



Brussels, June 2010

## **European Initiative on Danube Region on the eSilk and eAmber Roads**

A meeting was organized on the topic “European Initiative on Danube Region on the eSilk and eAmber Roads” in the European Parliament on Tuesday 1 June 2010 in order to discuss how to increase the competitiveness of the Danube Region. In the meeting, representatives of the European Parliament, European Commission, Committee of the Regions, current and next European Council Presidenting countries, the European Network of Living Labs-ENoLL, Alpe Adria Danube universities Initiative – ALADIN were present to talk about the cross-border innovation of the Region. Peter Jungen, the President of the SME UNION said, that in spite of the fact that Europe increasingly support the R&D and innovation, it is still behind the United States in R&D share to the world GDP. He revealed that the missing point is the “transfer agents” who should turn knowledge into innovation. He emphasizes the crucial role of universities. The representatives of the ALADIN showed the key role of institutional support and stressed the importance of the effective assistance. On the behalf of the Commission, the speakers told, that they pay attention for SMEs and the working groups deal with the reward and benefits for small businesses, however they made it clear that the implementation of e-administration and e-government takes time and it is a long-term process. From a regional perspective, the speakers accented the support of the “5<sup>th</sup> freedom” and importance of knowledge. The representatives of the University of Primorska (Slovenia), University of Trieste (Italy) and University of Novi Sad (Serbia) have summed up that the mobility of teachers, students and researchers has an important role in the implementation. As a concluding remark, they pointed out, that application of knowledge and innovation is the key point in the success.

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**SME UNION** (Small and Medium Entrepreneurs Union) of the EPP (European People's Party) is the network of pro-business Christian-Democrat, Conservative and Liberal politicians and political organizations. Its main objective is to help in shaping EU policy in a more SME friendly way. [www.sme-union.org](http://www.sme-union.org)