



**TITLE OF THE PANEL:** Opportunities of cooperation between HEIs and development agencies

**PROPONENT:** European Association of Regional Development Agencies (Eurada)

**CHAIR:** Christian Saublens, Former director of Eurada



**SPONSORED BY:** European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA)

**MAIN TOPIC/SCOPE:**

This panel session will be based on a case-study series on relations between regional economic practitioners and HEIs. The general objective is to showcase possibilities of cooperation between these main territorial actors. The debate takes place in the context of future development of EU policies related to innovation ecosystems; Horizon Europe programme will likely have a budget of €500 million to foster connectiveness in ecosystems for period 2021-2027.

Panellists will share their experiences on the relationships between HIEs and development agencies as the two main key-players in the ecosystems, despite the different contexts and geographical diversity. It has been widely analysed how HEIs could better contribute to RIS3 implementation (see Goddard et al (2013) Universities and Smart Specialisation). In recent years it has been emphasised the impact of higher education for smart specialization (Edwards et al (2017)). Despite the benefits, cooperation is not simple and *engagement of universities in regional policy-making often depends heavily on engaged individuals at the university* (Benneworth, P., & Fitjar, R. D. (2019)).

Proposed panellists contribute with their double vision in the interface. They are experts from development agencies involved in teaching in HEIs. They bring in the academic framework their practical experience and the detailed knowledge of the regional economic context. In addition to teaching they are involved in the implementation of research projects. From the other point of view, Universities and other higher education organisations are the main centres of knowledge and research applied in many European territories with undoubtedly bring benefits for regional economic development.


**PANELISTS :**

- Mr Christian Saublens, Former director of Eurada
- Ms Àurea RODRÍGUEZ, Director of the Innovation Department, Regional Development Agency of Catalonia (ACCIÓ)
- Ms Nathalie BOULANGER, Project Manager Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation, Regional Economic Development Agency of the Region Centre-Val de Loire (Dev'Up)
- Mr Jan Sienkiewicz, Proxy Registered Attorney and Director of International Projects, Bielsko-Biała Regional Development Agency (ARRSA)



### **Christian Saublens**


Christian is commercial engineer and has been for more than 30 years a leading representative of regional interest in Brussels, giving the innovative views of the regions to EU institutions and participating in a continuous dialogue and exchange of ideas for economic development. He founded the European Association of Regional Development Agencies (EURADA) in 1991, before he was working in a European association of local and regional authorities and started his career as lobbyist in the European association of glass manufacturing industry. Christian promoted the creation of the European Business Angels Network (EBAN), promoting the stimulation of informal venture capital at regional or national level. Christian has written several papers regarding the impact of EU regulations on regional development and the role of development agencies in Europe.

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### **Àurea RODRÍGUEZ - ACCIÓ**


As director of the business innovation unit at ACCIÓ, Àurea Rodríguez fosters a favourable innovation ecosystem so that Catalan companies can innovate and grow with a global outlook. She firmly believes that knowledge, collaboration and innovation are a core part of Catalonian industrial DNA. After finishing her studies in the University of Barcelona, Mrs Rodríguez followed a MBA. She had several managerial positions in private foundations, companies and technology centers related to chemistry and pharmacy. From 2008 to 2016 she was managing director of the Technology Center of Nutrition and Health. In recent years she is in the board of directors and high managerial positions of several applied research foundations and technology centers such as LEITAT, EURECAT, Center for computer vision, etc.

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### **Nathalie Boulanger - Dev'Up**

Nathalie is the head of European policies in the Regional Development Agency of Centre-Val de Loire (Dev'Up). She is a recognised expert on smart specialisation strategies, leading the operational implementation of the strategy in her region and coordinating the Interreg Europe project Beyond EDP. Nathalie also manages, for the Dev'up agency, five other European projects related to the smart specialization strategy. She supports the economic actors of her region to seize the opportunities offered by European programmes and coordinates the node of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). Nathalie has an important activity on widening the use of strategic intelligence and information-seeking methods, strategic analysis, within private companies and organisation from the region Centre-Val de Loire. Nathalie holds an industrial applied PhD on strategical information. She has a bachelor degree on technology watch and transfer.

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### **Jan Sienkiewicz – ARRSA**

Mr. Sienkiewicz works since 2005 in the regional development agency of Bielsko-Biala (ARRSA). Nowadays he has a top managerial position as proxy, attorney and responsible of international projects. He has a MSc degree on energy and agro-engineer by the University of Krakow. He complemented his postgraduate studies in USA and Canada. He initiated his professional career in the private industry, as sales manager in companies related to metal mechanics. In this moment he holds several managerial positions in private companies and in a think tank.



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