



**SBRA - TuR&Bo
European Regional Economic Forum – EREF-2008**

Preparatory Workshop, Istanbul, 30 April 2008

Business – Academia Collaboration

Draft Recommendations

The workshop was jointly organised by Turkish Research and Business Organisations (TUR&BO) and the Slovenian Business and Research Association (SBRA). It took place in Istanbul at the Cevahir Convention Center on April 30th 2008. It aimed at preparing the ground for the European Regional Economic Forum 2008 conference which is taking place in Nova Gorica, Slovenia on the 5th and 6th of June 2008. The main goal of the EREF Forum is to draw the attention of all knowledge and business stakeholders, as well as national and regional authorities, and the EU, to take the necessary actions regarding future developments and challenges for the role of public-private partnership in reaching the ambitious targets set by the Lisbon Agenda.

The workshop focused on the role of business-academia partnership in boosting growth and innovation. Following a discussion which brought together representatives of the different stakeholders (see attached participant list), the following conclusions and recommendations were adopted.

European knowledge society cannot develop without fundamental changes in business academia relations which imply a different attitude and approach on both sides. When the two accept global competitiveness as their key objective, they will find it much easier to develop a common platform of shared interest and mutual appreciation. For the moment this is still a challenge as the two spheres retain conventional prejudice and maintain their mutual relations on a very modest scale, thereby wasting tremendous potential for generation, sharing, transfer and dissemination of knowledge, skills and competences.

The new quality of relations to develop into proper partnership carries the prospects of great benefits for all involved, but can realistically develop only with support of adequate regulatory-fiscal environment to be created primarily by national and regional authorities, not excluding the greater role that the Commission should play in this domain. By intensifying the completion of the European single market the companies in Europe will be encouraged to

increase their capabilities to absorb RTD results., and will become more innovative. Further efforts could be made to adapt the implementation of state aid policies to the requirements of building knowledge economy in Europe. At the same time through newly developed partnership, business and academia will accelerate their own transformations and needed mindset shifts required by the Lisbon and Bologna process.

Recommendations	Stakeholders/Policy Makers		
	Industry Universities	Regional, National Bodies	European Universities
<p>Universities should be more open to the involvement of business in most of their activities (teaching, tutoring, research and consultancy).</p> <p>If developed together with other skills supporting creativity and innovation, an entrepreneurial mindset among researchers can greatly contribute to bridge the “cultural gap” between research institutions and companies.</p>	√	√	
<p>Management structures within universities (involving business representatives) should be modernised. Universities should develop and adopt innovation strategies.</p> <p>A key role could be played by technology transfer offices whose personnel should be composed by qualified experts including external consultants. Setting up corporate or business liaison offices should also be foreseen.</p> <p>More effective and systematic technology transfer would improve the ability of industry to tap into the knowledge developed by the public science base.</p>	√		
<p>Greater openness of universities to society and increased life long learning are mutually supporting and should be fostered.</p> <p>For this to happen, retraining of the academic staff and their adaptation to new demands of the dynamically changing social and economic environment should be encouraged.</p>	√	√	
<p>Geographical mobility as well as mobility between business and academia should be enhanced, both conventional and virtual as it is the key to reaching critical mass of expertise in a shorter period.</p> <p>Staff exchanges between research institutions, universities and industry should be more encouraged and facilitated</p> <p>Basic training in spin-off and licensing activities for researchers as part of their on-going training cycle should be introduced. It should be supported by governments, and regulated as part of the national requirements for the</p>	√	√	√

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<p>The creation and ownership by universities of commercial entities (spin-offs, technology transfer centres) should be facilitated by legislation and supported by university leadership.</p>	√	√	
<p>Results oriented research funding schemes for universities and research centres as well as government-business co-funding should be further enhanced and supported (e.g. tax incentives).</p>	√	√	
<p>A national or regional framework with a clear set of rules concerning the ownership of intellectual property rights (IPR) by universities as well as by other non profit organisations is required. Conditions and criteria on exclusive licensing of technology also need to be considered together with the role of universities in science and technology policy.</p>		√	
<p>Business should be involved in setting priorities of national research programmes in order to take into account the needs selected by the trends in the market.</p>	√	√	
<p>R&D tax incentives, especially targeting young innovative enterprises (start ups, spin-offs, etc.) should be enhanced and applied on a broader scale.</p>		√	
<p>Cross border collaboration and the creation of international research consortia involving both academic and</p>			

<p>The existence of a well developed venture capital market and seed capital is also important for the establishment of university spin-offs and other forms of business academia collaboration.</p>		√	√
<p>Obstacles caused by labour market regulations should be removed, encouraging staff exchanges and favouring part time consultancy or other forms of interaction between the different sectors of business and academia. It should be considered that enhanced academic consultancy activities could have a positive effect on the developing partnership between business and academia.</p>	√	√	√
<p>Long term innovation strategies for SMEs should be further encouraged. Interaction and exchange between academia and SMEs should be further stimulated, introducing innovative schemes which would allow SMEs to acquire needed knowledge and expertise through strategic consultancy involving members of academia.</p>	√	√	√
<p>Science and technology and trade parks are one of the key instruments of business academia collaboration and should therefore be encouraged and supported by local authorities, national legislation and interested business organisation.</p>		√	√