

# Utilisation of Structural Funds for e-Infrastructure development (experience of Hungary)

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# H2020 goals and opportunities

- e-Infrastructure is key component of the ERA  
(mobility, openness, RI, joint programs, global hub...)
- Distributed / integrated (remote) resources in the ERA  
(humans, funds, tools, info)
- Exceptional role of e-Infrastructures (glue):  
e-RI → RI → R → R&D → R&D&I → Competitiveness ...

Widely recognised role, function, importance !  
High priority (both EU & MS) !

# History of SF in eRI

- Past (2007-13): FP7 50 B€ + SF slowly entering RI  
(HU: ~20 M€ for e-RI)
- Horizon2020 preparations/transition (2011-2013):  
"RI funding by SF only (!)"  
Background: SF serves infrastructure developments  
(road, rail, energy ... ICT)
- Present (2014-2020): joint handling of R&D and RI =  
= harmonised FP + SF (ESIF) funding  
~80 B€ Horizon2020 + ~100 B€ SF! (7 years)  
S3 (Smart Specialisation Strategy): MS!

# Compatibility dilemma

## Difficulties in using SFs for RI purposes:

- RIs should offer unique research services to users, and solve grand societal challenges
- SFs should inclusively narrow the development gaps among regions and Member States

## Possible additional difficulties:

- RI and ESIF (NDP/OP) matters often under different Ministries
- lack of correlation between NDP/OP time-frames

in case of multinational RI Projects

# Challenges

## RI challenges (vs.ESIF requirements):

- Integral parts of strategies (not just individual large-scale budget absorbers)
- Elements of major discovery process (not just desired by researchers)
- Contributors to research excellence (not just tools for competitiveness)
- Catalysers of economic growth (not just new components of old systems)
- Providers of EU attractiveness (not only improvement)
- Pan-European dimension and interest (not just local / regional necessity)

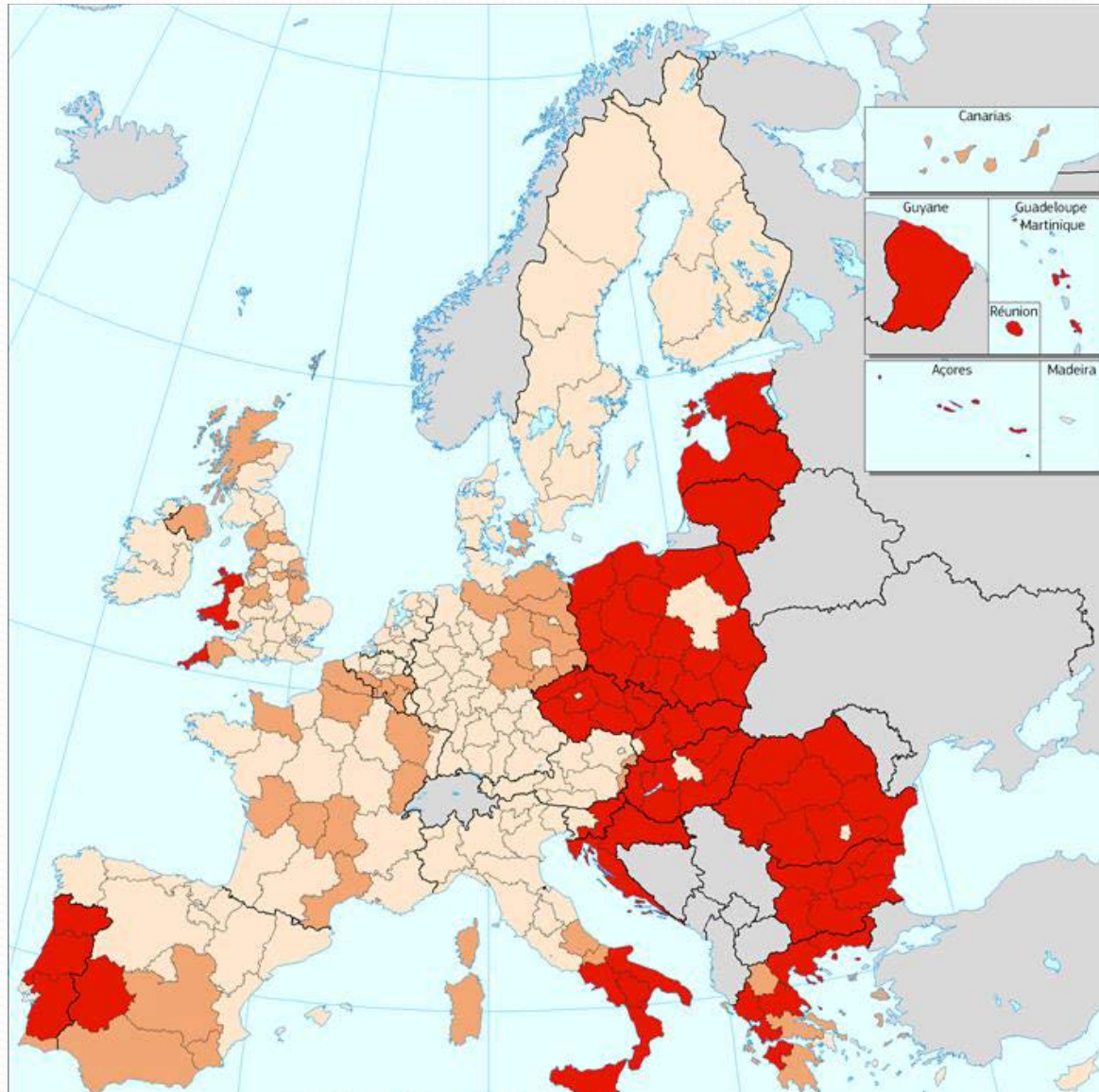
## ESIF challenges (vs.RI demands):

- Projects to be integrated into NDPs (Operational Programs)
- Project-level lengthy evaluation and approval for major projects by the EC
- Special goals (environmental, legal, financial, socio-economic, etc.)
- Rigid time constraints

# The case of Hungary

- During FP7: ~20 M€ for e-RI\*
- During H2020 (up to now): ~12 M€ for e-RI\*
  - Network, HPC infrastructure, data infrastructure
  - Beneficiary organisation: the Hungarian NREN
- We expected more. The trend is not promising...
- Reasons might be:
  - Weak lobbying
  - Dramatic organisational changing of the Hungarian NREN in 2016
  - Low level of understanding and commitment on political level
  - Development needs of the school network and general broadband access attract attention and resources
  - Unlucky geographical coverage of the SF (eligibility of Central Hungary is limited)

# ESIF eligibility





# Conclusions

- Funding for Research Infrastructures is a key issue
- NRENs face considerable problems
- OPEX of e-Infrastructures: govt + users + FP ...
- CAPEX: in most cases only Structural Funds can help
- Key to sustainability: combined cost coverage
- Solution (EU and MS): Horizon2020 + ESIF (S3)
- Compatibility issues and feasibility challenges
- Combining RI and SF requirements can be difficult
- Better implementation is needed

Thank you!

Special thanks to Lajos Balint for his contribution to the presentation



# Closing comments

- **Some figures may somewhat be incorrect**
- **Combining RI and SF requirements can be difficult**
- **There are a lot of question marks (eg. MS attitudes) but**
- **Attractive opportunities – demanding challenges ...**
- **A new situation: no lack but abundance of funds**
- **A promising future ... Are we ready?**
- **Let's try to do our best to exploit the SF option –**
- **for the benefit of the widest possible community !**

# Conclusions

- **Funding e-RI CAPEX: no more a bottleneck !**
- **NRENs should discuss:**
  - **- How to best exploit the SF opportunities**
  - **- How to convince / motivate MS governments**
- **NRENs should consider:**
  - **- Vertical & horizontal extension: increasing SF need!**
  - **- Greening, innovation, PCP: also increasing SF need!**
- **Specific issue wrt. EC rules on regional use of SF:**
  - **higher priority of convergence regions**
- **Major issues needing NREN move:**
  - **expert workforce + business model + CAPEX / OPEX issue**