

EIT deal sealed – unflinching support to Technology and Innovation during a pandemic

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“The pandemic is teaching us many lessons in these difficult and uncertain times. One thing is certain: technology is helping us a great deal in overcoming seemingly unsurmountable challenges. We are indeed committed to support it unflinchingly”. MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho said this soon after a deal was reached, last night, on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

Ms Carvalho, the EPP Group lead negotiator, stated:

“We have achieved a sustainable, more balanced, and simplified European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). There will also be a better balance in terms of geographical diversity, gender representation within EIT and within the knowledge triangle itself – education, research, and innovation. Finally, we achieved simplification at the administrative, financial and structural levels.”

This agreement brings financial sustainability to the Institute and all of its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The EIT operates mainly through Knowledge and Innovation Communities, which are large-scale European partnerships between higher education and training, business and research organisations and institutions.

“The EIT will have a better connection to regions and a binding budget for the Regional Innovation Scheme. We strongly reinforced the regional component. A great deal of attention was paid to the participation of Small and Medium Enterprises. Finally, we will have two new KICs: one, starting in 2022, on the Cultural and Creative sectors, and the other, starting in 2026, dedicated to all matters related to water, from rivers to oceans, Ms Carvalho said.

There are currently eight KICs, operating in the following areas: climate change, digital transformation, energy, food, health, raw materials, urban mobility and added-value manufacturing.

Since its inception in 2008, the European Institute for Innovation & Technology (EIT) has played a key role in nurturing the innovation ecosystems. It helped in the training of thousands of researchers, setting up new businesses, and coordinating and facilitating the transfer of technology between universities, research institutions and the private sector.

The pandemic has brought new urgencies to the table and the EIT is instrumental in addressing key barriers for innovation in the Union. This agreement should build on the successes so far while adapting to the new context. It will also continue to help Europe become technologically sovereign.