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Smart specialisation – a smarter approach to EU structural funding

The concept of *smart specialisation* will play a key role in ensuring the success of EU structural funding in future, according to a seminar organised in the European Parliament by Catalan MEP **Ernest Maragall**.



Whilst the idea of 'smart specialisation' is nothing new, it is significant that for the first time the European Commission intends to make having a smart specialisation (RIS3) strategy a pre-condition for accessing ERDF funding.

Mr Maragall is a member of the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

He organised the seminar in order to draw together policy makers and stakeholders who will be instrumental in the future delivery of EU structural funds. The seminar heard from Mr Maragall himself and from Mikel Landabaso, Chef de Cabinet for the EU's Regional Policy Commissioner.



But what is smart specialisation? The basic idea is that countries and regions should identify the unique characteristics and assets that will give them a competitive advantage. Regional stakeholders are then encouraged to rally around this unique vision.

The goal is to boost regional innovation and in so doing create economic growth through concentrating on the unique strengths of particular regions. In developing smart specialisation strategies, regions are also encouraged to build strong partnerships between the business community, public sector and education sector.

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