

**YDEAS project: Young Developers and Entrepreneurs to Advance Start-ups in the Western Balkans**

## **THE CONNECTIVITY MEETING**

*Inspire, Connect, Enable*

**Tirana, 8-9 November 2018**

### **Background**

The “Connectivity Meeting” is the closing event of the pilot project, “**YDEAS**” (Young Developers and Entrepreneurs to **A**dvance **S**tart-ups in the Western Balkans) implemented by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities between May and October 2018. The project has been implemented with the financial support of the Italian 2018 OSCE Chairmanship, the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

By granting eighteen scholarships in one of the most innovative hubs in Europe, the Turin-based European Innovation Academy (EIA) - a recognized leader in tech entrepreneurship education - the project aimed at improving the employability of young people in the Western Balkans - providing youth with the innovation-intense and entrepreneurial skills that are required in an increasingly digitalized economy - while leveraging the potential of a regional community of young innovators that could foster economic connectivity, development as well as reconciliation efforts in the region.

### **The OSCE mandate and role**

OSCE Ministerial Council Decision no. 8/17 on *Promoting economic participation in the OSCE area* calls upon participating States to “*Continue their efforts to promote education and vocational training, [...] and increase employment opportunities*” [...] “*ensuring the necessary conditions for the education and vocational training of youth facilitating youth access to the labour market*”.

Moreover, Ministerial Council Decision no. 5/15 on *Youth and Security* stresses “*the importance of promoting the implementation of the OSCE commitments on youth, particularly in the area of education and the role young people can play to support participating States in implementing OSCE commitments in all three dimensions of the OSCE.*” Finally, Ministerial Council Decision no. 10/11 on *Promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere* calls on participating States to “*eliminate gender-biased discrimination (...) and “facilitate the development of women’s entrepreneurial and other related skills*”.

In line with these commitments, Italy has placed human capital development as one its priorities during its Chairmanship of the OSCE.

### **The Connectivity Meeting**

With the motto “**Inspire, Connect and Enable**” the Connectivity Meeting - held in Tirana on 8-9 November 2018 - will benefit from the involvement of experienced mentors and young business leaders that will foster an interactive, dynamic and engaging dialogue with the aim to explore opportunities to leverage the potential for human capital development in the Western Balkans



The event will comprise three interactive panel discussions:

The first panel, facilitated by the European Innovation Academy, will focus on exploring ways to improve co-operation among Universities within and outside the Western Balkans;

The second panel, facilitated by “InsideOut Adventure” (IOA), will focus on exchange of experiences among young business leaders and mentors, with a special attention to social enterprise, exploring ways to strengthen start-uppers’ resilience, motivation and leadership;

The third panel, facilitated by Impact Hub, will focus on the role of private and banking sectors in supporting innovation, including investment opportunities for young start-uppers in the region.

A concluding lunch on 9 November will provide an open space for networking, interaction, exchange, discussion.

The event will offer the opportunity to confer the 18 awardees of the YDEAS project the symbolic title of “Ambassadors of Innovation”.

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## THE CONNECTIVITY MEETING

### *Inspire, Connect, Enable*

Tirana, 8-9 November 2018  
Venue: MAK Hotel, Sheshi Italia, Room 'Illyria 1'

## Agenda

### Thursday, 8 November 2018

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>12:00 – 12:30</b> | Registration of participants   |
| <b>12:30 - 14:00</b> | Welcoming/networking lunch offered by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities |
| <b>14:00 - 16:00</b> | <b>Panel discussion: Fostering University co-operation for the future of work</b>                                  |

*The curriculum and structure of University programmes cannot be dependent solely on known content, but should be preparing for the unknown unknowns. This means preparing students to be problem solvers, to know how to find and use information, and how to create new tools to solve problems. In this Session, Universities from the Western Balkans' region will be invited to share experiences and explore avenues to improve connections, share knowledge, and enhance co-operation inside and outside the region.*

**Opening remarks: Ms. Teresa Albano, Economic Affairs Officer,** Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE Secretariat

**Facilitator: Ms. Sandra Metsis,** European Innovation Academy (EIA)

**Featuring: Ms. Aida Bret,** National Erasmus+ Coordinator (NEO)

**Mr. Vlado Damjanovic,** Head of Community at MUNPlanet

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| <b>16:00 - 16:30</b> | Coffee/tea break |
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**16:30 – 18:30**                      **Panel discussion: Venturing out of the comfort zone**

*Innovative work will always remain influenced by the environment to which individuals are exposed. As a consequence, to boost innovation there is a strong need for potential and actual start-uppers to be exposed to the best environment possible. To do so, it is necessary to get inspiration from others, to listen to others' stories and learn from their successes and failures. How did they have the courage to be bold, innovative, creative? How did they face failures and challenges along the way and remain resilient? How did they serve our societies and create value for themselves and for others? In this session, start-uppers will tell their life and start-up stories.*

**Facilitator:**            **Ms. Amaia Sotes Linares-Rivas**, Director & Founder, InsideOut Adventure (IOA), Vienna

**Featuring:**            **Italian start-up: Orangefiber**  
**Egyptian start-up: Upfuse**  
**Austrian start-up: Vello Bike**  
**Spanish start-up: Vacío**

*We will explore the below seven themes from different perspectives. It will be a free flowing and open discussion. The audience will be asked to participate and reflect on the below questions.*

**Questions and themes**

- 1. Exploring values.** When pursuing your project/company/dream, since the minute you started until you made it real, what was driving you?
- 2. Articulating purpose, direction and vision.** Project yourself into the future: it is now 8 November 2020 and you are celebrating the best years of your life that lie behind you. Looking back, what would you like to have achieved? What are you proud of and happy about? What is your message to other people like you?
- 3. Team support.** Who has been decisive in your journey until there? What qualities have other people brought to your team? And to your life?
- 4. Courage - Making it happen!** Do you recall a moment in your life when you were terrified to do something, and nevertheless, did it. Can you tell us about it? What did you learn?
- 5. Resilience - Success and failure.** Imagine that during this process, you have experienced and continue to experience many successes and set-backs. How do you deal with them?
- 6. Presence - Recovering, reconnecting and resetting.** What do you do when you feel overwhelmed, tired, frustrated or unfocused?
- 7. Reflections and Learnings –** What is your biggest learning achievement so far? What do you want the audience to know before leaving the event tonight?

**18:30 - 20:30**    Networking dinner offered by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

## Friday, 9 November 2018

### 09:30 - 11:00                      **Opening Session**

#### **Welcoming remarks:**

- **Mr. Erion Veliaj**, Mayor of Tirana
- **Mr. Robert Wilton**, Deputy Head of Mission, OSCE Presence in Albania
- **Ms. Raffaella Campanati**, First Secretary, Embassy of Italy in Tirana

#### **Topical Session: Leveraging quality education for regional co-operation and development**

- **Mr. Đuro Blanuša**, Secretary General, Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO)
- **Mr. Gazmend Turdiu**, Deputy Secretary General, Regional Co-operation Council (RCC)
- **Ms. Anna-Katarina Deininger**, Special Representative on Youth and Security, 2018 Italian OSCE Chairmanship, Focal Point on Youth and Security, Office of the Secretary General, OSCE

**Moderator: Ms. Teresa Albano, Economic Affairs Officer**, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE Secretariat

#### **Ceremony: Awarding the “Ambassadors of Innovation”**

**11:00 – 11:30**                      Press opportunity and coffee/tea break

#### **11:30-13:30                      Panel discussion: The future of business: unlocking the potential of youth entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans**

*Turning a start-up into a solid economic reality that creates long-term value and impact is, indeed, a demanding effort. Challenges range from bureaucracy to access to credit, from skills' improvement to identifying the most appropriate partners. How can an ecosystem for start-ups be fostered in the Western Balkans? Which are the challenges, where the opportunities? How can maximisation of profit be combined with social change in a region which is still in transition? This Session will explore the role of investors, including new forms of investment also linked to increased digitalisation. The aim is to foster an enabling environment for start-ups, including social enterprise, to flourish and display their positive impact in the region.*

**Facilitator:                      Ms. Alina Moldovan**, Impact Hub, Vienna

*We will explore the below themes from different perspectives using the fishbowl format that is a dynamic conversation in which the speakers and audience contribute equally to the dialogue. It fosters active listening and creates an eye-to-eye exchange between the speakers and the moderator.*

#### Questions and themes

##### **1. Challenges & opportunities for start-ups**

Speakers in small circle:

- Sonila Necaj, Business Advisor, Yunus Social Business – Albania
- Vlado Damjanovic, Head of Community, Hub River – Serbia
- Oltjana Beci – YDEAS Winner
- Isadora Perovic – YDEAS Awardee

##### **2. Support for start-ups**

Speakers in small circle:

- Sonila Necaj, Business Advisor, Yunus Social Business – Albania
- Dafina Beqiri, Program Manager Western Balkans Fund – Albania
- Heinz Habertheuer, Austrian Development Agency Albania
- Robin Gosejohann, Erste Foundation

##### **3. Building an ecosystem for start-ups and social enterprises**

Speakers in small circle:

- Sonila Necaj, Business Advisor, Yunus Social Business – Albania
- Dafina Beqiri, Program Manager Western Balkans Fund – Albania
- Heinz Habertheuer, Austrian Development Agency Albania
- Robin Gosejohann, Erste Foundation
- Endrita Xhaferaj, EBRD

**13:30 – 16:00** Networking lunch offered by the Embassy of Italy