



## Press Release

### How Europe's regions can boost the bioeconomy

12 October 2015, Brussels

#### **Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU) hosts a workshop during the Open Days 2015 to show how regional initiatives are crucial for promoting the bioeconomy**

The role of regions in fostering bio-based strategies will be discussed during the workshop taking place on 13 October 2015, and gathering key players in Europe's emerging bioeconomy.

The workshop, part of the Open Days – European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels, is organised by the BBI JU in co-operation with the European Commission's DG Research and Innovation. It will examine the economic and growth potential of the bioeconomy for regions, focusing on innovative capabilities of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

"Bio-based industries and products offer significant new opportunities for regions and cities," says BBI JU Executive Director, Philippe Mengal. "Regions and cities depend on local biomass resources such as farming, forest and urban waste streams. It is often at a regional level that investments in new bio-based industries are best planned, and where the positive impact is in terms of value chains deployment and job creation," he adds.

The event will mark Mengal's first appearance since he took over as BBI JU's new Executive Director on 1 October 2015, after 25 years as a CEO and manager in green technologies, engineering and food/life sciences industries. Mengal's appointment is another stepping stone in the development of the BBI JU, which is set to assume its autonomy on 26 October 2015, including the authority to manage its own budget and launch its own calls for proposals, grants, and public procurement.

#### **BBI JU's workshop at the Open Days**

"We will show concrete examples of how regional authorities can foster Smart Specialisation Strategies to exploit the potential of bioeconomy and the development of emerging industries, which in turn lead to growth and jobs in the EU," says Mengal. The workshop will outline, among others, the Finnish government's bioeconomy strategy, which included a competition to build a biorefinery that was won by 3 SMEs.

Moreover, the event will discuss 2 inspiring bioeconomy projects. One of them, Poly4Emi, is a Slovenian platform of regional clusters to develop biopolymer materials and technologies. The other, INNOSUP-1, is focused on supporting groups of SMEs to create new industrial value chains that contribute to the development of emerging industries in Europe.

The workshop will gather decision makers from EU, national, regional and local authorities as well as project managers, business leaders, financial institutions, NGOs and researchers. It will include, among others, distinguished speakers such as: Mika Aalto, Head of the newly-formed Natural Resource Economy and Resource Efficiency division in Finland's Ministry of Employment and the Economy; Christine Garburg, Senior Advisor for Research and Innovation Financing at the European Investment Bank (EIB); Katia Reppel, Deputy Head of Unit for Smart and Sustainable Growth in the European Commission's DG REGIO and Agnieszka Truszczynska, Policy Officer in the Commission's DG GROWTH.

BBI JU plays an important role in supporting business models that link economic actors all along the entire value chain. The BBI JU's second call for proposals, published on 25 August 2015, aims to improve cooperation between the different economic sectors: from the biomass supply (breeding and plant production, forestry, farming) to biorefineries and consumers of bio-based products.

The workshop is entitled "Bio-based products for growth and jobs in the EU: the crucial role of regions in boosting the bioeconomy and the circular economy", and it will take place at the Borchette building, Rue Froissart 36, Brussels on 13 October 2015 from 11:15am to 1:00pm.

For more information about the workshop please see [here](#)

### **About BBI JU**

The BBI JU is a public-private partnership (PPP), part of the EU's plan to move its economy to a post-petroleum era. It is expected to help make the EU's economy more resource-efficient and sustainable, while supporting growth and employment. €3.7 billion will fund the BBI JU between 2014 and 2024, with €975 million coming from the European Commission and €2.7 billion from its private partner, the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC).

The EU's bioeconomy currently has an annual turnover of around €2 trillion and employs more than 22 million people.

For more information please visit: <http://www.bbi-europe.eu/>

