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European day of languages EUSAIR Open Days programme



The Parliament Magazine's

REGIONAL

EUROPE'S REGIONS AND CITIES **REVIEW**

October 2015

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INTERREG

Celebrating 25 years
of success

SMART CITIES

Building the cities
of tomorrow

EXCLUSIVE

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European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 wants us to (re)think and be happy



Dokk1 in Aarhus, Denmark

(Photo: schmidt hammer lassen architects)



Rebecca Matthews
CEO, European
Capital of Culture
Aarhus 2017

(Photo: Per Algreen)

Director Rebecca Matthews. "As a celebration of new ideas and rethinking, it's the perfect symbol for everything that Aarhus and the Central Denmark region stands for."

A bold approach – 'Let's Rethink' is the slogan for Aarhus 2017 – is certainly evident from the innovative programme that the team is putting together for the city, ranked as one of the happiest places in the world by *National Geographic* magazine.

Hundreds of projects are already lined up for 2017 and the city can count on the support of some of the foremost cultural figures in the Scandisphere.

They include the renowned Icelandic-Danish visual artist Olafur Eliasson, whose 150-metre skywalk installation *Your rainbow panorama* dominates the roof of the city's ARoS art museum.

As part of Aarhus 2017, Eliasson is collaborating with the Paris Opera Ballet, Wayne McGregor company and British music producer Jamie xx to create a contemporary ballet that rethinks American writer Jonathan Safran Foer's book *Tree of Codes*.

The Danish Oscar award-winning film director Susanne Bier is another big name on the Aarhus guest list.

Three of her feature films, *Open Hearts*, *Brothers* and *After the Wedding* are also getting the rethink treatment and will be performed as a ballet, opera and musical-drama respectively.

Add to this an array of fascinating festivals, world-class contemporary art, sculptures on the beach and Viking boats in the bay, and it's no wonder that the Aarhus 2017 team have the wind in their sails.

"For an entire year, we will create spectacular events, extraordinary experiences and magical moments," says Matthews.

Aarhus and its surrounding region is home to 1.3 million people. Inside Dokk1, they're hoping that at least as many again will visit the area in 2017, even those travellers who might have already made other plans.

"There's still plenty of time for a rethink," adds Matthews.

European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017

Official opening:
Saturday 21 January 2017

Program:
Some 300 cultural events across Aarhus and Central Denmark Region during 2017

Budget:
56,2 million Euro (420 millioner DKK)

Patronage:
HM Queen Margrethe 2

More info:
aarhus2017.dk

The view from the spectacular new Dokk1 building overlooking the harbour in Aarhus is dazzling, but the team preparing for the Danish city's stint as European Capital of Culture in 2017

has little time to enjoy it. Their floor in the architectural masterpiece, also hosting an immense library and citizens' service, is a hive of activity.

"We know we're lucky to be working in one of the most beautiful, iconic buildings in Scandinavia," says Aarhus 2017 Managing



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Going local

There's nothing that highlights autumn's arrival to EU watchers more than Open Days. As the EU district gears up for the arrival of more than 6000 participants, there's a real buzz of anticipation that this year's annual regional policy shindig will be one of the most significant gatherings of local, regional and urban stakeholders and policymakers for quite some time. With more than €350bn in reformed cohesion policy investment cash up for grabs over the next few years, it comes as no surprise that the focus this time round is on investment and growth.

Open Days will be structured around three key thematic priorities which the EU institutions hope will help to shape and focus the debates and events.

Modernising Europe: The regions in the energy union and the single market

According to this year's organisers, policies that can help promote the energy union and digital single market are key to creating new job opportunities. The debate here will centre around how new EU regional and urban policy programmes could help make Europe a world leader in renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as a "vibrant, knowledge-based society".

Regions open for business: SME development, innovation and job creation

As most of us know, almost 99 per cent of Europe's businesses are SMEs, providing two out of three private sector jobs. This theme will focus on best practice and experience sharing surrounding the implementation of SME aid schemes and innovative capacity with links to issues such as smart specialisation and micro-enterprise.

Places and spaces: Urban and rural development, urban-rural integration

The third thematic priority of this year's Open Days will look at the potential of urban areas in driving innovation, new economic activity and addressing social cohesion problems. The focus will take in issues such as how EU funded regional and urban programmes can promote a better, more balanced territorial development, reduce rural-urban population drift as well as address the special challenges inherent in so-called border cities and their rural hinterlands.

As always, we hope that this special edition of the Parliament Magazine's Regional Review can help contribute to the 2015 Open Days events. ★

Brian Johnson is managing editor of Parliament Magazine

ON THE COVER | Open Days 2015

European regional policy Commissioner Corina Crețu graces the cover of this year's Regional Review, giving us a preview of Open Days 2015. The conference's slogan is, "Europe's regions and cities: partners for investment and growth". Crețu explains that, "this year's discussions will build on the reformed cohesion policy, which will unlock up to €351.8bn over the next few years". We also have Committee of the Regions President Markku Markkula writing about the need for "local leaders who can inspire change, reinvigorate our economies and promote innovation". And MEP Lambert van Nistelrooij, who will speak at this year's Open Days conference, talks about how city and regional policy-makers can work together to create 'smart cities'. **See pages 35-82**



UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES ACROSS LANGUAGE BARRIERS



The real borders in the Digital Europe

Languages and linguistic diversity are at the heart of European culture, commerce, trade and collaboration. We work, study, travel, live and do business across national and geographic borders. The Digital Single Market (DSM), a key goal of the European Commission for 2020, is fundamentally multilingual. However, until now, most European languages have not enjoyed adequate language technology support to enable work, life and trade without borders. In fact, Europe's cherished linguistic diversity can turn into an obstacle when it hinders the

free exchange of information or prevents unbiased access to public services, business opportunities, job opportunities, and support.

Especially in the emerging Digital Single Market, language barriers thus create invisible borders: While 99% of all European businesses are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), only 7% of them sell cross-border¹ and cross-language. Similarly, 90% of all European customers prefer to browse websites in their own language². Hence, providing instant language support and enabling day-to-day multilinguality can have significant benefits for both economy and

society: It is estimated that a Digital Single Market can actually create up to €340 billion in additional growth, hundreds of thousands of new jobs, and a vibrant knowledge-based society³.

Benefit from the new opportunities

The European Commission has now taken a decisive step towards supporting the truly multilingual Digital Single Market by enabling

- ¹ http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/digital-single-market/docs/dsm-factsheet_en.pdf
- ² Flash Eurobarometer 313 Analytical report on user language preferences online (2011): http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_313_en.pdf
- ³ <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/factsheet-why-we-need-digital-single-market>

public services for Europe's citizens and businesses to operate freely across language barriers: The Automated Translation platform of Connecting Europe Facility (CEF.AT) will facilitate multilingual communication and exchange of documents and other linguistic content in Europe between national public administrations and between these administrations and EU citizens and businesses. The CEF.AT platform will address various public administration scenarios in the areas of consumer rights, health, public procurement, social security, culture and others. It will power Europe's public online services such as Europeana, the Open Data Portal, and the Online Dispute Resolution platform. With the help of the CEF.AT, public administrations across Europe will be one step closer towards operating without language barriers.

Technology as the basis for public services without borders

The technology behind CEF.AT is a statistical machine translation system, MT@EC, which learns how to translate from existing translations. MT@EC in its current state, is available free of charge to public services in Europe within the framework of the CEF programme. However, since it has mainly been trained on translations of EU legislation and texts produced by the EU institutions, it may not be so well suited for all day-to-day needs and demands of European national public services. In order to adjust the system according to the requirements of public services across Europe, corresponding language and translation data (mono- and bi-lingual data) relevant to the daily needs of European national administrations are needed.

Through the European Language Resource Coordination (ELRC) (www.lr-coordination.eu), the European Commission is

embarking an unprecedented language data collection effort in a first step to support the adaptation of CEF.AT to the needs of public services across all EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, thus supporting the provision of multilingual services for Europe's citizens, administrations and businesses. In doing so, ELRC will not only to close the gap between the capabilities of the current MT systems offered by the European Commission to the national administrations and the actual, day-to-day requirements of national public services across Europe, but it will also directly support Europe's national languages at the grass-roots level.



Meet ELRC live in your country

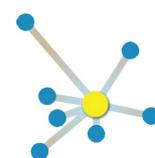
On behalf of the European Commission, the ELRC consortium is organising local workshops in each of the 30 participating countries to raise awareness about the importance of language data held by public administrations for public administrations. In order to involve all relevant stakeholders in making CEF.AT fit for their needs, ELRC invites all representatives from Europe's public service administrations to participate in their local workshop. Within each national workshop, invited speakers from the European Commission, national public administrations



“Supporting our languages is supporting Europe - and supporting Europe is supporting our languages.”

and government bodies, language service providers, and language technologists will work together to understand the needs of national public sector administrations with regard to automated translation, jointly identify relevant sources of multi-lingual language resources, and discuss any technical and legal issues involved in the use of data for automated translation. Information on the date and venue of each workshop as well as the registration system are available at www.lr-coordination.eu/events. We look forward to your engagement.

elrc-secretariat@dfki.de
+49 681 85775-5285



**European Language
Resource Coordination**
Connecting Europe Facility



Language diversity a central aspect of what makes the European Union so unique

Europe must do more to encourage and promote its linguistic heritage, including safeguarding regional and lesser-known languages, writes **Karim Van Overmeire**

Every 26 September, since 2001, the European Union and the Council of Europe have celebrated the European day of languages. This is to promote Europe's rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and to encourage people to learn languages, including the lesser-known, regional and minority languages that are part of our continent's unique heritage.

Fostering, promoting and learning languages is important, as it gives people opportunities to work and study in a more interconnected and globalised world. It also allows them to be more in touch with each other, better understanding different cultures and contributing to enhancing local identities.

Since its creation, the Committee of the Regions' (CoR) European Alliance (EA) group has placed the protection of cultural and linguistic diversity at the core of its activities. The EU is not about levelling out differences or creating uniform identities. Rather, it fosters greater cooperation and better understanding among Europeans.

Supporting national and regional identities and promoting and respecting their linguistic heritage should be a priority for the EU. There should be specific focus on Europe's historical languages, to see how we can protect and embrace them in a globalised world. While limiting the number of Commissioner portfolios was a reasonable choice, there is a strong argument that it was a mistake not to include a European multilingualism Commissioner.

Cultural and linguistic heritage is a very broad concept, including more than just tangible artefacts. It also features a wide range of shared values, beliefs, lifestyles and practices that strongly influence our perceptions and our daily lives. The EU must promote and preserve its culture and languages, as these are essential in achieving greater social cohesion. They are a decisive factor in

encouraging successful integration and citizens' participation in everyday life, particularly for migrants.

Unfortunately, the value of fostering linguistic heritage is not fully recognised. There needs to be a more proactive approach to promoting linguistic diversity, especially among young people and children. Media, audiovisual and IT tools should be developed to allow regional or national languages to prosper. Media tends to be dominated by English language US programmes, but we are capable of producing our own programmes of an equally

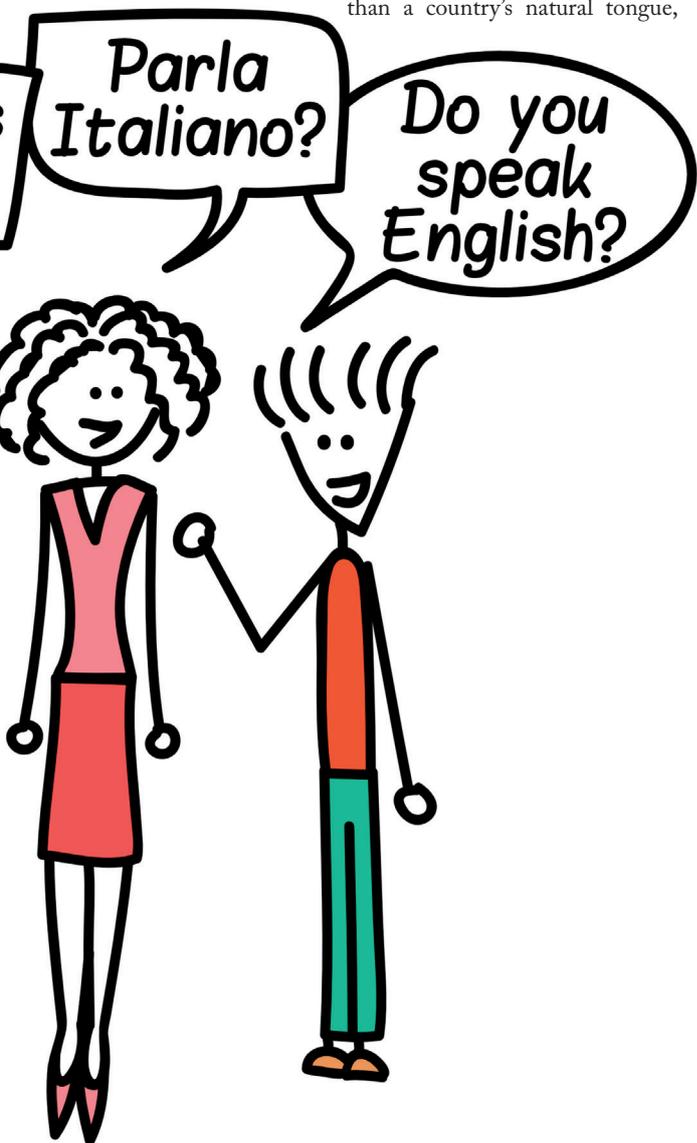


high standard here in Europe. The EU needs to bear this in mind in terms of future media and IT programmes.

But the need to promote multilingualism and linguistic heritage do not always go hand in hand. Some member states have neglected their own language in the name of multilingualism. Encouraging everyone to speak foreign languages is important, but we must be careful to also safeguard our own linguistic heritage and languages.

For instance, education is often offered in languages other than a country's natural tongue,

"While limiting the number of Commissioner portfolios was a reasonable choice, one could strongly argue that it was a huge mistake not to include a European multilingualism Commissioner"



and this is something we should be extremely careful about. National and regional authorities should be encouraged to maintain the primacy of their own languages when providing education at all levels, while underlining the importance of learning other languages.

The CoR's European Alliance group recently held a seminar in Aalst in Flanders and adopted a declaration on 'fostering and promoting the cultural and linguistic heritage of Europe'. This vibrant debate was held with regional representatives from across Europe. During the seminar, Belgian European Conservatives and Reformists group MEP Marc Demesmaeker called for European support and recognition for peoples and regions all over the world.

While he defended the right to self-determination, he also defended the rights of languages that have yet to achieve full official EU status and recognition, such as Catalan, Basque and Welsh. I strongly support this position. Languages are what make the EU special, they make us strong, and create a special identity that truly make the EU 'united in diversity'. ★

Karim Van Overmeire is first Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions' European Alliance group



Innovative solutions based on ICT tools in agriculture, ranching, agri-food and forestry sectors

The MITTIC project aims to incorporate technological innovation in strategic and traditional economic sectors of the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula. Specifically, the areas covered by the project are the regions of **Extremadura**, in Spain and **Alentejo** and the **Central** Region of Portugal, where agriculture, forestry, ranching and agri-food have a huge economical and social weight. The MITTIC project has developed several innovative proposals and tools with



different applications for traditional and characteristic products of these Spanish-Portuguese regions, such as the products of the pastureland (acorns, meat products, cork); oils; fruits and vegetables. The common objective of all these actions is to provide user-friendly solutions that can be used by farmers and companies to optimize production processes, to improve the

marketing of their products or to increase the information given to consumers about their products origin and quality.

The actions of this project, which ends on 30th September emphasizes the use of NIRS technologies (near infrared radiation) to determine instantly values about the quality of the main products of the pastureland and oils; the use of electronic devices for precision breeding in Iberian pigs; evaluation of new active and intelligent packaging for preservation of fresh meat;

and the application of non-destructive techniques to establish the suitable rate of ripening and quality for stone fruit harvest.

In addition, open source software applications have been developed

based on QR codes technology for the fruit, cork and natural stone industry. Its use allows a better management of these products traceability, giving information from its



origin to the final purchase by the consumers.

There are also other innovative initiatives such as the creation of a web platform for the knowledge of biomass resources in the regions of Extremadura and Alentejo, to facilitate the increasing demand of biomass as an energy source.

Another MITTIC action has been the development of a software for breast milk banks and hospitals. This is an application to improve the management of donated breast milk, conservation control and food safety. The platform enables responds to requests across communication between the banks and hospitals.

MITTIC, co-financed by ERDF through the Cross-Border Cooperation Operational Programme Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) has a budget of 1.521.965€. The project has been coordinated by the **Center for Scientific and Technological Research (CICYTEX)** of the **Junta de Extremadura**, and has involved eleven partners of the Centro

and Alentejo regions in Portugal and Extremadura from Spain.

Beyond the results obtained, it is important to highlight the cooperation between institutions of Spain and Portugal, which has allowed to join efforts to solve common problems, in a multidisciplinary and integrative way and, on the other hand, conducting performances of high economic impact and applicability in the productive sectors.



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As Interreg celebrates its 25th birthday, policymakers must continue promoting EU integration

As Interreg looks back on 25 years it should be proud of its achievements, writes **Walter Deffaa**

Interreg turns 25 this year. For those who are not familiar with the brand “Interreg”, it is the share of the European regional development fund dedicated to territorial cooperation beyond borders.

Interreg started as a modest community initiative in 1990 with the aim of compensating border regions for the introduction of the single market. Since then, Interreg has grown and is now a full objective of cohesion policy. Even though cooperation along border regions (cross-border cooperation) is still the main focus of Interreg, it also promotes cooperation across larger functional areas (transnational cooperation) and among regions across the EU (inter-regional cooperation).

Between 2014-2020, the EU will dedicate €10bn of its budget to Interreg, investing in more than 100 individual programmes. Close to €1bn of the Interreg budget is spent on cooperation programmes with external neighbours including the countries currently in the process of accession to the Union and those covered by the neighbourhood policy.

As Interreg turns 25, it is only fair that we should look back and assess its achievements and impact on European regions. A lot has been achieved. In our anniversary literature, we identify to the following top five achievements.

Firstly, building and maintaining trust between partners. Let's not forget that some of these were prevented from cooperating or were even enemies.

Secondly, from transport links to internet connections, from bridges to common TV channels, we have improved connectivity, a prerequisite for cooperation.

Thirdly, we have made great progress in protecting shared natural resources. Water or air know no borders – it is essential that we protect and look after these precious natural assets together.

Fourthly, preventing risks and managing responses to disasters. Whether it is major floods, forest fires or man-made accidents, a joint response normally restricts the negative impacts. Joint prevention is also a must when it comes to transnational rivers or large national parks.

Finally, our contribution to making border regions and transnational spaces better places to live. Interreg has →



“From transport links to internet connections, from bridges over rivers to common TV channels, we have improved connectivity, a prerequisite for cooperation”

invested significant resources in fostering growth and securing jobs. Cross-border clusters, joint research facilities and common export promotion campaigns all contribute to greater competitiveness for European regions.

Commissioner Crețu attended the Interreg 25th anniversary conference, organised jointly by the European Commission and the Luxembourg Presidency on 15 and 16 September. She joined the “Interreg family” to mark this important step and recall that working together makes us all better and stronger.

She used the occasion to announce that she was keen to explore ways in which shared issues can be addressed in an even more effective way in the future. She emphasised the importance of cooperation in the context of the four macro-regional strategies that are being implemented in the Baltic sea, the Danube, the Alps and the Adriatic-Ionian sea.

She also announced that there will be a public consultation until 21 December to allow citizens to share their “border stories”. Border citizens, businesses or organisations are strongly encouraged to respond and let the European

Commission know the issues they face when interacting across borders, in education, in health, in trade etc. and to also share possible solutions for addressing these types of problems. With 37 per cent of the EU population located in border regions, these difficulties cannot be considered anecdotal.

One aspect that we still need to improve upon is its visibility of Interreg. A recent Eurobarometer conducted specifically in border regions reveals that on average only 30 per cent of the border population is aware of Interreg, although the cross-border programmes have been active for many years. The European Commission now needs to step up its communication efforts. But member states, regions, managing authorities or project promoters have an equally important role to play. Interreg is a key instrument for European integration and it should be recognised as such. It should not only be known to “insiders” and “believers”. It should become a commonly known brand for our cooperation activities – unique, positive, and a signal from Europe.

Happy birthday, Interreg. ★

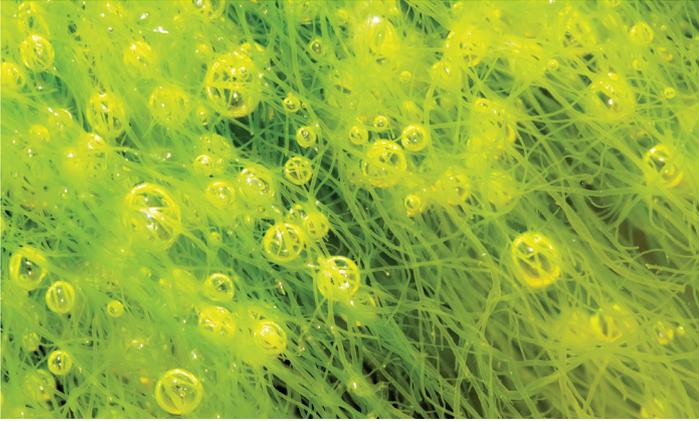


“Interreg is a key instrument for European integration and it should be recognised as such”

Walter Deffaa is
Director General of DG
Regional Policy of the
European Commission

NORTH WEST EUROPE

An attractive option for algal investment



With a vast amount of skill and expertise in the algal technology sector, North West Europe is well positioned to become a hub for investment in the further development of this sector on a global level.

That's the one of the concluding messages from the €14.5 million EU funded EnAlgae project, which comes to an end this month.

Having studied the viability of sustainable pathways to

generate algal biomass in support of the bioenergy agenda across NW Europe, the project has amassed a skills base across seven partner countries – an area which is now well placed to provide an investment opportunity for further innovation in the algae sector.

“North West Europe is renowned for the quality of its scientific research and a recent EnAlgae survey identified academic groups at over 170 regional institutions currently working on algae

related research,” said Adrian Higson, who leads the part of the project that has considered routes to market. “Algae provide a versatile platform for the production of numerous products from functional food ingredients through speciality chemicals to energy products.

“The breadth of knowledge and experience around algae cultivation and processing in NWE make it an ideal location for companies to base their research and development laboratories and projects.

“Currently the algae industry is relatively immature, and costs associated with some processes are high. However, thanks to EnAlgae we have recognised several market opportunities in the near to medium term that can promote the industry to develop. And the expertise we have here in North West Europe supported by technology development and underpinning research could lead to an exciting future for the region.”

Those involved in EnAlgae would now like to see the European Union adopt a joined up approach that will use this expertise to further strengthen and enhance the algal industry.

“Our research has made it pretty clear that for algal technologies to thrive in the future we have to look beyond pure energy as an output,” said EnAlgae project principle investigator Professor Kevin Flynn. “And the most effective developments in this field will be the ones which look at the big picture, and at how bioremediation, cultivation, aquaculture and downstream processing can work alongside each other.”

Helping this process are the major legacy products from EnAlgae which include the following:

- Manuals of best practice and standard operating procedures
- A decision support tool that enables a ready-reckoning of plausible levels of production and hence of commercial viability
- The Algal Information Network for future collaboration



Further information on all these outputs can be found at www.enalgae.eu and www.algae-network.eu

The EnAlgae project is led by Swansea University and funded by the European Union under the INTERREG IVB North West Europe programme. EnAlgae unites experts and observers from 7 EU member states to determine the potential benefits of algae as a future sustainable energy source.

@EnAlgae_NWE



ADRIAIR

AIRPORT SECURITY AND AIR TAXI NETWORK IN THE ADRIATIC

to facilitating, improving and intensifying the air transportation in the Adriatic macro-region. As a result, the general objective of the project is to strengthen the economic and institutional linkages within the Adriatic regions by making the airports more accessible and secure and providing new ad hoc services - flexible and on-demand - based on fleets of air-taxi.

As highlighted in the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), this region faces stimulating challenges, especially concerning the development of infrastructures. Indeed, there are still remarkable disparities of available facilities and transport networks among territories due also to the heritage of the XX century history, that in certain areas meant years of isolation and war conflicts. The improvement of the transport network, in particular air traffic, is an asset for the promotion and the attractiveness of the whole area, both for investments and for tourism, meaning also new jobs and economic growth. The promotion of innovative and intermodal ways of transport will positively affect the development of a sustainable economic growth of the Adriatic Region.

The ADRIAIR project, financed under the **IPA ADRIATIC CBC Programme** and coming to the end in September 2015, is driven by two leading ideas: the first one is the possibility to set up a new flexible and on demand air connection in the Adriatic macro-region based on **air taxi**; the second one is the improvement of the **security** standards of the airports involved. Both these leading ideas are developed in the same project with the intention to contribute

- The main results produced by the partnership in almost 3 years of common work are:
- **Delivery of guidelines** for a common cross-border Adriatic implementation of the security strategy set out at international and national level by the competent bodies;
 - **Implementation of pilot projects** to improve both accessibility and safety in the airports of Forlì, Ravenna, Dubrovnik, Rijeka, Pula and Banja Luka;
 - **Identification of suitable training modules and courses** on air transport security and marketing aimed to the airports of the participating areas;
 - Realization of a **preliminary study on the market potential** of an air taxi service in the Adriatic region;
 - Implementation of an **Action Plan**, expanding the outcomes of the preliminary study in order to target ideal clients and service levels;
 - Design of a **promotional and organisational plan for the setting up an air-taxi service on-demand**.

Furthermore, the cooperation among the different countries will contribute to improve the connections between the Adriatic Region and the other European corridors and represents a valuable opportunity for candidates of the EU to work alongside EU members, for a better integration of the Western Balkans into the European Union.

The ADRIAIR project is managed by the Province of Forlì-Cesena in cooperation with other partners from Italy (Province of Ravenna, University of Bologna – Forlì Campus), Croatia (Dubrovnik Airport, Pula Airport and Rijeka Airport) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (LIR Evolution).

www.adriairproject.eu

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Peer learning key to success of EU's regional cooperation



Europe's widely varying regions need more than a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to cooperative policy learning, says **Magda Anagnostou**

"The requirement to have a regional smart specialisation strategy (S3) in place is an opportunity for Europe's regions to create conditions for smart and sustainable growth"

Europe's regions have vastly differing characteristics, opportunities and needs that require more than a 'one-size-fits-all' policy. Therefore what's needed is a location-based approach providing regions the ability and means to deliver policies that meet their specific needs. If Europe's regions can tap into examples that offer best practice, knowledge and expertise on specific policy needs, directly when these needs occur, this will maximise their resources and impact.

With this in mind, the Interreg Europe cooperation programme is developing 'policy learning platforms' for the 2014-2020 period, in a bid to stimulate the process of continuous policy learning among interested regional policy

stakeholders. This is an initiative aimed at answering the call for cooperative policy learning that became more urgent in view of using resources - knowledge, human and financial - in a smarter way.

The requirement for a regional smart specialisation strategy (S3) in place is an opportunity for Europe's regions to create conditions for smart and sustainable growth. Many regions have had to create one from scratch, and have benefitted from the assistance of the smart specialisation platform, run by the joint research committee. Now as we come to implementing these strategies in an era of tight budgetary constraints, local and regional authorities are understandably seeking the best value





“Peer learning can help policy makers do their job better. It’s a remedy for wasted efforts”

for money. Cooperative policy learning enhances the chances of success by eliminating the risks and costs of trial and error. Organisations can instead capitalise

on existing good practice and regional expertise to improve the design and implementation of their own policies and strategies.

Interregional cooperation and policy learning, reconciled with the six steps of the S3 process, offer a real opportunity for regions to access global value chains, assess their priorities vis-a-vis other regions, identify their comparative advantages and exploit synergies with policy initiatives and infrastructures in other regions. Peer learning can help policy makers do their job better. It’s a remedy for wasted efforts.

At Interreg Europe, we are putting in place a hub of information and services for ongoing and interactive policy learning. Any organisation dealing with regional development policies in Europe can find inspiration, good practice examples and tried and tested solutions. Members of this policy learning platform can find the latest EU policy news and information, share ideas and expertise, access networking and partnering opportunities, ask complex policy questions, get support for capacity building and policy change and much more.

In a way, this represents the logical next step for users of S3 platform services, with regard to thematic content and a clear focus on the vertical research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) priorities. This includes bringing together regions with similar or complementary strengths and priorities to work towards combined forces and joint roadmaps. Regional innovation is, of course, a major topic but not the only one where Interreg Europe will assist. SME competitiveness, low-carbon economy and environment and resource efficiency complete the four topics for Interreg Europe’s policy learning community.

The policy learning enabled by the Interreg IVC programme (2007-2013) has already helped almost 6000 staff involved in

A Programme for Europe’s regions

Erwin Siweris became Interreg Europe programme director in July 2015. He manages a team of 30 people at the programme secretariat in Lille, France.

Q: Who is the Interreg Europe programme for, and what can they get from it?

ES: Interreg Europe helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. It is available to any public and non-profit organisation involved in designing and implementing regional policy. Today, the EU’s emphasis is very much on paving the way for regions to realise their full potential – by helping them to capitalise on their innate strengths while tapping into opportunities that offer possibilities for economic, social and environmental progress. We have a specific mission to assist the organisations in charge of the Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes. Up until now, there has been no dedicated arena to discuss and improve the use of structural funds, but Interreg Europe exists to meet that need.

Q: How can interested organisations get involved?

ES: We are all facing the same budgetary pressures to do more with less, so we’ve taken a streamlined approach to create two actions which are more focused and offer a greater chance of success. Interregional cooperation projects allow partners to identify a common interest and work together for 3-5 years, sharing ideas, experience and know-how about how best to deal with the issue at hand. The programme will finance up to 85 per cent of the project activities, in return partners develop and monitor an action plan detailing how to implement the lessons learnt from the cooperation.

Q: What are the key dates for potential beneficiaries?

ES: The first call for Interreg Europe projects closed in July and the team are currently assessing the 261 applications. The successful projects should be approved by January 2016. Organisations interested in policy learning can already join the thematic community on www.interregeurope.eu and create a profile, search for partners, and get access to project ideas. Additional services on demand will be available from 2016.

regional policy to acquire new skills and capabilities. It has led directly to the improvement of more than 400 policies. The programme was therefore determined to go a step further and share its tremendous wealth of policy experience and know-how even more widely, beyond the project partnerships and for the benefit of all EU regions.

By joining the Interreg Europe community, organisations can already build their thematic profile and be the first to benefit from the expert services to be rolled-out during 2016. ★

Magda Anagnostou
is policy learning
platforms coordinator
at Interreg Europe

THE RELS PROJECT



Introduction

The “Rénovation Énergétique des Logements – RELS” [Housing Energy Efficiency Upgrade] project is a cooperative cross-border project for upgrading energy efficiency in the residential sector.

The basic aim of the RELS project is to reduce energy insecurity and to facilitate the application of energy-efficiency improvement processes in social housing, with a view to supplying Mediterranean households with a more effective housing model in terms of adequate thermal comfort at an acceptable cost.

At the initial stage, before a specific methodology for RELS was developed, a number of studies and methods and the experience of efficiency upgrades were assessed at two levels: at the level of participating countries and at European level.

Among the documents and processes studied, the methodology used in the European SQUARE project was identified as the one best suited to the process established for the RELS project.

The RELS methodology: general overview

Each stage of the methodology includes sections and subsections specifying the actions to be undertaken to ensure that the partial and general objectives are met.

PHASE A: OBJECTIVES

A1. Preliminary diagnostic

This phase includes the RELS objectives, expected

results, a general analysis of the data, the selection of pilot projects and the parties involved in the process.

A1.1. Expected results

The aim here is to reduce CO2 emissions (< 20%) and primary energy consumption (< 20%), with around 20% of energy coming from renewable sources, carry out an in-depth cost analysis (overall cost) compared with the project budget, and ensure reliability of the analysis, at least in terms of the methodology adopted.

A1.2. General data analysis

The analysis starts with a general overview on a regional or national scale. The data for analysis involve climatic aspects, the characteristics of the housing stock concerned, energy consumption at regional level, energy consumption of the housing stock and, lastly, management and financing.

A1.3. Selection of pilot projects

An essential initial stage before applying the methodology is to select the buildings requiring attention.

A1.4. Parties involved in the process

The proposed methodology aims to examine and analyse the normal refurbishment management processes of agencies or administrators in each country.

PHASE B: DIAGNOSTIC

This phase of the analysis provides a detailed study of the building, the user and the various factors regulating energy consumption. This diagnostic allows



identification of potential measures, their validation and the implementation of improvements in the following phases:

B1. Data capture

This involves inspecting the premises, monitoring energy consumption, familiarisation with the family units involved, an energy simulation of the buildings and monitoring.

Prior to any diagnostic process it is essential to determine the approach to be used with users, either via the public body or management body concerned, or directly with residents assisting community management.

B1.1. Initial inspection

It is very important for the engineer to make a visual inspection, which should be as detailed as possible, since this information will reflect the actual state of the building.

B1.2. Information and monitoring energy consumption

The work of collecting consumption data, with or without bills, should continue throughout the process, in accordance with the RELS methodology.

B1.3. User-based survey

The survey is aimed at discovering the social background, economic level and habits of users. It also involves a determination of the building's energy requirement.

B1.4. Energy simulation of buildings

The aim is to obtain reliable comparative data on the current state of the buildings and to evaluate the various upgrading options.

B1.5. Monitoring

At both the initial stage of the diagnostic process and at the stage verifying the effectiveness of implemented improvement measures, the RELS methodology suggests the use of monitoring tools.

The parameters of concern to be checked in buildings at the start and at the post-intervention phase are linked to the building's consumption of resources, levels of comfort and the operation of systems.

The main parameters to be checked as part of the inspection process are comfort levels, changes in air temperature (T°), relative humidity (% HR), air quality (PPM of CO₂), total energy consumption, simultaneous weather conditions, the operating conditions of active systems and their program, plus the times when the system is on or off.

B2. Analysis and diagnostic

The analysis and diagnostic phase then ensues, with the processing and analysis of information, diagnosis by area, preliminary selection of improvement measures, and the RELS evaluation matrix.

B2.1. Information processing and analysis

Once the structural details have been obtained, an

analysis and assessment of the acquired data need to be carried out, and these will be used to draw up the final diagnostic of the building. Processing of the collected data enables an assessment of:

- the energy demand to be met,
- the operating conditions regulating demand (occupation, comfort levels, etc.),
- the energy consumption of systems,
- the consumption of energy resources (electricity, gas, other fuels).

B2.2. Area-by-area diagnostic

Once an understanding of the building's energy performance and its potential improvements has been gained, a partial diagnostic of each the analyzed areas (outer shell, energy systems, use and management) can be obtained.

B2.3. Preliminary selection of improvement measures

A selection of possible actions is based on the diagnostic. They involve the building's outer shell, systems and installations, and the management of energy resources.

The actions are grouped into scenarios, which then undergo a technical, economic and environmental assessment procedure.

B 2.4. Assessing improvement measures

Each identified action must be assessed in terms of its impact on consumption and viability: technical, economic and environmental.

Delegated regulation no. 244/2012 of the European Commission is the reference document used by the RELS methodology for this analysis.

B 2.5. RELS evaluation matrix

The diagnostic phase leads to the definition of action scenarios, which is based on a graphic analysis of the RELS decision matrix.

The aim is to prioritize the actions to be taken on the basis of the savings (economic, energy-related, environment-related, etc.) generated by each scenario.

The RELS matrix comprises 6 axes, forming a spider's web. Each axis represents a parameter for analysis (economic, energy-related, environment-related, etc.).

The initial condition of the building is the basic scenario determining an area of the matrix. This is an initial evaluation of the work needed on the building to ensure that it meets the RELS targets.

The RELS matrix allows various scenarios to be compared with each other.

B3. Drawing up the plan

B3.1. Performing the work

Having decided on the scenario, implementation of the plan will define the structural features involving passive measurements, modifications or replacements

of active systems, manuals or training for the improvement of energy management measures.

B3.2. Verification of aims and compliance

Once the plan has been drawn up and accepted by all the participants, verification that the plan's aims continue to be met will be necessary.

B3.3. Presentation of the plan to users

When the action plan has been completed and validated in terms of its initial objectives it must be presented to the residents. It is important that the administrator concerned, with the assistance of the bioclimatic expert and specialists, should explain the process to those involved.

Communication and validation are one of the reliability requirements of the RELS methodology.

PHASE C: THE UPGRADING WORK

This phase, involving implementation of the upgrading work, must include supervision and verification of all the energy efficiency considerations incorporated into the diagnostic and drafting of the plan.

C1: The upgrading work

C1.1. Compliance with the diagnostic

The aim of this phase is to implement the upgrading envisaged in the selected scenario. All parties involved must undertake to observe the conditions validated in the diagnostic procedure.

C2. Acceptance of the work

C2.1. Completion and delivery of the work

At the end of the work any information and documentation needed to educate and inform the user must be formalized.

This stage is essential for the building's maintenance and sustainability and to avoid future rehabilitation work.

C2.2. Use and maintenance instructions

The upgrading work done must be recorded in the 'book building' document. This document, which contains all information on the building's technical characteristics, is handed to the users.

The RELS methodology stresses the importance of involving the user at the diagnostic stage and in the selection and implementation of measures.

The user must be instructed in how to make best use of the measures taken, otherwise the effectiveness of the process is undermined.

PHASE D: USE OF THE BUILDING

D1. Measurements

D1.1. Monitoring consumption and comfort

Measuring consumption, monitoring how the installations operate and evaluating comfort levels provide the information needed to assess a building's energy efficiency.

D1.2. Second survey involving users

Checking that the aims comply with the RELS methodology requires a further survey involving users, when the upgrading work is complete.

The aim is to record the user's perceptions of the new functionalities of his or her home and to identify whether he or she has received information on maintaining them without the ongoing support received during the procedure.

D1.3. Final energy simulation

Monitoring and occupancy surveys will help to improve the thermal simulation carried out at the time of the diagnostic. The results will be compared with bills and help to predict future performance.

D2 Validation of results

D2.1. Validating the RELS matrix

Lastly, actual data from consumption, billing and the second survey involving residents will allow the simulation results to be validated on the RELS analysis matrix.

PHASE E: MANAGEMENT

This phase involves collecting feedback on the process examining the management of standard procedures, reformulating aims and incorporating modifications which are considered appropriate.

E.1 Checking and adjusting the management model

E1.1. Examining policies in the light of results

Full implementation of the RELS methodology provides useful information for those in charge of setting policies and guidelines for housing associations or equivalent management bodies.

The results obtained will allow validation or modification of the aims and procedures currently utilized in the comparative analysis of management bodies, and enable future scenarios to be envisaged.

E1.2. Examining the management model

The results will also enable internal implementation, financing and management procedures to be examined.

On the basis of 'inputs' refined by the RELS methodology, specific measures to assist with the adjustment and improvement of the current management model will be studied together with housing associations or management bodies.



SOUNDCAST PROJECT IS THE ANSWER TO THE NEED FOR DEMOCRATIZATION OF HIGH INTEGRITY LIGHT WEIGHT STRUCTURAL CASTINGS

Global warming and resource shortage have led to an urgent demand for reducing vehicle weight. Since the first AUDI A8 was introduced in 1994 structural aluminium parts have been successfully manufactured by vacuum assisted High Pressure Die Casting (HPDC) technology. However, it is still an expensive solution and only affordable for upper class cars.



Soundcast project offers an opportunity for car manufacturers (in particular of electric or hybrid vehicles) to exploit the advantages of the technologies developed in the project.

“If we can reduce just a few kilos of metal from a massive automobile weight, we can deliver an impact that is multiplied by millions,” said Ana Fernández, Project coordinator, SOUNDCAST.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SME FOUNDRIES

It is worth to mention that Soundcast technology is perfectly suited to small and medium foundries. At the present this advanced technology is in the demonstration phase in two SME foundries located in Germany and Spain.

Headquartered in Durango, Spain, IK4-AZTERLAN is a non profit research centre with more than 40 years of experience providing and promoting knowledge that strengthens the metal casting industry in Europe.

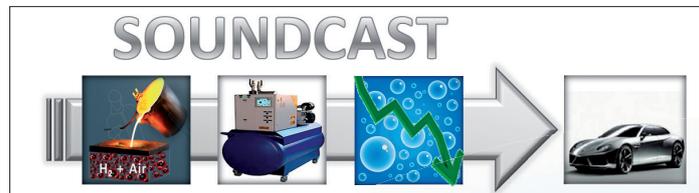
This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme, Research for Benefit of SME-2012, under grant agreement No. 315506.

The Soundcast project aims at the **democratization** of high integrity light weight structural castings by the combination of different technologies:

- the use of low cost, **portable vacuum systems** easy to fit to medium range HPDC machines
- the use of cheaper and environmental friendly **secondary aluminium alloys**
- the development of a **new laser welding technology** adapted to the casting process

ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY ALLOY

The use of secondary alloys, which are cheaper than primary, does not only reduce the fabrication costs but also lead to a reduced energy and CO2 emissions. The production of secondary alloys **requires 95% less energy than the one required for primary alloys** [EAA, 2012 Key facts and figures]. Additionally, the



higher Fe content typical of secondary alloys, reduces significantly die soldering and thus **die maintenance costs**.

Chemical composition, melt and heat treatment of the new secondary alloy have been fully optimized for manufacturing high integrity light weight structural castings by HPDC. A similar procedure had already been successfully applied by IK4-AZTERLAN to another new secondary alloy, patent EP 2471967, employed for other automotive applications such as suspension and brake components. However, the **spread of use of secondary alloys for high integrity castings need an additional driving force to overcome market barriers typical for recycled**

materials. Policy makers could help in this promotion.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LIGHT WEIGHT DESIGN

In the automotive industry, it is essential to lower manufacturing costs as well as reduce CO2 emissions by lighter weight designs. Vacuum assisted HPDC is very suitable for manufacturing thin walled high integrity castings with a significant weight reduction.

For more information of the project please visit WWW.SOUNDCASTPROJECT.EU

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IK4 
AZTERLAN
Research Alliance



European authorities must work together to find cross-border solutions to common problems

Macro-regional strategies (MRSs) are integrated frameworks adopted to address common challenges faced by member states and third countries located within the same geographical area.

When facing issues of geographical, cultural, environmental or economic challenges, national borders become irrelevant and common cross-border solutions must be identified. Currently, we do not have a standard definition of a macro region in the EU. However, a macro-region can be considered as a number of regions in a variety of countries coming together, building stronger relationships and working on collaborative solutions to common challenges. Macro-regions, therefore, might be considered a new form of territorial cooperation, able to include both an interregional and a transnational level of cooperation.

A well-developed, well-functioning MRS offers a unique

opportunity for the EU to achieve several objectives. These include the increasing the involvement of local and regional authorities in the implementation phase of EU programmes, policies and legislation; more efficient and better coordinated use of available funds, particularly relevant following the financial crisis; the capacity to close the gap between EU and non EU countries on specific priorities and legislation and pushing third countries towards a closer cooperation with the EU.

MRS is the first implementation tool underpinning the territorial cohesion concept. The concept is aimed at increasing territorial cooperation in Europe. Our union has grown geographically in the last few decades, creating more complex challenges and solutions. This is why we should use the opportunity offered by MRS to develop close cooperation between regions with similar problems and opportunities. Hence, MRSs are particularly useful when trying to find new approaches for common challenges.

Macro-regional strategies offer new, more cost-effective forms of territorial cooperation, writes **Mercedes Bresso**

"It is clear that a unique model of MRS does not exist. We need to avoid the one-size-fit-all approach"



There is no unique model of MRS. We need to avoid the one-size-fit-all approach, instead adapting our strategy to the reality on the ground. The existing MRSs, for example, have always been created around regions with water issues. The last MRS launched, the Alpine strategy, focussed on mountains and the unique issues specific to these areas. Regions around the Alps are not just mountainous; they also include rural areas, bigger more industrialised urban areas and stretches of water and rivers. A single model for all MRSs will not be effective and will not work, a flexible approach is clearly vital for success.

MRS may provide a unique chance to achieve better, more strategic planning and a more cost-effective use of European funds. To achieve this we must aim not only at national, regional and local level, but also at macro-regional level in Europe. We should all be aware of our differences but also be prepared to face common challenges and opportunities together. ★

Mercedes Bresso (S&D, IT) is a member of Parliament's committee on regional development

EUURA

'WELCOME TO OUR NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS'

The European Urban Research Association (EUURA) is an international network of urban scholars with a strong interest in policy and practice. Launched in Brussels in 1997, EUURA now has members in more than twenty countries. In the continuously globalising context of the 21st century, EUURA aims to bridge the worlds of policy and research by facilitating international exchange of research findings and the transfer of ideas relating to good practice. From its humble beginnings as a small but ambitious networking initiative, EUURA has evolved into a formalized Europe-wide, non-profit research association. Through a diverse range

of network expertise ranging from urban governance, urban policy, multi-level governance and policies, urban theories and methodologies and urban history, plus experience of, event organisation, to curriculum development and training assistance, EUURA informs policy makers through bottom-up information exchange.

The 2015 Open Days events feature fitting opportunities for EUURA to further contribute through themes such as 'Place and space' or, more specifically, smart cities, sustainability, urban - rural development, and other relevant issues such as multi-level governance and social integration. As a key organizer of over twenty international conferences, workshops and summer schools, EUURA has



succeeded in assembling scholars and practitioners in forums that have stimulated forward looking debate and discussion. In addition, EUURA has created a legacy of collaborative publications and projects that advise and educate current and future policy makers and scholars. As well as organising events, EUURA actively contributes new thinking through its international journal Urban Research and Practice - with academic papers, project reports, policy and book reviews that systematically analyse urban trends, urban developments and policy and practice in cities.

International partnerships with the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), the American Urban Affairs Association (UAA), and EUROLOC are also the product of EUURA's ongoing engagement





4) Encouraging and *supporting young practitioners and scholars* through research and engagement activities

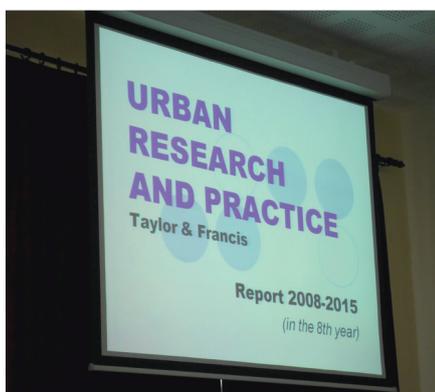
EURA facilitates exchange between urban scholars through conferences, summer schools and workshops. The EURA conference 2015 entitled “Transforming Cities – Transformative Cities” was hosted in September by the Lucian Braga University in Sibiu, Romania. The 2015 summer school, entitled “Innovation in Local Government,” was a PhD-Training event jointly organized by EURA and EUROLOC. Anargyriou and Korgialienou School of Spetses and the University of Athens led this activity as part of the COST Action “Local Public Sector Reforms: An International Comparison (LocRef)”.

The EURA 2016 conference will take place in June in Torino (Politecnico di Torino, 16-18 June). The conference topic “City lights. Cities and citizens within/beyond/notwithstanding the crisis” will examine the implications of the global financial crisis for European cities – covering social, political, economic, and environmental dimensions. The intention is to contribute fresh thinking to the ongoing EU Urban Agenda process.



The EURA goal is to continuously and effectively engage in policy shaping in urban affairs as a commentator and consultee at the European level. If you are interested in the future of European cities please consider joining our vibrant international network.

Visit our website
www.eura.org/
 for more details



an European Urban Agenda and will continue to do so. An extended invitation goes out to all of you to join the conversation about the ‘Urban Agenda’, enhancing understanding of urban challenges and making innovative practices more visible.

EURA’s current and future goals are to encourage and stimulate interdisciplinary and international urban research by:

- 1) Further *animating research* on urban issues through established and new networks
- 2) Supporting and *practically engaging* through thematic working groups and project collaboration
- 3) *Disseminating current* and relevant research insights

with other interdisciplinary and international research and policy networks. Moreover, these partnerships serve as vehicles for active and strategic insight on urban affairs and development in Europe.

EURA has followed up on the process of the formation of





MORAVIA'S DYNAMICALLY DEVELOPING JEWEL



place annually. The "Litovel Morava Basin" protected landscape area that lies in the vicinity of the city offers a dense network of cycle paths on an area of 9,600 hectares.

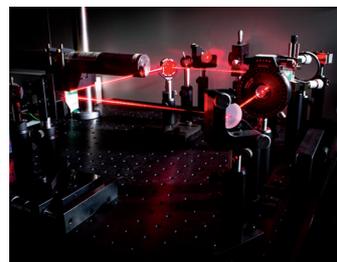
The importance of Olomouc's educational establishments extends far beyond the borders of the region. Dating back to 1573, Palacký University with its 8 faculties and 23,000 students is the largest institution of its kind in Central Moravia. One of the top rated Czech universities, it is ranked higher and higher among most prominent universities in the world. The total number of applied patents is highest

The City of Olomouc was first mentioned in written record as far back as 1055. Of all Czech towns and cities, only Prague can boast more eventful history. With its exceptionally preserved medieval downtown it is the second largest urban conservation area, next to Prague. The Holy Trinity Column, a unique and monumental Baroque structure, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List in 2000. Olomouc's history is closely associated with important figures and monarchs; e.g., Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria ascended to the throne in the palace of Archbishops of Olomouc in 1848.

Olomouc has always been a major educational, cultural and artistic centre of entire Moravia. The Moravian Theatre, Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra, and Archdiocesan Museum are based here. The city centre is surrounded by 47 hectares of historical parks in which annual floral exhibitions (FLORA) take



among Czech universities according to the CWUR ranking. Activities of the University, its contacts in abroad and participation in international projects raise hopes that a major international scientific and research centre might emerge in Olomouc. The establishing of new research centres that offer hundreds of high value jobs is a crucial step in this direction.



These establishments include the **Centre of the Haná Region for Bio-technology and Agriculture Research** (www.cr-hana.eu) and the **Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials** (www.rcptm.com), which is active in the field of nanotechnologies and optical technologies. The **Institute of Molecular and Translation Medicine**, attached to Palacký University's Faculty of Medicine (www.umtm.cz), presents a basis for basic and translational biomedical research of tumorous and infectious diseases.

The City of Olomouc, in cooperation with developers, prepares several new business areas (ca 200,000 m2 of floorspace) for investors in manufacturing and logistics focused on state-of-the-art technologies. The 50-hectare Technological Park at Olomouc – Hněvotín, suitably located nearby a junction with a motorway heading to Brno, presents a unique opportunity. To investors in strategic services, outsourcing and similar office

activities, the City of Olomouc offers skilled workforce and a range of first-rate office premises, both existing and planned ones.

Last not least, Olomouc's new hotels offer top congress facilities and largely contribute to the development of tourism that is promoted by a network of partner cities and regions from abroad.

Due to its strategic location, historical and cultural traditions, high quality of life, and versatile



opportunities for the transfer of science and research and for investors, the City of Olomouc can further strengthen its position of a dynamic university city in an international context.

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Improving transport and tourism key to effective implementation of EU strategy for Adriatic-Ionian region

Macro-regional strategies (MRS) represent a new model of multi-level governance. They involve stakeholders representing EU, national, regional and local levels, as well as different policies and programmes. They are still a fairly new feature of the EU's toolbox, which can be used to foster territorial cohesion and collective action. Their aim is to improve functional cooperation in areas such as transport infrastructure, economic development, implementing integrated maritime policy and protecting the environment.

Macro-regional strategies can also be used to mobilise joint efforts on innovation, risk management, security and tourism. MRS cover areas that bring together different countries and regions – both inside and outside the EU. They offer a new governance framework for taking on development challenges and opportunities, when these cannot be dealt with by local authorities, regions and states independently from each other, or are too specific to be approached at EU level.

Therefore, it can be argued that macro-regional strategies can fill a vacuum between the local, regional and member state levels, and the European level. Additionally, during the economic crisis, they are a useful non-cost tool to better coordinate available resources and increase the effectiveness of these investments. The added value of MRS is often seen in integrated approaches – collective action working towards a common objective, providing a platform for bringing together various stakeholders, policies and financial resources.

The Adriatic and Ionian region needs a document outlining engagement at different levels of governance, including local, regional, national and European. This

will create conditions for the coherent development of the whole region.

'Blue growth', as one of our four thematic pillars of the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR), should create new business opportunities and jobs by unlocking the potential of Europe's seas and coastal areas. My aim as Parliament's rapporteur on the topic is to promote innovative maritime and marine growth in the region by defining new governance models for the sustainable development of marine and land-based fisheries and aquaculture. Fisheries are one of the key components of coastal and island economies. As such, the protection and preservation of fish stocks must be paramount.

It is important to develop infrastructure connecting the Adriatic and Ionian regions, while promoting sustainability, growth and tourism, writes **Ivan Jakovčić**



"The establishment of 'Adriatic' and 'Ionian' tourism brands is essential, so as to streamline marketing activities and increase the visibility of the regions' destinations on the global market"





“Blue growth’, as one of our four thematic pillars of the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR), should create new business opportunities and jobs by unlocking the potential of Europe’s seas and coastal areas”

Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE, HR) is Parliament’s rapporteur on an EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region

Environmental quality is essential for ensuring the economic and social wellbeing of the region’s inhabitants. My report will focus on joint efforts to deal with the entire life cycle of marine litter, as well as shared planning to prevent and react to oil spills and other environmental threats. I believe it is important to support the shipbuilding sector in order to achieve sustainable and competitive growth that is in line with blue technologies. However, we must not forget to support and foster sport and family fishing, especially on the islands, in order to preserve local cultural traditions and maritime lifestyles of islanders and small coastal sites.

The Adriatic and Ionian region has significant infrastructure deficits. My report underlines the importance of improving transport connectivity between the participating countries, as well as between them and their other neighbours. This includes maritime transport, inter-modal connections, and connections between the two coasts, as well as maritime transport routes and ports with other parts of Europe.

The report also points out the lack of effective connections to the islands in the region. It is important to finalise the Adriatic-Ionian highway as soon as possible.

Participating countries must continue their efforts to diversify energy supply sources. This is a process that will improve MRS energy security, increase competition and deliver important benefits for the region’s economic development.

It is important to develop liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals in the macro-region, particularly in Croatia and Albania, as well as exploiting available renewable resources such as solar and wind energy as part of the energy production mix.

The report also highlights the importance of sustainability and competitiveness, and the need for hydroelectric power plants, in particular in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Sustainable tourism is an important pillar of the EUSAIR. Cooperation between countries is essential for the further development of tourism. Establishing ‘Adriatic’ and ‘Ionian’ tourism brands is essential, so as to streamline marketing activities and increase the visibility of the regions as destinations in the global market. We support the development of a diversified tourism offer to extend the tourist season and improve the destinations’ competitiveness.

All priority areas, targets and related indicators need to be developed into realistic and easily measurable goals. This should be monitored on an annual basis, and the results should be presented to the general public in a way that is easy to understand. The lessons learned have taught us that the crucial challenge in realising the potential of the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region is keeping all stakeholders committed in the long term. ★



Remote areas have huge potential for innovative transport solutions, we should use them to experiment

My nearest supermarket in Finland is 15 km away. The nearest railway station is 104 km away, and the nearest airport is 130 km away. It takes eight and a half hours to drive to the capital, Helsinki, roughly the same amount of time it takes to get to the European Parliament in Brussels.

Currently, over 70 per cent of Europeans live in urban areas. Soon, this proportion will exceed 80 per cent. There is a reason that urban mobility is the main focus of transport policy. Smart urban planning, combined with bold policies that promote walking, cycling and public transport, could have a huge impact. They could help ease congestion and reduce the harmful effects of traffic on the environment. In other words, urban solutions for urban living.

The reality of everyday life in more scarcely populated areas is a different story. Yet people living in remote places have the same basic rights to mobility and fundamental services, education, work, hobbies and social life.

According to statistics, exports and gross national product are mainly generated in urban areas. However, production stocks – food, timber, water and minerals, for example – are concentrated in these scarcely populated areas. Unless raw materials are effectively transported from remote areas, company headquarters in capital cities won't have much to export.

The Finnish national public administration is responsible for approximately 78,000 km of highways. Year-round, 24/7 maintenance of state-owned roads, including snow ploughing and de-icing, costs over €550m annually. Clearly, this is more than it costs to invest in construction and repairs.

Year after year, the size of the road network, combined with shallow flows of traffic, results in a headache for governments. In Finland, 70 per cent of freight is transported by trucks. Although monster trucks seem to frighten people in central Europe, in Finland we see them as a sensible solution for improving the capacity – and energy efficiency

– of road transport. This was the subject of a heated debate in the European Parliament last spring.

Finland is located along the EU's north-eastern border, meaning we live side-by-side with our Russian neighbours. In recent years, cross-border connections between Finland and Russia – meaning connections between the EU and Russia – have been improved thanks to EU funding.

However, the crisis in Ukraine has caused tensions in the political climate, and interest in eastward connections has diminished significantly, as has funding. This has made everyday life in the region difficult, both directly and indirectly. Economic activity, trade or commerce, or even commuting, does not respect the borders of nation states or of the EU.

When it comes to transport policy, it's crucial to remember that the issues and needs of urban areas are not the same as those of sparsely populated areas. The same applies to the solutions, and this is something we must acknowledge.

It would be foolish to leave out remote areas when allocating funding for innovation. The potential for new solutions is at least as big as in urban areas. Imagine how drones could transform everyday shopping over long distances. Delivering mail or medical supplies could look completely different in the future. We have a huge northern test lab, just waiting for the first experiments. ★

Transport issues in remote regions cannot be dealt with in the same way as urban areas, but scarcely populated areas could be used to experiment with innovative solutions, writes **Merja Kyllönen**

Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL, FI) is a member of Parliament's transport and tourism committee

"Unless raw materials are effectively transported from remote areas, company headquarters in capital cities won't have much to export"



Local and regional authorities must do more to respond to the mobility needs of Europe's ageing population



As Europe's population ages, more must be done to help the old remain mobile argues Anne-Sophie Parent

A key concern of ageing people is maintaining their mobility, letting them continue taking part in their daily activities. Over time, their needs and abilities change and they increasingly experience barriers that risk them becoming socially isolated. A single bad experience such as falling when walking on the pavement deter many from continuing to go outside on their own, and they become dependent on others for the rest of their life.

Despite demographic projections predicting a sharp increase in the numbers of very old people in the coming decades, few local public transport systems are designed to be accessible to the growing numbers of frail older people and persons with dementia. In today's context of austerity, local public transport authorities are forced to look for the most cost-efficient, demand-oriented, transport models. This results in limiting the number of routes, reducing the frequency of trains and busses during off-peak times or closing down local train stations in some rural areas.

Public transport may be accessible almost everywhere to wheelchair users, but this is not enough to make them age-friendly when they are overcrowded or when escalators are out of order due to lack of maintenance. Such conditions create unexpected challenges for older people with reduced mobility. Other concerns often raised by older people are related to the affordability, reliability, routes offer and time schedules which do not match their specific mobility needs because they are planned for other age groups' needs, and poor interconnectivity between transport modes.

When they travel to other regions or countries, like other age groups, senior people wish to be able to combine transport modes, but they face structural barriers. For example, while many older drivers drive every day in their neighborhood, for longer distances they would prefer to travel by rail or air and to rent a car upon arrival. Yet, above a certain age, this may not be possible, since car rental companies in some countries apply upper age limits on hiring. This can be as low as 70 and even lower in a few countries!

Local and regional authorities have a crucial role to play in guaranteeing optimal mobility for all their population groups. They must be accessible to older people, through designing genuinely inclusive, clean mobility plans that combine intelligent transport systems that will help improve road safety for all users, make public transport more predictable and easier to use for persons with reduced mobility. They must also reduce air pollution and limit time wasted to get to one's destination. Public transport systems are a prerequisite for the active participation and independent living of older people and a key element of the local response to Europe's demographic change.

Helping local and regional authorities understand the real needs of their ageing population and how they can develop improved travel services for their ageing population, is a key objective of the AFE-INNOVNET thematic network and up-coming covenant on demographic change which will be launched at the Committee of the Regions on 7 December 2015.

The EU urban agenda, the urban mobility package, as well as the European innovation partnership on active and healthy ageing's work on age-friendly environments and the emerging European silver economy strategy are all EU initiatives that should support local and regional authorities to better respond to the mobility needs of Europe's ageing population. ★



Anne-Sophie Parent is Secretary General of AGE Platform Europe

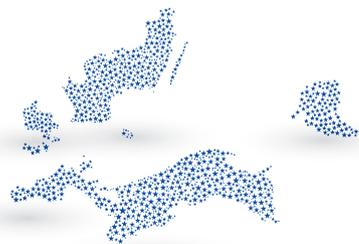
THE INTERREG SOUTH BALTIC PROGRAMME 2014-2020

TOWARDS TANGIBLE RESULTS FOR BLUE AND GREEN GROWTH

"Generation BALT was a life changer for me," says Eva Errestad, a young mother and maritime sector employee from Sweden who escaped unemployment thanks to her participation in the South Baltic project Generation BALT. For Daiva Saliene, a jewelry designer from Lithuania, Going Abroad's cross-border learning exercises successfully paved the ground for the internationalisation of her business. In the growing sector of LNG technologies (Liquefied Natural Gas), businessman Anders Ørgård Hansen from Denmark actively used the networking and consulting services of the MarTech_LNG initiative to expand the business activities of his company.

Hence, Eva's, Daiva's and Anders' success stories may provide an initial glimpse into the results achieved by the first generation of South Baltic cross-border cooperation projects, implemented between 2007 and 2013 by more than 430 partners from Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. Indeed, contributing to the cross-border strand of European Territorial Cooperation, the 69 funded projects served as an injection for the participating regions, allowing them to learn from each other, transfer good practices and jointly develop innovative solutions for the benefit of their citizens, the economy and the environment.

Building on the successful trial phase, the second generation of the South Baltic Programme has been launched. Driven by the spirit of thematic concentration, result orientation and multi-level governance, the available funding will be targeted at South Baltic's blue and green economy and hence on sectors which are key for the future of the entire area. Five priority areas and seven specific objectives shall put the Programme objective of "blue and green growth through cooperation" into practice - blue representing the Baltic Sea as the common resource for economic development and green underlining the importance of preserving the attractiveness of the South Baltic regions for current and future generations. Managed by the Polish Ministry for Infrastructure and Development, projects of different sizes and duration will be supported, accompanied by active advisory services of the Joint Secretariat in Gdańsk and the network of regional Contact Points.



INTERREG SOUTH BALTIC PROGRAMME 2014-2020

FACTS AND FIGURES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: unlocking the potential for blue and green growth through cross-border cooperation

AVAILABLE ERDF FUNDING (WITHOUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE): EUR 78m

PRIORITY AXIS 1: EUR 9,972m ERDF

Strengthening the international activeness and innovation capacity of the South Baltic blue & green economy

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.1: Increase the presence of blue & green sector SMEs from the South Baltic area in international markets through joint cross-border actions.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.2: Improve the transfer of innovation for the benefit of blue & green sector SMEs through joint cross-border actions.

PRIORITY AXIS 2: EUR 39,773m ERDF

Exploiting the environmental and cultural potential of the South Baltic area for blue and green growth

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1: Increased development of the South Baltic area's natural and cultural heritage assets into sustainable tourist destinations.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.2: Increased use of green technologies in order to decrease the pollution discharges in the South Baltic area.

PRIORITY AXIS 3: EUR 15,789m ERDF

Improving cross-border connectivity for a functional blue & green transport area

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: Improve the quality and environmental sustainability of transport services in the South Baltic area.

PRIORITY AXIS 4: EUR: 8,310m ERDF

Boosting the human resource capacities for the area's blue & green economy

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4: Increase the share of skilled labour force working in blue and green economy sectors of the South Baltic area through joint cross-border actions

PRIORITY AXIS 5: EUR 4,155m ERDF

Increased cooperation capacity of local actors in the South Baltic area for the blue and green growth

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 5: Improve the cooperation capacity of local South Baltic area actors through participation in cross-border networks.



The South Baltic Programme uses resources from the European Regional Development Fund CONTACT

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www.southbaltic.eu
Mentioned projects
www.generationbalt.eu
www.goingabroad.nu
www.golng.eu

NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Integrated Territorial Investment or ITI will be used in the new 2014–2020 programming period to implement strategic projects with a significant impact on the current problematic situation in large cities. Its main benefit consists in targeting the investment at areas from more than one priority axis and several operational programmes. It is designed for metropolitan areas with population density exceeding 300 thousand inhabitants, which is the case of seven metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic.

European cities are often faced with economic, environmental or social issues requiring an integrated and geographically focused approach. It is the aim of the Integrated Territorial Strategies to make Europe achieve a smart and sustainable inclusive growth as foreseen by the Europe 2020 strategy. The tools will therefore focus primarily on the implementation of projects (large and small) which can significantly improve the quality and functioning of assisted areas.

Approximately EUR 24 billion was allocated for the Czech Republic in the

2014–2020 programming period. EUR 2.4 million from this amount was allocated for ITI tools, which will be used in the metropolitan territories to support areas such as transport and mobility, social cohesion, sustainable economy and the environment. These are areas with the highest concentration of deficiencies. Cities often deal with a lack of parking spaces, insufficient quality of public

experience with projects implemented in the 2007–2013 programming period. One successful example of how the EU Funds helped improve the situation in a city is extensive reconstruction which took place in Ostrava, the most important city in the Moravia-Silesia region. After its closure, a blast furnace and coal mine complex went unused and dilapidating. The EU

Funds helped turn the site into a multicultural and architecturally valuable space visited by dozens of thousands of tourists, whether during a popular international music festival Colours of Ostrava or some of many other cultural events. One of the major added

values of the project is the creation of many jobs because the Moravian-Silesian Region has long been struggling with high unemployment rates. It is the ITI which may help tackle such a problem.

The success of the ITI tool is based on partnership and cooperation within a territory. Within a set strategy, partners share the same vision about the future of the territory and fulfil objectives which may only be achieved collectively.



services, insufficient capacities of kindergarten and schools in the suburbs, unemployment, etc. The ITI tools have provided space for a more complex solution of the territorial problems and for more coherent investment in areas with growth potential.

The fact that investment in cities and suburbs is important is evidenced by



Europe's macro-regions: Beyond national frontiers

'Save the sea', 'connect the region', and 'increase prosperity' are the three key objectives of the EU strategy for the Baltic sea region. The environmental deterioration of the Baltic sea prompted eight member states to sign an agreement, in 2009, promoting more balanced development of the area. This new approach is based on the idea that common challenges and opportunities – whether environmental, economic or security related – are best tackled or exploited cooperatively.

Since then, the concept has gained momentum and four strategies involving 19 EU member states and eight non-EU countries have been adopted so far. The EU strategy for the Danube region adopted in 2011, has helped improve navigation on the river through coordinated maintenance work.

This region is currently strengthening its research and innovation base. The EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region was adopted in 2014, incorporating much of the

western Balkans. The strategy seeks to improve connectivity by developing road, rail and maritime infrastructure between countries.

The strategy also includes building an Adriatic-Ionian 'brand' for diversified tourism products targeting global travel customers. The Alpine region – a major natural resource and a socio-economic core of Europe – is the latest region to consider implementing an EU macro-regional strategy. It is likely to be endorsed by the Council no later than 2015.

The macro-regional strategies place issues in a multilateral setting. The aim is to encourage participants to overcome national frontiers and barriers to strategic and imaginative thinking about available opportunities. The macro-regional approach creates clear added value with existing EU policies reinforced across different sectors and geographical borders.

We need an integrated approach on issues that affect different economic sectors. Examples include climate action needs

Cooperation is key to regional development, writes **Andrea Mairate**



"This new approach is based on the idea that common challenges and opportunities [...] are best tackled or exploited cooperatively"



or support for a low-carbon economy.

For issues that cross borders such as, the integrated maritime policy, the trans-European transport network (TEN-T), the trans-European energy network (TEN-E), we need greater connectivity and a more cooperative approach. Recent developments highlighted further important value added at EU level, such as contributing to integrating potential member states and neighbours such as Ukraine and Moldova.

As far as cohesion policy is concerned, macro-regional strategies help build social, economic, and territorial cohesion. They can also be useful for combatting regional disparities and promoting convergence between European regions.

The common provisions regulation defines these initiatives as: “an integrated framework endorsed by the European Council, which may be supported by the European structural and investment funds among others, to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area relating to member states and third countries located in the same geographical area which thereby benefit from strengthened cooperation contributing to achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion”.

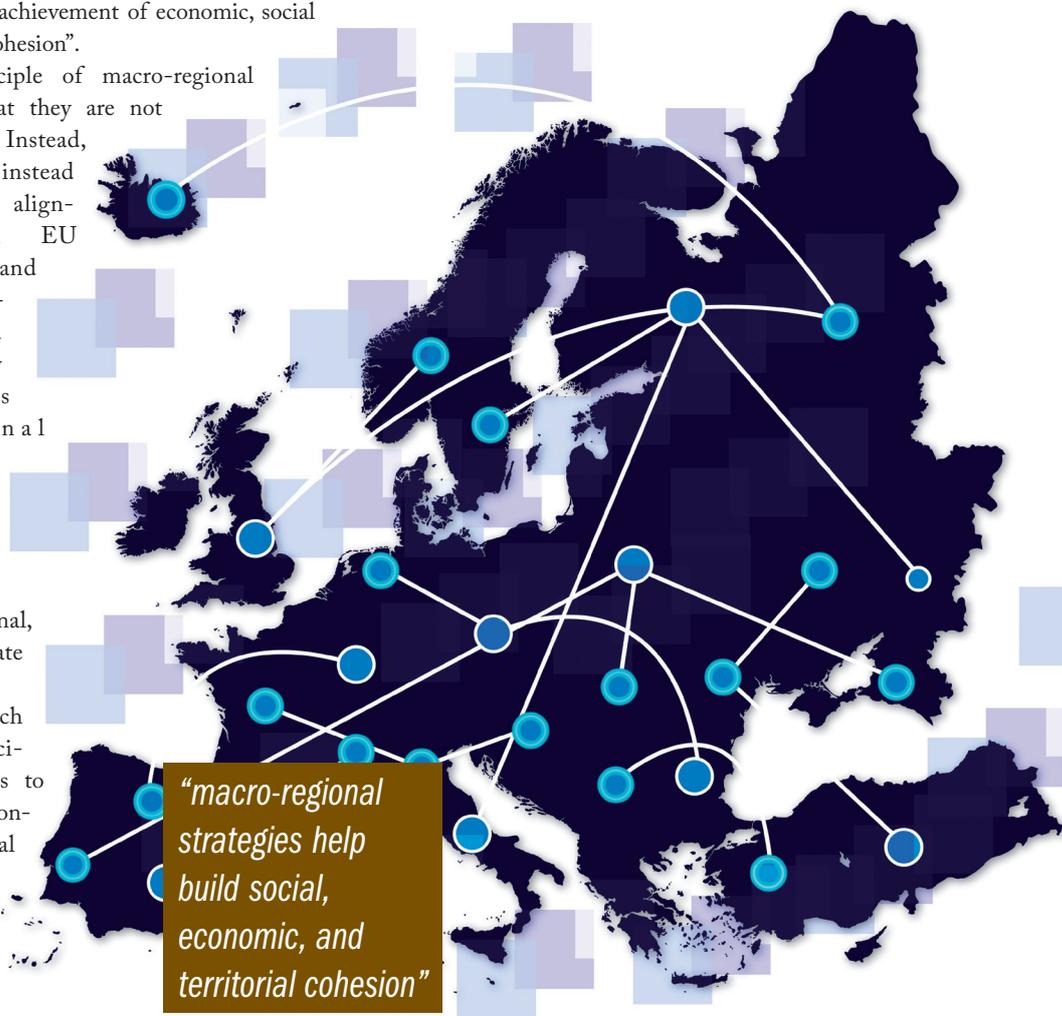
A key principle of macro-regional strategies is that they are not self-financing. Instead, financing is instead provided by aligning policies, EU programmes and financial instruments, and working closely with various international financial institutions. The participating countries also mobilise national, regional, local and private sector resources.

This approach invites participating countries to adjust their national and regional policies and programmes in line with their neighbouring partners.

In spite of good results, the approach has not been without problems. A European Commission report in May 2014 on the governance of the macro-regional strategies adopted, identified the changes needed to ensure strong political leadership and commitment from the countries and regions concerned.

Most notable was the issue of harnessing adequate institutional and administrative capacity for effective implementation. The Interreg cooperation programmes now match the geographic scope of the strategies, are fully integrated into their framework, and support their implementation and governance structures.

Cooperation is an integral part of regional development. Solutions to common problems such as environmental issues, risk prevention, connectivity gaps and migration can be found. Meanwhile the potential benefits, such as smarter research; business link-ups; expanded markets and trade can be made reality. We must build on the work we have done to ensure we work closely together on issues of common concern. ★



“macro-regional strategies help build social, economic, and territorial cohesion”

Andrea Mairate is head of unit for the European Commission's DG regional policy



URBACT III

What's in it for Cities?

URBACT is the European Programme of Territorial Cooperation dedicated to promoting sustainable and integrated urban development in European cities. The programme is financed by ERDF and national contributions from Member States, Switzerland and Norway. Approved in December 2014 by the European Commission, the 3rd generation of the programme, URBACT III, is now being launched.

Created in 2002, URBACT has accumulated a lot of experience in enabling European cities to work together to develop effective and sustainable solutions to major key urban challenges.

In the continuity of URBACT I and URBACT II but with an enhanced budget, the main focus of URBACT III will be on capacity building for

practitioners and decision makers looking for answers to urban challenges. This is the reason why all the activities of the programme are put under a specific investment priority dedicated to URBACT III within the thematic objective 11 "enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration".

URBACT III new features will help to better respond to the needs of cities:

- The core strand of activities of the URBACT III Programme will still be composed by transnational exchange and **learning networks**. But in addition to the URBACT I&II action-planning networks for cities wanting to design integrated strategy and action plans, two other types of networks will be developed: implementation networks for cities wanting to

design integrated strategy and action plans and transfer networks for cities wanting to transfer good practices from a giving city to receiving cities.

- **Capacity building activities** will be strengthened with diversified offer and targets (elected people, practitioners, etc.) with transnational training named URBACT Summer University and with stronger links to national urban context
- **Capitalisation and dissemination activities** will be strengthened as well and URBACT III will contribute to the *European Urban Agenda* based on the experience of URBACT II to build up urban knowledge and urban know how around thematic clusters¹.
- Stronger links will be built with the national level through **National URBACT Points** to communicate on URBACT activities and disseminate URBACT results at national level in local language and to operate as national platforms for dialogue, exchange and learning on sustainable urban development, involving the different levels of governance concerned (national, regional, local).

URBACT III is now in full implementation. Following a first call for projects, 21 action-planning networks were selected in September 2015 by its Monitoring Committee, covering a great array of urban themes. These networks will involve around 200 cities from all Europe, sharing experience and working together on developing integrated action plans to address their urban challenges.

A call for proposals for the creation of implementation networks will be launched in March 2016 open to all cities in Europe including art. 7 cities of the Cohesion Policy and at the end of 2016 a call for good practices will be launched European wide.

Capitalisation and capacity building activities will also be launched at the end of the year and the next URBACT Summer University for urban practitioners and local stakeholders is already planned at the end of August 2016. A wide range of opportunities to benefit from the programme and become active members of the URBACT community!

¹ see last URBACT II capitalisation results (April 2015) around 4 main topics: New urban economies, More jobs for urban youth, Social innovation in cities, Sustainable regeneration of urban areas under <http://urbact.eu/capitalisation-and-dissemination>

Smart solutions for small cities



Following the series of events organized in 2013 and 2014, the North-East Regional Development Agency, Intermediate Body for implementation of the Regional Operational Programme in the North-East Region of Romania, will organize the Meeting Place debate **“Modernisation of small and medium-sized European cities with smart and sustainable measures – the present challenges and future prospects”** under the auspices of the **13th edition of European Week of Regions and Cities - Open Days 2015**.

This event, which will take place on **14 October 2015, in the room JDE62 of the Committee of the Regions, between 14:30-17:00 hours**, is intended to give the opportunity to over 270 Romanian and European stakeholders in urban

development to share experiences and good practices related to the development and implementation of urban policies.

The panellists of this debate, who will include representatives of Energy Cities / Covenant of Mayors, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration and Suceava City Hall in Romania, EURADA, Abruzzo Region in Italy and URBASOFIA Bucharest, will highlight – on one side – the synergy between the EU approach and specific issues related to funding and implementation of urban policies and, on the other side, will present models of success in implementation and development of urban development projects. The networking session organized as follow-up of this event will facilitate deepening approached topics and creating contacts for future projects and cooperation.

Pre-event statements

Urban areas play an important role in the development of a country. No country has developed without having first strong and vibrant urban centers. Investments through Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 contributed to the increase of the attractiveness of towns and cities of Romania, enhancement of the quality of life of citizens and creation of jobs.

Ionut Trinca
**Ministry of Regional
Development and Public
Administration Romania**



Big and medium sized cities, seem to be better placed to design and implement smart specialization strategies than a region. Cities are able to mobilize easier endogenous actors to carry out activities closer to the beneficiaries; and also even more valuable, the governance of the policies could be better shaped because it is possible to directly involve local stakeholders.

Esteban Pelayo
**EURADA - European
Association of
Development Agencies**



Small towns in Europe are places we instinctively recognize as part of our everyday experience but are problematic to define. Existing research and policy work has focused to a large degree on large cities and on metropolitan regions ('big' or 'global' places) often in the context of globalizing forces and international competition but there has been relatively little work on 'smaller places' such as smaller cities and towns, with less than 50,000 inhabitants, that represent 94.4 % of the total European cities. They are the communities with have to focus on to a larger extent in terms of development.

Pietro Elisei
URBASOFIA Bucharest



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Reformed cohesion policy will take centre stage at this year's European Week of Regions and Cities Open Days 2015

In just a few days, European regions and cities will gather in Brussels for this year's Open Days, the European Week of Regions and Cities. The annual four-day event gives cities and regions the opportunity to share ideas about their capacities to create growth and jobs, by efficiently implementing cohesion policy.

Over the years, the original Open Days concept has grown into a key annual event on cohesion policy. Every October,

6000 participants – local, regional, national and European decision-makers and experts – gather for more 100 workshops and debates, exhibitions and networking opportunities. This year's discussions will build on the reformed cohesion policy, which will unlock up to €351.8bn over the next few years to strategically invest in the real economy. By targeting these resources towards key priorities, the reformed cohesion policy is one of the EU's main investment tools, for boosting research

This year's Open Days will allow cities and regions to share knowledge on how best to foster growth and prepare for the future, says **Corina Crețu**



“This year's discussions will build on the reformed cohesion policy, which will unlock up to €351.8bn over the next few years to strategically invest in the real economy”





“The Open Days 2015 will provide a unique opportunity for regions and cities to exchange their long-standing experience in the conception and implementation of aid schemes for SMEs”

to support the digital single market. Between 2014 and 2020, €20bn will be invested in digital projects, such as broadband deployment, online public services and better ICT for small businesses. In parallel, more than €38bn will be devoted to fostering the low-carbon economy, which is twice the amount invested in this area during the previous funding period. These funds will enable regions and cities to promote energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy, smart grids and sustainable urban transport.

The second theme, ‘regions open for business’, is of the utmost importance to me. The vast majority of European businesses are SMEs established in our regions and account for two-thirds of private sector jobs. The Open Days 2015 will provide a unique opportunity for regions and cities to exchange their long-standing experience in the conception and implementation of aid schemes for SMEs. Debates should focus on the role of smart specialisation strategies, development of innovation capacities and support for setting up micro-enterprises.

‘Places and spaces’ will emphasise how EU interventions in urban areas play a key role in developing cities’ ability to innovate, create new economic activities and address social cohesion issues, which often arise in deprived urban areas.

Discussions will offer insights on how EU regional and urban programmes

and innovation, tackling climate change and promoting social inclusion. It will also help realise the objectives of job creation and growth outlined in Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker’s investment plan.

The slogan for the Open Days 2015 is, ‘Europe’s regions and cities: partners for investment and growth’ and they will focus on three themes. First, ‘modernising Europe’ – the regions in the energy union and the digital single market. Second, ‘regions open for business’ – the development of SMEs, innovation and job creation. Third, ‘places and spaces’ – urban and rural development and urban-rural integration.

‘Modernising Europe’ addresses two of the Commission’s top priorities – the energy union and the digital single market. It is an opportunity to discuss how regions and cities, through the new programmes and projects, can help the EU become a world leader in renewables and energy efficiency and create a vibrant knowledge-based society.

Cohesion policy will be an important contributor to the EU digital agenda. It will also be key in developing infrastructure

can foster more balanced territorial development, on how to promote rural competitiveness and reduce the rural-urban drift of population, including the specific challenges of border cities and border rural hinterlands. A specific ‘Open Urban Day’ will be organised on 14 October in the Brussels canal area.

In addition to these three priorities, stakeholders will be invited to discuss challenges and solutions of programme management, better implementation and simplification, as well as to the cross border, inter-regional or transnational dimension of cohesion policy.

We expect to bring together political representatives, decision makers, experts and practitioners of cohesion policy, as well as stakeholders from the private sector, civil society organisations, academia, EU institutions and the media. Their knowledge, experience and expertise will be vital in improving the way we deliver cohesion policy, promote growth and jobs and prepare the future for our regions and cities.

This is the strength of the Open Days and I very much look forward to being part of it. ★

Corina Crețu
is European regional
policy Commissioner

MAXIMISING THE GROWTH POTENTIAL AROUND LARGE SCALE RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

The case of Skåne and the European Spallation Source and MAX IV Laboratory



The Öresund bridge linking the regions of Skåne and Copenhagen

Photo by Leif Johansson

A vision of the future ESS and MAX IV.



© European Spallation Source

Europe invests billions of euros in large scale research infrastructures, but who ensures that “big science” is worth its price tag and by what means? While the EU and its Member States are vital, regions also have an increasingly important role to play as supporters of local innovation ecosystems and facilitators of technology transfer.

NEXT GENERATION RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES IN SWEDEN AND DENMARK

With the on-going establishment of two cutting edge materials research infrastructures in Sweden and Denmark, Europe has a unique opportunity to further develop its world class science and innovation in fields that rely on materials. The European Spallation Source (ESS) will be the world's most powerful neutron source, welcoming up to 3000 guest researchers to its laboratories in Lund and

data centre in Copenhagen yearly. Virtually next door, another world leading facility is being built, the synchrotron lights source MAX IV. Together they will serve a vast array of sectors, from life sciences to bio-based industries, energy technologies to cultural heritage.

EU SUPPORT IN THE ÖRESUND REGION

As the largest project ever in the Interreg Programme Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak (ÖKS), “ESS MAX IV: Cross Border Science and Society” devotes a total of 19 million EUR to prepare young researchers for the neutron and synchrotron techniques used at ESS and MAX IV. Combined with subprojects on marketing, business involvement, international attractiveness and breaking down border barriers, Region Skåne, The Capital Region of Denmark and another 27 partners aim

to further advance the ÖKS-area as an internationally competitive region for neutron and synchrotron light use.

REGIONAL SMART SPECIALISATION

Skåne's Smart Specialisation Strategy with its emphasis on Smart Materials underpins the ambitions of the Interreg project. It also serves as a basis for close cooperation with similar EU regions, notably through the Vanguard Initiative – a collaboration aiming to foster new European value chains by pooling the individual strengths of advanced research and innovation regions. With the Vanguard regions' commitment to leading by example, Skåne's active contribution consists of a pilot project within nanotechnology, including materials based on nanowires emerging from pioneering research in Northern Europe.

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS 16TH OF NOVEMBER

To explore the opportunities that investment in large scale research infrastructures bring about at the regional, national and EU-levels, Region Skåne is organising a full day high level conference at Stanhope Hotel on the 16th

of November 2015 entitled “Large scale research infrastructures – Maximising the potential for renewed growth in Europe”. A number of key players will give their views on the matter, with high level speakers including the Swedish Minister for Higher Education and Research, Mrs. Helene Hellmark Knutsson, the Director General for the European Commission Directorate for Research and Innovation, Mr. Robert-Jan Smits, as well as the ESS Director General and the Vice Chancellor of Lund University.



**Skåne
European
Office**

Registration is open on <http://www.riandgrowth.eu/>

Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (ADRBI) organizes the following events in 2015:



In Brussels:

14TH OCTOBER: BUCHAREST-ILFOV REGION – URBAN-RURAL INTEGRATION

Event co-organised with the Permanent Representation of Romania to the European Union as OPEN DAYS 2015 Side Event.

Venue: 12, Montoyer Street.

20TH OCTOBER: BUCHAREST-ILFOV REGION – PARTNER FOR INVESTMENT AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

Event organised with the support of European Parliament and members of some European institutions, presents REGIO success stories.

Venue: 60, Wiertz Street.

Target audience: representatives of DG REGIO, representatives of European decision-makers, chambers of commerce, experts from public&private institutions for exchanging and discussing projects and issues related to regional and local development and mass media, etc.

For more details and events registration please visit: www.regioadrbi.ro

**For more details and registration please visit:
www.regioadrbi.ro/open-days-2015**

In Bucharest:

26TH NOVEMBER: CONFERENCE "REGIO-ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS IN BUCHAREST-ILFOV REGION" AS OPEN DAYS 2015 LOCAL EVENT, VENUE: RADISSON BLU HOTEL, 63-81 VICTORIEI AVENUE.

The Conference will offer the frame for presenting and debating results of the implementation of REGIO in Bucharest-Ilfov Region.

These events are an opportunity for you to discover the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, sharing good practices, and especially to develop new contacts at networking debates

Attendance is free of charge for all events.

Don't miss the opportunity to make new partners.

For more details and registration, please visit www.regioadrbi.ro and www.facebook.com/adrbi

Working language: Romanian and English



Permanent Representation of Romania to
the European Union



Inițiativă locală. Dezvoltare regională.

Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013

The Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (ADRBI) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization of public utility, with legal status, founded in 1999, offering specialized services for local authorities and private sector, in order to develop Bucharest-Ilfov Region.

Since 2007, ADRBI is an intermediate body for Regional Operational Programme (REGIO). This Programme aims to support economic and social balanced territorial development of all the regions of Romania, taking into account their specific needs, with a focus on sustainable development of cities.

Supported by REGIO 2007-2013 regions started to make progress in modernizing public infrastructure: urban, road, health, social, educational and tourism. Some results of the Programme in Bucharest-Ilfov region are:

- 1,429,000 inhabitants benefiting from the implementation of urban development projects
- 10,078 inhabitants benefiting from modernized social services
- 679 students receiving rehabilitated educational infrastructure
- 171 micro-enterprises supported
- 872 new or maintained jobs
- 129 km of modernized road
- 35% increase for freight and passenger traffic
- Reducing intervention time for emergency services in urban and rural areas

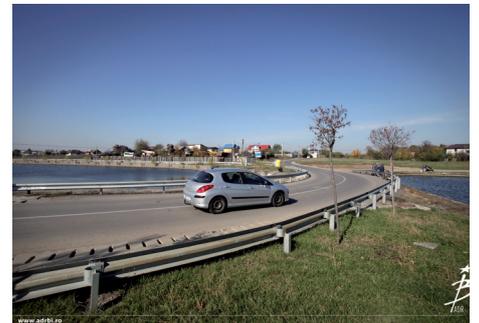
These results were achieved thanks to the joined efforts of the local public administrations, NGOs and business environment.

Citizens of the Bucharest capital city and Ilfov County can enjoy a modernized public infrastructure and public services.

For the programming period 2014-2020, the Bucharest-Ilfov Region is deemed "more developed region" at NUTS 2 level. In this context the region is open to invest funds in new areas such as: energy efficiency, supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.

Following joint efforts of all involved stakeholders, we will succeed to develop the Bucharest-Ilfov region so that citizens benefit from public infrastructure at European standards and quality public services, and so that visitors from other Member States and non-EU can admire the natural beauties of Romania.

See more details on
www.adrbi.ro and
www.facebook.com/adrbi



EU budget crucial to encouraging investment



European Parliament's Regional Development Committee has a key role to play in supporting cohesion policy, writes **Iskra Mihaylova**

Cohesion policy has been identified as one of the most effective instruments in financially supporting the Europe 2020 strategy. These instruments have become increasingly important following the 2007 financial crisis, remaining a vital source of public investment across Europe. Maximising available resources is of the utmost importance in delivering economic growth.

In many countries, cohesion funding represents more than 60 per cent of the investment budget. Cohesion policy funds prevented a total collapse of public investment in many member states during the crisis and played a crucial role in supporting the capacity of member states to promote growth and job opportunities. These funds are a key source of financing for the real economy and have made a major contribution

to strengthen Greece's economic, social and territorial cohesion. Currently, they play an important role in paving the way for a prosperous future.

The EU budget accounts for around one per cent of the EU's combined Gross Domestic Product or approximately two per cent of public spending across all member states. Though relatively small, it has had a big impact in the period 2007-2013. I would like to emphasise the crucial role the budget played in encouraging investment, given that, by supplementing public and private financing at national and international level, its leverage helps growth and promotes economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU.

The 2016 draft EU budget supports key initiatives such as the energy union, the digital single market and the European

"I would like to emphasise the crucial role played by the EU budget in encouraging investment"



agenda for migration. The money will be invested to boost innovation, create jobs, help convergence among member states and regions, deal more effectively with migration and strengthen the role of the EU as a global player. The proposal also includes contributions to the investment plan for Europe through the new European fund for strategic investment. The EU budget uses cohesion policy to encourage investment in areas such as infrastructure, competitiveness, employment, education, social inclusion. It also supports research and innovation through Horizon 2020 and contributes to producing high-quality agricultural products thanks to the Common Agricultural Policy.

It is essential for the budget to include credits sufficient to phase out the backlog of outstanding claims from the past budgetary programming period, which is expected to be about EUR 20 billion to the end of 2015. At the same time it must help launch programmes from the new programming period 2014-2020.

In a meeting on the 17th September 2015, the parliament's regional development committee (REGI), which I chair, adopted an opinion on the draft EU budget 2016. This stressed the need for sufficient resources to support the proper and smooth implementation of both their programmes and their multiannual operation, in order to minimise the risk of a recurrence of the backlog of payments. It also demanded a long-term solution for the payment backlog, as any delays in payments increase the burden on local and regional authorities and can impact on all beneficiaries of funding.

In the same meeting, the committee adopted the European Commission's proposal for a regulation amending the common provisions regulation of the European Structural and Investment Funds, to offer extra support for Greece. If the country makes best use of available EU funds, €35bn could be available to invest in people and businesses by 2020, providing a powerful additional stimulus.

These specific measures were proposed to boost growth, investment and job creation in Greece by ensuring that the available EU funding is used for investments on the ground and reaches beneficiaries as rapidly as possible. These funds will not solve the short-term liquidity problem that Greece faces, but they will help alleviate the crisis.

We also welcome the commission's proposal for preparatory action, which is open to all member states and is intended to finance capacity development and institution building to support the implementation of reforms identified as priorities.

The REGI committee will closely scrutinize the process of implementation of the specific measures for Greece and will require the Commission to set up a follow-up procedure to keep the European Parliament informed of progress, as well as of the efficient and effective implementation of the cohesion policy programmes. ★



"If the country (Greece) makes best use of available EU funds, €35bn could be available to invest in people and businesses by 2020"

Iskra Mihaylova (ALDE, BLG) is Chair of the European Parliament's REGI committee

Energy efficiency and sustainable investment



The Commission is fully committed to helping cities build and renovate more energy efficient buildings, through public funds leveraging private investments, writes Paul Hodson

Given their spending power and pivotal role within their communities, cities and regions continue to play an important part in delivering a more resilient, sustainable and resource-efficient Europe. The engagement of cities and regions is particularly visible in the covenant of mayors initiative, launched by the European Commission in 2008. This initiative now boasts some 6400 signatory cities, representing nearly half of Europe's population. They have voluntarily committed to increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy resources within their territories. This way, they aim to meet – and exceed – the EU's objective of reducing CO2 emissions by 20 per cent by 2020.

A good example of public authorities forward thinking is the Horizon 2020-funded 'urban learning' project, which gathers European capital cities such as Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Warsaw and Zagreb. The project focuses on multi-disciplinary learning and innovative technological solutions and governance processes. The aim is to institutionalise integrated urban energy planning, in response to the common challenge of considerable population growth, while committing to significantly reducing fossil fuel consumption and CO2 emissions.

Promoting the energy efficiency of buildings is a key priority of EU energy policy, as was clearly recognised in the recently published energy union strategy. The Commission has set up various financial instruments to assist member states, citizens and businesses with the material improvement of their building stock.

The 2014-2020 cohesion policy will support investments to make public, residential and corporate buildings more energy efficient. Some €29bn has been allocated to investments in energy efficiency, smart energy infrastructure and low-carbon research and innovation. Out of this amount, €18bn is intended for energy efficiency investments in public and residential buildings and in enterprises.

Public money, including from the European structural and investment funds, should be used in a smarter way, so as to leverage

private funding in support of sustainable energy investments. These should go beyond 'business as usual', particularly in improving poorly built and poorly insulated buildings.

The Commission strongly encourages using cohesion policy funding through financial instruments. Loan, guarantee or equity instruments should be the first choice of EU financial support for projects guaranteeing revenue or significant cost savings. Grants may complement this support where needed, for example in the case of extensive renovations of buildings that go beyond legal minimum energy performance requirements, helping develop innovative technologies or addressing social issues, particularly energy poverty. Our aim is to complement private investment, leveraging it rather than crowding it out.

The EU will continue to drive demand for sustainable energy

"Promoting buildings' energy efficiency is a key priority of EU energy policy, as was clearly recognised in the recently published energy union strategy"



investments, through its project development assistance facilities, such as European local energy assistance (Elena). Cities have a major role to play in supporting the development of bankable projects at local level, while aggregating and standardising lower-scale building renovation projects. This is crucial in attracting investors, reducing transaction costs and creating confidence. The Elena facility provides grants to EU cities and regions for such projects, through private funding leverage. Over the past five years, around €100m have produced a pipeline of around 95 projects, resulting in €4.8bn worth of investment.

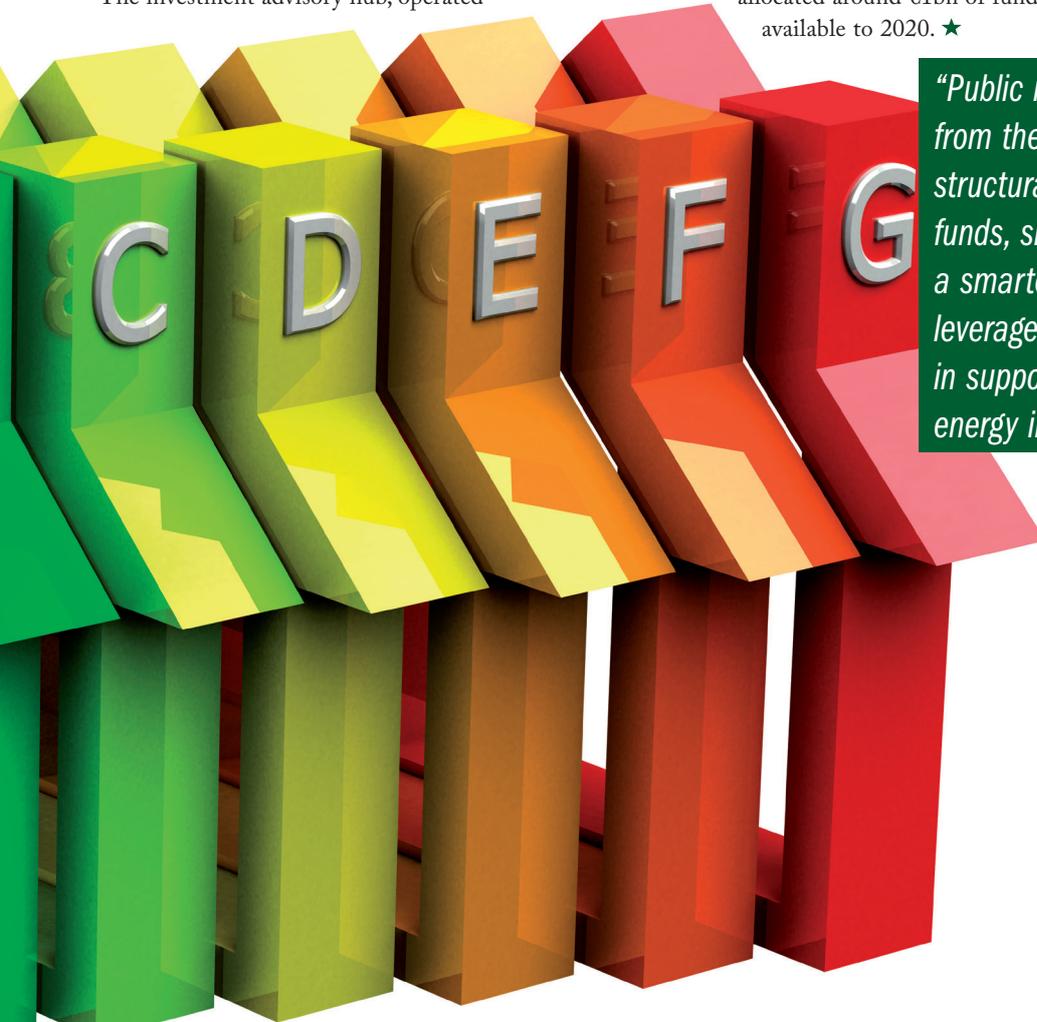
Two financial instruments have been created at EU level, specifically targeting energy efficiency projects. The European energy efficiency fund (EEEF), managed by Deutsche Bank, invests directly in renewables or energy efficiency projects, including building renovations. The private finance for energy efficiency (PF4EE) combines lending from the European investment bank (EIB) to financial intermediaries, and protection against losses associated with their energy efficiency lending activities.

The investment advisory hub, operated

by the EIB, will play a crucial role in providing clear navigation and marketing for existing funds, as well as additional technical assistance facilities for project promoters and public authorities. It will also address the gaps in market capacity, particularly in structuring and operation of financial instruments.

Under the 'smart finance for smart buildings' initiative, the Commission will continue addressing investment market fundamentals. Our aim is to establish a solid project database and track the financial performance of energy efficiency investments. We also want to work out methods to improve understanding and pricing of associated risks, and establish a common language among market participants, leading to a voluntary agreement with investors and financiers.

Finally, Horizon 2020 supports energy efficiency projects that address the main challenges, of buildings, such as increasing the rate, quality and effectiveness of renovations and developing the 'nearly zero energy buildings market'. The programme also looks to integrate renewable energy sources or address inadequate construction skills. It has so far allocated around €1bn of funding out of a total of €5.6bn available to 2020. ★



“Public money, including from the European structural and investment funds, should be used in a smarter way, so as to leverage private funding in support of sustainable energy investments”

Paul Hodson is head of the Energy efficiency Unit at the European Commission's DG energy

Open days 2015 Highlights

Monday

15:00 - 17:00

12E01 - listening room

OPEN DAYS Opening Session: Europe's regions and cities: Partners for investment, innovation and growth

Organisers: CoR, DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Charlemagne, Mansholt room (listening room) + Jenkins room (listening room)

Tuesday

09:00 - 10:30

13E03 - REGI-COTER: Joint meeting of the European Parliament's regional development committee and the Committee of the Regions' commission on territorial cohesion policy and EU budget

Organisers: European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development (REGI), Commission on Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) - CoR

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 62

09:00 - 10:45

13C02 - The role of territorial impact assessments in improving EU policymaking

Organisers: CoR

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 63

09:00 - 10:45

13UNIV01 - Beyond big data: regional analysis for university, industry and policy collaboration

Organisers: CoR, Regional Studies Association, Association of European Schools of Planning

Venue: European Commission, Charlemagne, Jenkins room

09:00 - 13:00

13UNIV02 - Dynamics of job creation and role of micro-enterprises

Organisers: Regional Studies Association

Venue: European Commission, Charlemagne, Room Mansholt

11:15 - 13:00

13A06 - Towards a resilient, sustainable and resource-efficient energy union - the role of European capital cities and regions

Organisers: Capital Cities and Regions Network (CCRN)

Venue: Prague House

11:15 - 13:00

13A10 - What key competencies are required for managing and implementing the European regional development fund and the cohesion fund?

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room OA

11:15 - 13:00

13B01 - Integrity pacts - a tool for increasing transparency, accountability and improving access to EU public investments for all companies, including SMEs

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 1D

11:15 - 13:00

13B17 - Implementing smart specialisation strategies on health and ageing: mutual learning for integration of care services and age-friendly environments

Organisers: DG SANTE - EC, DG CONNECT - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 2A

11:15 - 13:00

13C08 - Getting on track: accessible transport for older people

Organisers: Accessible transport for older people

Venue: Liaison Agency Flanders-Europe (vlefa)

14:30 - 17:00

13A14 - How can local projects benefit from the Juncker plan? The long-term investors (NPBIs) approach

Organisers: European Long-Term Investors association (ELTI)

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 53

14:30 - 17:00

13A17 - Appraisal procedures of major projects planned for European regional development fund or cohesion fund funding in 2014-2020

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room O

14:30 - 17:00

13A18 - Cohesion policy support for the EU energy union

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room OC

14:30 - 17:00

13B14 - Promoting SMEs' access to government contracts - best practices and results from a study on administrative capacity for public procurement in the ESI funds

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 1A

14:30 - 17:00

13C13 - Promoting integrated urban development with a view to an EU urban agenda

Organisers: CoR - E1, Dutch Government

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 52

19:00 - 22:30

13E02 - OPEN DAYS official reception and RegioStars awards ceremony

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC, CoR

Venue: Bozar, Centre of Fine Arts

Wednesday

09:00 - 10:45

14A01 - Cities and regions investing in the energy union

Organisers: ICLEI Europe

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 5

09:00 - 13:00

14A04 - Future sustainable energy supply through innovative partnerships - biomethane and CNG as an example

Organisers: The innovative partnership for sustainable energy 2020

Venue: Stockholm Region EU Office

09:00 - 10:45

14A12 - European territorial scenarios and visions for 2050

Organisers: Ministry for sustainable development and infrastructure, Luxembourg (LU presidency)

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Van Maerlant, Room 3

09:00 - 13:00

14A13 - European roundtable on energy data sharing

Organisers: ENVE Commission secretariat - CoR

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Van Maerlant, Room 1

09:00 - 13:00

14B06 - The rising impact of healthcare innovation on regional economies

Organisers: Healthy strategies for smart regions

Venue: Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussel

09:00 - 10:45

14B14 - Ready for take-off? Smart participation of SME in regional innovation systems

Organisers: DG EAC - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room OD

09:00 - 13:00

14C04 - Opportunities for demographic change organisers: local and regional cooperation for demographic change

Venue: Castilla y León permanent delegation to the EU - Spanish permanent representation

09:00 - 10:45

14URB08 - Urban development network – deprived areas and its communities: how to improve the living conditions?

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: BEL (Brussels canal zone), workshop room 50

09:00 - 10:45

14URB09 - How to set up new types of co-operation to transform European urban areas and make our cities smarter?

Organisers: DG MOVE - EC

Venue: KBC (Brussels canal zone), Herman Teirlinck room

11:15 - 13:00

14B08 - The investment plan and the European structural and investment funds - Maximising synergies and complementarities

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room OA

11:15 - 13:00

14B09 - Open & agile smart cities – Creating the European smart city market

Organisers: DG CONNECT - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 1D

11:15 - 13:00

14B17 - Connecting digital innovation hubs in manufacturing across European regions

Organisers: DG CONNECT - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room O

11:15 - 13:00

14C09 - Public banks supporting local and regional finance and development

Organisers: European association of public banks (EAPB)

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 62

11:15 - 13:00

14C16 - Filling the data gap in border regions: the importance of developing meaningful cross-border data for policy making and programme management.

Organisers: DG REGIO, D2 - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 2D

14:30 - 17:00

14A08 - Cities and Regions addressing the energy challenge

Organisers: Transition Cities and Regions

Venue: Greater Birmingham & West Midlands - Brussels Office

14:30 - 17:00

14A10 - Financing energy efficiency in buildings, heating and cooling

Organisers: European Commission - EASME

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room OA

14:30 - 17:00

14A11 - Digital skills and entrepreneurship in the digital revolution era: from EU funding opportunities to job creation

Organisers: DG CONNECT - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room OD

14:30 - 17:00

14B10 - The silver economy: what approach should the regions adopt?

Organisers: Council of European cities and municipalities (CEMR)

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Van Maerlant, Room 1

14:30 - 17:00

14C10 - Integrating urban and rural areas: ideas and experiences from European regions

Organisers: Europe of Traditions

Venue: Fundaci3n Galicia Europ

14:30 - 17:00

14C12 - Cities of the future: smart, connected and open

Organisers: European People's Party - CoR

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 51

14:30 - 17:00

14C15 - Cross-border urban integration: European groupings of territorial cooperation in twin cities and cross-border agglomerations

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 2C

14:30 - 17:00

14C17 - Addressing health inequalities to promote growth and social cohesion in deprived areas

Organisers: DG SANTE - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 2A

14:30 - 17:00

14URB04 - New urban economies

Organisers: INTERREG, URBACT, ESPON, INTERACT

Venue: KBC (Brussels canal zone), Room Herman Teirlinck

14:30 - 17:00

14URB18 - Child Poverty: how to develop integrated strategies and actions?

Organisers: Federal Public Planning Service for Social Integration

Venue: BEL (Brussels canal zone), workshop room 40

Thursday

09:00 - 10:45

15B01 - Strengthen efficient innovation through lasting collaboration between SMEs and larger enterprises

Organisers: Region Drehtsteden

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 51

09:00 - 10:45

15B03 - Improving business and innovation support in the regions – through cooperation with the enterprise Europe network

Organisers: DG GROW - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 1A

09:00 - 13:00

15B06 - The Adriatic-Ionian macro-region for jobs and growth

Organisers: Adriatic-Ionian macroregion

Venue: Emilia-Romagna region representation

09:00 - 10:45

15C02 - Partnership – the key to successful urban development

Organisers: European economic and social committee

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 53

09:00 - 10:45

15C06 - Innovative strategies for historical challenges: rural and urban integration policies, from theory to practice

Organisers: DG AGRI, H.5., DG REGIO - EC

Venue: European Commission, Charlemagne, Mansholt room

11:15 - 13:00

15B09 - INTERREG EUROPE: what are the benefits of the investment for growth and jobs programmes?

Organisers: INTERREG EUROPE

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room 62

11:15 - 13:00

15UNIV04 - Energy issues in regional and urban development

Organisers: European regional science association (ERSA), association of European schools of planning

Venue: European Commission, Charlemagne, Alcide de Gasperi room

11:15 - 13:00

15B10 - Creating a market place for smart cities and communities in Europe: achievements and lessons learnt through the EIP smart cities

Organisers: DG MOVE - EC

Venue: European Commission, Centre Borschette, Room 1A + Room 1B (listening room)

11:15 - 13:00

15UNIV03 - The added value of an integrated versus sectoral approach to territorial development

Organisers: DG REGIO - EC, regional studies association

Venue: European Commission, Charlemagne, Mansholt room



Welsh Government Finance Minister, Jane Hutt, and Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin T.D.

Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme 2014-2020

A new era

The inception of Interreg 25 years ago paved the way for a fruitful partnership between Wales and Ireland – two nations which have just launched a new €100m co-operation programme set to continue delivering economic benefits for communities in both regions.

Backed with €79m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 marks a new era in supporting collaborative projects to provide joint solutions to common economic, environmental and social challenges.

It will focus on opportunities relating to innovation, climate change and the development of natural and cultural resources, and at the heart of the programme, the economic benefits that can be derived from the Irish Sea. By maximising these opportunities, the programme will also help improve collaboration between academic institutions and business, and drive forward innovation in key growth sectors.

Celebrating partnership

The Ireland Wales Programme 2014–2020 was launched in Swansea, South Wales earlier this year and was attended by Welsh Government Finance Minister, Jane Hutt, and Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin T.D.

Wales' Finance Minister, Jane Hutt said that fostering strong partnerships across borders are vital to the programme's success.

"The EU cooperation programme has made a real impact on our economies,

people and communities and is an excellent example of how regions like ours benefit from EU membership.

"Wales is perfectly located for doing business with Ireland and provides a link to the UK market and Europe beyond. There are strong synergies between Irish aspirations and those of the Welsh Government on driving economic growth for our two nations, and we will continue to work together to explore opportunities in an increasingly global economic and social environment."

Building on success

The new programme will build on the achievements of the Ireland Wales Cross-border Programme 2007-2013 which focussed on innovation, skills, climate change and sustainable regeneration. Some 41 collaborative projects were backed by a total of €50.6m of ERDF, resulting in:

- 300 new jobs created;
- 100 new SMEs created;
- over 700 new products/ processes developed; and
- over 1,300 individuals gained qualifications.

Co-operation in Action Hydro BPT

One of the success stories of the co-operation between Ireland and Wales during 2007-2013, was Hydro BPT. It conducted research into the generation of low carbon energy from the water supply network that serves homes and other buildings using micro hydropower (MHP) turbines. The study examined how energy can be recovered at break pressure tanks (BPTs) – used to reduce pressure in the water networks – and then converted into

clean electricity. The aim was to reduce carbon emissions generated by the supply, treatment and disposal of drinking water and cut the operating cost of supplying treated water. The energy generated could then be used by the water industry and sold to the National Grid.



Visit to Smart Coasts by Welsh Government Finance Minister, Jane Hutt AM, and Irish Government Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform, Brendan Howlin TD

Delivered in partnership between Bangor University and Trinity College Dublin, over 300 water infrastructure sites across Wales and Ireland were examined to assess the suitability of MHP energy recovery.

Through the study, it was identified that over 10 GWh could be recovered annually – the equivalent of a saving of €2.5 million and over 10,000 tons of CO₂ emissions. Partners are now working on a proposal for the 2014-2020 Ireland Wales Programme, and potentially through Horizon 2020, the EU's largest research and innovation fund.

Dr. Prysor Williams, Bangor University, said: "There are many positive experiences that we will take from the project and the partnership to achieve a common goal.



Hydro BPT



Hydro-BPT partners meeting the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins

Through our findings we also developed water pipe software to optimise the location of MHPs in the water network, and assessments of the environmental and energy impacts of the proposed technology were undertaken. Best practice business and organisational management models were developed to accelerate the implementation of MHPs and new engineering design guidelines were established to cater for changes in water demand in future."

Smart Coasts = Sustainable Communities

Smart Coasts = Sustainable Communities, an award-winning project supported by the 2007-2013 programme, helped improve the quality of coastal areas on both sides of the Irish Sea to boost tourism and support local economies.

Led by Aberystwyth University alongside University College Dublin, the project saw partners collaborating to develop a new system to give real-time water quality information.

The system involved predicting water quality, based on sampling and analysis as well as field and coastal data, which could be linked to electronic information systems to provide bathers with up-to-date details of water conditions.

The aim was to improve understanding of pollution sources and help maintain, and increase, the number of Blue Flag beaches in line with European bathing water standards.

Professor David Kay, Aberystwyth University, said: "The Ireland-Wales co-operation in this project was key to its success with complementary skills in the two teams strengthening the science and policy relevance of the work. The project helped develop the tools needed to predict bathing water quality in real time. This approach to bathing water management is designed to protect the public through predicting water quality and giving real-time information to beach users. Although scientifically challenging,

it could potentially help prevent the loss of 50% of our Blue Flag beach awards.

"The success of the project has been marked by a recent award from the UK Water industry forum for research relevance to practitioners."

The Ireland Wales Co-operation programme 2014-2020 is managed by the Welsh Government and delivered in co-operation with partners in the Southern Regional Assembly based in Waterford, Ireland and the Irish Government's Department for Public Expenditure and Reform.

UNDEB EWROPEAIDD
EUROPEAN UNION

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

SOUTHERN
Regional Assembly

Promoting our Region

Ireland's European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes 2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union

Contact Information:

Joint Secretariat
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Email: ireland_wales@seregassembly.ie

Website: [www.wefo.gov.wales/
programmes/irelandwales](http://www.wefo.gov.wales/programmes/irelandwales)

Twitter: @irelandwales

IRELAND/WALES CROSS BORDER PROGRAMME (2014-2020)



ESPOO INNOVATION GARDEN

INNOVATIONS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EXPERIENCES

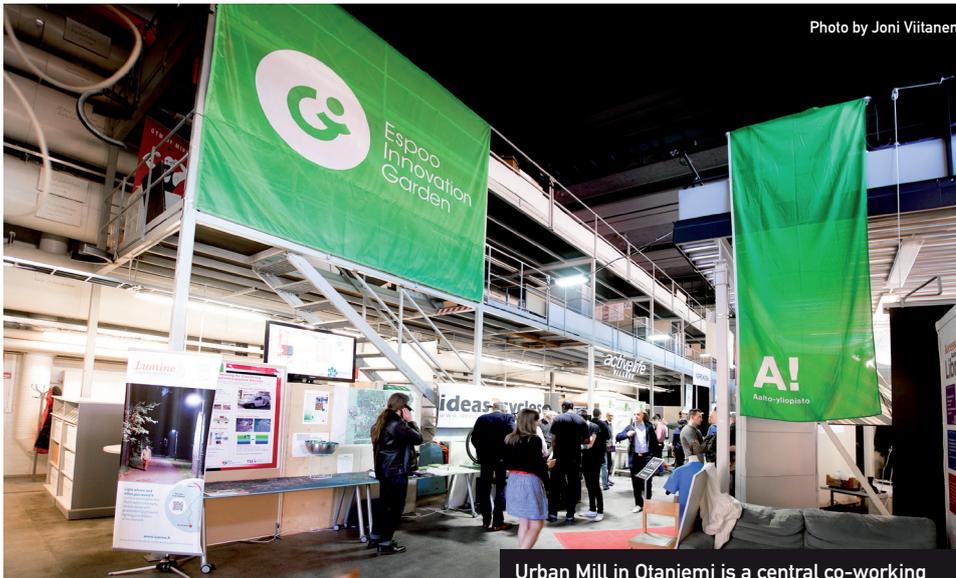


Photo by Joni Viitanen

Urban Mill in Otaniemi is a central co-working and co-creation space of Espoo Innovation Garden. Urban Mill brings together various research and innovation actors of the area

The second largest and the fastest growing city in Finland, Espoo, is a garden of innovation and adventurous experiences - Espoo Innovation Garden. This refers to innovative, common ways of working and a culture of collaboration and co-creation; it's a communal way of thinking and doing things. The Espoo Innovation Garden is one of the European forerunners on innovation - it is home to the largest innovations hub in the Northern Europe. The heart of the Innovation Garden is at the Keilaniemi-Otaniemi-Tapiola area, which is a home for e.g. Aalto University, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, headquarters of companies like Kone, Fortum, Neste Oil and Rovio, the hottest Startup Sauna on the planet, inspiring cultural and sports activities as well as a renowned community of scientists and researchers. The area has strong international character, thanks to more than 100 different nationalities

working, studying or living there. The Innovation Garden is an open network of residents, companies and communities. Anyone can become a gardener - science and research organizations, companies, cultural and sports organizations, city employees and residents. The mindset of collaboration, co-creation and open innovation are though must. It creates cooperation which in turn transforms into new jobs. Espoo's success in the European Commission's first call for the European Capital of Innovation in 2014 inspired the innovation gardeners to continue cultivating the soil to make it even more of a fertile ground for growth and innovation. Encounters - planned or serendipitous - between people are a source of innovation and new experiences.

The West Metro Growth Corridor will open up numerous opportunities

The West Metro extension under construction is Espoo's largest ever investment in infrastructure. However, the metro is not being constructed just to have a metro line but for what it will make possible. The primary role of the metro line will be to serve as a growth and development corridor supporting the Aalto University, Otaniemi science community and the international businesses in the area and to facilitate the creation of knowledge-intensive jobs in the area and to bring vitality and growth to Finland. The construction of the West Metro development corridor will be powered by Espoo Innovation Garden. There will be 13 new metro stations along the West Metro extension, 11 of them in Espoo. Strongly developing station areas will facilitate the testing and implementation of various cleantech and energy efficiency related methods and solutions both during and after construction. The new metro extension will enable emissions-free public transport. Espoo Innovation Garden invites all operators to develop intelligent and emissions-free local and connecting traffic to serve the metro. Espoo Innovation Garden also invites all operators to develop new knowledge-intensive business and to create new jobs.

Let's create the future together!





Strong regional role to tackling EU challenges

Regional policy rarely comes under the spotlight of public debate in Europe. Regional development ministers do not gather in Brussels for fraught meetings and there are few noisy political clashes or divisive votes in the European Parliament. Yet EU cohesion policy - valued at €350bn between 2014-2020 - is used to drive sustainable growth, promote job creation, increase social inclusion, spur innovation and increase the public sector's capacity to deliver services and opportunities for citizens.

Each time the Union is confronted by serious challenges - from the economic crisis to the unprecedented flow of refugees seen in recent months - cohesion policy is called upon and structural funds are identified as one of the most effective tools in shaping the EU's response to shared problems.

Making cohesion policy work effectively needs the knowledge of those working in our communities. It is a powerful investment tool for the vast army of practitioners - local administrators, experts, academics and politicians - who work every day to improve how we use it. This wealth of experience will be shared in Brussels on 12-15 October as many of them attend Open Days organised each year by the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's Directorate

for Regional and Urban Policy.

The principal themes of this year's event are priority issues for the EU and the Committee of the Regions. The themes include job creation, modernising Europe, the energy union, the digital single market and urban and rural development. The headline of the event - 'Europe's regions and cities: partners for investment and growth' - reinforces a message which was shared by Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission's President, during our CoR Plenary in June. The message is that local leaders have a pivotal role in opening up new opportunities for economic and social growth. Economic growth and reducing regional disparity - the goals of cohesion policy - cannot be achieved without local leaders who can inspire change, reinvigorate our economies and promote innovation.

We - as local and regional leaders - are also very aware how hard it is to select priorities and innovate when businesses are suffering, unemployment is increasing and national funds are shrinking. Innovation and prioritisation require openness and partnership. Open Days represents the best example of this in policymaking. The event gathers leaders of EU regions, European commissioners and 800 high-level speakers from national, regional and local administrations and universities,

offering in-depth discussions and cross-cutting debates.

More than 6000 people from 40 countries will be in Brussels attending some 140 events. Now in its 13th year, Open Days is an opportunity to assess the state of health of our growth strategies and their impact on the lives of citizens and businesses. It will review the prog-

Open Days 2015 is a great opportunity to support EU priority issues, writes **Markku Markkula**

"Each time the Union is confronted by serious challenges - from the economic crisis to the unprecedented flow of refugees seen in recent months - cohesion policy is called upon"



ress that has been made to boost the integration of EU and local measures in areas such as energy, the digital economy and society to achieve new urban development. It will also help identify bottlenecks and offer possible solutions.

We will also discuss the most recent developments in the EU's approach to growth. In particular how the €315bn EU Investment Plan can complement structural funds through attracting private investment. To make sure that these changes bring new opportunities for regions and cities, the Committee continues to work to deliver solid opinions on all strategic aspects of the new programme's implementation. At the same time, we are renewing partnerships - such as the Action Plan with the European Investment Bank - to promote participation by regions and cities.

The goal of cohesion policy is to achieve economic, social and territorial cohesion and reduce disparities - a goal that cannot be achieved without innovating our economies and societies. Smart specialisation strate-

gies and societal innovations are key challenges. As local and regional leaders are aware, the major challenge is to prioritise and innovate when businesses are suffering, unemployment is rising and public funds are dwindling. However, we know full well that only a clear choice of priorities and serious investment in bottom-up innovation can help us create new opportunities for economic and social growth.

Smart specialisation and societal innovation can only work if choices are based on real knowledge of local potential and if the right actors are involved. Effective policies require partnerships, which is why we at the Committee insist on respecting the "Partnership Principle" introduced by the EU when it agreed on the use of structural funds rules for 2014-20. Open Days must reinforce the awareness among politicians and policymakers that the only guarantee that investment plans can address real problems and are accepted is if local leaders - in politics, business and society - have a chance of shared ownership in enriching policies. ★

"Making cohesion policy work effectively needs the knowledge of those working in our communities"

Markku Markkula is President of the Committee of the Regions



FINNISH OFFSHORE INDUSTRY 2015

Finland has always had to cope with demanding maritime conditions – Finland’s foreign trade has and still is relying on sea routes, which have to be kept open throughout the year, regardless of the prevailing weather conditions. Location near the Arctic has led us to develop solutions which enable operating even in the most challenging of conditions, be it in thick ice or winter’s storms. Also, the Baltic Sea, with its highly sensitive and interdependent ecosystem has challenged us to create sophisticated cleantech solutions for marine operations in order to ensure the durable preservation of the Baltic Sea and its unique nature. We know that ecological sustainability in maritime technology and services does not exclude economical development.

Today, the Finnish offshore industry comprises of approximately 150 active companies, for which the offshore business is of increasing importance as part of the Finnish marine Industries. In Finland

the industry employs approximately 5 000 persons. The Finnish offshore industry experienced substantial growth in exports in the years between 2010 and 2014, but declined slightly in 2015 due to the global oil and gas investment slowdown. The total exports of the industry were around 1.7 billion euros in 2014 and are expected to decline to 1.6 billion euros in 2015. Technology, including machinery and equipment, is the most important offshore industry segment in Finland constituting approximately 1.3 billion euros, or around 70 % of the industry’s total revenues.

Finnish companies are known for their deep technological expertise and uncompromising quality. Companies emphasize that quality is viewed holistically, covering not only traditional aspect of product quality, e.g. technical

properties and durability, but also reliability of delivery, and communication and cooperation through the entire supply chain. Other



Photo source: Arctech Helsinki Shipyard

important competitive strengths of the Finnish offshore industry include Arctic knowhow, geographical location near Norway and Russia, expertise in engineering work and project management, as well as, a supporting political environment. Also the strong marine cluster with competitive network of suppliers is a key asset for the Finnish offshore industry.

Finnish companies emphasize that they invest robustly in technological innovativeness and quality. Specifically, companies regard advanced service concepts, such as preventive maintenance, HSEQ, subsea and project management – even by assuming EPCM (engineering, procurement and construction

management) projects – as crucial success factors in the future.

By investing in new capabilities and strengthening existing know-how, the Finnish offshore industry will continue as a forerunner in multitude of business areas, which are outlined in the Finnish Offshore Industry 2015 Report. With the advanced Finnish know-how of the Arctic conditions and its requirements, the international customers are offered a great opportunity to develop sustainable partnerships in cleantech marine technology, communications, new energy and power solutions and other areas of technology, and to improve their position in the global competition.



The Finnish Offshore Industry 2015 Report has been funded by the Ministry of Economy and Employment and the City of Pori. The report was made in co-operation with Prizztech Ltd, The Finnish Marine Industries and Valor Partners Ltd. The report can be found from <http://www.finoffshore.fi>



Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)

Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), established in 1987, is an international association of universities teaching and researching in the field of spatial planning.

With over 150 institutional members, AESOP is the only representation of planning schools of Europe. AESOP mobilises its resources, taking a leading role and entering its expertise into ongoing debates and initiatives regarding planning, planning education and qualifications of future professionals.

AESOP offers a platform of exchange of planning knowledge for scholars, practitioners, and urban managers.

AESOP promotes its agenda with professional bodies, politicians and all other key stakeholders in spatial and urban development and management across Europe.

At present, AESOP members cover a significant majority of European scholars in territorial, regional, spatial and urban planning, development and management research. **The level of expertise in planning represented by the AESOP community is outstanding.** The AESOP Annual Congress, with more than 1,000 abstracts regularly submitted, has become the biggest planning assembly in Europe.

AESOP cooperates with European organisations, both with those with an academic background focusing on territories and planning (in the broad sense of the word) and with those with more focus on practice, but above all with



the European institutions, agencies and programmes, giving their growing interest in “things territorial” via its representation in Brussels: **Brussels European Liaison Office (BELO)** responsible, among others, for representing AESOP in the EU and networking with other organisations.

One of the important activities within this framework is the **Lecture Series** established to attract not only the planning community but also a wider audience of politicians, community leaders and organisations, business and the media to promote planning as a discipline that can help to find new tools of governance and function as an effective mediator between many stakeholders.

The other is annual **European Urban Summer School (EUSS)** for young planning professionals.

More about both projects can be found at www.aesop-planning.eu in the section „Events”.

AESOP, via BELO, cooperates with **EC, EP, URBACT** and **ESPON**, being invited as an

academic partner of the ESPON Scientific Conference.

Responding to the invitation of the EC taking into account its field of expertise, AESOP has become involved in the **OPEN DAYS University**, and the **Master Class** for PhD students/early career researchers in the field of regional and urban policy.

AESOP, via BELO, offers different stakeholders involved in territorial planning and governance, to share its expertise. We can advise on specialised courses and modules taught at our member schools which could be interesting for professionals and administration as lifelong learning training. We can also organise tailored lectures, seminars, courses and trainings.

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Turning smart cities into excellent ones

Living and working very closely together has many advantages. Cities are engines for economic growth and employment, the breeding grounds for art, culture and creativity, and the perfect platform for innovation and start-ups. For these reasons, almost three quarters of the EU's population live in cities. But how can we keep them liveable and enjoyable?

The European Commission has come up with initiatives to implement so-called 'smart cities'. At the same time, smart specialisation has been adopted into mainstream regional policies, which also apply to European cities. It's about time we came up with a single policy for regions and cities. In my new

book, 'Cities in the spotlight', I explore the exact link between smart specialisation strategies and smart cities. How can two 'smart concepts' become a single, excellent one?

Smart cities and smart specialisation strategies are two novelties that have been quickly adopted by policymakers, and translated into specific EU policies or initiatives. Smart specialisation is all about making the right choices – a region identifies its priority, enjoys its benefits and shares acquired knowledge with other EU regions. A smart city, logically, does roughly the same. A city that makes the most of its possibilities, is driven by its inhabitants' strengths and develops into an enjoyable and 'user-friendly' place, is doing a smart – even excellent – thing.

But a smart city is more than that. These days, a smart city needs technological improvements to be a frontrunner in Europe. The Commission has recognised that the smart city concept goes beyond the use of ICT for better resource management and less emissions. This means, for example, setting up smarter transport networks and new, efficient ways of lighting and heating buildings. It also means the city administration should be more interactive and responsive, and safer public places. However, there is currently a lack of clarity in terms of concrete initiatives and funding scenarios for smart cities. They need investments and a coherent policy, and Europe must fill this gap.

A smart city does not operate in a vacuum. Cities are surrounded by regions. Urban activities are related to external exchanges, for water supplies and electricity, for example. Therefore, a smart city cannot exist without having a smart relationship with its surroundings.

The EU needs greater coherence in its city policies and streamline these with regional policy, to encourage innovation and the development of 'smart' cities, says **Lambert van Nistelrooij**

"The Commission has recognised that the smart city concept goes beyond the use of ICT for better resource management and fewer emissions"





Lambert van Nistelrooij (EPP, NL) is a member of the European Parliament's regional development committee

Creating a smart city means establishing coherent links with a smart specialisation regional strategy. This can help cities become successful and enables them to be at the forefront of innovation, especially when it comes to technological renewal processes, such as the use of big data in dealing with traffic or within healthcare.

Cities, regions and local authorities must work closely together to create smart areas. In the Netherlands, 'BrabantStad' is an example of smart cooperation between cities in a specific region. It is strategic cooperation with a common agenda. The main goal is to achieve competitive cross-border and transnational alliances. But cooperation does not stop at one border; Europe needs to create a level playing field.

The EU needs greater coherence in its city policies, as until now it has been highly fragmented. We need a breakthrough in governance between all actors. First, there should be an overhaul of the EU urban agenda. Once this has been done, Europe

should play a leading role in monitoring its implementation.

We recently launched, together with the Commission, a first budget for 'city deals' worth €370m. More than just another declaration on the urban agenda, this may lead to an 'Amsterdam pact' – a future-oriented programme, with the participation of European cities as a central element. The pact, which is the brainchild of the upcoming 2016 Dutch EU Council presidency, aims to create a bottom-up approach to empower cities. They will be able to share their ideas, knowledge and fears. Together, we will build a strong European framework for sustainable and intelligent cities: the EU urban agenda for the cities of tomorrow.

I will take a first step towards this, with the presentation of my book on 14 October in Brussels. The EU urban agenda will be one of the Dutch EU Council Presidency's focal points. After this, hopefully, we will be able to turn 'smart' policies into 'excellent' ones. ★



Cooperation between all levels of governance is essential to fostering smart, connected and open cities

Cities currently have a very important role in Europe. Over 70 per cent of the EU population lives in cities, generating approximately 85 per cent of the EU GDP. There are three basic pillars on which cities must focus to succeed in becoming more intelligent, better connected and more open. While cities and local authorities are the main actors in developing policies to make this happen, the European institutions and national authorities perform an essential role, providing, promoting and supporting tools to help achieve these objectives.

It is essential to promote and implement ICT, as well as smart technologies. Using these tools in cities can help improve citizens' quality of life, lowering CO₂ emissions, increasing energy efficiency, reducing bureaucracy and producing more competitive cities. This can be achieved through the development of applications in key sectors such as education, health, assistance to disabled people, mobility, electricity, water management, electric mobility and eGovernment.

This is why it is essential to set up business incubators focusing on the development of these technologies. Cities need to create the appropriate environment that will promote these incubators, and driving forward projects. This should help create the jobs that make Europe more competitive, more sustainable and less energy-dependent.

Energy is another key area. Smart networks must be used and applied via smart grids, providing an opportunity to improve the integration of renewable energies, encourage the use of electric vehicles and supply energy through controlled consumption technologies.

The transport sector is also very important. Transport has a major impact on the urban environment

and on people's quality of life. With the help of European and national institutions, local authorities must promote clean, sustainable, safe, effective and energy efficient transport. They should focus on pushing alternative means of transport to vehicles, as well as interconnections in urban and peri-urban areas.

These measures are all part of the European Commission's objectives. Cohesion policy, together with the EU's research and technological development, transport and energy policies, are key tools to help achieve these goals. Programmes such as Horizon 2020 and the European fund for strategic investments – the so-called 'Juncker plan' – are also valuable.

The European institutions already have several initiatives and programmes intended to promote the development of cities. Community institutions need to create a strong bond between all of these, for example, the smart cities initiative, the

covenant of mayors, the Civitas 2020 initiative, the Urban and Urbact programmes and others.

Similarly, the EU institutions must encourage member states to create networks of excellence in these areas. Multilevel governance should be encouraged, in order to foster cooperation between regional, national and European authorities in the development of policies and the exchange of best practice. This will help spread the most innovative solutions so that the EU can achieve its objectives. The Committee of the Regions can fulfil a vital role in driving forward cooperation between regions and EU policymakers.

European cities have responsibility for putting policies into practice that will make them more intelligent, connected and open. The European institutions can help guide them and drive forward plans and tools to help them achieve their objectives. ★

Cities are the main actors when it comes to turning words into action, but the EU also has a key role to play, writes **Ramón Luis Valcarcel Siso**



Ramón Luis Valcarcel Siso (EPP, ES) is a vice-president of the European Parliament and a speaker at the Open Days conference

ResilieNtWEB

An innovative methodology and toolkit for promoting eco-innovation within SME

ResilieNtWEB is co-funded by the European Interreg IVB-NWE program. The ResilieNtWEB consortium consists of 6 partners with Brussels Environment as the lead partner. ResilieNtWEB uses creativity and collaboration to help SMEs develop innovative solutions that deliver positive results for both the company and the environment. The innovations have been co-designed with companies to put forward resilience and sustainability as a winning business strategy rather than a costly constraint. Participating

SMEs understand the interest in developing products and services that require as few natural resources as possible while integrating their activities within a circular economy. They see the value of doing business on a local scale while forging collaboration with their suppliers and clients to address the core sustainability issues. The ResilieNtWEB approach places the company and its core business in the centre of attention. By looking beyond eco-efficiency measures (the quick wins that can reduce a limited

range of negative environmental impacts) towards those activities directly related to the business model of the company as a whole. The ResilieNtWEB approach then seeks to identify the innovation opportunities that have both a beneficial impact on the core activities of the company and for the environment. These innovations do not stand alone. The opportunities that can reap the highest benefits for all often require the involvement of the suppliers and clients.

A 6 steps methodology

ResilieNtWEB provides companies with a methodology to identify and plan opportunities whilst understanding the impact of their decisions on the wider community. The 6 steps of the methodology helps the company to understand, develop, prioritise, plan and evaluate their sustainable innovations to build a business model that will improve the resilience of the company.

Step 1. After a first contact, an online quick scan is used to draw the company's profile of its sustainable practices and resilience.



Step

2 uses the results from the quick scan to further scope out and focus on relevant issues including new business opportunities. The company can already identify here a number of objectives to be reached at the end of the project.

In **step 3** an innovation action plan is designed in order to achieve the objectives set in the previous step.

During **step 4** the action plan is implemented and realised;

In **step 5** the results of the work are measured; enabling the users to check whether the objectives set with the company at the start of the process have been met.

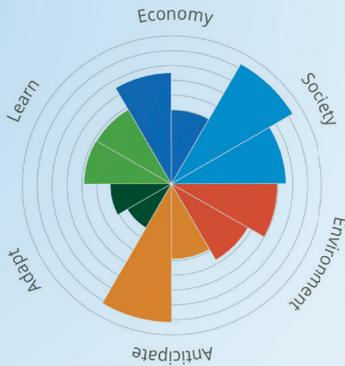
As the ResilieNtWEB methodology and tools are partly co-developed with participating companies **the final step 6** invites feedback for improvement of the coaching approach, methodology and tools.

A seven components toolkit called the « Resilience Design Toolkit”

The Resilience Design Toolkit <http://resilientweb.eu/design-kit> includes:



The Resilience Quick Scan <http://resilientweb.eu/quickscan> to assess the strong and weaker points of your organisation’s resilience.



Through a multiple-choice questionnaire the scan allows to visualize performance on economic, social and environmental aspects. At the same time it offers a first insight in resilience of the company through mapping its ability to anticipate changes, successfully adapt and learn from the process. An adapted Business Model Canvas (BMC), an internationally recognised tool (freely available under CC-BY-SA) to co-create an organisation that creates, distributes, and recovers values.

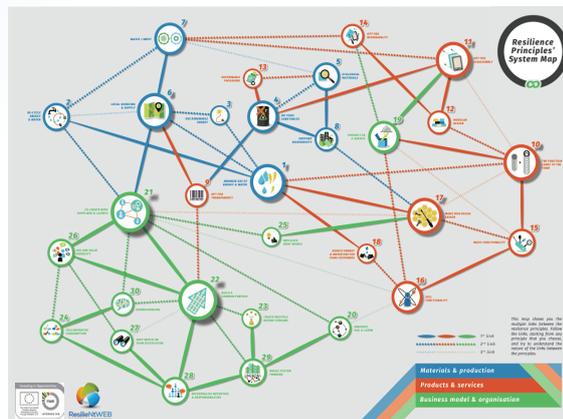
The Resilience Design Card set of 30. All cards have been translated in practical and easy to use Resilience Design Magnets, analog to the principles to be used in co-creation session with the BMC. The kit allows the company to quickly identify opportunities, generate innovative ideas and map these on a single business model canvas. The kit consists of a set of cards that are used to inspire and visualise novel ideas in a very practical and fun way. The resilience design principles are based on biomimicry thinking; inspired by nature’s innovative and sustainable strategies build on 3.8 billion years of R&D. Each design card gives, via a QR code, access to an online repository of inspiring company cases and additional tools for your organisation

A Resilience Principles Ecosystem Map of all the links between principles.



The Resilience Design Hand-book, with methodologies tailored to specific situations (resilient start up, resilient project within an organisation ...).

The Resilience Design Game, designed to discover the resilience design principles. The Resilient Organisation Game is a hand-on and fun way to discover the opportunities for businesses in sustainability. Through collaborative team play. The participants work to create novel ideas and business solutions within a safe and creative setting. The game stimulates innovative thinking to tackle presented challenges around pressing real-life sustainability issues. Those players who co-create sustainable solutions for the benefit of themselves and their business ecosystem can develop a clear advantage.



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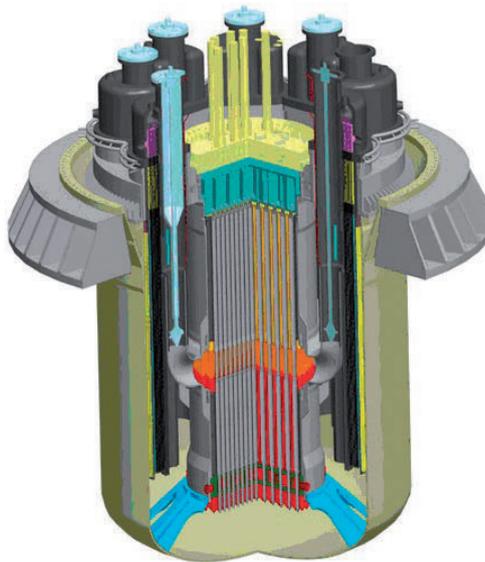


COAGULATING REGIONAL CAPABILITIES FOR NEW REACTORS DEVELOPMENT IN AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

ALFRED (Advanced Lead Fast Reactor Demonstrator) is intended to be built in Romania by a consortium of nuclear research organisations and industry from Member States interested in developing and exploiting this technology. Construction of ALFRED in Romania raises a large number of questions that must be considered before the final decision is made including, where appropriate, benefits from Generation III reactor developments. These questions regard not only the technical-scientific aspects, but also financial and socio-economic matters, public acceptability and national support. In addition, entrusting an international consortium with the management of a real, industrial project as ALFRED poses a number of brand new questions that have to be approached: these include the project management itself, legal aspects, knowledge management and intellectual property, and regional cooperation. Since all these aspects have to be carefully reconsidered in the light of the specific nature of ALFRED, as a demonstrator of an innovative technology, and should not be considered individually but in a close interaction, the ARCADIA project (a 3-year Coordination Action project funded through the Commission's Seventh Framework Programme) was designed as the most effective framework to approach this challenge.

Innovative technology

ALFRED reactor is a new technology that requires considerable research and development, therefore all needed competences from design to operation need to be identified. Based on exhaustive list, the existing expertise and infrastructure available at regional level will be screened,



and methods will be developed to close any existing knowledge gaps.

First of a kind

ALFRED will be the demonstrator of the European Fast Reactor, a first of a kind nuclear facility. It must be licensed and achieve public acceptance. ARCADIA clarified the steps for siting and construction of the facility according to European and national requirements and started the dialogue with the local community from the very early phase. Getting national and European support for implementation of ALFRED in Romania is essential for the success of the project and ARCADIA will raise its profile with representatives from local communities and authorities, Parliament and Government establishing from the very beginning a frame based on the principles of European governance. Therefore a multi-disciplinary working group was created bringing together decision makers and nuclear specialists to push forward the ALFRED promotion in the national strategies.

Improved collaboration

Through its activities, ARCADIA will improve the collaborative culture in the Central and Easter European region nurturing the natural process of team construction and strengthening based on skills, expertise, complementarities and power to produce valuable research results with ambitious objectives.

Regional impact

Addressing the core values and socio-economic impact of building ALFRED in Mioveni - Romania in terms of job creation, diversification of the economic activities, decrease of the brain drainage from the surrounding areas, increase of the local GDP and other economic indicators, ARCADIA will provide powerful arguments on how ALFRED will contribute in reducing the differences between the Region Sud Muntenia (where the demonstrator should be built) and other Romanian regions, and on the possibilities this new technology offers for the regional further development.

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RATEN
ICN PITEȘTI
INSTITUTUL DE CERCETĂRI NUCLEARE



Regions at the heart of Europe's digital economy

The digital economy has great potential to generate sustainable growth in Europe. According to European Commission studies, joint EU measures on the digital agenda could create as many as 3.8 million new jobs across various economic sectors. Digitising public services could reduce public administration costs by 15 to 20 per cent. Sadly, EU measures have failed to complete a genuine digital single market. At the moment Europe's local and regional authorities do not have sufficient resources to generate growth and jobs through creating a digital economy.

Particular attention must be paid to developing IT skills and improving digital infrastructure.

Local and regional authorities have a key role to play in teaching people's IT skills and building digital infrastructure. Stronger markets will be created if Europe has a strong digital identity and moves from analogue to digital services. Additionally, a flexible regulatory framework can cut costs,

make it easier to set up IT companies and provide them with support.

To create new jobs, households and businesses need to have access to high-speed, reliable internet and telephone connections and excellent transport links. Broadband projects should be more closely linked to urban planning: at the moment their development is too often separate. Local broadband partners will continue to need guidelines on how to obtain funding and develop tailored business models for providing high-speed broadband to their community. New-generation technology will require even greater bandwidth, which will also increase costs for local authorities.

Digital society is dependent on the internet – particularly in spheres such as agriculture, transport and energy – bringing risks including growing internet crime and threats to data protection. To protect us from overreliance, authorities need to ensure that society and business can function without the

The digital economy has the potential to create millions of jobs across Europe, writes **Anne Karjalainen**



“EU measures have failed to complete a genuine digital single market.”



internet. It may be that some population groups are excluded from, or wish to be excluded from, the internet society. Local authorities must ensure that these people also benefit from development.

We need sociological expertise and scientific data showing how everyday life and society are changing through digitisation. Decision-makers have to understand the direction development is heading.

Trust is an vital part of the digital economy. Without trust, we cannot develop public e-services or provide adequate protection to consumers. Common ground rules are needed. On the other hand, regulation should not be an obstacle to internet or e-commerce innovation. The EU general data protection regulation must be finalised as soon as possible.

Growth and jobs can be boosted by opening up knowledge, processes and public spaces. Innovation will be promoted as a by-product of publicly funded research and development projects. Access to public sector data boosts economic growth and creates new business opportunities, including for small businesses. Use of “big data” is expected to generate new business opportunities and jobs in the next few years. However, such data is only just starting to be used in the public sector, for instance in healthcare or transport.

A key requirement for the functioning of the internal market and the competitiveness of the digital economy is bringing together contributors to the network to find digital solutions. Local and regional stakeholders could play a bigger role in putting together and orchestrating Europe-wide and interregional value networks.

IT and innovation can be used to address critical socio-economic challenges. A new policy framework should be developed, through which the European Union would encour-

“To create new jobs, households and businesses need to have access to high-speed, reliable internet and telephone connections and excellent transport links”



Anne Karjalainen was rapporteur for the opinion adopted by the Committee of the Regions in December 2014 on “The importance of a more interconnected Europe, focusing on the potential of the ICT sector as a source of growth”

age IT-based business to move towards addressing major societal problems such as climate change, energy issues or population ageing.

In a citizens’ Europe, digitisation makes it possible for people to build networks and maintain contacts so that they can discuss, learn from each other, form shared opinions and bring their own hopes and objectives to bear on decision-making and the strengthening of a shared European identity. ★



Decision makers must remember the EU is ‘united in diversity’ and avoid designing ‘one-size-fits-all’ policies

A successful policy to combat unemployment may require a very different set of tools depending on whether it is applied in Andalusia, Saxony-Anhalt or Peloponnese, even if it is tackling the same problem. Likewise, regulating marine environments and fisheries might have a different cost distribution and benefits for Baltic sea ports than for Mediterranean fishing villages.

Nothing describes the complexity of the European project better than its motto, ‘united in diversity’. It should always be kept in mind when designing policies meant to fit all

member states, regions and municipalities, which are so rich in their uniqueness and specificities. EU policies should not extend disparities between our continent’s regions and cities, or even compensate for the geographical or demographic disadvantages that some of them face. Policies should be better coordinated and optimise their spatial impacts, while avoiding any negative effects that conflicting measures might have.

To this end, over the last few years, the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European People’s Party group in particular, have been strongly advocating the inclusion of territorial

impact assessments (TIAs) as a standard practice in the impact assessments the Commission carries out for new or revised policies. We strongly believe these will help improve EU policymaking, especially since the implementation of nearly 70 per cent of all legislation takes place at local and regional level.

Early assessment of territorial impacts could not only help the institutions improve the quality of their policymaking, it would also provide them with data leading to a more effective distribution of funds. On the one hand, TIAs, as part of a ‘subsidiarity check’, are a key argument for taking action at EU level, should this be of greater benefit than action at national or regional level. However, they can also be useful in shedding light on potential downsides to policy proposals, which is especially important in view of the principle of proportionality.

Impact assessments are vital for regions, as although they are not directly involved in the legislative process, they are the ones who must imple-

EU policies would be much more effective if regions were more involved in designing them, argues **Michael Schneider**



“EU policies should not extend disparities between our continent’s regions and cities, or even compensate for the geographical or demographic disadvantages that some of them face”



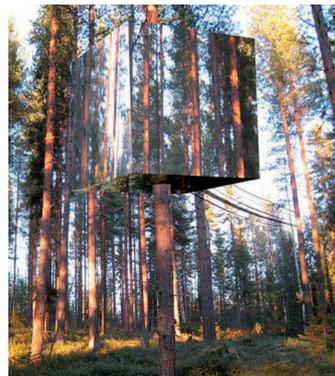
TOURISM, A MOTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE NORTH



The northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland are geographically located in the Arctic, especially everything above the Arctic Circle. The people in this region also live in an Arctic context with stark contrasts between four seasons. In wintertime the landscape is coated with white snow, the temperature is way below zero degrees and it is dark almost day and night. During summer, on the contrary, people bathe in 24-hour sunlight for nearly three months and the flora and fauna is remarkable. These circumstances flourish the opportunities to develop tourism in the Arctic. Tourism has been a motor of economic growth in northern Finland, Norway and Sweden, and the turnover in this sector has increased steadily. The region has a varied landscape with deep fjords, high mountains, beautiful archipelago and an endless wilderness. Also one of the world's indigenous peoples, the Sami people, has its land here. Their language, culture and customs make them unique from the societies around them. These circumstances nourish versatile activities such as hiking adventures, winter skiing, freshwater fishing, rafting, reindeer and dog rides, wildlife expedition and a sensation of the aurora borealis. The region also offers unique accommodation in

the forest, under the sky or in ice and snow buildings, serving cuisine prepared with ingredients fresh from the surroundings. One of the overall goals for Interreg IV A Nord has been to develop the tourism sector by encouraging cross-border cooperation combining or developing new attractions. During the period 2007-2013 the program has supported approximately 8 tourism projects and some other projects facilitating the availability to destinations in the region. The project Region Arctica has, for example, cooperated with the development of a common image, in service-training, product development and promotion of the Arctic region. Almost 40 SMEs participated during the two-year project and 5 new arctic experience based-products were developed. In another project, Nordkalottnätverk för hållbar turismutveckling, 50 SMEs has cooperated to develop sustainable tourism in the North. They have created a collaboration platform within ecological and sustainable experiences such as handcraft, food, cultural events and physical activities. A new project, starting during the

period of 2014-2020, is Visit Arctic Europe collaboration between Finnish Lapland Tourism Board, Northern Norway Tourism and Swedish Lapland Visitors Board. They aim to strengthen the SMEs in the tourism sector by cross-border cooperation and hence increase tourism in the Arctic region. Traveling has increased immensely all over the world and the tourism sector has significant employment effects, especially on youth and women. Considering regional development, it's thus important to work together with groups of firms, research and the society in order to solve common challenges and to recognize upcoming opportunities. Each country, in our region, lacks the critical mass to improve their tourism sector nationally, but together we have a unique strength being a part of the Arctic and, thus, differ from other regions. We therefore need to continue facilitating cross-border cooperation and to support a social, ecological and sustainable development.



OPENSOURCELINK



OpenScienceLink is an EU-funded project which introduces and pilots a holistic approach to the publication, sharing, linking, review and evaluation of research results, based on the open access to scientific information.

OpenScienceLink pilots a range of novel services that alleviate the lack of structured data journals and associated data models, the weaknesses of the review process, the poor linking of scientific information, as well as the limitations of current research evaluation metrics and indicators.

Five pilot services are integrated and piloted in the **OpenScienceLink platform** (<http://opensciencelink.org/>):

- (a) **Data journals development** based on semantically-enabled research dynamics detection,
- (b) A novel open, **semantically-assisted peer review process**,
- (c) Services for **detection and analysis of research trends**,
- (d) **Services for dynamic researchers' collaboration** based on non-declared, semantically-inferred relationships,
- (e) A set of **scientific field-aware, productivity- and impact-oriented enhanced**

research evaluation services.

The **OpenScienceLink** services are piloted with the active participation of over 1200 researchers from the consortium organizations. **OpenScienceLink** also studies the business potential of open access paradigms, through investigating and pursuing multiple business models including author fees, hard copy sales, advertisements, sponsorship, as well as subscription based models.

Besides the **OpenScienceLink platform** another major result of the project is the **Biomedical Data Journal (BMDJ)** (<http://www.biomed-data.eu/>), a novel open access data journal with the aim to potentiate the use of data papers as a source of new scientific creation, maximize reach and visibility of data publications, and introduce formal citation of data papers. With an editorial board of 20 renowned scientists in clinical research, cell biology, functional anatomy, pharmacology, cancer research, neurosurgery and bioinformatics, the **BMDJ** leads the way to high-impact, transparent, open access publication of research models, results and datasets.

Further information

PROJECT'S WEB PAGE <http://opensciencelink.eu/>

TWITTER <http://twitter.com/opensciencelink>

OPENSOURCELINK PLATFORM <http://opensciencelink.org/>

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KU LEUVEN



Connecting Europe facility is an instrument of solidarity

One of the EU's objectives is to create a trans-European transport network (TEN-T), enabling citizens and businesses to make the most of a borderless Union.

To achieve this, the EU provides financial assistance to projects across the TEN-T network, through the connecting Europe facility (CEF). Over €24bn is available for such projects throughout the 2014-2020 period, compared to around €8bn for 2007-2013.

On 29 June, I had the honour of announcing the largest investment plan ever implemented by the EU for transport. This allocated €13.1bn to 276 projects under the connecting Europe facility.

It will then unlock additional public and private co-financing, amounting to a total of over €28bn. This came after evaluating over 700 funding applications, requesting €36bn.

As European transport commissioner, I am delighted to see that my portfolio is delivering on one of the Commission's top priorities: boosting investment to generate favourable conditions for creating jobs and growth. A recent Commission study suggested that completing the TEN-T could deliver up to 10 million jobs by 2030.

Let me now turn to the projects. When evaluating the 700 applications we received, we subjected them to a series of four broad criteria: relevance, maturity, impact and quality. This let us select those with the highest European added value. We also assessed the need to overcome financial obstacles. At the end of the process, we retained some 'landmark' projects, such as Rail Baltica (€442m), the Fehmarnbelt rail link between Denmark and Germany (€589m), the Brenner base tunnel (€1b) and the Seine-Nord waterway (€979m).

Beyond these projects, the connecting Europe facility's rationale is also to fund smaller actions that directly benefit people's daily lives. Studies on enhancing the integration of urban transport into the TEN-T in Paris, completing the Greek rail network and constructing an expressway linking Poland to Lithuania will all receive connecting Europe facility funding. Regardless of their size, all of these projects are essential to completing the TEN-T network and in reaping its full economic benefits.

The connecting Europe facility is also an instrument of soli-

darity. As suggested by the Commission's transport scoreboard, some member states – mainly in central and eastern Europe – still lag behind in terms of infrastructure quality. The connecting Europe facility aims to close this gap. To do so, more than €11bn out of the €24bn available for 2014-2020 have been earmarked for countries eligible to the cohesion fund.

These countries will also benefit from a higher EU co-financing rate – up to 85 per cent – meaning that national governments only need to finance a residual share of the projects to unlock EU funding. The list I presented on 29 June has now been approved by member states and officially adopted. Individual grant agreements will now be signed with each project promoter.

Effective implementation is crucial – we cannot afford to waste any more time. In parallel, we will soon launch a new connecting Europe facility call for proposals, with another €7.8bn available. This money will not simply be about rail tracks or new waterways. It will also be about growth, job creation, solidarity and sustainability. ★

This article was originally published in the September 21 issue of the Parliament Magazine

Transport projects funded by the EU will help better connect Europe's regions and boost job creation and growth, writes **Violeta Bulc**

"The CEF's rationale is also to fund smaller actions that directly benefit people's daily lives"

Violeta Bulc is European transport Commissioner



Connecting transport and health

PASTA the healthy take on transport planning



Email
info@pastaproject.eu
Twitter
<https://twitter.com/EUPASTA>



Europeans move too much without moving enough these days. Many rely on cars even for the shortest of trips, while keeping their sedentary lifestyle. Of the 10 million deaths per annum in Europe, nearly 1 million can be attributed to lack of physical activity, as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO)¹. The EU-funded project PASTA - *Physical Activity Through Sustainable Transport Approaches* - aims to connect transport and health by studying and promoting active mobility (i.e. walking, cycling and use of public transport) in European cities, as an innovative way of integrating physical activity into our everyday lives.

Bringing together a multi-disciplinary consortium of leading experts in policy, research and practice from across Europe, the project will collect data on travel patterns linked to health and provide good practice examples. An updated version of the WHO's Health Economic Assessment Tool for walking and cycling (HEAT) will be designed to help urban planners, transport and health practitioners make the case for new investment in active mobility strategies and planning. PASTA is organising a free workshop *Building the Liveable and Healthy City* on 18 November 2015 in Brussels which will offer participants free training on the HEAT tool, the opportu-

nity to exchange with a unique group of experts and to learn about the project. Local, regional and national authorities, researchers, urban, public health and transport planning practitioners, policy-makers, advocacy groups and civil society organisations are welcome to contribute actively to transferability and spread of policy recommendations from all over Europe.

To register, please visit:
www.pastaproject.eu



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 602624-2

¹ Polis position paper on health and transport



Contact
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Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme of the European Union

Cleaning up our act on the streets

As the Clean Vehicles Directive (CVD) undergoes a period of review, Clean Fleets project coordinator Simon Clement shares his views on the CVD and the project's concluding policy recommendations:

For the last three years, alongside partners from across Europe I have been working with local authorities to implement the CVD and procure cleaner, more energy efficient public fleets.

I have been impressed time and again by the efforts undertaken across Europe – while at the same time seeing the challenges for cities as they strive to achieve cleaner air for their citizens in the face of shrinking budgets and a confusing array of new technologies and fuels.

I feel the CVD is a useful contribution to promoting the uptake of alternative fuel vehicles in Europe's cities, by obliging public authorities and public transport operators to consider energy efficiency, CO2 emissions and local pollutants such as particulates and NOx. However, it isn't perfect. The lack of any agreed minimum standard for environmental performance and the confusing but fixed methodology offered by the Directive for monetising environmental impacts in procurement, are amongst the most significant problems.

For me, the need for exchange between cities, procurers and city decision makers, which Clean Fleets sought to support, has never been stronger.

You can read our recommendations in full by visiting: www.clean-fleets.eu



Technology is central to improving public services

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have long been hailed as a miracle cure for many problems facing by member states. If implemented correctly they could promote growth, increase efficiency and improve the quality and accessibility of government services. The development and implementation of ICT for eGovernment is of particular interest.

The idea is to use ICT to allow eGovernment to deliver more efficient government and enhance knowledge sharing, capacity building and sustainable development. However, in a number of member states the focus remains on making these services available, rather than providing transparency or good governance. This leaves room for development in areas such as user centricity, speed and service delivery.

How much eGovernment is used varies greatly between member states. In my own city of Delft, we pride ourselves on an approach that focuses on bringing together resources, people and systems to take on the long-term challenges to become a forward-thinking, resilient city.

This brings me to the concept of a 'smart city'. In our view,

smart cities should focus on long term challenges rather than short-term solutions. In Delft's smart city, we analysed the challenges of trying to become an energy-neutral, climate-proof city with a knowledge economy that creates jobs on all levels. We also studied a number of governance issues.

Is the action to be taken a question for government or for society? Are there already policy instruments in place to address these questions? Who is the end-receiver of the smart city solutions: is it our universities, our companies, industries or citizens?

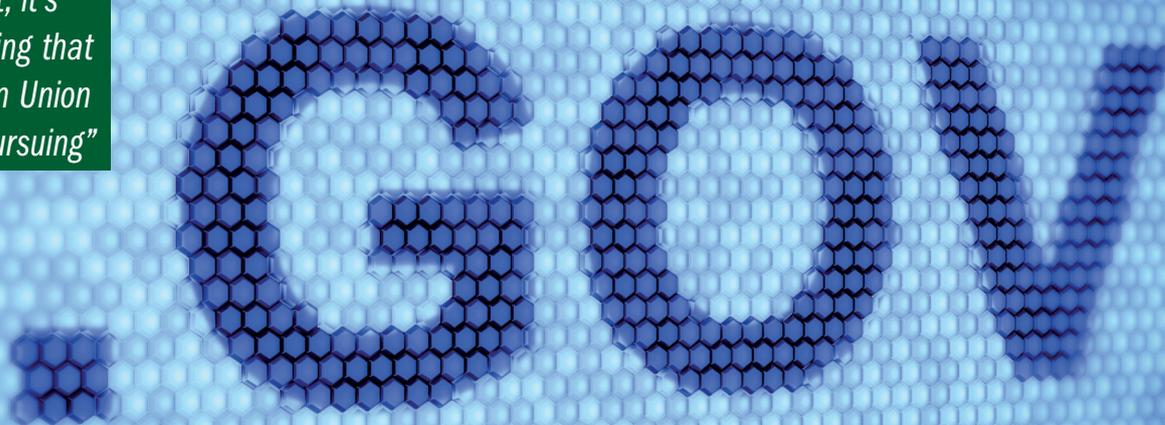
The Delft University of Technology is currently conducting thorough research into government (de)centralisation, eGovernance and rethinking the role and size of public administration. Research has unequivocally demonstrated the relevance of eGovernment and how it can influence and shape government strategies. Clearly, the overall goal of this is to deliver better governance to all target groups.

Supporting eGovernment is not only of national and local interest, it is also something that the European Union is actively pursuing. The digital single market is one of the

To keep with the times, the EU must promote eGovernment, writes **Bas Verkerk**



"Supporting eGovernment is not only of national and local interest, it's also something that the European Union is actively pursuing"





“In the 21st century, the only way to keep up with the times is to provide public services anywhere, anytime and on any device”

Bas Verkerk is Mayor of Delft and a speaker at the Open Days conference

most promising areas of EU policy – experts estimate efficiency gains amounting to €260bn per year. It also opens up the possibilities of improving the economy with the help of eCommerce, enabling improved administrative and financial compliance for businesses and therefore empowering citizens through eGovernment.

The European Commission is actively supporting the introduction of eGovernment at both national and European levels. The aim is to develop effective cross-border eGovern-

ment services that will encourage interaction between government bodies, citizens and businesses regardless of their country of origin.

can deliver good governance. The workshop will explore successful case studies where ICT has enhanced good governance, empowered citizens and proved to be an effective platform to generate benefits in the form of new employment, better health and education. In the 21st century, the only way to remain up to speed is to provide public services anytime, anywhere and on any device. In short, by engendering enhanced participation and transparency, eGovernment becomes a tool for good governance. ★

ment services that will encourage interaction between government bodies, citizens and businesses regardless of their country of origin. This includes developing conditions that promote the use of systems across member states. Of course, it is not only a question of introducing technology to the work of government bodies – this is already the case in a majority of member states!

Rather, it boils down to rethinking established processes and changing organisational behavior. Only then is it possible to enable citizens, businesses and organisations to benefit from improved public services. One of the Commission’s main objectives is to increase the use of eGovernment services. The commission is targeting usage rates for eGovernment services at 50 per cent of citizens and 80 per cent of businesses. ICT systems are now at the heart of government processes, but work is still needed to ensure they continue improving the delivery of government services.

Like many organisations and government bodies across Europe, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group in the Committee of the Regions is doing its best to leverage the possibilities offered by eGovernment to citizens, businesses and even national and local governments.

As part of the European Week of Cities and Regions, the EU Open Days, my group is holding a workshop on eGovernment and how ICT solutions

Investing in children's services

Improving outcomes



Alfonso Lara Montero, Policy Director at the European Social Network, shares some lessons from their European project on children's services across 14 European countries.

Disadvantaged children and families may come into contact with social services, which provide income support, early childcare and specialist child protection, mental health, disability and housing support. Social services assess the needs of children in light of their best interest and bring together different services as required.

The European Social Network (ESN) started working on this theme in 2008, when we launched a working group, which gave its input on working with the most vulnerable families and children. In our 2010 report 'Breaking

the cycle of deprivation', we stressed the importance of continuous needs assessment, family and community-based care and joint work with education, health and justice. ESN's 2011 seminar 'Investing in children: early years and child protection' looked at the role of general and specialist social services in lifting young children out of poverty and social exclusion.

At EU level, child poverty emerged as a major issue in social policy coordination and led to the 2013 European Commission's Recommendation 'Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage'. ESN has been a

key stakeholder contributing to its implementation at local level with the project 'Investing in children's services, improving outcomes', which has been assessing how national policy frameworks are implemented locally and whether they are aligned with European recommendations.

We have held various peer reviews that have provided an interdisciplinary exchange platform for professionals working in children's services and have paid particular attention to the ways the economic crisis has affected children's services. A number of challenges have been identified in relation to the inclusivity, affordability and quality of services. New ways of delivering services have been sought, including the freezing of some universal services, the delivery of more targeted solutions to reach children most in need, and the use of EU funds to develop early childcare and social inclusion services for young people leaving state care.

Given our ageing populations and reduced resources in many European countries, focus should be on quality and efficiency of service provision, for which effective collaboration between professionals, families and the wider community is key. Moving forward, I sincerely hope that this project serves as a point of departure for further investment in the quality and reach of children's services across Europe.

The European Social Network (ESN) is the network for local public social services in Europe. ESN brings together people who plan, finance, research, manage, regulate and deliver local public social services, including health, social welfare, employment, education and housing.



Land of the Oaks

VUKOVAR-SRIJEM COUNTY (CROATIA)



SLAVONSKI HRAST
drvni klaster

SLAVONIAN OAK wood cluster was founded in 2010 by Vukovar-Srijem County. 31 cluster member from wood industry, education institutions, government units and business supporting institutions are dedicated to be builders of sustainable bio-economy.

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Vukovar-Srijem County

<http://www.vusz.hr/>

Vukovar-Srijem County forest area makes 28,7% of its territory. Tradition in wood processing, existing resources of quality raw wood material, significant percentage of forest territory and largest oak forest in Europe make Vukovar-Srijem County green county with sustainable bio-economy, renewable energy sources, natural environment and humans health protection - desirable place to live and work in.

Visit Vukovar-Srijem County

<http://www.visitvukovar-srijem.com/>



Vinkovci

<http://www.vinkovci.hr/>

European oldest town continually inhabited more than 8300 years with famous hunting lodge and forest "Kunjevci"

Otok

<http://www.otok.hr/>

The door of Spačva forest basin with special forest "Lože" and significant landscape of watercourse "Virovi"

Forestry Museum

Unique museum of lowland regular forests displaying a long tradition of organized forestry in Vukovar-Srijem County



Spačva forest basin

Spačva basin in Vukovar-Srijem County (Croatia) is the largest integrated complex of low land oak forest in Europe with 96% of world-famous Slavonian Oak (*cro. slavonski hrast*)





Structural funds of great help to Finland

Finland has many sparsely populated areas and needs to continue receiving regional development funds to help them, says Hannu Takkula

Finland has been a member of the EU for 20 years. Looking back, there have been many positive developments. However, others have not been as welcome. Finland's largest daily newspaper, the Helsingin Sanomat, recently reported that over the next 15 years, hundreds of thousands of people will be moving out of the country's rural areas. 20 of Finland's largest cities were asked for their population forecasts to 2030, and collectively they predicted considerable growth of over 400,000 people. While a small portion of this amount can be attributed to immigration and natural birth, the main reason for this increase will be the continuous flow of people moving out of rural communities and into urban areas. And though 400,000 people may seem

rather insignificant, it is actually very significant in a country with a total population of 5.5 million, and whose land area is the fifth largest in the EU.

Finland's accession treaty clearly recognised the country's specific challenges; sparse population, long distances and a harsh climate. The country has certainly benefited, and still benefits, from structural fund support, which has helped advance its competitiveness. Some of the more successful projects supported by EU structural funds can be found in the sparsely populated eastern and northern parts of Finland.

These include: research on printed intelligence – 'PrintoCent'; the development of international particle research – 'Laguna Research Centre' in the Pyhäsalmi municipality; the pilot concentrator project supporting the mining industry in the University of Oulu; the mining education unit – 'Oulu mining school'; and the international geopark network activities in Rokua National Park.

One of the most significant structural fund projects has been the establishment of the northern start-up fund in Oulu in the north Ostrobothnia region. The European regional development fund has provided substantial investment, supporting dozens of start-up companies with potential for growth, and has played a major role in boosting the business sector in this region.

Looking ahead, it is essential that Finland's unique and challenging features continue to be taken into account for future structural funding. The

network of northern sparsely populated areas, with which I work closely, is actively involved in this field.

Finland is remarkably rich in terms of its



"Finland's accession treaty clearly recognised the country's specific challenges; sparse population, long distances and a harsh climate"



“The Commission and the European external action service are currently preparing a communication on the Arctic, which Finland is eagerly awaiting”

natural resources and its natural environment. Maximising these resources, in an appropriate and sustainable manner with little to no impact on the environment, needs active support from decision-makers, including the EU, particularly in the field of R&D, and also in the improvement of existing industrial and logistical infrastructure.

For example, the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) could look at improving connections for northern sparsely populated areas with the rest of the EU. Additionally, the Bothnian corridor, a strategically important link within the transnational transport system of goods in northern Europe (Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia) could be included in the larger European core corridor network. A mid-term review of TEN-T will commence next year, and I will be paying close attention to proposals for better connectivity in the north.

Finally, whenever regional development is being discussed – whether it concerns Finland or any other northern countries,

the Arctic should not be forgotten. The Commission and the European external action service are currently preparing a communication on the Arctic, which Finland is eagerly awaiting.

The current state of the country’s economy is not at its best. Combating high youth unemployment and updating industrial infrastructure mean that economic recovery will take some time. It is vitally important for Finland, and, in particular, the sparsely populated areas, that regional policy funding continues to be available, that the paperwork and red tape to request funding is simplified, and, most importantly, that the available funding is utilised in the most effective manner.

My priority during this legislature, as the Finnish member of the European Parliament’s regional development committee, will be to ensure that the share of structural funds apportioned to Finland, which has been on the decline over the years, is increased during the mid-term review process. ★

Hannu Takkula (ALDE, FI) is a substitute member of Parliament’s regional development committee



Azerbaijan, to its detriment, is turning away from the founding principles of the Eastern partnership

With their invaluable experience of incorporating EU instruments into national legislation, MEPs can be of great help to the EU's eastern partnership, says Euronest co-president Heidi Hautala

Recent developments across the EU's Eastern neighbourhood have served to highlight the many different forces at play across the region that in some cases are drawing certain neighbourhood countries closer to Europe while pushing others further away. The May 2015 Eastern partnership summit in Riga confirmed that the partnership still has significance and a role to play despite ongoing differences. It is useful to perhaps refresh our memories of the partnership's founding principles and commitments. On 7 May 2009 in Prague, the founding members declared that the Eastern partnership "will be based on commitments to the principles of international law and to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to market economy, sustainable development and good governance".

Today I can't emphasise enough the importance of those words. Economic prosperity and social progress are linked to the consolidation of the fundamental values in functioning institutions. The perspective of economic cooperation between the EU and its Eastern partners parallels this. The reality of the Eastern partnership is that the three countries with EU association agreements; Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, now form a 'coalition of the willing' which deservedly expect to receive the full attention of the EU in accordance with the 'more for more' principle. It is no easy task to transpose, implement and monitor around 300-400 EU legal instruments. Success will largely depend on whether reforms can lead to fundamental changes.

In this spirit I welcomed the agreement between the Georgian, Ukrainian and Moldovan parliaments to support each other in the implementation work. The Euronest parliamentary assembly will enhance this cooperation by hosting an open conference on 10 December in the European Parliament jointly with Open Society Foundations. MEPs

have valuable experience of incorporating EU instruments into national legislation and therefore can be of great help. To date, too little practical parliamentary experience has been utilised in the sphere of the Eastern partnership. The fact that these three countries are now in their own category, doesn't mean that the three other Eastern partner countries should just be left to drift away. The European Commission's practical support to the justice sector reforms across all the Eastern partners is vital for the successful development of other sectors.

Armenia rejected the association path in 2013, but it is now negotiating a new agreement. Releasing six political prisoners, Belarus has signalled that it is ready for closer cooperation with the EU. This has not gone unnoticed by the European parliament. However, the events over the last year shows it is too early to draw any conclusions. The developments in Azerbaijan have not gone unnoticed by MEPs either. The recent urgent resolution focused on the ever deteriorating human rights situation, in particular on the increasing number of political prisoners and the crackdown on civil society.

Now that Baku, with its angry reaction to the parliament's resolution, seems ready to leave Euronest, it is also turning away from the very principles of international law and fundamental values to which it committed itself as a founding member of the Eastern partnership. This will only be to the detriment of the Azeri people. In its resolution, the Parliament said that the welfare of people, including the respect of rights and freedoms, is the prerequisite of sustainable economic growth. People's welfare, rights and freedoms should be at the core of any new bilateral partnership agreement.

Together with Euronest's co-president Victor Dolidze, we regret Baku's exit plan and have expressed our willingness to discuss the situation openly with our colleagues in Milli Majlis, the Azerbaijani parliament. ★



"The reality of the Eastern partnership is that the three countries with EU association agreements; Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, now form a 'coalition of the willing'"

Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA, FI) is chair of Parliament's delegation and co-president of the Euronest parliamentary assembly



SUSTAINABLE RENAISSANCE IN PORVOO KILPILAHTI

By: Cássia Ayres, Posintra Ltd Pioneer into Practice consultant from Climate Kic, a EU founded Programme.

How to create 100,000 new jobs and increase the economy up to € 100bn by 2025 using the best assets of the environment in a sustainable manner? Bioeconomy seems to be the answer for this complex challenge set by the Finnish government. The city of Porvoo, 55 km East of Helsinki, is supporting this national ambition through Pobi - Porvoo Kilpilahti evolving into a biobusiness park – a programme which aims to develop a cutting-edge industrial park for bio- and recycling businesses. In practice, Pobi aims to attract new companies with practices orientated to sustainable development at the same time that it will

improve technical capabilities in this field among established organizations within the petrochemical sector in Kilpilahti area.

In order to achieve this goal, Pobi will create a strategy and an action plan towards the implementation of bioeconomy practices in Kilpilahti by the end of 2017. In practice, Pobi has a multi-stakeholder approach, planning to involve approximately 65 existing companies operating in applicable businesses together with public authorities under the coordination of Posintra Oy, a consultancy specialized in business solutions oriented to sustainable development. Through this approach, Pobi will allow all participants to create, agree and comply with shared sustainable vision

for this economic cluster in a long-term perspective. More in depth, Pobi will pilot business plans and innovative ideas that will add value to the current Kilpilahti operations, making this economical pool part of the bioeconomy's worldwide map.

TOWARDS PORVOO'S SUSTAINABLE PURPOSE

The national Finnish target is closely connected to one of the major goals of the City of Porvoo : to stay in the forefront of the most energy-efficient cities in Finland, by enabling a pioneering cluster of energy and environmental technology enterprises. The local authority and the private sectors are convinced that the solution will come through a new stream of innovative SMEs in Kilpilahti and opportunities of

and know how while using of natural resources, sustainably. "Relevant examples of the Finnish expertise such as energy generation through biomass and the use of clean tech to transform forest resources into valuable products for the petrochemical sector are robust and may be perfected in Kilpilahti through Pobi programme", stated Leena Tuomi, Programme Director of Posintra Oy.

This clear purpose added to consolidated corporate skills in Kilpilahti and the abundant renewable natural resources in Finland make Pobi programme a very promising initiative that can lead Porvoo to a true renaissance momentum, increasing local jobs and boosting the economy at the same time that it creates new ways of protecting biodiversity.



Photos: Topi Haapanen

engagement between these new organisations and large and experienced ones. This would generate a synergy of exchangeable capabilities within this market, catalyzing sustainability solutions in a cross-sector manner. In addition to this, the solution also involves a local vision

About Bioeconomy

Bioeconomy is an approach that relies on renewable natural resources to produce food, energy, products and services in closed loops industrial systems, reusing continuously technical and biological nutrients as raw materials and reducing streams of waste. It aims to reduce the dependency on fossil resources, prevent biodiversity loss and create new economic growth and jobs opportunities. Therefore, it maximizes value creation of products and services. In order to increase its potential, Bioeconomy needs a network environment in science, technology and management areas.



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Europe must adapt to the green economic revolution

Successfully transitioning to a green, low-carbon and resource-efficient economy is essential to the EU's competitiveness and public health. The European Commission has prepared an action plan intended to help SMEs harness the business opportunities provided by the green economy. Meanwhile, the green employment initiative aims to support job creation in new sectors. Local and regional authorities are the best placed to identify and grasp the opportunities that the green economy offers in their area.

The green economy is based on the principle of expanding business activity and productivity while consuming less resources. Using recycled matter as raw materials not only serves environmental goals, but can also help industry reduce raw material consumption as well as storage, processing and waste management costs.

The closed circulation energy concept means that waste, lost energy, heat, nutrients and CO₂ are used and recycled back into energy and food production. A good example from my region in Finland is a plant combining bioenergy and food production: heat from the biogas power plant warms the water for a fish farm, while the nutrient-rich waste water irrigates the greenhouse. The organic waste from the greenhouse and the fish farm also serves as biofuel or raw material for biogas production.

The transition to a green economy bears significant potential to create local, new and innovative jobs which cannot be relocated. This also implies that some jobs may be replaced by new ones, and job profiles may have to be redefined. Therefore education, employment and environmental policies should be more closely integrated.

An environmentally and business-friendly mind-set should be encouraged at school. We need to review and update training and education curricula, as well as qualifications systems. All academic and vocational courses could include a module devoted to the green economy.

At a local level, partnerships could be created with businesses and training institutions to improve the job/skills match. Cities and regions should provide targeted information to SMEs in different sectors about training and funding oppor-

tunities and ways in that improving resource efficiency could bring them real economic benefits. Local and regional authorities can also positively discriminate in public procurement, favouring companies adhering to green economy principles and concepts.

Local and regional authorities also have a crucial role to play in achieving the EU's emission targets. A good example is the Finnish project, 'Kohti hiilineutraalia kuntaa' ('Towards a carbon-neutral town'), the aim of which is to commit local players – the municipal council, residents and businesses – to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The project is meant to identify new and innovative approaches that create local jobs based on the sustainable use of

Europe must transition to a green economy by fostering relations between business and new training methods, writes **Satu Tietari**

"The green economy is based on the principle of expanding business activity and productivity, while consuming fewer resources"



local natural resources and greater energy efficiency.

In addition to this, green standards should be introduced more broadly at EU level, and consumers informed about these standards so that they can buy certified, environment-friendly products.

We are in the middle of a remarkable change – a green economic revolution. The green economy has already opened significant opportunities for European businesses. It is clear that in future, raw material consumption must be reduced and businesses must develop products that use less energy or materials to be competitive. ★

Satu Tietari is the Committee of the Regions' opinion rapporteur on the green economy



These numerous fast-paced improvements have led to Ljubljana becoming the European Green Capital 2016 and the first and only green lighthouse in Central and South-East Europe.

THE METROPOLITAN BIOREGION AND ITS GREEN BEACON LIGHTHOUSE

The Ljubljana Urban Region (LUR) is the central Slovenian region, which not only exemplifies Slovenia's economic, administrative, scientific, educational, creative and cultural hub, but also boasts a unique intertwining of urban and well preserved natural environments. Merely forests cover 58% of LUR's territory, which also features a high share

made environment patterns, etc. Enriched with these attributes, the region ensures quality living conditions – not solely from the environmental and societal perspective but also in terms of economic development. Abundant natural resources present an immense potential for the development of nature-friendly tourism and green economy.

Come and explore the numerous opportunities the region has to offer. On this scavenger hunt the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region will be happy to be of assistance. The Agency is active in all 26 LUR municipalities – promoting cooperation between them, businesses, researchers and other stakeholders, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and the quality of life in the region.

LJUBLJANA – GREEN FOR THE PEOPLE

At the heart of green development in the region

of protected areas: e.g. the protected Natura 2000 areas cover 27.2% of the region; whereas 67 areas are areas of ecological importance. The region is characterized by great landscape diversity, rich flora and fauna, numerous habitat types, variety of man-

lies the City of Ljubljana – the European Green Capital 2016.

Ljubljana is a city that will surprise you and exceed your expectations. It is indeed a unique place: small in size but big in hospitality and quality of life. Since 2006 more than 1600 projects have given the city its cosmopolitan character and brought it many flattering national and international awards and titles. The aim of these projects was to improve the quality of life of each and every citizen.

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW IT USED TO BE?

This is a question posed by almost everyone

who lives in Ljubljana or has returned to the city after a long time. People quickly get used to changes for the better and they also quickly forget how they had to avoid cars in the city centre, how difficult it was to cross the river, how long they had to wait for a bus, and how the Ljubljanica riverbanks were full of car parks, which have now been replaced with delightful coffee shops.

WELCOME TO LJUBLJANA AND LJUBLJANA URBAN REGION IN 2016 – THE GREEN CAPITAL YEAR

We invite you to experience the treasures of Ljubljana and Ljubljana Urban Region. We will welcome you with arms wide open and show you how proud we are of our beautiful,

clean, green city and its surroundings, where we cherish differences and respect each other. You will discover a city and a region of friendly



people, who wish to make Ljubljana and LUR a hospitable, green and healthy place for current and future generations!



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Cities all have a part to play in combating climate change

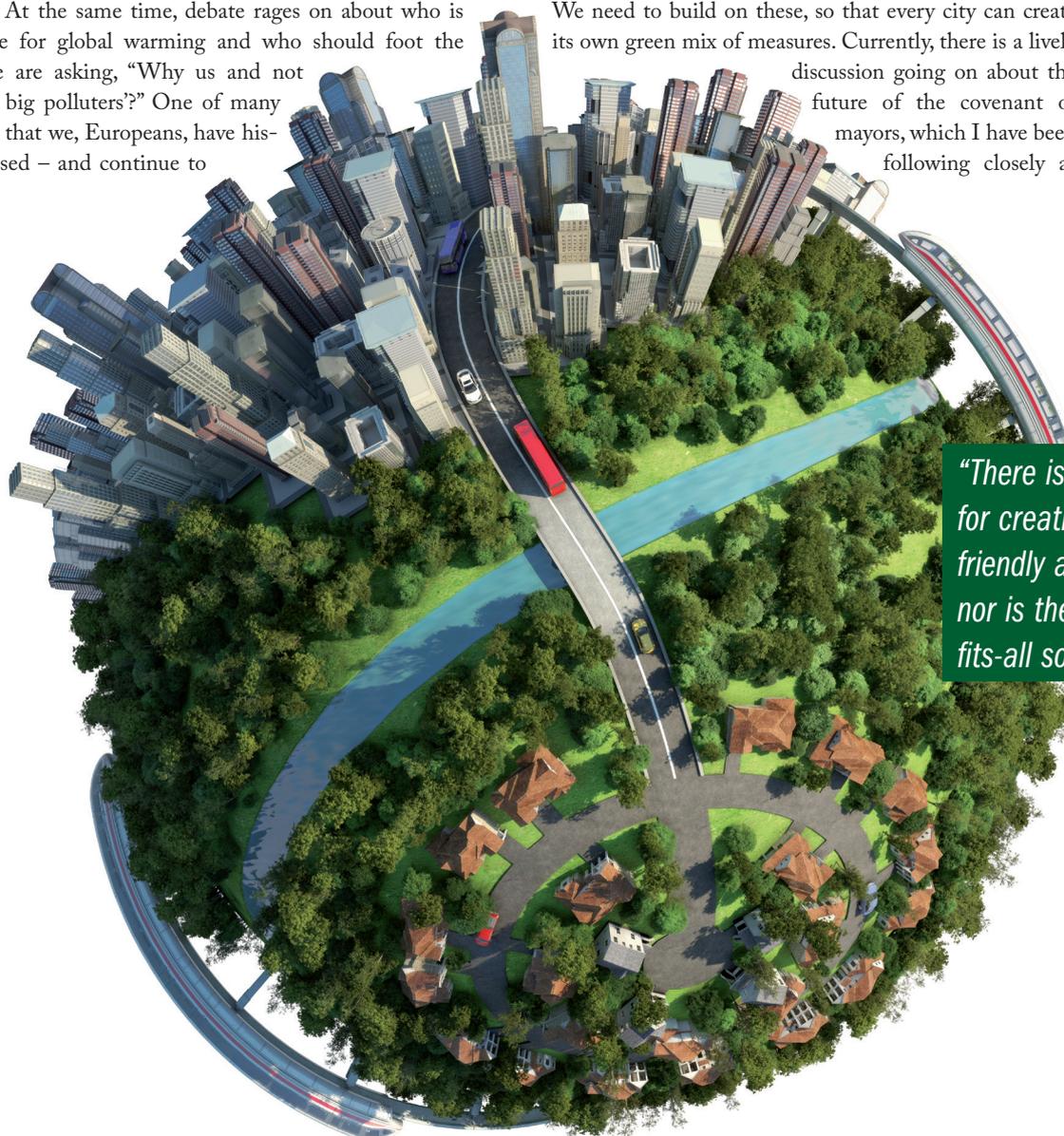
Extrême weather conditions, such as heat waves, excessive rainfall, hail and floods, which often occur in summer – including this year – remind us of the stark reality of climate change. Such wake-up calls have made us realise that global warming is not a problem for our future grandchildren, but rather a serious, immediate challenge. At the same time, debate rages on about who is responsible for global warming and who should foot the bill. Some are asking, “Why us and not the ‘other big polluters?’” One of many answers is that we, Europeans, have historically used – and continue to

use – much more than our fair share of the Earth’s resources. We should also be clear that the global answer comes from local action.

There is no easy recipe for creating climate-friendly and green cities, nor is there a one-size-fits-all solution. Yet, there are many good practices to be copied from cities across Europe.

We need to build on these, so that every city can create its own green mix of measures. Currently, there is a lively discussion going on about the future of the covenant of mayors, which I have been following closely as

There are many different measures cities could implement to become more climate-friendly, says **Kata Tüttö**



“There is no easy recipe for creating climate-friendly and green cities, nor is there a one-size-fits-all solution”

the Committee of the Regions' rapporteur on the issue.

Essentially, it is a movement of cities – now more than 6400 around the world – that are taking responsibility and action, and making a voluntary pledge to reduce their CO2 emissions beyond the EU's target of 20 per cent by 2020. They are committed to cutting their emissions by 28 per cent on average.

“Beyond economic considerations, no measure can be successful if it is not accompanied by a real change of culture when it comes to people's attitudes”

But reducing CO2 emissions alone is not enough, and a holistic approach is needed. Mitigation and adaptation are two sides of the same coin.

Cities can become climate-friendly by promoting green buildings, through 'green building codes', which contain techniques such as solar access and shading, natural cross-ventilation, triple glazed windows, renewable energy sources and smart meters, better insulation, and heating and light-

ing system upgrades. Buildings are responsible for more than half of total final energy use.

Transport represents close to one third of overall energy use. Cities can help make active transportation choices – such as walking and cycling – safe, comfortable and enjoyable for all ages. In addition, it is essential to maintain and expand good quality, low-carbon and affordable public transport. Where possible, authorities should consider closing streets to cars and using them as public spaces.

Trees and urban ecosystems are carbon sinks, and therefore key to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. Creating space for community gardening, growing edible plants, and planting trees on public and private properties are some effective measures in this direction. Cities can help and inspire local communities to move away from the idea of the 'perfect lawn', which has a huge carbon footprint because of its fertilisation and irrigation needs, and instead promote climate-friendly backyards, natural parks and drought-resistant plants and trees.

Installing smart meters, reducing the sale of bottled water in public buildings and

around the city, while expanding public access to drinking water are essential to reducing our water consumption. Using rainwater is also a key measure. In big cities, rain is considered more of a problem since it is collected through drains and then discarded. With more parks, green roofs, green spaces or grass-based permeable pavers, rain water can be absorbed, cleaned and used for other purposes.

Cities should encourage sharing economy models to reduce their overall carbon footprint – community bikes, car sharing, co-working spaces, community gardens or even tool libraries could all help.

Making local food available in city-run facilities, encouraging citizens to buy local food by supporting neighborhood food hubs, community kitchens, farmers' markets and community gardens can also make a real difference.

We need to make waste reduction and reuse a priority. No solid waste should go to landfills. We must collect waste separately and reuse, recycle, or make compost from yard waste and kitchen scraps. We must also aim to go plastic bag-free.

These are some practical examples of what European cities can do to address climate challenges. Many of these measures require considerable public and private funds, which are not automatically available, especially in crisis-struck countries. Yet, beyond economic considerations, no measure can be successful if it is not accompanied by a real change of culture when it comes to people's attitudes. In this respect, local and regional authorities can lead by example and raise citizens' awareness. ★

Kata Tüttö is the Committee of the Regions' opinion rapporteur on the future of the covenant of mayors and a speaker at the Open Days 2015 conference





SMEs are key to regions' economic success

SMEs are the backbone of the European economy. They make up more than 99 per cent of all European businesses, provide two out of three private sector jobs and contribute to more than half of the total added value created by businesses in the EU. Therefore, it is vitally important for the EU's economic success that we have fully functioning support measures for SMEs. However, policy for these companies must be able to respond to the variety of situations they face, taking into account type, location or sector, for example. Not all countries have recovered their SME activities, and some sectors, such as construction and manufacturing, are yet to find their feet once again.

Therefore, support for small businesses cannot be 'one-size fits all' and, to a large extent must be tailored to the relevant regional and sectoral level. Much of this support can come from structural funds, and is one of the four priority objectives of the 2014-2020 programme. However, wider measures are available to support, for example, research and innovation, business planning for innovative SMEs and export and tech-transfer. Help is also available at regional level.

Around 20 per cent of Horizon 2020's total combined budget for all societal challenges, as well as the specific 'leadership in enabling and industrial technologies (LEITs)' objective, is likely to go to SMEs. This means that at least €8.33bn in EU support for research and innovation activities will go directly to small businesses. The first Horizon 2020 call demonstrated that both SME participation and financial allocation have increased over the seventh framework programme average.

While not all countries have signed up to the Eurostars programme, which is jointly funded by member states, it is ideal for research-intensive SMEs. It requires smaller consortia, with two deadlines per year.

Another new funding opportunity is the 'fast track to innovation' pilot initiative, which also requires a smaller consortium, and aims to speed up the commercialisation of research. The Commission notes that, 'first-time applicants and SMEs are particularly welcome' to participate in the new programme; the first set of winning projects has just been published.

One of the key challenges for small business is finance. Under Horizon 2020, about one third of the access to risk finance budget - over €900m - will go to SMEs and small midcaps, through a debt facility providing loans, guarantees and other forms of debt finance to entities. This also includes an equity facility, providing finance for mainly early-stage investments, with particular focus on early-stage SMEs.

While support under Horizon 2020 requires transnational collaboration, the 'SME instrument' is exclusively dedicated to small businesses, targeting those that are highly innovative and demonstrate strong ambition to develop, grow and internationalise, regardless of the sector. With a budget of more than €3bn for 2014-2020, the SME instrument grants tailored support to businesses that have ground-breaking ideas with high market potential but lack certain resources,

SMEs are the backbone of the EU's economy, and as such they need strong support from all levels of governance, writes **Richard Tufts**



"A strong and vibrant SME sector is a key component of a dynamic regional economy"

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- 1.8 million people die of cancer each year.
- 20% of cancer deaths in Europe are caused by lung cancer.
- Bowel and breast are Europe's most common cancers.

CONTACT US

To find out more about how you can help contact: Catherine.Guinard@cancer.org.uk
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