

Draft agenda

11TH RECTORS' FORUM OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE AND WESTERN BALKANS & EUTOPIA WESTERN BALKANS CONFERENCE: UNIVERSITY – BUSINESS COOPERATION

Date: May, 11 – 12, 2026

Venue:



University of Ljubljana
Kongresni trg 12, Ljubljana
Ceremony room / Zbornična dvorana
[Google Maps](#)

Introduction

In recent decades, universities and businesses have been increasingly encouraged to strengthen their cooperation. Initially, the focus was on ensuring that higher education could equip growing numbers of students with the competencies needed for employability. With the rise of the knowledge economy, attention has shifted toward the rapid creation, circulation, and application of knowledge, which now takes place not only at universities but also in R&D units across industry and services.

Despite these developments, universities must continue to provide strong foundational knowledge, foster creativity, and cultivate critical and humanistic thinking.

The purpose of the conference is to explore how universities in the Western Balkans address the challenges of university–business cooperation, to promote mutual learning, and to present good practices from the region and Western Europe. The conference will also highlight how such cooperation fits within broader innovation ecosystems and identify the services needed to support it.

Participants will include rectors and vice-rectors of the Rectors' Forum member universities and representatives of selected EUTOPIA universities.

If you wish to attend the event, please register [here](#).

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Day 1: 11 May 2026

11:30 – 12:00

Registration

12:00 - 13:30

Rectors' Forum General Assembly Meeting

14:00 – 16:30

Visit to the Centre of Excellence – Vesolje (Space)

17:00 – 18:00

Keynote Speech by Prof. Robert Wagenaar, University of Groningen

18:00

Reception for Participants hosted by the Rector of the University of Ljubljana, Prof. Gregor Majdič

Day 2: 12 May 2026

University–Business Cooperation

08:30 – 09:00

Registration

09:00 – 09:15

Welcome Addresses

09:15 – 09:45

Connecting Higher Education with Industry

Marjana Majerič, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia

09:45 – 10:15

University–Business Cooperation in the Field of Education and Training

Duša Marjetič, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

10:15 – 10:45

Company Case Study – Lek Sandoz: Experiences in University–Business Cooperation

Jure Vajs, Global Early Talent Lead

10:45 – 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:00

Support for University–Business Cooperation through Technology Transfer Offices

- Case Study of the University of Ljubljana - Urša Jerše
- Case Study of VUB EUTOPIA University - Tuur Roels

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12:00 – 12:45

Support for University–Business Cooperation through Curriculum Development and Study Support Services

- Case Study of the University of Ljubljana - Prof. Dr. Andrej Kos
- Case Study of EUTOPIA University

12:45 – 14:00

Lunch

14:00 – 15.30

Round Table Discussion: Universities' Experiences in University–Business Cooperation

Participants:

- Prof. Dr. Ksenija Vidmar Horvat, University of Ljubljana
- Representatives of two Eutopia universities
- Representatives of two Western Balkans universities

Each university presents its cooperation model (15 minutes), focusing on areas such as:

- Curriculum planning
- Involvement of industry experts in teaching
- Student training in organisational settings
- Research and innovation, including business creation activities

Open discussion: Key challenges and opportunities

Audience participation is encouraged.

15:30 – 15:45

Closing of the Conference