

Transform4Europe Research and Innovation (T4ERI)
31.05.2023

REPORT ON FIRST TWO STAKEHOLDER ASSEMBLIES

T4ERI DELIVERABLE D5.5

**WORK PACKAGE 5: COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION, AND
COOPERATION WITH THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM**
TASK 5.5 TRANSFORM4EUROPE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Prepared by:

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" WP5 team

Assoc. Prof. Stelian Dimitrov, PhD

+359878417859

stelian@gea.uni-sofia.bg

INTRODUCTION

The engagement of stakeholders and the Regional Innovation Ecosystems is crucial for the T4ERI project due to the following issues:

- **Bring diverse perspectives:** Stakeholders bring diverse viewpoints and expertise to the project. By engaging them, we will benefit from their insights, ideas, and experiences, which can lead to more comprehensive and innovative solutions.
- **Establish collaboration and partnerships:** Engaging stakeholders and the Regional Innovation Ecosystems facilitates collaboration and the formation of partnerships. These collaborations can help access additional resources, share knowledge, and leverage each other's strengths to achieve project objectives more effectively.
- **Enhance project outcomes:** Involving stakeholders and the Regional Innovation Ecosystems increases the likelihood of project success. Their involvement ensures that the project aligns with the needs of the community, industry trends, and market demands, resulting in more relevant and impactful outcomes.
- **Mitigate risks:** Engaging stakeholders early in the project can help identify potential risks and challenges. Their input can contribute to effective risk management strategies, ensuring that project risks are identified, assessed, and addressed in a timely manner.
- **Ensure support and buy-in by the stakeholders:** By involving stakeholders and the Regional Innovation Ecosystems from the beginning, we can secure their support and buy-in for the project. This support is crucial for obtaining necessary resources, overcoming obstacles, and sustaining the project's momentum.

To effectively engage stakeholders and the Regional Innovation Ecosystems, various strategies can be implemented such as conducting stakeholder analysis, organizing workshops and consultations, establishing communication channels, and fostering a collaborative environment.

Several events were organized to ensure the inclusion of the stakeholders.

FIRST TRANSFORM4EUROPE RESEARCH & INNOVATION STAKEHOLDERS' ASSEMBLY

The First T4ERI Stakeholders' Assembly was held on Monday, 31 January 2022. Due to the ongoing pandemic situation, the meeting was organized as an online event with virtual hosts Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and University of Trieste.

The Stakeholders' Assembly was open to all members of the Transform4Europe & T4ERI community and aimed at engaging stakeholders from the whole Alliance network – a key aspect in the T4ERI project.

The meeting featured more than 40 participants – both T4ERI team members and invited stakeholders from all 7 partner universities' countries.

To this purpose, a preliminary stakeholder analysis was conducted from all the partner universities to identify key stakeholders – also those involved in T4EU Regional Transformation Network.

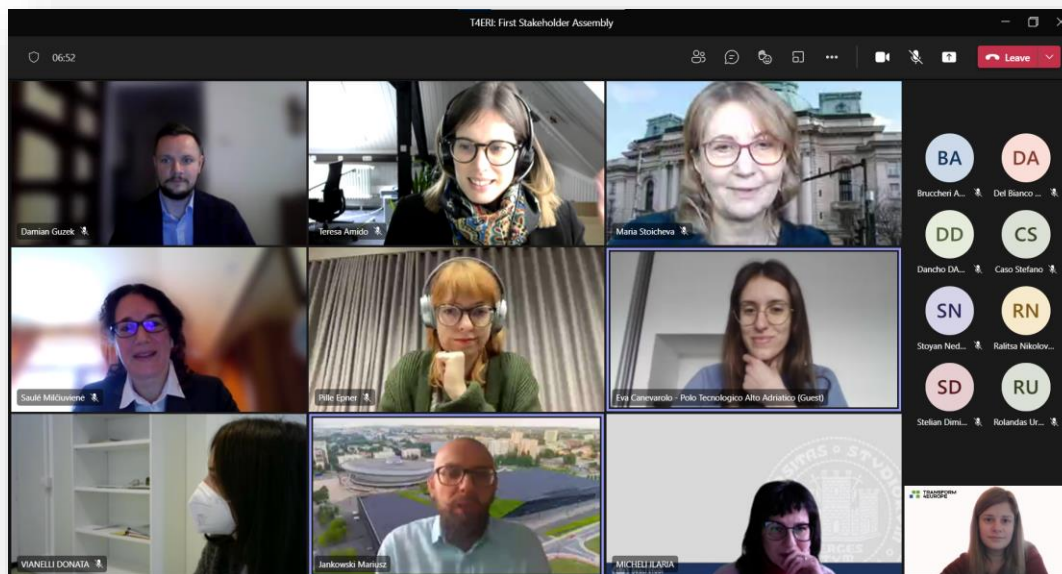


Figure 1. Participants in the first T4ERI Stakeholders' Assembly (online meeting, 31 January 2022)

The main aspects of the T4ERI project were briefly presented to the audience. Further in the meeting program, research and innovation specializations of each university were presented by its project manager. Special attention was paid to each stakeholder so that participants could learn more about each other and collaborate through the Transform for European Research & Innovation Alliance opportunities. In conclusion, it was emphasized the diverse picture of actors and regional strengths within the Alliance network on one hand and on the other – the overlapping of common scientific aims and targets, which is a perfect starting point towards a common vision of the future Transform4Europe Research and Innovation development.

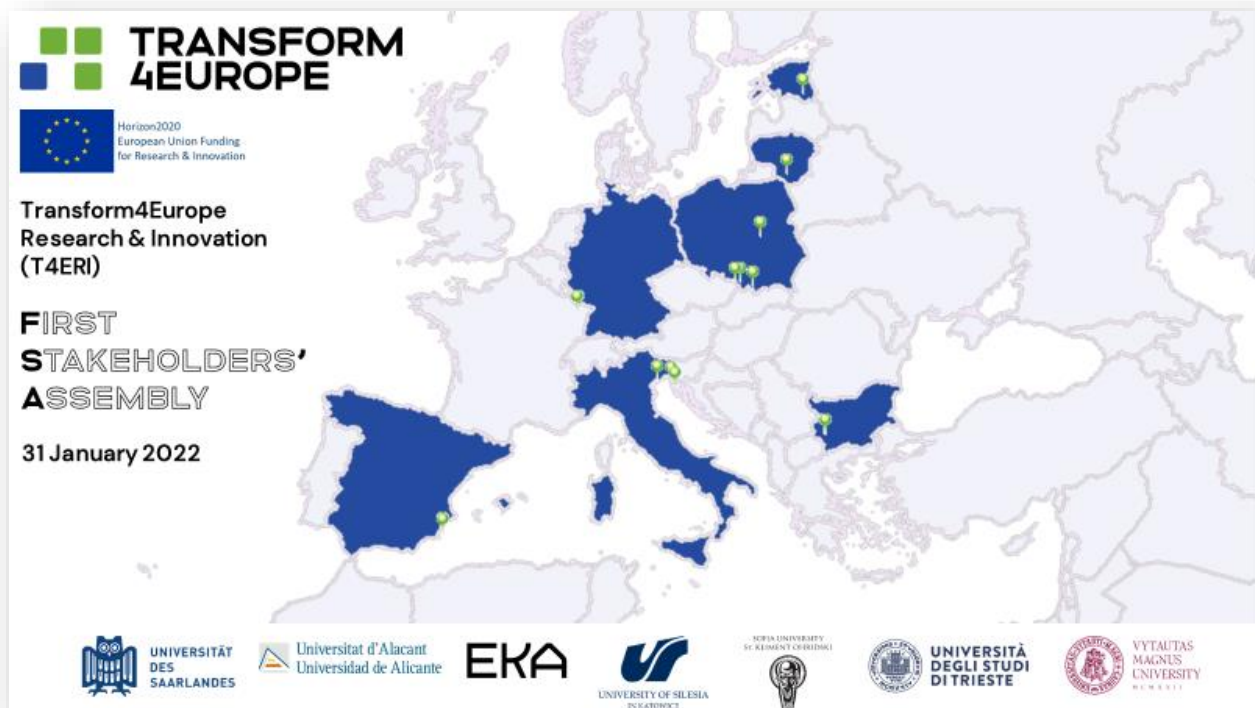


Figure 2. Map of stakeholders' engagement in T4ERI as a result and most important goal of this 1st Stakeholders' Assembly – to identify the key research & innovation partners

Additional information for the event including list of participants is reported in MS5.1. Stakeholder assembly 1 has taken place (Minutes from the stakeholder assembly available).

SECOND TRANSFORM4EUROPE RESEARCH & INNOVATION STAKEHOLDERS' ASSEMBLY

The Second T4ERI Stakeholders' Assembly was held on 15 November 2022 at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The meeting featured more than 50 participants – both T4ERI and Transform4Europe team members and invited stakeholders from partner universities.

The event was combined with the T4ERI Inter-Regional policy roundtable meeting to use the opportunity to present to the invited stakeholders the key results of each of the Regional Policy Roundtables meetings (T5.3, WP5) and variety of examples of public and project activities of the Transform4Europe Alliance partners with local stakeholders.

The aim of the Second T4ERI Stakeholders' Assembly was on collaboration of universities with local and regional authorities. It was collected and presented a diversity of cases from our Transform4Europe universities as a ground for further collaboration and inter-regional-universities activities under the European Universities Alliance. It was also a good opportunity to bring together the Alliance's network of stakeholders and to try to make new collaborations and draft potential project proposals.

Preliminary results and insights of the progress of WP2, WP3 & WP4 were also presented and discussed.

An emphasis was laid on inviting representatives of local and regional authorities and have a theme for discussion on the projects implemented by the partner universities collaboratively or commissioned by regional and local authorities.

The event was open to all members of the Transform4Europe & T4ERI community and aimed to engage a wide range of relevant stakeholders from the whole Alliance network – Regional Transformation Network and participants in the T4ERI regional policy roundtable event of each university (national authorities, local and regional authorities, non-governmental sector, whose focus is on the development of the regions).

The event was attended on site and online by stakeholders from a variety of regional structures and organisations from Bulgaria (DIAL IN – Lab, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), Spain (Distrito Digital Comunitat Valenciana, ALIA – Alicante Investment Support Hub) and Estonia (Estonian Research Council).

A short video film was prepared for dissemination purposes presenting key moments of the event and parts of interviews with several participants from the partner universities: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgLIG8OWhhw>



Figure 3. Participants in the second T4ERI Stakeholders' Assembly (15 November 2022, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski)

Additional information for the event including list of participants is reported in MS5.4. Stakeholder assembly 2 has taken place (Minutes from the stakeholder assembly).

A variety of events and activities for stakeholder engagement are planned within the current task (jointly with the Transform4Europe project team) by the end of the project, in addition to the final Stakeholder Assembly and final Inter-regional policy roundtable as for example:

- Invitations for joining Transform4Europe Week in Trieste 2023 - in order to create a transnational network of stakeholders within the T4EU Alliance, it is necessary to actively involve students as privileged actors in the exchange between universities and stakeholders. The Transform4Europe/T4ERI workshop "Bridging the Gap between Stakeholders through Students' Commitment within the T4EU Alliance", scheduled for the 6th of June 2023, will be the first step for a discussion between stakeholders and students.
- Invitations for joining Transform4Europe Week in Sofia 2023 and Transform4Europe Strategic Assembly at Saarland University 2023, etc.

By valuing and incorporating the input of stakeholders and the Regional Innovation Ecosystems, T4ERI can benefit from increased creativity, knowledge exchange, and collective problem-solving, leading to better outcomes and long-term success of the project.