



Welcome to the June newsletter of Startup Europe Regions Network. We would like to share with you interesting initiatives, news and events about EU regions, as well as information about SERN activities and upcoming events.

Enjoy your reading!



SMEs need support from all levels to go digital

The challenges and opportunities of digitalisation for SMEs was at the heart of a conference by the European Committee of the Regions in Bucharest on 22 June. The role of local and regional authorities, available EU instruments and synergies for cooperation via interregional programmes have been discussed during the event. Public policy has a key role to play in creating the framework conditions for SMEs to enter the digital age. This requires a coordinated approach to tackle the problems SMEs face and to ensure future competitiveness. More information [here](#).



Cohesion Policy beyond 2020: support to regions to become more innovative

The Commission renewed the initiative 'Stairway to Excellence', to continue to provide tailored support and expertise to regions lagging behind in terms of innovation. The initiative will help regions develop, update and refine their smart specialisation strategies. It will also help them identify adequate EU resources to finance innovative projects, and pair up with other regions with similar assets to create innovation clusters. More information [here](#).



Commission invests €9.2 billion in first ever digital programme

The European Commission proposed to create the first ever Digital Europe programme and invest €9.2 billion to align the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027 with increasing digital challenges. This needs to be matched with equally ambitious funding and investments in the Digital Europe programme for increasing EU's international competitiveness as well as developing and reinforcing Europe's strategic digital capacities. More information [here](#).



European Commission launches Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans

On the 25th of June at the Digital Assembly in Sofia, Bulgaria, the European Commission is launching the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans. This aims to support the transition of the region into a digital economy and bring the benefits of the digital transformation, such as faster economic growth, more jobs, and better services. It also enables regional startups to connect and network with major European hubs; opening Digital Opportunity Traineeship to students and young people.. More information [here](#).



Learning Accelerator Technology (LEA) project was launched on the 1st of March 2015 and will last 2 years. The LEA project's goal is to accelerate knowledge transfer, dialog and awareness raising of innovative procurement within the learning technology sector by creating a European wide cleantech procurers' network. The main objective of LEA is to form a critical mass of procurers of education. More information [here](#).