

EDITORIAL

The 7th RFO-Newsletter focuses on the activities of running sub-projects that took place before the summer break.

While the first sub-projects are organising their final events and finishing their activities, an additional new SWG "Risk and innovation", submitted in the 4th call for proposals, has been approved on 16th June 2006 by the Steering Committee.

Furthermore a Thematic Forum 2 meeting took place in Papenburg (Lower Saxony) on 16th and 17th June 2006.

Therefore this issue will focus on a description of the last starting and the first closing SWG's with an outlook on the near future cooperation as well as the outcomes of the Thematic Forum meeting in Papenburg.

In addition a short introduction of the next coming international conferences and seminars on SWG level will be given.

Ilka Meisel RFO-Coordinator



Thematic Forum 2 meeting in Papenburg

"Multilingualism across Europe" LABS - Final Conference

The linguistic diversity in Europe is a source of richness that is highly valued not only as an element of identification.

The final event of the sub-project "**Language Bridges**" was held on 24th - 26th August in Bolzano (IT). During the sub-project's lifetime, various aspects of multilingualism in six European border regions have been examined and put in contrast.

About 300 participants from more than 20 Countries contributed to the success of the largest conference on multilingualism of the last years by providing 70 presentations and a plurality of posters.

As multilingualism is certainly an aspect that will shape the future of many parts of Europe, it was the central aim of the conference to present research reports and examples of good-practices from regions, where individual and institutionalised multilingualism forms already part of their tradition.

During the conference organised by „EURAC“ linguistic experts from all over Europe exchanged their view and their experiences concerning the current research state of art with regard to language learning, lan-

guage acquisition and prestige and state of languages in the EU. Questions like "What are the needs of European regions in the fields of multilingualism?" or "How much potential arising from multilingual situations can still be discovered in European regions?" have been discussed intensely by researchers from the fields of linguistics, language teaching and language policy during the conference.

Further information concerning the project and the conference results can be obtained from:
www.eurac.edu/labs

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**“Lisbon & Tourism”
Thematic Forum 2
meeting in Papenburg**

More than 35 tourism experts, representatives of (Cross)Border Regions and interested parties came to Papenburg on 16th and 17th June to participate in the 4th Thematic Forum 2 meeting hosted by Lower Saxony and organised by the Ems Dollart Region, a Dutch German cross-border association.

Beyond several presentations focusing on tourism projects realised along the Dutch-German border area, ideas how to implement the Lisbon Strategy (as this issue will be in the centre of the forthcoming funding period) within cross-border and interregional cooperation were discussed.

The overall goal of the Lisbon Strategy adopted in 2000 is developing the Community area into the most competitive, dynamic knowledge-driven economy until 2010.



Michael Schnaider, Executive Director of „it.emsland“, Lingen (DE)

Although (in comparison to other economic sectors) the tourism industry is dominated by small and medium sized enterprises and shows a quite low labour productivity, it is of high importance as it contributes to the main economic aims such as: fostering economic growth, supporting structural change and increasing employment.

Since 1950 the tourism industry has experienced a significant growth that is reflected in the no. of international arrivals in Europe. While e.g. 1950 the arrivals amounted to 25,3 million they reached 414 million in 2003. Currently, the tourism industry contributes 4 % to the GDP of the EU and employs more than 7 million people. Some sources forecast that in the next 10 years travel and tourism jobs will increase by 2 million. Despite a steady growth of the tourism industry, this sector is facing some structural changes and challenges resulting from the transformation towards information society and economy, global competitiveness, the need for sustainability, and demographic change.

In this context, Mr Schnaider underlined the growing importance of communication and information technologies that are increasingly

applied while searching for information on travel destinations or making reservations. The European Union has recognised the importance of the tourism industry for economic growth and has therefore adopted some regulative and distributive instruments in order to support the tourism sector.

**“Working for the future
of European tourism”**

Key activities put forward
by the Commission:

- Promoting dialogue between the tourism industry and other interested parties
- Fostering networking services
- Ensuring good use of the EU’s financial and non-financial instruments to the benefit of the tourism industry
- Promoting sustainable development by further elaborating and implementing the “Agenda 21” guidelines
- Defining and disseminating assessment methods and tools necessary for monitoring the quality of tourist services.

The Internet Guide “EU Support for Tourism Enterprises and Tourist Destinations” provides a structured overview of various EU programmes, funds, schemes and initiatives available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/services/tourism/index_en.htm

"Risk and Innovation"

Cross-border risks, resulting from the globalisation and innovation processes

Objective:

To stimulate and support the exchange of information and know-how on cross-border risk management, to improve knowledge and understanding of approaches, methodologies and good practices related to innovation risk and cross-border risk management and to stimulate and promote awareness of cross-border risks within the local population in cross-border regions.

Lead Participant:

Chamber of Commerce of Seville (ES)

Partners from:

University of Trieste (IT), Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Drama (GR), Prefectural Local Authorities of Rodopi - Evros (GR), Autonomous Province Friuli Venezia-Giulia (IT)

**EU Commissioner
Günter Verheugen in
Oldenburg**

On 20th July Mr Günter Verheugen, EU Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, visited the Europe Direct Office in Oldenburg (DE). He congratulated the team of the office on their activities aiming at promoting and stimulating the innovation processes in the region and the "Change on Borders" sub-project "Youth for innovation" initiated by the Europe Direct office.

Mr Verheugen stressed that "innovations are our

economic future" and referred to Finland, where first chairs in innovation have been established. At the moment the Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry is elaborating draft guidelines in order to enhance the innovation processes.



Discussion at the City of Oldenburg (DE)

**Youth for Innovation
"Y4I" - Linz**

Partners of the "Y4I" met on 21-23 June 2006 in Linz (AT) to discuss results achieved so far and elaborate further proceedings.

The SWG aims at exchanging experiences and knowledge on cross-border involvement of universities and schools as instruments for regional development. Its target group are students aged 15-30 frequently not sufficiently qualified and motivated to foster innovation processes in their region.

Several activities like the elaboration of exemplary innovation curricula for different school types or the implementation of mini-innovation-projects by young research

teams have been launched in order to achieve the sub-project's main objectives.

The project manager, Mr Dieter Meyer, presented the draft guidelines for funding of such mini-innovation-projects with elementary importance for the economic development of the participating regions like tourism, agro-business, mechanical engineering or the IT-sector.

Some examples of innovation curricula that were elaborated by three regional working groups for general schools, vocational schools and universities were presented. Different educational systems and region-specific conditions make a uniform application of these curricula difficult. However, efforts will be made to apply the curricula at least partially in each participating region. Further information concerning the results and the mini-innovation projects is available at: www.y4i.net



Participants of the meeting in Linz in the framework of the sub-project "Youth 4 innovation"

"Risk and Innovation"

The SWG "Risk and innovation" took up its activities in July and addresses in particular:

- Industrial-related issues such as risks linked to genetically modified crops, nuclear plants, water pollution
- Environmental related issues, e.g. forest fires in border regions or the impact of investments in infrastructure
- Humanitarian problems and health related issues like illegal border crossing, the risk of epidemics etc.

An important instrument to achieve the projects objectives (see box in this issue) will be the jointly developed "Handbook on cross-border globalisation and innovation risks: EU views and experiences".

Final conference of the sub-project "REGBOUR"

The sub-project's final conference on 29th and 30th June 2006 took place in the European Centre for Integration and Self-Government Cooperation „House of Europe" in Lublin (PL).

Under the leadership of North Karelia partners from 5 different border regions cooperated in the SWG **"REGBOUR"** with the aim to:

- ✘ Exchanging experiences on existing institutional models for cross-border cooperation at the pre-enlargement external borders
- ✘ Gathering information and knowledge related to cross-border cooperation at the post-enlargement external borders
- ✘ Assisting regional authorities in the practical implementation of the new European Neighbourhood Programme
- ✘ Bringing the regional innovative initiatives into a broader inter-regional discussion.

The results of each phase, contributions for discussions, as well as experiences and conclusions of the regions have been put together in a Handbook that was presented during the Final Conference in Lublin by the Project Manager, Mr Petri Virtanen.

The Handbook includes a theoretical part which briefly summarises the legal framework as well as the Community programmes and instruments whereas the practical part describes the implementation of cross-border cooperation in the participating regions and addressing concrete recommendations for regional authorities and project leaders. The Handbook has been

elaborated in order to provide basic knowledge to actors involved in cross-border cooperation at the external EU borders and furthermore to deliver concrete, practical recommendations for future programmes and project implementations.

Several SWG-partners reported on the project results from their own, regional point of view.

As in their contributions, the speakers set quite different priorities; the complexity of this subject became once again clear. While for example Mr Iikka Liikanen from North Karelia explained the role of regional actors at the external EU borders in the future Neighbourhood Policy and the opportunities for a stronger inclusion of the regional level, other speakers focused on the current experiences in the territorial cooperation and the preparation for the upcoming programming period 2007-2013. Other contributions in return focussed on the practical implementation of cross-border cooperation in the respective regions, the achieved results and future challenges.

Due to the mostly peripheral location of the participating regions, the different administrative and legal structures as well as the implementation of new financial instruments of the EU at

the external borders (ENPI and IPA) the challenges are still considerable. Therefore the participating organisations are interested in a sustainable exchange of information and experiences beyond the project duration.



Participants of the REGBOUR conference

New Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

The European Council adopted a regulation establishing a new Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) on 17th July. Over the budgetary period 2007-2013 IPA will provide financial assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries (i.e. Croatia, Turkey, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as Herzegovina, Albania, Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo) and will replace the five currently applied instruments. Within the next 7 years IPA will spend 11.468 billion euros with due regard to the individual objectives

and progress of each country.

Assistance should be provided for promotion and protection of human rights, for the public administration reform, the development of the civil society, social inclusion, reconciliation, confidence-building measures and reconstruction as well as regional and cross-border cooperation. In case of candidate countries the assistance aims also at adopting and implementing the full requirements for membership.

The EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn welcomed the adoption of the regulation by the Council and stated: "*Financial assistance has always been and remains a corner stone of our enlargement policy. We stand ready to help countries on their way towards the EU with advice, political guidance and with substantial financial assistance. I welcome the decision of the Member States which allows us to continue to support preparation of candidate and potential candidate countries during the next budgetary period.*"

Positive opinion on the new Pre-accession Instrument was also expressed by partners of the SWG "REGBOUR". During their final conference in Lublin Mrs Chiara Vecchiato, representing

the Autonomous Region Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT) which is involved in the current Adriatic CBC programme, underlined that IPA will give the regions in the candidate and potential candidate countries the unique opportunity to familiarise with the Structural Funds and to deepen relationships already existing in the area of the Adriatic and Balkans.

Besides, the IPA will put in particular the potential candidate countries in a position to "practice" the Community's cohesion policies by applying rules as closely as possible to the Structural Funds.



Map of the Adriatic Euroregion (for further information on the Euroregion see: <http://www.adriaticeuroregion.org/en/>)

Next SWG seminars, conferences and meetings

The conference "Inside Inspire" of the SWG "Cross-SIS" will take place on 20th September in Brussels. The aim of the seminar is to inform about cross border cooperation in consideration of the European Initiative "INSPIRE".

Questions like "What kind of geographic and administrative information can we get from our neighbouring regions or countries?" and "How do we organise such an information exchange?" will be in the centre of the meeting. Through the "Cross-SIS" project the involved regions gained practical experience in exchanging geo-administrative information via the internet. These results and those of similar geo-data pilots will be presented.

A seminar regarding "Efficiency assessment of cross-border transport infrastructure" will be held on 12th Oct. in Brussels by the participants of the SWG "Trans EA". Transnational transport links between EU and neighbouring countries as well as the objectives and the status of the sub-project will be in the centre of the meeting.

From 28th Nov. until 1st Dec. an international conference of the **SWG "River Cross"** will take place in Lublin (PL).

RFO Dates & Events

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (DE) and the Province of Limburg (NL) will organise jointly a combined **Thematic Forum 1 & 3** meeting in Düsseldorf and Maastricht. The

meetings on 28th-30th September 2006 will focus on "Environmental management in border regions" and "Risk management and prevention in cross-border areas".

The Cross-border cooperation along the Dutch-German border dates back to the 70ies and is characterised by well established, institutional structures for cross-border cooperation.

Within the framework of Thematic Forum 3, the meeting will focus on „Risk management and prevention“, project examples in the field of risk and disaster management as well as civil protection will be presented and experiences of different regions in coping with such risks, frequently in cooperation with neighbouring areas, will be discussed.

During the meeting of Thematic Forum 1 information on the INTERREG IIIC project „Flapp“ will be provided. There will be an opportunity to exchange experiences on cross-border flood prevention and water management. Interested experts are kindly invited to contribute with their knowledge to the meetings. For further information, registration or agenda please contact:

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IMPRESSUM

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