge agents build connections with different regional, national and transnational partners across the public and private sectors, and civil society more generally. But roles, functions and normative orientations of universities in the context of their surrounding regions have, in many cases, been taken for granted.

We set the objective through the series of policy roundtables focusing on university-regions’ activities to consider the dynamic, complex, and co-evolving interplay between key social agents and institutions. We expand the discussion of universities’ regional engagement both thematically and geographically with a focus on universities-regional authorities’ engagement, unpacking their complex and context specific institutional arrangements, practices and interactions.

The aim of the regional policy roundtables and their intermediary edition is to provide examples of the broad range of mundane and project activities that make up the majority of linkages between a university and its region and in particular the regional authorities. We intend to hold a discussion on how generalist universities can engage

with their region in a profound way and shed light on the universities' everyday sustainable engagements with their regions.

Our aim is at this inter-regional policy roundtable to collect and present a diversity of cases from our Transform4Europe universities as a ground for further collaboration and inter-regional-universities activities under the European Universities Alliance.

On the other hand, this is a good opportunity to bring together the Alliance's network of stakeholders and to try to make new collaborations and draft potential project proposals.

The First T4ERI Stakeholders' Assembly (held in January 2022), was a successful event, featured more than 40 participants where research and innovation specializations of each university was discussed. Possibilities to collaborate through the Transform for European Research & Innovation Alliance were also addressed. We mapped stakeholders' engagement in T4ERI as a result and most important goal of the 1st Stakeholders' Assembly – to identify the key research & innovation partners.



Now it is time to broaden the diverse picture of actors, to use the regional strengths within the Alliance network and to focus on common scientific aims and targets, creating a common vision of the future T4EU & T4ERI development.

The event is open to all members of the Transform4Europe & T4ERI community and aims to engage stakeholders from the whole Alliance network – a key aspect in the project.

Looking forward to meeting you in Sofia!

EVENT PROGRAM (EET)

 **14 November 2022:**

Arrival and Welcome cocktail

 **15 November 2022: *T4ERI Inter-regional policy roundtable & II Stakeholders Assembly***

10:00-10:15 Welcome speech by the Rector of Sofia University

10:15-11:00 Presentation of Centers of excellence, centers of competence and research centers of Sofia University

11:00-11:30 *Coffee break*

11:30-12:30 Presentation of Centers of excellence, centers of competence and research centers of Sofia University

12:30-13:30 *Lunch*

13:30-13:45 T4ERI Project Presentation (Dr. Teresa Amido, Saarland University, Project Coordinator Transform4European Research and Innovation - T4ERI)

13:45-14:05 Keynote speech: Research & Innovations – the role of the Universities (Prof. Dr. Vladia Borisova, President of the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria)

14:05-14:25 Keynote speech: Role of the T4EU Universities in adaptation of EU regions to changing geography: challenges, responsibilities and opportunities (Assoc. prof. Stelian Dimitrov, PhD)

14:30-15:00 *Coffee break*

15:00-16:45 Examples of good practices from the Alliance: projects and initiatives with local stakeholders from the T4EU regions

16:45-17:00 *Break*

17:00 – 18:00 Roundtable discussion: future initiatives and collaborations

19:00 *Joint Dinner*

 **16 November 2022: *Transform4europe activities***

10:00-12:00 T4EU Management Board meeting

12:00-13:00 *Lunch*

13:00-14:30 T4EU WP5 experts meeting: T5.1. Smart Transformation Strategy discussion (room 289, Rectorate, North wing of SU)

14:30-15:00 *Coffee break*

15:00 – 16:00 T-lab Environmental transformation, smart regions and cities – experts’ meeting (room 289, Rectorate, North wing of SU)

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