

## Innovative thinkers of the region meet in Budapest

The large-scale innovation forum of the region has been organised for the second time in the Hungarian capital. At the strategic conference called think.BDPST, representatives of the economic, governmental, and scientific spheres discussed break-out points of the region in the fields of digital economy, the transformation of labour market, the education, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals.

The second think.BDPST opened with speeches by Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, József Pálincás, President of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office and Gábor Bagdy, Deputy Major of Budapest. The conference held on 30-31 March at the Bálna Budapest event centre and consisting six panels that involved 40 lecturers, aims to strengthen cooperation between the economic, governmental, and civil spheres in the field of research and development, while also aspiring to become a noted strategic forum on innovation in Europe. The main patron of the event is Minister Péter Szijjártó and is organised by the Antall József Knowledge Centre in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the International Visegrad Fund, in strategic partnership with the National Research, Development and Innovation Office, and with the courtesy of MVM the Hungarian Electricity Ltd.

Topics discussed on the first day included the role of digital technology in shaping society and its arising opportunities, the transformation of labour markets and its effects on the future of professions, the big data, and artificial intelligence. The second conference day focused on innovation in healthcare and pharmaceuticals, with special regard to cancer research and treatment.

“The V4 countries can improve their competitiveness in innovation through the coordinated and sustainable use of the research infrastructures, as well as the efficient use of funding aimed to boost research programmes. This is strengthened by the V4 prime ministers’ statement issued on 28 March at the CEE Innovators Summit in Warsaw that initiated to increase the role of the International Visegrad Fund in financing R&D and innovation projects. The coordinated V4 cooperation related to the Horizon 2020 the EU research and innovation framework programme, is also worth boosting, so as to represent a common standpoint in strategic issues at the mid-term evaluation and the planning of the next framework programme after 2020” stated József Pálincás, President of the NRD Office in his welcoming words.

Further speakers of think.BDPST included George Friedman, geopolitical strategist, Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, former Deputy Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, Rabbi Professor Daniel Hershkowitz, former Minister for Science and Technology of the State of Israel, and Ronald de Bruin, Director of COST. The event also featured speeches by Csaba Balogh, Minister of State for Public Administration, and István Mikola, former Minister for Health.

Similarly to last year, the conference also showcased innovative ideas and exciting start-ups of the region. As part of the Start-up and Innovation Corner, innovators, innovative companies and start-uppers introduced their latest innovations and ideas to the international audience of investors. On this satellite event of the conference, the Japanese robot Tapia easing our everyday life with artificial intelligence and other start-ups presented themselves with great success.