

Lisbon Regions Network

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Seminar Future EU Innovation Strategies

A joint network event of the LRN and ERRIN

*By Randstad Region
Ingefleur Spreij*

On 2 September 2009 the European Commission published the communication **Reviewing Community Innovation Policy in a changing world**. The Commission intends to explore the feasibility of proposing to the Member States before spring 2010 for a European Innovation Act encompassing all the conditions for sustainable development and which would form an integral and crucial part of the future European reform agenda. For the preparation of this act the Commission launched a survey on Community Innovation Policy for which the deadline closed the 16th of November. Therefore the Lisbon Regions Network and the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) hosted a seminar on November 6th where the current Commission thinking on future EU innovation policy was outlined by César Santos of DG Enterprise and where the regional demands for the future policy were discussed.

Moderator Claus Schultze –head of secretariat of ERRIN – lead the discussion with enthusiasm and asked both speakers and public clear and sharp questions. Welcoming everybody he expressed pleasure about the fact that ERRIN and LRN hosted this event jointly and mentioned that there must be a lot of overlap between the networks since he recognized a lot of 'ERRIN faces'.

Setting out the main issues of the communication of the Commission titled 'Reviewing Community Innovation Policy in a changing world'. César Santos discussed the main research actions of the Commission on a European Innovation Plan so far, summarized EU achievements on innovation, drew some concluding lessons and so pointed out a couple of elements of debate. One of the steps towards a European Innovation Act (EIA) – which will, in spite of the name, not be a law - is the assessment of Community Innovation Policies. Santos' opinion is that the current Community innovation program is a good start but needs some improving.

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Another main document towards an EIA is the review of the Lead Market Initiative (LMI). However, as the LMI dates from end 2007, it is too early to tell if the instruments indeed increased growth and created jobs. Santos mentioned that measuring progress on the LMI is difficult at all.

Among the achievements Santos mentioned the increase funding for EU innovation and RTD, the establishment of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology, progress in cluster policy, the LMI and standardization. The success factors have led to a trend of convergence of the EU towards Asia and the US. However the EU is still far behind when it comes to investment in innovation and in business R&D compared to the US and Japan. At the same time the fear is that this trend of convergence will reverse due to the current crisis. The conclusion is that the Intellectual Property Rights system is still costly and highly fragmented. EU patents are generally 3 times more expensive than in the US and a unified litigation system is needed. At the same time, there currently are not enough or no cross-border investments at all. Also the LMI should be taken up on national level and adequate complementarity between national and EU funding is needed. Santos presented key topics of debate like, should innovation policy be oriented around societal changes? Should innovation policy be broadened as innovation policy has biased towards technological innovation? How should finance and support for innovation be improved?

Responses from the public showed that there is need for attention for authorities that are risk averse, as it holds back innovation. Regions should also be made aware of the possibilities of different policies, in order for them to enjoy the synergy between EU funding, R&D, and regional policies. With regard to cluster-policy, the question was posed who decides what world-class clusters are. Santos replied that although world-class clusters are important, it cannot be guaranteed that a cluster defined as world-class also has the capacity to compete globally. The conclusion is that besides the focus on world-class clusters, there should also be room for the 'regular' clusters in innovation policy. Another main issue that came up in the debate was the question whether the EU is not over-focusing on SME's. Economies cannot survive just on SME's, large corporate and multinationals are needed for (riskier) investments and for bringing innovations to the market.

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Following Santos' presentation and the debate, Richard Tuffs from West Midlands in Europe presented the innovation dossier of LRN which is based on questionnaires, seminars and a policy paper. Priorities addressed in the dossier: infrastructure, strengthening the triple helix, social and public innovation and 'selling' innovation, more support for innovation, development of technopoles and clusters, and reinforcing human capital. These priorities imply that there is need for example for simplification of current programs, strengthening of R&D at the regional level and better matched funding rates, to name a few. Tuffs also touched the issue of risk-averse investors. He suggested the approach of "...here's a little bit of money, do what you want with it...". The LRN innovation dossier presents a 10-point plan for innovation policy that covers issues that can all be divided among the categories financing and investment (trust, confidence and proximity, human capital and public services, R&D base, and funding), strengthening relationships (clusters, networking, partnerships) and control (procurement, monitoring). A main point presented by Tuffs is that regions can and should play a hinge role in implementing 'transformational innovation'. It is in the regions where things actually happen, which is why there is the need for a place-based strategy. Regions are needed to link big ideas to incremental innovation.

Although the seminar was a great success, and it was valuable that ERRIN and LRN could host this event jointly, the input of regions into the innovation policy debate is not enough. Regions should take their own responsibility when it comes to implementation of innovation policy. However, now that the consultation on the European Innovation Act has closed, it remains to be seen what the Commission will present in spring of 2010.

On 15 October 2009, the Brussels Capital Region organised the home event within the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities, in the Tour & Taxis buildings. It was a seminar entitled "Constructing a Creative Brussels".

The event focused primarily on a public of entrepreneurs from the creative industry, with sectors like fashion, design, etc. It paid attention to the Brussels and European support that the creative industry can benefit from and the actual experience from the sector.

'The Brussels Capital Region encourages the creative industry'

First, the measures that the Brussels Capital Region takes to support the creative sector were highlighted. These past years, special attention has been paid to the creative industry, a sector that provides 8% of regional employment. The Brussels Capital Region encourages the creative industry when it establishes new companies, and stimulates the industry by developing company clusters.

A good example of that is the Fashion and Design Centre, which will bring together all the sector's players and will mean to become a display window for the Brussels fashion and design world in the near future.

In many cases, the resources and instruments provided by the European Union, such as the ERDF funds and the funds for territorial cohesion, are used to strengthen the Brussels policy efforts. A good example of this is the Dansaert Centre, a business centre accommodating many companies from the creative sector, which was developed thanks to ERDF funds.

S. Pasqua from the DG Culture went over the limited possibilities to support the creative sector from his administration. Nevertheless, a positive note is the growing consciousness that the creative sector is important for the economy and for employment. Culture is more and more often acknowledged as a driving force behind innovation. In the future, the Commission will verify how the growing economic possibilities of the creative sector can be utilised, among other things through a public consultation.

'students' business instinct is stimulated through the SPEED programme'

During his discourse, S. Moore, from the Wolverhampton University, stressed how important it is "to make people think about opportunities". For instance, the students' business instinct is stimulated through the SPEED programme, enabling them to develop their business creativity. Via the Erasmus programme for entrepreneurs, new entrepreneurs get the chance to accrue valuable experience in leading a SME by training during a few months with an experienced entrepreneur in another European country.

Finally, 2 Brussels managers, L. Coirier of Pro Materia Creative Design and E. Goossens of Walking the dog, were given the opportunity to inform the seminar participants of their experiences and to allude to further support possibilities.

At the end of the seminary, it was brought home to all present how important it is to unite everyone from the creative sector so as to promote a well-balanced urban development.

Constructing a Creative Brussels

By Brussels Capital Region

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On 15 October 2009, the Brussels Capital Region organised the home event within the European Week of Regions and Cities

Spotlight on Regional Innovation

By Helsinki Region

Culminatum Innovation Oy Ltd. – a regional development company that generates internationally competitive product and service innovations through connecting experts with a wide variety of players in various sectors. Culminatum Innovation's main operational channels include development programmes that enhance selected fields of expertise and development projects that promote the region's innovation environment.

Culminatum Innovation Oy Ltd (Helsinki Region Centre of Expertise) was established in 1995 to implement the national Centre of Expertise programme in the Helsinki region and to serve as a joint instrument of regional development for its owners. The aim is to improve the international competitiveness of the Helsinki region and to encourage the business utilisation of the region's educational, scientific and research resources. The company is owned by the Uusimaa Regional Council, the city authorities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa and the universities, polytechnics, research institutes and business community of the region.

The operations of Culminatum are based on three partly intersecting strategies. Firstly, Culminatum Innovation aims to promote new business opportunities by combining cutting-edge expertise with companies' operations. Secondly, Culminatum Innovation supports the creation of various development frameworks that enable the interaction of companies, leading researchers and end-users. Thirdly, Culminatum Innovation aims to internationalise customers' operations through its own international activities, providing its own networks to support customers' internationalisation.

Culminatum Innovation's strategy implementation has two cornerstones. Firstly, to coordinate and create innovation strategy for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, and now also the area's competitiveness strategy.

Secondly, to implement the Centre of Expertise Programme that provides tools for developing clusters in the Helsinki region. Culminatum Innovation also participates in other projects – such as developing knowledge-intensive business services, enhancing innovation in public procurement, and other international development projects.

The Centre of Expertise Programme is a special fixed-term government programme aimed at allocating regional resources and activities to development areas that are of key national importance. During the 2007–2013 programme period, Culminatum Innovation is involved in nine clusters and is acting as national coordinator for two clusters.

Living Business (www.livingbusiness.fi)	Digibusiness (www.digibusiness.fi)	Food Development (www.elintarvikekehitys.fi)
HealthBIO (www.healthbio.fi)	Health and Well-being (www.hyvinvointipalvelut.fi)	Ubiquitous Computing – ICT everywhere (www.ubi.fi)
Tourism and Experience Management	Nanotechnology (www.nanobusiness.fi)	Cleantech (www.greennetfinland.fi)

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Including KIBS, Knowledge-Intensive Business Services Forum, created by Culminatum Innovation, is a network of knowledge intensive business service companies. The Forum comprises a variety of theme groups, covering service design and innovative public service procurement.

One example of Culminatum Innovations' regional project is the Innovative Public Procurement development scheme, which aims to deploy new models for the procurement of public services, and to create new types of services for municipal employees and local residents. The programme will promote the creation and implementation of service innovations in terms of procurement procedures and the services to be procured. The practical initiatives of the project include implementing innovative pilot procurements, deepening the procurement process expertise of city managers and experts, and creating a permanent network of key specialists. The cities participating in this programme are Helsinki, Espoo, Kauniainen and Vantaa.

For more information, please visit:
www.culminatum.fi

ITER Project

By Valencian Region

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Various studies have shown that juvenile violence and delinquency are delicate problems to treat owing to a series of linked causes: parents, against the aggression of the youngster, leave the tasks of education to the school; yet the teacher cannot concern him or herself with behavioural education in addition to academic instruction, so when faced with a lack of respect it is common that the teachers find themselves unable to control the situation and the police are required to intervene, on many occasions in an aggressive manner which does little for the education of the youth.

With this in mind, the regional council of Alicante has designed a series of police itineraries in a multi professional network for the prevention of juvenile delinquency which is undertaken by the European project ITER. The main objective of the project is to attain the involvement of all those working in and responsible for, young learner education, through the creation of a cooperation network geared at avoiding delinquency and juvenile violence. ITER wants to increase the involvement of policy bodies to prevent juvenile violence, to improve the interaction between the Police and those families which have the problem and to promote cooperation between the different associations and organisations involved in this field.

To achieve this objective, a series of training courses is being devised relating to the prevention of juvenile delinquency between the agents of the participating security services, those families in which the problems occur will be analysed, and cooperating organisations will give informal talks in schools among other activities in an effort to raise awareness and help prevent such problems.

Iter is a European project led by the Regional Council Alicante and counts on the Fundación Comunidad Valenciana-Región Europea as partner and leader in marketing and dissemination, Vidscenter for Integration of Denmark, the City Council of Latina in Italy and the National Association of Municipal Clerks in Bulgaria

The Project also counts on different collaborative bodies: the Valencian Association of Heads of Police Officers, the AYO Association, the Public Defender of Minor of the Alicante High court, the Socials Affairs Department from the Montesinos and Callosa de Segura City Councils, the Timoneda Association, the Valencian Society of Family and Community Medicine, the "Dones i comunicació" Associations, and other students' parents' associations.

Project data

Programme of Security and Safeguarding Liberties—Prevention and fight against crime	
Total budget:	267,928.85€
EU Contribution	70,00%
Duration:	24 months (September 2008 - September 2010)
Partners	Alicante County Council (Spain) Vidscenter for Integration (Denmark) Latina City Council (Italy) Fundación Comunidad Valenciana-Región Europea (Spain) National Association of Municipal Clerks in Bulgaria

One of the main objectives of the European Union is the development of social policies to support socially disadvantaged groups, coinciding with the 2010 European Year in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The project PHD2 (Personal and Human Development. Psychodrama to Help Disadvantaged) aims to help achieve this objective.

PHD2 will develop through different seminars the psychological methods of video therapy and psychodrama in persons of physical or mental disability or those in risk of social exclusion to foster their integration or reintegration into society and the workplace.

The project has three phases: in the first of these, psychologists, teachers, video producers and other experts will investigate the educational techniques of psychodrama and video therapy applied to disadvantaged people, and analyse its application in the participant countries.

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During the second phase laboratories of communication will be created, verbal and non verbal, in which disabled people or those in risk of social exclusion will work, so that, through the dramatizations they acquire greater confidence in their own ability and are able to communicate with their fellow participants.

Finally, in the third phase, an audiovisual will be created which will compile the experiences of the previous phase. The putting together and development of this audiovisual by the participants will also help them in their personal development. The videos are to be presented in a final event which will be open to the public and encourage the exchange of ideas.

PHD² Project

By Valencian Region

The project is led by Centro Studi e Formazione Villa Montesca (Italy), and has as its partners experts in the field of audiovisuals, such as Nessuno TV, and researchers in the field of psychology or those who work with people with disabilities or are socially disadvantaged, these include Health Psychology Management Organisation Services (UK), Institut Zamestnanosti (Slovakia), Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians (Lithuania), Public Institution Roma Community Centre (Lithuania), Education Center and Social Support for People with Disabilities (Greece), la Mancomunitat de la Ribera Alta (Spain), Provincia di Perugia (Italy), and Ricerca e Cooperazione (Italy). Fundación Comunidad Valenciana-Región Europea (Spain) is responsible for disseminating the project.

Project data

Lifelong Learning Programme-Grundtvig. Multilateral projects	
Budget Total	€ 399.007,00
EU Contribution	75,00%
Duration	24 months (December 2008 - December 2010)
Partners	Centro Studi e Formazione illa Montesca (Italy) Health Psychology Management Organisation Services (UK) Fundación Comunidad Valenciana- Región Europea (Spain) Mancomunitat de la Ribera Alta (Spain) Institut Zamestnanosti (Slovakia) Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians (Lithuania) Public Institution Roma Community Centre (Lithuania) Education Centre and Social Support for People with Disabilities (Greece) Provincia di Perugia (Italy) Ricerca e Cooperazione (Italy) Nessuno TV (Italy)

The development of knowledge based economy requires growth of social awareness concerning innovation importance for ensuring welfare in the region. Region innovativeness in terms of implementing innovative solutions in all sectors is essential factor for building competitive economy and in turn socio-economic development.

In order to promote innovative actions in European Union and build the culture of innovation in all EU member countries, The Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region holds annually the World Innovation Days in Wielkopolska. This is a unique event not only nationwide but also in European Union. All conferences will be broadcasted online (www.rsi-wielkopolska.pl).

Discussions, conferences, workshops and exhibitions are foreseen in the programme, comprising topics such as possibilities of influencing competitiveness through the regional policy, which involves networking of particular elements of economy, design development or use of new methods of financial engineering. Target groups of the event are entrepreneurs, representatives of public administration, business support institutions and R&D units.

World Innovation Days

By Wielkopolska Region

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One of the most creative sectors of economy is design, closely connected with industry and technology development. With constant process of awareness rising design, previously perceived solely a culture element, is now more and more often seen as a part of the economy. Design is not only associated with aesthetics but also with technology, management, economics, sociology and marketing. There are numerous benefits for companies in terms of implementing patterns to the designed products such as income rise, growth of innovation level, bigger shares in the market, brand strengthening, increase of quality, growth of competitiveness. Therefore the idea of opening Design Center in Poznan and creating a comprehensive support programme for design in Wielkopolska has emerged.

In order to enable sharing knowledge and experience in the field of innovations worldwide, the representatives of Europe (Sweden, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Germany, Ukraine, Russia) and other continents (United States, India, Brazil) were invited.

This is a cyclic event, where new topics concerning various economy sectors are introduced to help raise the economy level and in turn enhance competitive attractiveness of our region in the international scale.

The aim of the World Innovation Days is strengthening competitiveness of Wielkopolska regional economy by supporting the development of innovative entrepreneurs, in order to create more workplaces thanks to flexibility on the work market. Moreover, the event will influence the region and boost its companies' image by good promotion practices, encouraging companies to look for new technological solutions or suggest changes in their internal work organization. The World Innovation Days will allow to implement the Lisbon Strategy foundations, in particular the aim of "Knowledge and innovations – the engine of the sustainable economic growth".