

Towards 2020: New Horizons for RTD and Innovation in the Western Balkan Region

WBC-INCO.NET Final Conference & Brokerage Event

Tech Gate Vienna / Donau-City-Straße 1 / 1220 Vienna / Austria

Parallel Session (2) on ICT:
Enhanced ICT Research and Innovation Cooperation

The current situation, priorities, and the future of ICT research in Kosovo

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Nikos Zaharis, SEERC Director

- ▶ The South East European Research Center (SEERC)
 - ▶ International, multidisciplinary, non-profit research centre established in Thessaloniki by the International Faculty of the University of Sheffield, CITY College.
 - ▶ Mission: To support the development of SEE by conducting basic and applied research, in, and for the region.
 - ▶ Three research tracks:
 - ▶ Enterprise, Innovation and Regional Development
 - ▶ Information & Communication Technologies
 - ▶ Society and Human Development: Psychology, Politics, Sociology and Education
- ▶ Nikos Zaharis
 - ▶ More than 20 years experience as a consultant and manager working for industry and public sector organizations on issues ranging from management of innovation to economic and regional development in Greece and in a series of eastern European countries. Research interests: innovation policy, regional development and entrepreneurship. Currently, involved in the **EUHUB** (<http://www.euhub.eu/>) initiative and the **ICT2B** project which aims at transforming European funded ICT research into investment opportunities (FP7/ICT).



Kosovo participation in ICT in FP and ERA

Challenges that Kosovo faces:

- ▶ Near isolation of ICT researchers (from EU RTDI)
 - ▶ lack of international project experience
 - ▶ professional networks mostly limited to Kosovo
- ▶ Wide gap between ICT RTDI and the ICT industry
 - ▶ weak knowledge transfer to ICT industry
 - ▶ weak industry does not drive researchers towards FP participation
- ▶ Lack of career path for young researchers
- ▶ Lack of ICT RTDI strategy setting capacities

ICT-KOSEU: Goals

Support Kosovo's inclusion in the ERA

- ▶ strengthen capacity to participate in FP research
- ▶ facilitate researchers' collaboration with EU researchers



ICT-KOSEU: Approach

- ▶ **implement of a thorough ICT Technology Audit**
- ▶ **conduct a participatory process to identify Kosovo ICT research priorities**
- ▶ **facilitate the dialogue between EU and Kosovo with regard to ICT RTDI**
- ▶ **implement a strategy to strengthen capacity, networking, and dissemination**



ICT-KOSEU: Outputs and Results (excerpt)

- ▶ **mapping of ICT stakeholders (in academia, industry, and policy-making)**
- ▶ **analysis of macro-economic context and ICT RTDI policies, including the neighbouring countries**
- ▶ **raised awareness among Kosovo researchers in ICT**
- ▶ **established healthy ties with *Diaspora***
- ▶ **ICT RTDI roadmap of Kosovo participation in Horizon 2020**



ICT-KOSEU: Outputs and Results (contd.)

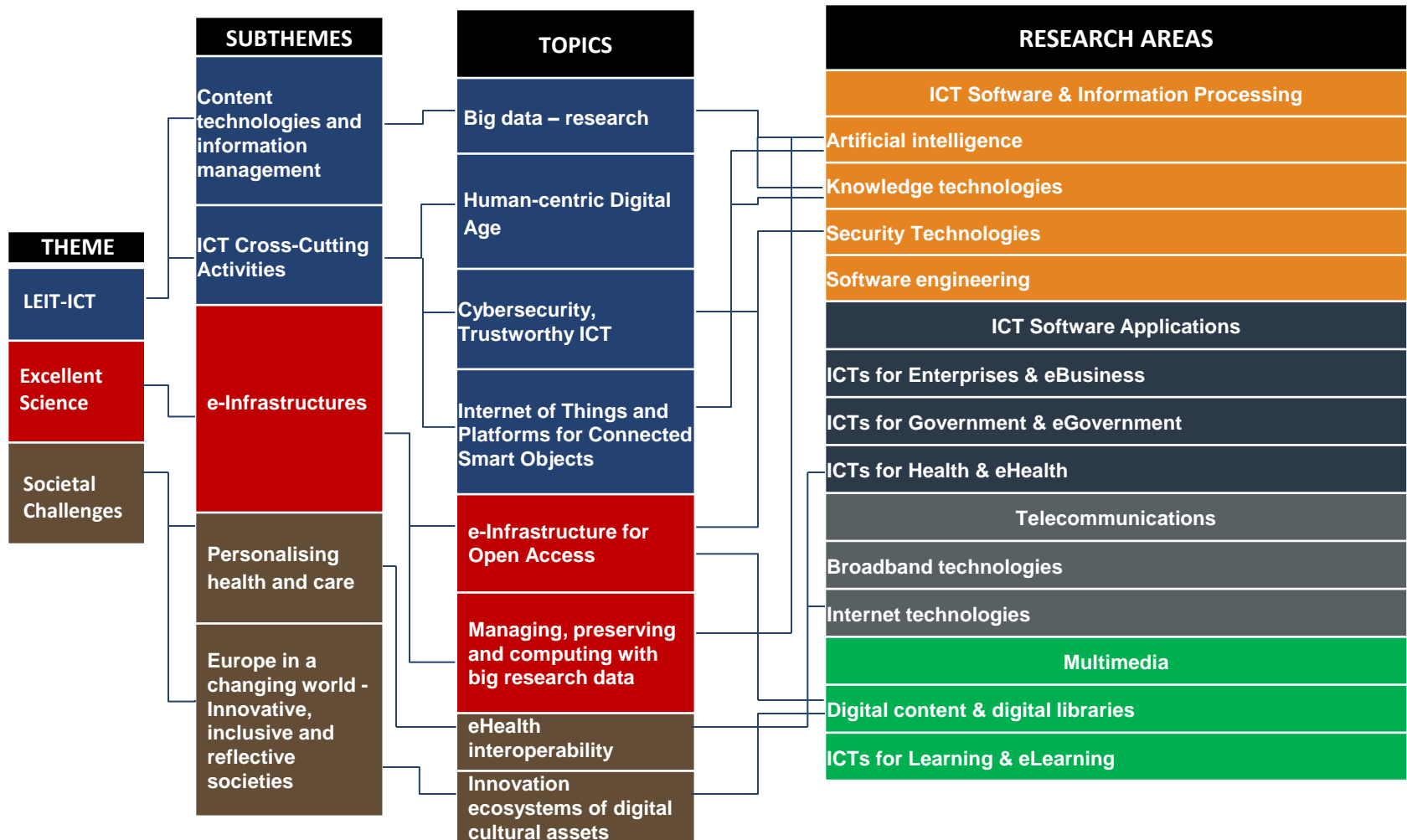
Future ICT research priorities in Kosovo & neighb.

country	Albania	BiH	Croatia	Kosovo	FYR Macedonia	Serbia
priority						
e-Health	High	High	High	Medium	High	High
security technologies	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low
digital content & digit. libraries	High	Low	High	Medium	High	Low
knowledge technologies	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	Low
artificial intelligence	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low



ICT-KOSEU: Outputs and Results (contd.)

– ICT RTDI roadmap (excerpt)



ICT-KOSEU: Outputs and Results yet to come ...

- ▶ finalisation of the ICT RTDI Roadmap for Kosovo participation in Horizon 2020
- ▶ recommendations to ...
 - ▶ national RTDI stakeholders
 - ▶ national policy-makers and authorities
 - ▶ the EC
- ... as regards ...
 - ▶ the modernisation of the national RTDI system
 - ▶ overcoming barriers to participate in the FP
 - ▶ exploiting available funding opportunities



ICT-KOSEU: Key suggestions

- ▶ Regional collaboration in research projects
- ▶ Improvement of the country's capacity to absorb resources from available EU funds (capacity building, participation and collaboration with EU institutions)
- ▶ Strategic planning and streamlining the new IPA II funds to support R&I
- ▶ Strengthening the collaboration between the academia and the business sector - involving the business and academic members of Kosovar Diaspora
- ▶ Advance the country's research infrastructures
- ▶ according to scientific specialisation and available resources

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Thank You For Your Attention!

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