**PRESS RELEASE**

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**New project “P-IRIS” for improving rural areas’ innovation systems**

Six partners from Croatia, Finland, Italy, Norway, Slovenia and Spain have launched the **P-IRIS** project – **“Policies to improve rural areas’ innovation systems by professionalising networking activities and use of innovation tools”.** Thepartnership is led by the **Sogn and Fjordane County Municipality from Norway**. The 4,5 year project (January 2017 - June 2021) was approved within the **Interreg Europe programme** financed by the European Regional Development Fund. Interreg Europe programme helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy.

The partners have identified that **triple helix** or**quadruple helix cooperation** (innovation cooperation model in which businesses, research actors, public authorities and users cooperate in order to produce innovations) is important to boost innovation in rural areas. The P-IRIS project aims to increase the number of SMEs in innovative networks and the number of innovation projects including research and development.

The Kick-off meeting of the P-IRIS project will take place in April 2017 in Norway, it will be hosted by the lead partner Sogn and Fjordane County Municipality. The opportunity of meeting in Norway will be also used as study visit of most interesting cases of rural innovation networks in Sogn and Fjordane area.

**More information about the P-IRIS project:**

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**List of partners in P-IRIS project:**

* Sogn og Fjordane County Municipality (Norway)
* Development Centre of the Heart of Slovenia (Slovenia)
* Local Development Agency PINS (Croatia)
* Regional Council of Central Ostrobothnia (Finland)
* Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (Spain)
* Poliedra – Politecnico di Milano (Italy)