

Udine, Italy, 29th and 30th June 2017



Institutional Greetings

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Good morning and welcome to everybody.

We are **proud** that the “G7 University” initiative has chosen Friuli Venezia Giulia as the host region for this event and that the University of Udine hosts this Fora. This choice proves that the excellence of our regional scientific and academic system is acknowledged at international level. It is worth highlighting that **many themes** of today and tomorrow’s agenda are deeply consistent with the **regional strategic orientation**, such as:

- the promotion of a strong and weighty connection among **University, Culture and Society**
- the support to the enhancement of the **academic role** for the **social and economic development**
- the importance of increasing the **economic results** of **scientific research** together with the enhancement of **human capital**
- **and finally** the promotion of the **internationalization** of the regional scientific and academic system in order to achieve an higher level of Education activities.

As you know, Friuli Venezia Giulia is a small Region, situated at the heart of the enlarged Europe. One of the most important characteristics of this area is that it’s a **hub for science and technology**, with a large community of foreign scientists and students and an impressive network of at about 50 public and private research centres. The region has a high percentage of **high level researchers** for its population (the first in Italy for the territory of the city of Trieste and one of the higher in the world, nearly 35/1000).

To have just a look at our research system, in our regional territory there are three Universities (the University of Udine, of Trieste and the International School for Advanced Studies – SISSA-ISAS located in Trieste too), four Scientific and Technological Parks, and many other important national and international research centres. The territory stands out also for the presence of **important research infrastructures**, at a Pan-european level too.

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Our region boasts a long tradition in the field of **scientific diplomacy** and maintains historically cultural strong relationship with countries located in the **Central and Eastern Europe**.

This context of excellence and these historical peculiarities have moved the Regional Government to strongly support the candidacy of **Trieste** to become the **European Capital of Science 2020** and to host, in the same year, in the Old Harbour area, the **EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF)**, the largest biennial European meeting in research and innovation. The whole regional academic and scientific system endorses the initiative.

The Regional administration aims at promoting and supporting the **excellence** and the **competitiveness** of the university system, fostering at the same time the quality of teaching and of the research, by a financial supporting system settled in a logic of **integration** and optimisation.

Financial support is envisaged for a **wide range of activities**, such as institutional initiatives, research and technological transfer projects, initiatives for the organisational and management innovation, university orientation actions, as well as research infrastructures.

In the same way, the Region considers the Universities an important part of the regional scientific system too. On August 8th 2016 the Regional Government undersigned an **Agreement** to enhance the scientific and innovation system of Friuli Venezia Giulia (**SiS FVG**) together with the Ministry of Universities and Research (MIUR) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) with the strategic aim to enhance the **regional potential** in terms of research and high education and maximizing its **impact on the regional social and economic context**, to support inter-sectorial entrepreneurial and scientific networking and interaction too.

This agreement responds to the need to set up a “**Scientific network of excellence**”, so that the main national and international scientific institutions operating in the area may better coordinate their activities and share available services, with a view to increasing their ability to deliver results. It's meaningful to point out that these actions are consistent with the **Regional Government's long-term strategies** for the development and internationalization of the regional academic and research system. One of the main object of the **SiS FVG** is exactly to favour the improvement of the **international visibility** of the regional scientific system, through the development of internationalisation services for the entire community of regional researchers.

This orientation is included in **bilateral agreements** too - as the one signed with Bavaria in May 2016 - which the Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Government is implementig with countries deemed

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strategically relevant, particularly with reference to the two EUSAIR and EUSALP macro-strategies.

For the same purpose, at the present moment, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region has signed a Memorandum of understanding with the **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** of the European Commission, to establish the basis for future collaboration in the field of mutual interest, in particular in the area of the **evidence-informed policy/decision-making** at regional level and in the development of the **Regional Innovation Ecosystems**.

At the same time, an agreement with the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** is being drawn up to facilitate and promote **joint collaborations** and two ways **scientific exchanges**, at both **faculty** and **students** level, between MIT and the University of Udine, of Trieste, and SISSA and to expand and deepen the already existing exchanges through new initiatives that will give them **critical mass** and increase their **visibility** and **impact**.

In conclusion, our local territory is very pleased to host this important event. Our wish for this initiative is to turn into an **opportunity** to ponder upon and examine a number of topics that are extremely interesting also in terms of managing our local territory, in particular to strengthen the **academic and research potential** to the benefit of the **socio-economic system**, creating fruitful **synergies** at an international level and enhancing the **international attractiveness** of our territories for qualified human resources too.

To this end, I sincerely wish all of you great success in the development of the initiative and send you a very warm welcome in Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Benvenuti e buon lavoro!