

Policy dialogue in ICT to an Upper level for Reinforced EU-EECA Cooperation

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EU-Eastern Europe and Central Asia Gateway for ICT Research, Development and Policy Dialogue
<http://www.eeca-ict.eu/>

From the editor



Svetlana
Klessova,
PICTURE project
coordinator
Director,
Inno TSD
(France)

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PICTURE Validation and Dissemination Workshop Moscow, Russia, 29 November, 2012



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From the editor



Svetlana Klessova,
PICTURE project
coordinator
Director, Inno TSD
(France)

Dear readers,

The project PICTURE has been running for 18 months and has already overcome its middle line. We are pleased to receive and share your feedback that you appreciate PICTURE

activities and that this contributes to bridging the European and EECA ICT communities and to reinforcing an ICT EU-EECA policy dialogue. Networking and strategic events – for example, several meetings of PICTURE working groups, and large scale ICT Research and Innovation in Horizon 2020 - Eastern Partnership (EaP) Information Day (Kyiv, 23 May 2013) demonstrated an important synergy and mobilization of the ICT stakeholders from Europe and EECA countries. Attendance of the workshop in the field of “Content Technologies and Information Management” by the representatives of the European Technology Platforms NESSI and NEM underlined the

importance to give a joint response to global challenges and to reinforce the EU-EECA research cooperation in the field.

During the next months, the consortium partners will perform the pilot actions in three strategic topics that, we hope, will shape the future of the ICT collaboration between European Union and EECA countries’ cooperation and create new opportunities for joint projects under HORIZON 2020.

Details on these and other activities can be found on the next pages of the newsletter. We welcome your feedback and sharing of experience about EU-EECA ICT collaboration!

PICTURE Validation and Dissemination Workshop Moscow, Russia, 29 November, 2012

A PICTURE Validation and Dissemination Workshop was held at Dorodnicyn Computing Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, Russia on the 29th of November, 2012.

The workshop was aimed to validate the first findings about the ICT Policy Dialogue Picture, provided in the draft of the Roadmap and to define the most relevant pilot actions to be implemented during PICTURE project. The event has been attended by consortium partners, the EU and EECA ICT stakeholders, including IT high-level specialists, and top researchers.



The participants of the Moscow workshop



The workshop summarized the first year of the project.

Meetings of the three Working Groups were held in parallel to Validation workshop. The objectives of these three meetings were transversal: to discuss with the experts the Draft of The Roadmap and proposals for pilot actions in order to select the most relevant actions addressing interests of the EECA countries. As a result experts provided valuable recommendations on the criteria for selection of actions they should focus on.



Vassilis Kopanas,
DG CONNECT



Working Group 3 (Content Technologies and Information Management) session

For more information:

http://www.eeca-ict.eu/news/PICTURE_Validation_and_Dissemination_Workshop_Moschow_November_2012

Launch of Pilot actions to explore new opportunities for the upgrade of EU-EECA ICT policy dialogue

In accordance with recommendations of the Working Groups given at the Moscow workshop, planning for implementation of pilot actions for each WG was prepared by the consortium.

PILOT ACTION FOR WORKING GROUP 1: International R&D ICT Cooperation Policies

TITLE: Preparing the ground for the development of an information system to support the policy dialogue and the cooperation between the EU and EECA region in the area of ICT R&D.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The significance of international cooperation for achieving excellence in research and innovation is undisputable. One of the main findings of PICTURE project till now is that the level of international cooperation in the EECA region is not yet optimum. According to the conclusions of the Moscow Workshop, the development of an information system to support the ICT policy dialogue and to facilitate the cooperation between EU and EECA ICT research and industrial communities is considered as one of the most effective ways to enhance the level of international cooperation in the EECA region. The proposed information system could provide various services to the involved stakeholders including:

- Information about funding opportunities both under EU programmes and EECA national programmes focusing on those that support the international cooperation.
- A database with key EECA ICT actors and their competencies.
- Various documents on the EU-EECA ICT cooperation potential (e.g. policy dialogue meetings minutes, national and thematic reports, etc).
- Networking instruments to support the collaboration and the interaction between the ICT communities from both regions.

The actual development of the information system is beyond the scope of this Pilot Action and of PICTURE project in general. This pilot action aims to prepare the ground for the implementation of such a system by identifying the information needs of the potential users and defining its main functions. Of course any useful material that may be developed under this pilot action (e.g. profiles of EECA ICT actors, profiles of EU and EECA funding programmes, etc.) will be available for future projects that will undertake the development and operation of the proposed information system and will be published on PICTURE portal to be used by the R&D communities from both regions.

OBJECTIVES

1. To promote and strengthen cooperation and interaction among academia, research organisations and industry from EU and the EECA region in the ICT field.
2. To support the ICT policy dialogue between the EU and the EECA countries.
3. To help EECA countries make optimum use of international cooperation.
4. To allow a direct interaction between policy makers and representatives of the ICT community and the civil society of the EECA region.
5. To support the involvement of EU researchers into EECA RTD programmes and vice versa.

ACTIVITIES:

- Identification of information and support needs.
- Proposal for the main functions that the information system should perform.
- Sum up of outcomes and lessons learnt.

PILOT ACTION FOR WORKING GROUP 2: Components, Computing Systems and Networks

TITLE: Bridging the European and EECA knowledge networks in the field of "Components, Computing Systems and Networks" to give a joint response to global challenges.

PILOT ACTION FOR WORKING GROUP 3: Content Technologies and Information Management

TITLE: Bridging the European and EECA knowledge networks in the field of "Content Technologies and Information Management" to give a joint response to global challenges.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

In the EU, the European Technology Platforms (ETPs) constitute state-of-the-art initiatives bringing together the industrial and research communities. In Russia similar structures have already emerged (e.g. Russian Technology Platforms). Some EECA countries exhibit a sufficient degree of maturity for the development of such structures in the foreseeable future. Finally, the other EECA countries can benefit considerably of similar good practices in setting up Technology/Knowledge Platforms (e.g. research agenda development, organisational structuring, etc) since they will further facilitate the process of national research structuring. The increase of visibility of ETPs among similar structures as well as relevant stakeholders from EECA countries will be mutually beneficial allowing reciprocal learning, sharing experience and possibly joining forces. At the same time, it may also trigger more participation of the private sector in EECA (e.g. innovative companies) in ETPs as well as other similar structures. This could further stimulate the engagement of the private sector of EECA countries in research and innovation and, in return, can provide additional strength to the technology platforms in both regions. Tak-

ing into account the above, PICTURE project will implement a pilot action aimed at bringing together from the one hand the European Technology Platforms, and from the other hand similar structures and interested stakeholders from EECA countries in the fields of "**Components, Computing Systems and Networks**" and "**Content Technologies and Information Management**", respectively. The consortium will firstly identify relevant structures in EECA countries and then will investigate the feasibility of creating links with ETPs to enhance the participation of private companies from EECA. Research areas of mutual interest will be searched to become common ground for future joint activities. Recommendations will be developed regarding the potential collaboration between ETPs and relevant structures in the EECA region.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase the visibility of ETPs in the academic and business community of EECA countries.
2. To increase the visibility of similar structures from EECA countries in the EU.
3. To foster the cooperation between the ETPs and similar structures in EECA countries by identifying areas of common interest in the light of HORIZON 2020 societal challenges.

The achievement of the above objectives is expected to have a multiple impact:

- A. The increase of the visibility of EU and EECA key re-

search and industrial communities in the fields of "Components, Computing Systems and Networks" and "Content Technologies and Information Management", respectively.

- B. The development of EU – EECA strategic cooperation in the fields of "Components, Computing Systems and Networks" and "Content Technologies and Information Management", respectively.
- C. The strengthening of the Academia – Industry relationship in the EECA region.
- D. The improvement of the innovation capacities of the EECA countries, particularly in the private sector.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Identification of common research priorities in the light of HORIZON 2020
2. Participation of ETPs representatives in Stakeholders Workshop on "Components, Computing Systems and Networks" and "Content Technologies and Information Management", respectively
3. Elaboration of recommendations for potential cooperation between ETPs and relevant structures in EECA region
4. Participation of ETPs representatives in Final Dissemination event
5. Sum up of outcomes and lessons learnt

For more information:

http://www.eeca-ict.eu/working_groups



ICT policy in participant countries updated

Following the recommendations given to PICTURE project consortium after the review meeting that took place on 30 November 2012 in Moscow, the Project partners reviewed strategic documents that are related to ICT domain in each EECA country. When necessary, they also contacted the key national stakeholders in order to complete and validate the list of ICT priorities. As a result, information about ICT priorities has been updated for all EECA countries, and presented in "Updated report about the EECA ICT priorities" (http://www.eeca-ict.eu/uploads/new_documents/D2.1a_15-02-13_revised_report_about_EECA_ICT_priorities.pdf)

For each of the three sub-regions (Russia, EaP countries and CA countries), the current state of ICT R&D Policy was examined in relation to four specific issues:

- ICT Strategies / Policies.
- Structure of National ICT Governance Systems.
- State of International Cooperation.
- Recent ICT Policy Dialogue Activities with the EU

The relevant information was collected by PICTURE local partners according to a specific methodology and based on:

- Extensive desk research
- Interviews / contacts with national ICT policy stakeholders
- Meetings with the EC delegations in EECA countries.

The main conclusions of this analysis presented below.

Russia's dimension and size of population but also its economic and geopolitical weight (Russia is member of the G8 and UN Security Council) far surpass the other countries. Also, in terms of ICT potential and absolute output, Russia is greatly ahead followed by Ukraine. **Policy framework for ICT** is most advanced in Russia in relation with any other country in the EECA region. Recently introduced measures support the creation of a structured national ICT policy framework including the identification of national priorities, the introduction of performance-based budgeting, the ongoing restructuring of the governmental R&D sector, human resources and infrastructure development, etc. Russia has a complex **ICT governance system** with several interdepartmental Councils and Committees and no assigned organization (public authority) for coordinating the development and implementation of the State ICT policy. The intensity in **international ICT cooperation** (e.g. participation in the 7th EU Framework Programme, agreements with the EU and member states) is strongest for Russia comparing with any other country in the EECA region. The **ICT policy dialogue** between Russia and EU is well established and has already produced important results mainly in the form of several bilateral agreements.

All **Eastern Partnership (EaP)** countries share a common

"historical" background which was marked by the dramatic downsize of the ICT R&D intensity since the early 90s (i.e. the collapse of the Soviet Union). In recent years all **EaP** countries have defined their **policies on ICT R&D** through the development of relevant legislation. Most **EaP** countries are still performing reforms in their **National ICT Governance Systems** or have just implemented them. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the above Systems will be possible after the completion of the reforms and the operation of the reformed Systems for a certain period. The state of **international ICT cooperation** (e.g. participation in the 7th EU Framework Programme) is quite advanced in most countries of the region with Ukraine to have precedence over the other countries and Moldova to attain the status of an associated country in January 2012. With that said there is still much room for further development regarding the ICT cooperation between the **EaP** countries and the EU.

ICT policies and National ICT Governance Systems are in a phase of transition in all countries of **Central Asia (CA)**. All governments have taken up concrete measures for the progress and development of ICT R&D in their countries. It is essential that the new ICT policies and the reformed ICT Governance Systems take into account the important economic and societal challenges that these countries are facing. Central Asia countries have not yet reached the high level of

international cooperation that characterizes the other EECA countries and especially Russia. Nevertheless, significant efforts are being made towards strengthening cooperation both with EU and the international community in general. The extent of the **ICT policy dialogue** with the EU is rather limited in all CA countries. Various types of opportunities to facilitate the dialogue and cooperation in ICT between EU and Central Asia countries should be examined such as the integration into European Technology Platforms (ETP's), benchmarking activities / projects and twinning projects.

Although the ICT cooperation between the EU and the EECA partner countries is quite strong there is still much room for further development. Acknowledging the current global as well as societal challenges

both regions are facing, new perspectives should be developed for the strategic ICT partnership between the EU, countries associated with the present European RTD Framework Programme and the EECA region, building on each others' strengths and on common policy objectives.

Despite national specificities, the countries in each of the two regions share a lot of common elements which, in turn, provide the rationale for EU-EECA cooperation at policy level, among others:

- the geographic proximity: they are neighbors (in particular the EaP countries) and therefore share traditional societal and cultural links, economic proximity and strong trade as well as common regional challenges ahead;
- the need for common policy frameworks allowing op-

timum use of opportunities (scientific, economic, political) through joint policy approaches;

- the need for strong public and private institutions on both sides to create a win-win situation; therefore institution building and institutional networking between the two regions needs to be improved;
- to ensure optimum circulation of knowledge throughout the two regions in order to develop human capacities;
- to offer compatible, coordinated or joint instruments for policy implementation ensuring equal footing/balanced partnership and reciprocity.

For more information:

http://www.eeca-ict.eu/uploads/new_documents/D2.1a_15-02-13_revised_report_about_EECA_ICT_priorities.pdf

PICTURE Workshop on Content Technologies and Information Management, Kyiv, 24 May 2013



Workshop participants

The PICTURE Workshop on Content Technologies and Information Management, which was held in Kyiv on 24 May 2013, was the second in a series of events organized by PICTURE project (the first being the successful Validation and Dissemination Workshop in Moscow). Representatives from two European Technology Platforms (Networked European Software and Service Initiative (NESSI) (<http://www.nessi-europe.com/default.aspx?page=home>) and Net-





worked and Electronic Media (NEM) (<http://www.nem-initiative.org/>) as well as key persons (invited experts in the field of WG3) from research and science organisations in EECA countries were invited to this exchange that meant to trigger new momentum for cooperation between the involved ETPs and the EECA region. The agenda featured:

- Presentations of the involved ETPs with focus on their research priorities under Horizon 2020.

- Presentations of the R&D ICT potential of each represented EECA country.

- Open discussion session to validate common research priorities and to identify potential joint activities for future cooperation between the involved ETPs and the EECA region.

As an immediate effect of the Workshop, some represented EECA organizations decided to become members of the involved ETPs.

http://www.eeca-ict.eu/news/PICTURE_Workshop_on_Content_Technologies_and_Information_Management_Kyiv_May_2013

The experts invited to the PICTURE Workshop on Content Technologies and Information Management also attended

the CEENet/CEENGINE NREN Users Workshop or CEEUSER on 22 May, 2013. Memorandum of Understanding between two projects PICTURE and CEENGINE (www.ceengine.eu) was officially signed on March 2013. The event addressed the prominent research organisations and institutions and aimed at generating, facilitating and enabling strong and active participation



Morten Møller,
DG CONNECT



Svetlana Klessova,
PICTURE project coordinator

of the various research communities in the forthcoming EU research programmes under the Horizon 2020 programme (http://www.st-gateukr.eu/_media/CEE-USE_Workshop_invitation.pdf)

The experts then took part in the ICT Research and Innovation in Horizon 2020 - Eastern Partnership (EaP) Information Day on the 23rd of May 2013, jointly organised by DG CONNECT (EC), Ukrainian State agency on science, innovations and informatization, Ukrainian ICT NCPs, National Technical University of Ukraine 'Kyiv Polytechnic Institute' and PICTURE project (FP7), the event was attended by more than 140 participants, in majority EaP ICT stakeholders. The key speaker of the event was Morten Møller, Head of Unit, DG CONNECT. (http://www.eeca-ict.eu/news/Information_Day)

Participation of the experts in ICT Research and Innovation in Horizon 2020 - Eastern Partnership (EaP) Information Day on the 23rd of May and the presentations made by the representatives of ETP NESSI and NEM on the 24th of May demonstrated that the research priorities of NESSI and NEM are more relevant to the field of Content Technologies and Information Management. This, in its turn, will make it possible for research organizations of EECA countries to participate in HORIZON2020 calls more successfully and propose more scientific innovative and socially oriented project ideas.

For further information:

http://www.eeca-ict.eu/news/PICTURE_Workshop_on_Content_Technologies_and_Information_Management_Kyiv_May_2013



Introducing project partners: TuRENA and BELISA

Turkmenistan



Turkmenistan has a numerous separate plans which can be attracted to the development of the IT sector. Communication infrastructure and services is developing very actively in Turkmenistan. The National Strategy is considered to be as one of the most important trends in the development of the country within the framework of realization of national development program of Turkmenistan for the period of 2020; Informative communicational technologies give great opportunities for goal-reaching in the National program, the acceleration of economic development and improving the well-being of the Nation.

The following basic trends of the country are:

- The normative documents which regulate ICT structure in the country are developed or developing.
- Instructions on the document workflow and E-Government have been elaborated in Turkmenistan. Several Workshops have been led in Turkmenistan.

■ The National ICT training centre in Ashgabat was established in 2011.

■ The governmental staff of Turkmenistan has an opportunity to be trained on the base of ICT programme for introduction and using in all the spheres of National economics.

■ The Government of Turkmenistan is assigned the budget means for computing and ICT use. All secondary Turkmen schools (more than 1200) were equipped by PCs.

International Cooperation Agreements allows increasing stable development at international level. More than 30 agreements have been signed for the last period. The donors provide significant and large support of the initiatives of sector development of information communication technologies in Turkmenistan. A lot of workshops and seminars have been implemented in Turkmenistan on the base of different sources.

PICTURE project's partner from Turkmenistan is TuRENA.

TuRENA (<http://www.science.gov.tm/turena/>) – Turkmen research educational national association, established by Supreme Council of science and technology under the President of Turkmenistan (Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan from 2009) on the base of NATO science committee Project "Virtual Silk Highway". **TuRENA** holds Infodays and consults scientific research organizations with the purpose of their cooperation with the EC framework programme.

Total: 71 organizations- more than 61000 users.

Number of users and institutions connected to TuRENA:

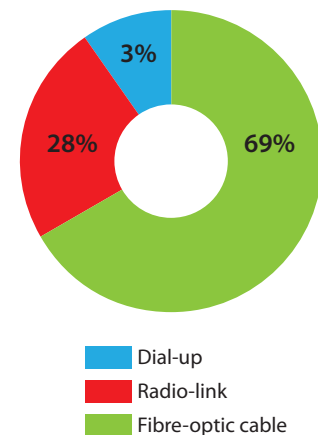
19 Educational universities- more than 18500 users

15 Scientific research institutions- more than 7900 users

2 Colleges – more than 1400 users

26 Secondary schools- more than 21300 users

10 other organizations- more than 10000 users



The TuRENA role in the User group support is focused on the elements of particular expertise, relevant previous experience and contacts. The most significant progress is in the areas of user support and user services on the base of TuRENA support.

TuRENA provides the following services: support of specific user communities, providing end user training, or train the trainers training, provide technical support to the IT departments of the connected institute, hosting: www.science.gov.tm, consultation support, educational platform support, telemedicine support, security support.

Belarus



Information and communication technologies (ICT) are one of the most important RTD priorities in Belarus and they gradually turn to an important tool for the improvement of the Economy of Belarus:

- The key research, education and training in ICT in Belarus are provided from several **universities** and related institutions. For example, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio Electronics (BSUIR) train experts in a wide range of ICT specialist: design and construction of radio-electronic equipment, software development, telecommunications, information protection, and micro- and nano-electronics. Big and important role the Belarusian State University plays in this process, as well as many other universities and high schools.

- Belarus has a number of public organisations that play essential role in the ICT sector: among them - the **National Academy of Science of Belarus** (NASB) which has several departments involved in academic ICT research. In particular, this includes the United Institute of Informatics Problems (UIIP-NASB) as one of the institutions of the Department of Physics, Math-

ematics and Informatics of NASB, as well as the Institute of Physics, Institute of Heat and Mass Transfer of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, and Institute of Mathematics.

- The ICT private sector is playing quite essential role in Belarus. During the latest decade there were established several strong and experienced ICT companies, holdings, associations what are keeping the top positions in world ICT ranking, and contributing to the country ICT development. Public association NGO **"Information Society"** facilitates the application of ICT in all spheres of Belarusian society and has more than 200 active members. The scientific and technological association **"Infopark"** is the largest private voluntary union of software development companies in the Republic of Belarus, it was created in 2001. "Infopark" renders assistance to development of Belarusian IT educational system, high-skilled personnel consolidation, conducting inter-branch research and raising competitive abilities of the IT enterprises. In 2005, the Belarus **Hi-Tech Park** was created following the Decree of the President of Belarus to stimulate high technology production. Today, most Hi-Tech Park residents are involved in information technology development. Currently, the park has 109 enterprises (125 in 2013) and their export of software development services exceeded \$215m during 2011.

Historically, Belarus was one of the most technologically advance republics of the former Soviet Union. A major key

advantage of Belarusian ICT organisations is the highly educated labour force. According to the *"UN 2011 Human Development Report"*, Belarus ranks **65th** among 187 countries of the world with regard to the human development and its human development index (HDI) being 0.756. Belarusian R&D organisations have also developed considerable infrastructures such as supercomputer and computer systems for medical applications.

In order to improve the ICT sector, Belarus has designed and implemented a broad range of ICT related policy measures to establish and develop its information society. The most important of them was the National ICT programme of the Republic of Belarus from **2003-2010 "e-Belarus"**.

Looking ahead over the medium-to-long term, the next set of high-level goals for national ICT policy is defined in the **"National Program for accelerated development of IT services for 2011-2015"**. In the action plan to implement the National Program, **21 specific actions** have been defined, responsibility for their implementation **with specific deadlines** allocated to different governmental bodies.

The National Program for accelerated development of IT services for 2011-2015 was prepared and approved within the framework of the **"Strategy of Information Society Development in Belarus until 2015"**. The aim of the Program is to establish favorable conditions for accelerated development of IT services in the country, promote development of information society on the basis of innovation and improve the quality and efficiency of information for the population, business and gov-

ernment, including creation of the state system for providing electronic services.

The strategic goal of the **State Programme of Innovation Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2011 – 2015** aims to transfer the national economy in the regime of intense development and provide solutions to major problems of the country together with a significant increase in export, including export of high technology and high-tech products. Program measures are concentrated on the set of activities that will ensure a positive trade balance, as well as address issues of import substitution, increase the country's position in international rankings in terms of global competitiveness ranking.

The major activities can be divided into the following domains:

- Formation and development of high-tech sector of national economy
- Formation of institutional environment conducive to intensive innovation development.

To emphasize the importance of the ICT sector development for Belarus a Council on Information Society Development has been established under the President of the Republic of Belarus (Presidential Decree, November 8, 2011 № 515).

In May 2012 Belarus has applied to join the Council of Europe's Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.

Belarusian remote sensing satellite has been launched in July 2012.

According to the current data the External Internet gateway of Belarus expanded to 350 Gbit / s (January 2013).

So, during the latest period Belarus has continued the im-

provement within the ICT area and quite a lot of the results has been achieved, what was noticed by the International society and organisations.

According to the ITU Report "Measuring the Information Society 2012", **ICT Development Index (IDI)**, in 2011 Belarus has the following result: **Economy Rank - 46 and IDI - 5.57.**

Thus, international experts highly estimated the ongoing activities on the development of information and communication technologies in the Republic of Belarus.

It should be noted that at the present time in Belarus in the framework of the National program for accelerated development of services in the field of information and communication technologies, a whole range of measures aimed at the further progressive development of ICT infrastructure, e-government, e-health, e-learning and human development capital are under realisation.

The main result of the successful implementation of the National Programs should be an increased by 2015 positions of Belarus in the ranking of countries by the ratings system of the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations (to be among the thirty leading countries of the world).

PICTURE project's partner from Belarus is **BelISA**.

БелИСА

BelISA (<http://www.belisa.org.by>) – **Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of Scientific and Technical Sphere** was founded by the Decree of President of the Republic of Belarus N 363 of 13.09.1996

for undertaking a systemic analysis of the state and development trends of the science and technology in Belarus and implementing research for the needs of policy making in this area to which later an innovation has been added. The Institute is the only research organization subordinated to the State **ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ КОМИТЕТ** **ГКНТ** **ПО НАУКЕ И ТЕХНОЛОГИЯМ** Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus, ranked as ministry for S&T, <http://www.gknt.org.by>.

BellSA is a successor of the Belarusian Research Institute for Scientific and Technical Information which together with similar institutions in the republics of the former Soviet Union formed the unique network – a Pan-Union system for exchanging the S&T information. Today, the elements of this system are active in Russia and Ukraine while in the other countries their functions were distributed between several organizations or lost. Following its historical path, BellSA develops and coordinates the State Program for Scientific and Technical Information and acts as a national center responsible for the international exchange of S&T information.

Pursuant to the Resolution of the Belarus Council of Ministers of 13.05.1997 N 472 BellSA is entrusted with registering R&D projects, both national and international and keeping the appropriate public register, as well as data bases and collection of reports on registered R&D projects. The projects which pass the public registration are exempted from VAT. Since 1997, BellSA is in charge of maintaining a Register of high-tech production facilities and enterprises and arranging the evaluation of applications

for inclusion in this Register: the status of a “high-tech enterprise” brings not just a moral satisfaction.

One of the relatively new tasks is a monitoring of the implementation of the State Program for Innovative Development of Belarus. Within the first program cycle, 2007-2010 BelISA has developed a unique automated information and analytic system which provides an opportunity for a real time monitoring of several hundreds of projects included in the program. In the current program cycle, 2011-2015 the system collects and analyses information from 32 state managing bodies about implementation of almost 700 projects.

BelISA is widely known in the national research community for its activities in supporting the international collaboration. The key areas of activities include

- Organization of S&T sections within international exhibitions in Belarus and abroad, this activity is supported from the state budget;
- Promoting cooperation of Belarus research centers and companies in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. Since 2004, BelISA hosts the FP National Information Point and participates in EU-funded projects aimed at supporting Belarus-EU collaboration in various priority areas of which the ICT is on the top. By June 2013, BelISA is a partner in 17 FP projects – 9 completed, 4 ongoing and 4 under negotiation;
- Promoting science and innovation cooperation within EECA. Since 2012, the Institute hosts a national contact center for implementation of the Interstate Program

of Innovative Cooperation of EECA member states till 2020;

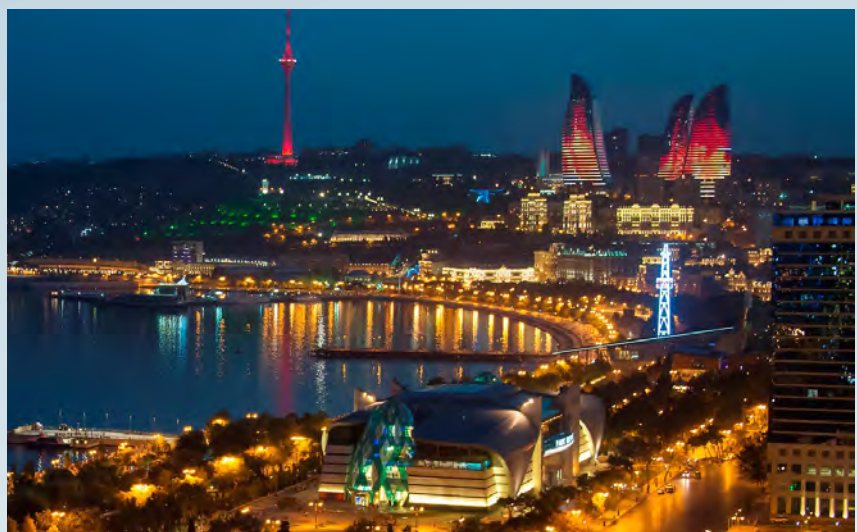
- BelISA gains popularity due to its activities in bringing in Belarus the best international experience in innovation policies. This new activity is being developed with the support of the UN Economic Commission for Europe;
- Last but not the least, the Institute operates the National Science and Technology Portal, <http://scienceportal.org.by> – a single entry point for Belarusian researchers to information about variable opportunities of the international cooperation worldwide and a reliable source of information about national science and innovation as well as the possibilities for cooperation with Belarus for foreign users.



Year 2013 declared “Year of Information and Communications Technologies” in Azerbaijan

The year 2013 has been declared the year of ICT by a decree of President of the Azerbaijan Republic. As a result, work in the field ICT have been encouraged and received significant financial support from the state. This will naturally have an effect on the priorities in ICT.

The first important historical event of declared 2013 the Year of ICT was country's entry into the space age: on February 8, 2013, Azerbaijan launched its first telecommunications satellite Azerspace-1



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into orbit. Satellite, covering the countries of Eastern Europe, CIS, North Africa and the Middle East, will provide various communication services and broadcasting. Further steps in this direction will be launching of low-orbit optical satellite in 2015, and in 2016 - the second telecommunications satellite.

With the view of further development of ICT the **"Action Plan in connection with the declaration 2013 "Year of ICT" in the Republic of Azerbaijan"** was worked out by the experts of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies and the National Academy of Sciences and approved by the Order of the President on March 28, 2013.

The Action Plan consisting of 52 events to be organized and measures to be executed, includes measures on Improvement of legal framework and management, Strengthening the capacity of ICT, Development of information society and human resources.

"The State Fund for Development of Information Technologies" for support of innovation ICT projects has been established.

"High-Tech Park" has been created, which mainly is designated for realization of innovation ICT projects.

"Regional Innovation Zone" project developed by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies in cooperation with Booz Allen Hamilton (a leading US consulting company), will serve and support the establishment of techno-parks for the support of innovative entrepreneurship, a regional market for the production and export of electronic equipment and software, of transitional information dimen-

sion between the East and the West to provide wide-ranging electronic services to all countries in the region and of a university for the development of human resources.

According to the report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), "Measuring the Information Society 2012" for ICT Development Index (IDI), having moved forward five points our country finished 68th among 155 countries in the world. In the ITU report Azerbaijan is included in a group of ten countries in the world that have achieved most dynamic development in the industry over the past 5-7 years.

Among the major initiatives planned for implementation this year is the project "Fiber to Home" providing the expansion of the country's infrastructure for model optical FTTH. The project implemented with the financial support of the State Oil Fund (SOFAF) is estimated at about \$ 500 million. The ultimate aim of the project is to ensure throughout the country, including remote rural areas, with high-speed Internet at speeds of 10-100 Mbit / s, and bring the number of broadband Internet users up to 85%, which will allow Azerbaijan to reach the level of developed countries in the world in 2017.

Another international project initiated by Azerbaijan expected to develop in the short term is laying the **Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM)**. Backed by two special resolutions from the UN General Assembly, TASIM project envisages laying of fiber-optic backbone that will connect Hong Kong with Frankfurt and thus provide vast Eurasian space with high-speed Internet. For several years, the part-

ners of the future consortium - the largest telecommunications companies of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Russia and Turkey have been preparing for this project. Implementation of the project will give Azerbaijan an opportunity to become a key information hub in the Caspian region.

International organizations are rather optimistic about the development prospects of the ICT sector in Azerbaijan, believing that continuation of sector reforms and, in particular, the establishment of preferential environment for potential investors in 2025 will bring the level of income from the ICT sector to 10% of GDP. It is comparable with the expected level of profitability of sector in the developed countries of the world.



Launch of the first Azerbaijan telecommunications satellite Azerspace-1 from Kourou, in South America, the Space Center of French Guiana

Interview of the PICTURE project Coordinator to the PanEuropean Network

Svetlana Klessova, the PICTURE project Coordinator, gave an interview to "PanEuropean Network" journal about collaboration in the field of ICT between the EU and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

In her interview titled '**PICTURE in Focus**', Svetlana Klessova pointed out that science and technology co-operation, based on mutual benefit with third countries, is crucial to the European Community's scientific, political and economic objectives. PICTURE stands for 'Policy dialogue in ICT to an Upper level for Reinforced EU-EECA Co-operation', and is a support action funded by the European Commission's DG for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CONNECT). PICTURE supports co-operation between the European Union and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) countries in the field of ICT. It aims to support ICT policy dialogue between EU and EECA countries, and to foster ICT collaboration opportunities. The ambition of PICTURE is to bring

the ICT collaboration between EU and EECA to a higher level, to involve ICT stakeholders from the government, academia and enterprises in the process and to foster ICT collaboration opportunities between Europe and EECA.

Svetlana Klessova told about the meaning of the PICTURE project and gave detailed answers to the PEN correspondent's questions, such as:

What is the context in which the project is being undertaken, and why is it necessary and important to support policy dialogue between the European Union and Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries?

Why does the project cover the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia?

What do you hope to achieve, and how do you propose to go about it?

The full text of the interview is available on:

http://www.eeca-ict.eu/uploads/new_documents/Klessova_article.pdf

Main upcoming events for PICTURE project



PICTURE Workshop on **Components, Computing Systems and Networks**, will take place on the 26th September in Yerevan, Armenia within the framework of the **9th International Conference on Computer Science and Information Technologies** (23-27 September 2013, Erevan).

http://www.eeca-ict.eu/events/9th_International_Conference_on_Computer_Science_and_Information_Technologies

The PICTURE workshop will be preceded by the **EC Infoday "ICT in Horizon2020"** that will take place on the 25th September, 2013.



PICTURE consortium intends to participate in the **ICT 2013 – Create, Connect, Grow**, in Vilnius on 6-8 November, 2013 – the main European Commission ICT devoted event in 2013.

More than 4000 researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, industry representatives, young people and politicians are expected in Vilnius.

The event will focus on **Horizon 2020** - the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for 2014-2020. (http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm)

ICT 2013 includes: conference, exhibition, networking sessions, investment forum, activities for students and young researchers.

The information on the event can be found on: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/ict-2013>

The registration is **already open!**

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/ict-2013-registration-open>

PICTURE partners submitted a proposal for a Networking session on the **EU-EECA ICT research co-operation to support the development of scientific excellence and industrial partnership under Horizon 2020**.



WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK

The PICTURE team will provide you with expert advice and professional consultancy, tailored to your needs.

In return, we would like to hear your feedback about your experiences collaborating in EU-EECA joint ICT projects.

Do you have any other experience to share?

A seminar or conference to promote?

Suggestions for EU-EECA pilot projects?

Partners to be searched?

Send us your ideas and suggestions <http://www.eeca-ict.eu/contact>.

List of consortium partners per country:

Country	Organisation	Contact Name	E-mail	Tel. & Mobile phone	Skype
France	inno	Svetlana Klessova (coordinator)	s.klessova@inno-group.com	+334 92 38 84 26	
		Camille Vidaud	c.vidaud@inno-group.com	+334 92 38 84 17	
		Olga Kieffer	o.kieffer@inno-group.com	+334 92 38 84 25	
Greece	Q-PLAN	Kostas Bougiouklis Petros Papadionissiou	bougiouklis@qplan.gr papadionissiou@qplan.gr	+30 2310411191 +30 6978897827 +30 6978897401	
Armenia	IIAP	Levon Aslanyan Hasmik Sahakyan	lasl@sci.am hasmik@ipia.sci.am	+374 94 521 913 +374 55 511231	laslanyan
Azerbaijan	RITA	Tofiq Babayev	tbabayev@bk.ru	+994 50 21 259 13 +994 50 31392 02 +994 1 2 53 913 68	babayev.tofiq
Belarus	BELISA	Tatyana Lyadnova	tlyadnova@fp7-nip.org.by tlyadnova@belisa.org.by novat2@gmail.com	+375 29 335 98 68 +375 17 203 10 16	
Georgia	GRENA	Givi Kochoradze Ramaz Kvatadze	gcp@ip.osgf.ge givi.kochoradze@yahoo.com ramaz@grena.ge	+995 599 29251 (Givi) +995 599 562869 (Ramaz)	ramaz.kvatadze
Kazakhstan	NATD JSC	Timur Shalabayev	timur.shalabayev@nif.kz	+7 7172 517024 (add 247)	
Kyrgyzstan	EIMO	Kunduz Rysbek	abilayabilay@gmail.com	+99 6 543 714 741	azumi2348
Moldova	CIP	Lidia Romanduc Igor Cojocar	intprojects@asm.md mrda@mrda.md cojocar@asm.md	+ 373 22 270 774 (Lidia) + 373 7 9 45 4 575 + 373 22 7 3 33 01 (Igor)	
Russia	E-ARENA	Marat Biktimirov	marat@e-arena.ru marat@ras.ru	+749 913 525 98	
Tajikistan	SODESCO	Ilkhom Mirsaidov Mirzo Akramov Shabnam Tosheva	i.mirsaidov@nrsa.tj agentilhom@mail.ru mirzo_1@mail.ru shahiya@mail.ru	+99 2 918 244 944 +992 918 237 777 +992 378 814 906	
Turkmenistan	SCC Altyn Umyt	Charyyar Amansahedov Rustam Gadzhiev	amansakhatov@yandex.ru rustamtme@gmail.com	+993 65 5 60 720	
Ukraine	AEI	Ivan Kulchytskyy	kul.ivan@gmail.com	+ 380 999 064 447	
Uzbekistan	IMNUU	Prof. Fatima Adilova	fatima_adilova@rambler.ru	+ 998 712 629 878	