Three Seas Initiative

Business Forum

Slovenia, 5 - 6 June 2019

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia Mr Marjan Šarec will host the second **Three Seas Initiative Business Forum** in Ljubljana on 5 and 6 June 2019. Business forum will be happening alongside with the Three Seas Initiative Summit hosted by the President of the Republic of Slovenia Mr Borut Pahor.

Three Seas Initiative Business Forum will be co-organized by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. Bilateral chambers of commerce that are present in Slovenia will participate in the organization of the Business Forum, which will focus on four key areas: **energy**, **infrastructure**, **digitization** and **innovation**, and involve the cross-cutting topics of **transatlantic relations**, **security** and **water**.

Business Forum will be attended by 500 participants from the private sector and governments of the Three Seas Initiative states. Further participants will include high representatives from EU institutions, US and Germany and business representatives from the wider region.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has advocated for an inclusive Three Seas Initiative that will support united Europe and strong transatlantic cooperation to tackle strategic investment projects in the region. Slovenia strives to ensure active and clear inclusion of the European Commission in the Initiative to strengthen EU cohesion and avoid risk of overlapping. We would also like to link Initiative's efforts with the existing EU mechanisms and EU macro-regional strategies.

Agenda

Ljubljana Convention and Exhibition Centre

Wednesday, 5 June 2019

15.30 – 15.45	**3SI Summit and Business Forum Joint Opening**
15.45 – 16.45	**Presidential Panel**
16.45 – 17.15	Break
17.15 – 19.00	**3SI Foresight: Artificial Intelligence** Keynotes and interactive discussion
20.00	**3SI Reception** National Gallery of Slovenia **Special Address by HE Dr Miro Cerar** Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia

Thursday, 6 June 2019

8.00 – 9.30	**Morning Sessions** **A** EU Macro-Regional Strategies Breakfast **B** 3SI Network of the Chambers of Commerce Meeting		**8.00 – 15.00** B2B Meetings **8.00 – 9.30** **11.00 – 14.30** Special presentations **12.00 – 14.00** Lunch
10.00 – 11.00	**Plenary Session** **Opening Address by HE Mr Marjan Šarec** Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia **Leaders' Panel**		
11.15 – 12.45	**A Innovation**	**B Transport**	
12. 45 – 13.15	Break		
13.15 – 14.45	**C Digitalisation**	**D Energy**	
14.45 – 15.30	**Concluding Plenary Session**		

Thematic Discussions
at the 3SI Business Forum

A INNOVATION
Innovation-Driven Development

Faster economic progress in the Three Seas Initiative countries is limited by low economic productivity. The raising of productivity in the long-term is limited mainly by structural factors. These relate not only to human resources, innovation capacity and digitalisation levels, but also to institutional ineffectiveness and unfavourable business environments. As far as implementation and scaling-up of innovation processes in all fields are concerned, international innovation indexes reveal that these countries frequently lag behind Western European countries. Consequently, to raise the productivity and increase the region's competitiveness, it is vital to devote more attention to this domain.

The long-term development perspective of the 3SI countries will depend mostly on their capability to foster innovation in the economy and implement it within the strategic projects in selected thematic areas and beyond. The promotion of an enhanced innovative capacity would therefore help increase the economic productivity in the region.

Innovation is the manifestation of human development through concrete solutions, and remains the driving force of progress. The countries must be aware of the importance of the infrastructure based on advanced new solutions, and not on old technologies and concepts of the past. Promoting innovation in all fields is crucial.

A number of smaller, state-of-the-art innovative projects, which are being implemented in and among the Three Seas Initiative countries, have not yet gained sufficient visibility and may therefore be presented within the innovation debate. The long-term development of the region is possible only with simultaneous promotion of innovation in all areas, including in well-established industries, such as energy and transport.

Development solutions should not be based on past or present technologies; instead, they should consistently respond to new development challenges. In this context, it is necessary to discuss the methods for developing a business environment that will foster cooperation between various stakeholders, with a view to accelerating the innovative capacity of individual countries and the region as a whole.

The panel will focus on the innovative capacity of the 3SI countries, present a variety of excellent innovative solutions, and explore measures aimed at fostering innovation in all fields. Leading companies will have the opportunity to present their products, while the ministers of selected countries will talk about the promotion of innovation in their countries and the possibilities of cooperation between the countries of the Initiative to ensure a comprehensive development of the region.

B TRANSPORT
Transport Connectivity and Resilience

Transport connectivity is vital for a balanced social and economic regional development. Quality transport infrastructure is a prerequisite for ensuring effective and sustainable mobility of people and goods; in the global context, it is a lever for demonstrating economic and, indirectly, political power. The control and ownership over strategically vital transport hubs are burning political, economic and, inevitably, security issues.

Effective transport connectivity is vital to economic growth and competitiveness. To guarantee the openness of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and its transport corridors, and their connections with third countries, international cooperation is required to ensure quality, environmental adequacy and security. How to channel investments to the much needed transport infrastructure connections in the region of the Three Seas Initiative? How to ensure their sustainability and security?

Much of the infrastructure that will be needed in 2050 has not even been built yet. Inevitably, new technology will provide new transport, energy and digital infrastructure solutions and bring about entirely new social needs. In light of these developments, a revision of the Trans-European Transport Network is planned for 2021, in which

the current TEN-T Core Network Corridors must be adapted to the new mobility challenges, environmental standards and climate change, including the needs of military mobility by road and rail and at airports and ports (dual use).

Enhanced cooperation and Trans-Atlantic engagement could result in new business opportunities for the region, and introduce new views on, and solutions for, the emerging challenges of mobility and transport infrastructure.

C DIGITALISATION

Digital Transformation and Cyber Security

Europe needs a balanced, modern and resilient digital infrastructure to be able to keep pace with the rapid digital transformation and the opportunities it brings for the economy. In this content, an adequate level of cyber security is essential. To adapt to the 21st century, the countries involved in the Three Seas Initiative must gain a deep insight into the future of their ICT sector, digital policies/competences, digital industry, artificial intelligence and robotics.

Marked by an extraordinary rise in the transfer and processing of big data and device connectivity, the fourth industrial revolution requires strategically planned and harmonised horizontal policies. Artificial intelligence is becoming a reality. The advent of 5G network technology brings new possibilities in the use of applications. The all-round use of artificial intelligence installed on devices, in networks and in data clouds will bring new solutions and related new user experience.

The high performance 5G network will be the primary tool for connecting and transmitting information, which must guarantee an exceptionally fast data transfer while meeting adequate security standards. Autonomous driving, robotic telesurgery, remotely controlled production lines or real time translation cannot be imagined without the synergy of artificial intelligence and 5G. 5G networks will be the cornerstone of digital infrastructure. The pace of investment in 5G must be enhanced and new innovative advanced technology environments must be created to strengthen the European identity and strategic autonomy in the field of technological solutions. This will increase European competitiveness, which will benefit the entire society.

A great deal of attention will need to be devoted to security, as the enormous quantity of concentrated sensors and the ensuing databases will represent a great security challenge, not only in terms of supervision, but also of the ICT effects on physical space.

The numerous skills and comparative advantages of the participating countries need to be identified and channelled into the construction of digital motorways, to be deployed along the designed infrastructure links on the Baltic Sea–Black Sea–Mediterranean axis. The enormous concentration of sensors and the emerging big data databases give rise to security challenges: How to ensure safe cyber networks, resilient to hybrid and cross-border cyber threats? How can safe digital infrastructure contribute to energy security and the security of critical infrastructure?

D ENERGY

Challenges and Opportunities of Energy Transition

Sustainable energy use is one of the key factors in the fight against climate change and in efforts to preserve the environment. Through new technologies, energy is the key area in the transition to a low-carbon society. In this field, five megatrends, i.e. decarbonisation, democratisation, digitalisation, decentralisation or accessibility, and deregulation, will have to be embraced. Energy transition is the fundamental challenge facing today's society, i.e. how to produce a maximum share of energy from low-carbon sources while improving energy efficiency without a risk to the security of supply or the competitiveness of the economy.

In ensuring the security of supply, natural limitations and limited resources have to be factored in, and overdependence on a single energy source avoided. The transition to low-carbon energy sources will bring new dependencies (e.g. import and limited supply of raw materials required by new technologies), the challenge of adjusting to renewable energy intermittency and ensuring a stable operation of networks, and the question of energy storage. Issues with a social dimension (e.g. closing down mines and thermal power plants leading to job loss and energy poverty) are particularly challenging. At the same time, they may open up new prospects, such as business cooperation and social development, new jobs with high added value, technological development through investment in innovation and science, and, last but not least, closer cooperation of countries in the attaining of their own and common European or global objectives.

The Three Seas Initiative countries may not share their vision on how to attain low-carbon targets; nevertheless, they are all committed to the objectives of the Energy Union. The recent amendments to European legislation will be crucial to the energy transition of the Member States and their meeting the Paris climate goals. At the end of November 2018, the European Commission presented its strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy titled "A Clean Planet for All". In 2019, the debate within the EU is expected to focus on the 2050 agenda.

How to harmonise the interests of countries with different geographic features, and the resulting advantages and limitations, and how to prepare these different energy systems for attaining ambitious common goals? Enhanced regional cooperation within the Three Seas Initiative region can have a positive effect on making the right decisions and achieving the goals set.