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Editorial

Mattia Crosetto

Dear readers,

Europe provides new opportunities to our Region thanks to a new initiative, the Danube macro-regional Strategy.

This is a new approach of the European Commission to finance regional development in a wide area including 14 countries (of which 8 are EU Member States) ranging from Germany in the West to the Ukraine in the East. Given the inter-linked nature of many of the challenges facing the region, for example in the fields of transport, energy and environment, the cooperation within a 'macro-regional' framework is intended to produce more effective coordination.

This new working method initiated with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - does not imply new laws or institutions, but rather strengthens links between different policies and those of a wide range of stakeholders.

Although the strategy will not come with extra EU finance, a considerable amount of funding is already available to the macro-region through a host of EU programmes. The aim is to use this available support - around €100 billion alone has been allocated from the cohesion policy (European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund) between 2007 and 2013 - to greater effect and show how macro-regional cooperation can help tackle local problems.

After a first conference in Ulm, the European Commission and the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a second consultation event on the Strategy in Budapest for the 25.02.2010. Opening the meeting, the new EU Commissioner for Regional Policy said *"Today we get down to the business of discussing concrete projects that will deliver lasting results. This demonstrates the commitment to find shared solutions to our shared challenges"*.

As our Region is fully part of the Danube area, we will be active in identifying which concrete opportunities we can directly benefit of.

Sincerely,

Mattia Crosetto
The Head of Office
Zlín Region in Brussels

AER Innovation Award For The European Regions

Innovation is a key priority of AER Committee 1's strategic plan for 2007-2012. After 4 consecutive years, AER launches the 5th edition of the AER Award for Innovative European Regions. In the context of the economic crisis against which our regions are still struggling, it is more than ever crucial to identify and make use of our territories' innovative potential.



The Prize aims at honouring European Regional Authorities' actions, which have stimulated, fostered and implemented innovation in their territory. It aims at promoting best practices as well as to demonstrate how regions can contribute to regional economic welfare.

5th AER innovation award - 2010

The competition is opened to all regions in Europe, who have, in a way or another, initiated, fostered and implemented innovation on their territories. The winning regions will be rewarded in the occasion of the AER General Assembly in Istanbul on 9-10 November 2010.

The award is of symbolic value and can generate investment and media opportunities for the region that wins. The winning regions will enjoy extensive publicity, provided by AER all along the year that will follow the awarding ceremony.

The deadline for submitting your application is 1st June 2010.

Application form to be downloaded on the website below and sent back to: c.dawans@aer.eu

4th AER Innovation Award 2009

The 2009 AER Innovation Prize was awarded to two Regions: Västra Götaland (S) and Slaskie (PL).



Västra Götaland's project is called: "Industrial Dynamics". It is a network of research institutes aimed at providing coordinated proactive support to industrial SME's. The objective of the project is to develop a cluster of support services to SMEs in the region and to create synergies allowing the different actors to launch common projects. The jury was particularly impressed by the quantitative results of the project, independently evaluated. There was a clear focus on the region's potential. Finally, this initiative is politically backed and is based on a strong existing demand.

Slaskie's project is called "SEKAP"(Electronic communication system for public administration in Silesia Region). The objective of the SEKAP project is to provide a number of public services via the Internet and increase the administration's efficiency. A Platform of Public e-Services was established and is dedicated to 3 types of users: officials, citizens and entrepreneurs. This project was chosen because the initiative was well integrated in the regional development strategy, with a strong dissemination component and a measurable impact on a large number of citizens, since 3 million inhabitants could benefit from this platform. Finally, the exemplarity of the project was demonstrated since it was transferred into other Polish regions.

For more information about the award and application formulare visit:

<http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/economic-development/aer-innovation-award.html>

***The Assembly of European Regions (AER)** was established in 1985 and it represents the largest independent network of regions in the wider Europe.



Europe's local and regional leaders debate landmark report on Cohesion Policy

Regions and cities joined forces to secure future EU funding for infrastructure, social and environmental projects. More than 100 local and regional politicians from across Europe came to Brussels on 26 February to discuss joint requests for the next funding cycle of EU cohesion policy after 2013. Under the chairmanship of Michel Delebarre (PES), Mayor of Dunkirk and former President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the members of the CoR's Commission for territorial cohesion policy (COTER) voted on a first draft report prepared by Michael Schneider (EPP), European Affairs State Secretary of the Land of Saxony-Anhalt.

To define the common ground of Europe's local and regional authorities in the forthcoming strategy and budget negotiations, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) prepared a so-called "outlook opinion" on the future of cohesion policy. Following a series of grassroots consultations, rapporteur Michael Schneider presented a first draft of this report to the CoR's COTER Commission. Regional and local politicians from across the EU have tabled almost 90 amendments, reflecting the enormous interest in this issue. Full adoption of the amended report is scheduled for the CoR's April plenary session, which will make the Committee of the Regions the first EU body to formulate an official position on the future of cohesion policy.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, Michael Schneider said: "I hope that we can adopt a concept for the future of cohesion policy that is based on a consistent approach and on a broad consensus. Such a powerful vote would allow us to exert our influence in the next stages of the decision-making process. Therefore, in some areas we still have to find compromise solutions."

Michel Delebarre highlighted the challenges ahead for the COTER Commission: "The future of cohesion policy will obviously be at the forefront of our concerns. Our main aim must be to secure a political agreement on the methods and objectives of this policy before the start of budgetary negotiations. I believe that we already have a consensus on the need to avoid any form of renationalisation and to adapt industries and employment to the challenges of a more sustainable development model, and on the need for multilevel governance and an approach that is more targeted to the region concerned and to intra-regional disparities."

Other issues on the agenda: Baltic Sea Strategy and urban mobility

The members of the COTER Commission also adopted the draft reports on two other issues of crucial importance for Europe's regions and cities. Pauliina Haijanen (EPP), Member of the Executive Board of Laitila City Council, presented her draft report on the Baltic Sea Strategy, the first "macro-regional" strategy developed by the European Union. Following up on a longstanding CoR request, the European Commission recently published its action plan on urban mobility. Building on his previous work as CoR rapporteur on the issue, Birmingham City Councillor and former CoR President Sir Albert Bore (PES) presented his draft opinion on the EU executive's proposals.



The Committee of the Regions' COTER Commission 2010-2015

The Committee of the Regions' Commission for territorial cohesion policy (COTER) gathers 116 regional and local politicians from the 27 EU member states. On 11 February they held their first meeting in the CoR's 2010-2015 mandate period, and elected Michel Delebarre as COTER President, and Marek Wozniak (EPP), Marshall of the Wielkopolskie region, as First Vice-President until June 2012.

The COTER Commission prepares the CoR's policy work in the fields of economic, social and territorial cohesion, structural funds, spatial planning, urban policy, housing, transport, macro regions and interregional cooperation, including the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The next COTER meeting will take place on 22-23 April in Jaén, Spain.

The meeting agenda and more information about the CoR is available on www.cor.eu.

Healthy Workforce = Healthy Economy: CoR highlights economic importance of reducing health inequalities

On 24 February 2010 Europe's efforts to boost its economy and get people back to work will be undermined by the failure to tackle the key issue of improving healthcare, claims Dave Wilcox (UK/PES), Committee of the Regions' (CoR) rapporteur on health inequalities.

Commenting after his draft opinion on "**Solidarity in health: reducing inequalities in the EU**" was adopted by the natural resources (NAT) commission of the CoR on Tuesday, Wilcox stressed that health issues were largely ignored by other EU policies despite having a clear influence on key issues such as productivity and competitiveness.

"Europe is currently suffering from a major economic and financial crisis, yet among all the proposals to lift our economies out of the doldrums, there is little or no mention of health issues. A **healthy workforce is an obvious advantage** when it comes to boosting productivity and improving competitiveness; investing more in ensuring that every EU citizen has access to the best quality health services and the highest possible quality of life would be one way of supporting more general measures to encourage economic growth and boost job creation."

Wilcox stressed that good will alone would not be enough to improve the situation. "If we want to reduce health inequalities then the EU has to put some resources behind that objective. Structural funds could be put to more widespread use in this area, for example, and the ongoing discussions over the **EU2020 plan for growth and jobs** should be widened to include this key issue."

Wilcox also underlined the need for a more comprehensive approach to assessing the impact of efforts to reduce inequalities in healthcare.

"We need to be able to know how we want to measure the changes that we are looking for in terms of reducing inequalities. This is not just a question of looking at how long people live, but at how long the wider population lives too, so that we then start to focus on the inequalities as well as the improvements."

The information which we currently collect is deficient. There are some common measures such as infant mortality and anticipated healthy life expectancy but we need some more measures that look at inequalities as well as the general average change that has taken place across countries. That's why we need a regional input into this: if we can get the better measures and talk to all the regions about what is required, then we have a way forward."



Wilcox added that he and fellow CoR member Karsten Uno Petersen (DK/PES), author of the CoR's 2009 opinion on cross border healthcare, had put forward a proposal to create an inter-regional group on health inequalities that would attempt to define a new set of criteria for assessing health inequalities. "We have had a very positive feedback to our proposal, not least from the European Commission which is keen to use the expertise of the Committee of the Regions and its members to improve its own statistical assessment procedures, as well as benefiting from more regular contact with local and regional representatives on the key issue of health care. Our hope is that this group, if it is agreed, can help turn this opinion into something more akin to an action programme."

The proposal to create an **inter-regional group on health inequalities** will be submitted to the March Bureau meeting of the Committee of the Regions for final approval.

If agreed, the first meeting of the inter-group is likely to take place during the April plenary session of the CoR, when Wilcox's opinion is expected to be adopted.

Adriatic Strategy towards European Cooperation

In light of a large scale of global challenges with which the Adriatic territory is confronted and with the aim to reach the objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion, the members of the Adriatic Euroregion have launched the Initiative for the creation of an Adriatic Strategy.

The conference was held in the Committee of Regions on 24 February 2010 to introduce this initiative and discuss a potential of macro-regional approach. The Adriatic Euroregion intended to inform the European institutions and various stakeholders about the need for the creation of an Adriatic development Strategy which will contribute to overcome disparities that characterize the Adriatic basin. The event welcomed speakers from various institutions as Danuta Hübner, Chairwoman Committee on Regional Development – European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Commission or leaders of the Adriatic Euroregion, the President Ivan Jakovčić and the Vice President Michele Iorio.

The Zlin Region in Brussels was present to this conference to monitor creation of a new initiative.

Meeting with Mr Jirotko from PermRep about the Danube Strategy

Since Romania and Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007, the Danube has become an internal EU waterway. As one of the "Trans-European corridors" it represents a priority axis for transport across the Union.

The preparation of a EU strategy that can encompass the simple transport dimension for the entire Danube area was put forward by the Danube area interregional group of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), which unanimously elected the President of Baden-Württemberg Landtag, Mr. Peter Straub, as its Chair on the 18 June 2009. On 19 June 2009, EU leaders gathered at a summit in Brussels requested the European Commission to prepare a strategy for the Danube region by the end of 2010. This would then be adopted by the Heads of state and government in the first half of 2011, under Hungarian EU presidency.

As the Zlin Region is geographically and administratively part of the Danube area, new opportunities for direct funding to major local projects having a transregional or transnational dimension appear at the horizon. For that reason, the Zlin Region in Brussels is trying to identify the specific advantages that the Danube Strategy could provide to local communities and is trying to assume a proactive approach to the on-going consultations for the preparation of the European strategy.

In that frame, on the 23 February 2010, the Rose House hosted an informal meeting with Mr. David Jirotko, Economic and Financial Officer at the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU. During the meeting, participants exchanged information and points of views about national and European activities for the preparation of the future macro-regional strategy. Specific attention has been devoted to the calendar of the future institutional appointments concerning the strategy.

The meeting ended with the mutual promise of maintaining the contacts for strengthening the future co-operation.

Presenting BAC in Pomorskie Regional Office

On the 23 and 24 of February 2010, the Pomorskie Regional Office in Brussels hosted a delegation of regional officers from the Transport Department. A program of visits and meetings was organized by the colleagues of the representation, including also on the 24 February a presentation by the Zlin Region in Brussels concerning the common initiative for the promotion of the Baltic Adriatic Corridor project.

Actually, the Zlin Region in Brussels was chosen as leader of the partnership "Baltic Adriatic Corridor Regions" which presented a candidature for the participation to the Open Days 2010.

The presentation touched all main points of the BAC project: the illustration of the importance of the Baltic Adriatic Axis from the perspective of Regional development for all involved countries, a resume of the initiatives already realized – starting with the signature of the Common Declaration among 14 Regions of the Corridor – and the program for the incoming months.

Specific attention has been reserved to the survey now going on within interested Regions for collecting information on the regional dimension of the BAC and to the dialogue with the EU institutions. Also the preparation of the Open Days 2010 was specifically treated.

The meeting was particularly useful to strengthen the cooperation among partner regions of BAC.

Calls

for proposals

Civil Society

Civil Protection Financial Instrument – Preparedness & Prevention

Deadline: **31.03.2010**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:311:0024:0024:EN:PDF>

Civil Society

European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors

Deadline: **12.03.2010**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:311:0021:0023:EN:PDF>

Civil Society

Europe for Citizens Program (call 2009)

Active Citizens for Europe; Active Civil Society; Active Europe Remembrance

Deadline: **Various**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:323:0042:0044:EN:PDF>

Civil Society

Youth in Action Programme

Deadline: **Various**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:315:0003:0007:EN:PDF2>

Education

LifeLong Learning Program – General Call for 2010

Deadline: **Various**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:247:0013:0015:EN:PDF>

Education

Erasmus Mundus II – Joint programs & partnerships

Deadline: **Various**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:294:0018:0024:EN:PDF>

Research

Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research (COST)

Deadline: **26.03.2010**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:021:0038:0039:EN:PDF>

Innovation

ICT section of the Competitiveness and Innovation Program

Information and Communication Technologies

Deadline: **01. 06. 2010**http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp

Healthcare

Second Program of Community Action in the field of Health

Deadline: **12. 03. 2010**<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:313:0016:0016:EN:PDF>



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CALENDAR

MARCH

12. 03 2010

Committee of the Regions
Open Days 2010
Regions of the BAC Initiative
Announcement of selection
Jacques Delors Building
Brussels, Belgium

18. 03. 2010

Baltic Adriatic Corridor
Partner meeting
Styria Office
Brussels, Belgium

22-26. 03. 2010

EU Sustainable Energy Week
Conference and events
European Union and EU
member countries including
Brussels, Belgium

26. 03. 2010

EU conference
"Which future for milk?"
European Commission
Brussels, Belgium

Vacancies in Europe

European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol)

- **Lawyer for Institutional Issues**

Vacancy notice: Europol/2010/TA/AD7/001

Temporary agents

Place of work: The Hague (Netherlands)

Deadline: 26. 03. 2010

Info: <http://www.europol.europa.eu>

European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol)

- **Senior ICT Specialist**

Vacancy notice: Europol/2010/TA/AD7/025

Temporary agents

Place of work: The Hague (Netherlands)

Deadline: 19.03.2010

Info: <http://www.europol.europa.eu>

European Law Enforcement Agency (Europol)

- **External Affairs Specialist**

Vacancy notice: Europol/2010/TA/AD7/011

Temporary agents

Place of work: The Hague (Netherlands)

Deadline: 26. 03. 2010

Info: <http://www.europol.europa.eu>



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Form closed:
28. 02. 2010

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