



VISIBLE SUCCESS FOR EAPCONNECT

2nd EaPEC conference

Research infrastructures and e-infrastructures representatives joined a large group of enthusiastic participants and high-level speakers at the 2nd Eastern Partnership E-infrastructures Conference (EaPEC) in Minsk, Belarus on 27-28 September.

Sessions on e-infrastructures for Open Science and e-infrastructure challenges were part of a varied schedule at EaPEC 2017. With lively discussions and engagement with the large audience, the conference succeeded in building community interactions as the basis for future collaborations on policy and research in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region.

EaPEC 2017 featured lightning talks and breakout workshops as new additions to the programme. Topics ranged from social entrepreneurship, a virtual reality streaming-based learning environment, and software router acceleration using OpenFlow hardware, to research data management and artificial intelligence as Open Science.

Three keynote speeches were delivered: Severin Strohal, Deputy Head of Unit 'Georgia, Moldova & Neighbourhood Cross-Border Cooperation' at the European Commission explained 'the European Eastern Partnership'; Karlheinz Meier of

Heidelberg University and of the Human Brain Project discussed 'brain-inspired computing'; and Erik Huizer, CEO of GÉANT, made the case that 'internet freedom is essential for research'.

In a panel session on e-science and innovation, participants explored how the host country, Belarus, can achieve its goal of becoming an 'IT country'. Drawing on nearly 20 years of progress in Estonia, Kristina Lillemets, the Director of the Estonian national research and education network EENet of HITSA, advised that success comes if governments have a clear vision, a strong will, and if they "invest in infrastructure, invest in people, invest in collaboration with the private sector, because the government alone cannot do this". In Belarus, according to Alexander Tuzikov – Director General of the conference host organisation UIIP NASB / BASNET – such investment is needed to improve prestige and support motivation for young people to go into research and innovation. "We are expecting some changes in the near future because there was a meeting of the president of our country with people from research this year. The president said we should change this situation with stimulation of researchers."

A high level of interest in collaboration using research and education networks and other infrastructures and services was evident during EaPEC 2017. In particular, a broad range of fields were represented by six winners of this year's Enlighten Your Research awards, which had enjoyed a record high number of applicants. Digitisation of cultural heritage, professional development for teachers, digital libraries, open government data sharing, and cloud computing are areas that will benefit from research projects in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region supported by EYR and partners in the coming years, coordinated by SURFnet, the originator of the EYR programme.

Pictures
EaPEC 2017 with Florian Berberich (PRACE), Andrea Wiktorin (Head of EU Delegation to Belarus), Kristina Lillemets (EENet of HITSA), Karlheinz Meier (Human Brain Project) and Erik Huizer (GÉANT).

EaPEC 2017 was organised by the EaPConnect project and hosted by UIIP-NASB BASNET. Photos, links and video streams of the performance: <https://www.facebook.com/EaPConnectProject/> Other information: <https://www.eapconnect.eu>



Pictures
Main image;
Laura Pöldvere
and Kirke Karja
(piano) with
Reso Kiknadze
on screen.

Surrounding
images;
- Linda
Corugedo
Steneberg,
Director, DG
CONNECT
and Lawrence
Meredith,
Director
'Neighbourhood
East', DG
NEAR, enjoying
'Music Without
Borders'.
- Maria
Minaricova,
EaPConnect
project leader,
and Claudio
Allocchio of
GARR.
- Ivari Ilja (piano)
and Henry-David
Varema (cello)
with Katsiarina
Shapochka
(viola) and Oleg
Iazina (violin)
on screen.
- Lawrence
Meredith,
Director
'Neighbourhood
East', DG NEAR,
welcoming
'Music Without
Borders' guests.
- A cake
celebrates the
arrival of LoLa in
Estonia.

A harmonious day in Tallinn

On 5 October 2017, Eastern Partnership Connect (EaPConnect) project partners presented 'Music Without Borders' in a special concert for European Ministers and Ambassadors, then joined many of them for the second Eastern Partnership (EaP) Ministerial Meeting on Digital Economy, in Tallinn, Estonia.

During the ministerial meeting, EaPConnect was mentioned in a declaration on digital economy that EU and EaP country representatives signed. This includes a commitment to deepen cooperation in six areas: electronic communications and infrastructure; trust and security; eTrade; digital skills; ICT innovation; start-up ecosystems and eHealth. Delegates welcomed EaPConnect progress and agreed to implement further actions to promote well-structured ecosystems for ICT research, innovation and start-ups.

Preceding the meeting, the 'Music Without Borders' concert showcased how research and education networks paired with 'LoLa' low latency technology can support harmonious cross-border collaboration. With a programme of Mozart, jazz and comic opera, the event demonstrated new opportunities for artistic research, rehearsal, performance and teaching in the EaP region.

Estonian and Armenian musicians located in Tallinn played seamlessly

together with Belarusian and Georgian performers who were connected in real time from Minsk, Belarus. This was the first time that LoLa had been used in Estonia and Belarus. The performance showed the capability of the national research and education networks to support its use.

Lawrence Meredith, Director 'Neighbourhood East' of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations gave a welcome speech and provided the following statement: "The EU is pleased to support since 2015 the Eastern Partnership Connect project and its efforts to provide not only physical networks to interconnect Eastern Partnership (EaP) and other countries with high-speed broadband connections, but also its efforts to build online services for research and education, to extend its reach beyond supporting big science and research and to offer support also to the arts and humanities. Projects like this are of strategic importance to help bring EaP and European neighbours closer together."

'Music Without Borders' was hosted by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre with the Estonian research and education network link provided by EENet of HITSA. In Minsk, LoLa

was implemented at the Academy of Sciences and the network was provided by the United Institute of Informatics Problems/BASNET (UIIP NASB).

Eugeni Efimov, Head of the International Cooperation Department at UIIP NASB said: "It's extremely important for our musicians to have the ability to make the window to Europe open wider, and to have more chances to organise online meetings with musicians of many European countries."

LoLa was developed by the Giuseppe Tartini Music Conservatory in Trieste, Italy, in collaboration with the Italian research and academic network GARR. <https://lola.conts.it>.

EC news about the declaration on digital economy: <http://bit.ly/2fNMcXO>.

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Other information: <https://www.eapconnect.eu>