

BIRTH

NEWSLETTER
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OPEN DAYS 2008
BIRTH Bringing Innovative Regions Together for Health



European Week of Regions and Cities Brussels 6-9 October 2008

Editorial by BIRTH partners

Dear readers,

Our joint activities took place during the Open Days Week in Brussels and individual events continued even after in each one of our Regions.

Now that the intense program of official and informal events is over, we can finally draw a balance of BIRTH initiatives. Our general evaluation is definitively positive. BIRTH resulted to be a real good idea, as it was capable of launching the debate among Regions at the EU level around strategic issues such as the healthcare of tomorrow and the solutions that local and regional authorities can adopt in order to provide efficient and high-quality services to their citizens.

All involved parties, from regional politicians to international experts, from representatives of the European Commission to university professors, recognised that the exchange of information and experiences in that domain is crucial for facing a challenge of priority importance.

The idea was good, but also the contents of single initiatives were interesting.

Speakers and participants to BIRTH's seminar remained all satisfied by the quality of the contributions and the outputs of the debates. Then, the events within the Regions, further developing the themes approached in Brussels, registered everywhere extremely high rates of attendance.

Finally, the cooperation among BIRTH partners has been positive, with all members contributing to the common program and the organisation of the Open Days Week. Those reasons are bringing us thinking that the cooperation started up last year can surely continue and in several possible ways. Some of us have begun to think at joint projects to be realised with the help of EU funds, while the possibility of promoting a BIRTH2 conglomerate is more than a mere hypothesis. On the meeting of the 13th of November 2008, we have put the idea on the table and we are working on.

BIRTH is surely not close to other developments, including the welcoming of new partners and a strengthened cooperation with the EUREGHA Network grouping the local and regional authorities active in the field of healthcare.

Thus, we will continue on a way that seems to be promising and potentially rich of opportunities.

BIRTH partners of Open Days 2008

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BIRTH conglomerate

Bringing Innovative Regions
Together for Health

OPEN DAYS 2008

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Workshop 1, 08 October 2008

Maximising health gain: new financial models and use of Structural Funds

Organisers: BIRTH

Deputy: Veneto Region
Venue: West Midlands in Europe

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Outline of the workshop

The Seminar was organised in two parts. Part one focused on the notion of "health investment" as conceived by different actors such as Regions, academics, and DG REGIO.

Mr. Ruscitti, Veneto Region, initiated the debate by providing a concrete example on how the Veneto Region has invested available funding in health infrastructures and services in order to reduce the territorial disparities and improve the quality of the services provided to citizens. Prof. Suhrcke illustrated the existing literature on the topic by analysing two different core questions: first, whether health investment has positive impact on economic growth and, second, if investing in health is a consistent economic strategy. Mr Walsh, DG REGIO, explored the ways in which the European Cohesion Policy supports health infrastructures, services and investment programmes so as to spur endogenous growth potential, competitiveness of Regional economies and infrastructures.

The second part of the seminar was dedicated to regional experiences dealing with health investments and reforms.

Resume of the debate

Speakers and participants examined four case-studies in the second part of the workshop.

Mr. Eloy Jimenez-Cantos, Valencia Region, described the new model of financing healthcare services adopted by Valencia in 2005 to improve the efficiency of the health system. Based on three principles, namely decentralisation, integration of healthcare levels and

capitalised financing, the reform aimed at ensuring qualitative service and reducing financial losses.

Ms. Stefikova and Mr. Badura, Trencin Region, highlighted how the structural funds and national investments are earmarked to improve the Regional Healthcare System (RHIS) in Trencin to set a database of electronic health records, guarantee a transparent use of public resources and provide evidence of real expenses for healthcare insurance companies.

Ms Sulot illustrated the Regional Operational Programme of the Opolskie Voivodeship for 2007-2013. The ROP was put in place to enhance competitiveness and ensure social, economic, and spatial cohesion. As part and parcel of this strategy, the investment in health infrastructures and technologies aims at increasing attractiveness of the Region.

Mr. Ryznar, Olomouc, examined the reforms that have been undertaken by the Czech Republic since 1989. By providing a very clear picture of the flaws of the system management, Mr Ryznar pointed out a number of recommendations to address the problems, mainly the deficit of the health system, and improve the quality of the service.

Conclusions of the works

Participants all agreed on the strategic value of health investments as a mean to stimulate socioeconomic and regional development. Evidence-based researches show that health investments support on economic growth and have a positive impact at microeconomic level, including the regional dimension. However, a general



consensus emerged on the consideration that not enough is done in health promotion to address demographic trends and stimulate labour force participation. The presentation of different regional experiences highlighted common trends and the importance of re-thinking health systems so as to create a virtuous circle of health and financial efficiencies.

All involved parties, from regional politicians to international experts, from representatives of the European Commission to university professors, recognised that the exchange of information and experiences in that domain is crucial for facing a challenge of priority importance.

Europe in my Region

Birmingham, October 17, 2008

The seminar **Medical technologies and Europe** was opened by Malcolm Harbour MEP who stressed the importance of innovation for the EU economy and particularly the role of public authorities in pre-commercial procurement. Two examples of innovation were then presented, specifically the i-house, a converted house in the region that was used to showcase assistive medical technologies and show they could be used in a standard house or apartment, and the Coventry University's new Health Design and Technology Institute. A review of travel grants available for project development as well as overview of the role of West Midlands in Europe and current EU policy and funding opportunities in terms of health were also outlined to participants. The seminar ended with a general debate on how the medical technologies cluster could get more actively involved in European activities and exploit opportunities more effectively. It was also quite clear that the seminar was an excellent opportunity for many smaller SMEs to meet up and exploit networking opportunities.



Scientific conference „Human and Technics Integrating to Indicators of Knowledge Economy“, organised by Alexander Dubcek University of Trencin, 30-31 October 2008, Trencin Region, Slovakia

Workshop 2, 08 October 2008 Regional Innovation for a Healthier Europe

Organisers: BIRTH

Deputy: Veneto
Region

Venue: West Midlands in Europe

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Outline of the workshop

The workshop commenced with a networking lunch, addressed by Malcolm Harbour MEP for the West Midlands, which provided the opportunity for Health experts, researchers, public administrators, businesses and other delegates to exchange ideas and find potential partners for future collaboration. The workshop was chaired by Sir Albert Bore who opened the seminar with an introduction to the BIRTH consortium, explaining its background and the innovative ideas and objectives which the conglomerate wished to share with its participants. The seminar illustrated how new technologies are revolutionising health care, providing a platform for several regions to showcase innovations and best practice. The seminar showcased a number of success stories from participating regions including; Eszák-Alfold (HU), Picardie (FR), Zlin (CZ), and Brussels (BE). The sharing of first hand practical experience enabled delegates to gain an insight and investigate future transnational cooperation.

Resume of the debate

Rob Chesters from Medilink West Midlands took the opportunity to present the i-home, a real home which, for the first time in the UK, pioneers new technologies for assisted living, monitoring and ensuring the wellbeing of the resident. This demonstration project is helping create a demand-led market for innovative technologies.

Emmanuel Lemazurier member of the INERIS (French National Institute for Industrial Environment and Risks) gave a stimulating presentation outlining the ANIMEX research network. The ANIMEX research network evaluates chemical product impact on patient health, while reducing the level of animal experiment during clinical trials (REACH Directive.)

Anne Ferreira MEP, (PES France) highlighted that innovation in healthcare was a policy that affects all citizens. Advances in self-medication, mobility of patients and health professionals and on-line health facilities were all different aspects of a wider proposal that was currently being debated within the EU institutions. Anne Ferreira therefore strongly supported the Open Days seminar which helped provide a platform to showcase particular regional ground-breaking initiatives.

Pierre Lamy from Brussels Enterprise Agency gave an informative presentation on innovations in tele-diagnostics and telemedicine. Mr Lamy gave an overview of the telemedicine market in Belgium with a focus on Brussels. In particular he stated that the Brussels capital region represents 15 % of the global healthcare activity in Belgium (hospitals, private doctors, universities and industries) and that the region works in close collaboration between universities, the industry and the support of the regional authorities. He also described the current trends in the market.

Professor Petr Saha from Tomas Bata University and is head of Polymer Centre in Czech Republic discussed the innovative use of polymer technologies in the health sector. The presentation gives an insight to the innovative products that the Polymer centre and the medical research centre produce including; medical polymer gels, medical biomaterials, medicals composite materials and catheter, tube and container production.

Professor Zoltan Szekanez from the University of Debrecen Medical centre Eszak-Alfold region Hungary spoke about innovative use of thermal water for health care and heating. Professor Szekanez illustrated that thermal water can be used in many different forms including; physiotherapy, thermotherapy, phototherapy, electrotherapy, balneotherapy and climatotherapy. He concludes that thermal water can be used for healing in a medicinal form and has proven therapeutic efficiency.

Conclusions

Transregional cooperation is vital to improve research and innovation in Europe.

Local and Regional involvement is key to the success of structural funding opportunities.

Innovative Medicines Initiative in terms of health is becoming a key input to regeneration strategies and the fight against increasing inequality within the EU.



Europe in my Region

Brussels, October 24, 2008

Following the Open Days, the Ministry of Brussels-Capital Region organized as a home event a lecture called **Brussels: a regional player in Europe**. Held in the premises of Brussels Europe Liaison Office (BELO), the speakers discussed the role of the regions in Europe and the interest of the EU for the regions. Particular attention has been paid to the place and role of the Brussels-Capital Region as one of the regional actors. Due to its institutional situation, Belgium has a specific arrangement regarding the participation of its 3 regions in the EU as well as in the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU. The Brussels-Capital Region wanted also to draw the attention of the students that regions are crucial partners in the European scene.



Workshop 3

08.10.2008

Re-engineering hospitals

Organisers: BIRTH

Deputy: Veneto Region

Venue: Veneto Region in Brussels

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Outline of the workshop

In the first session, speakers defined the theoretical framework of discussion concerning the role that hospitals should cover in health systems characterised by an increasing number of outpatient services. Mr. Bertinato, Veneto Region, launched the debate by arguing that 'new' hospitals should consist in buildings perfectly fitting with the functions and processes that are still concentrated in the clinic setting. The new-built Mestre Hospital was presented as a non-invasive infrastructure that merges in complete harmony with the surrounding environment. In an inspiring intervention, Mr Wright, European Investment Bank, gave emphasis to the multiple role of hospitals that goes beyond the mere provision of healthcare. In order to ensure services of quality, hospitals have to invest in the workforce and R&D as well as focusing on

determined specialties. He also stressed the importance of conceiving hospitals according to the patients' pathways across whole system, which extends outside the hospital. To fuel the debate, Mr. Garel, HOPE, addressed a series of provoking questions to the audience. He analysed a series of trends such as the number of hospitals and acute beds over the last 10 years in order to ask "if" and "how" any national or regional health planning has ever influenced those trends. This linked to a more controversial question: have we ever been able to predict? - related to the assumption that hospitals and health planning usually respond to citizens' needs instead of predicting trends. After having explored these general questions, space was given to a series of case-studies.

Showcases

Six case-studies animated the discussions. Mr Mayolas, Catalunya Department of Health, highlighted the innovative solution epitomised by the cross-border hospital of Cerdanya between France and Spain run by a joint administration and management system set up in Puigcerda.

Ms Dinwoodie, Medway Primary Care Trust, gave an example of reconfiguring acute hospital services through a joint collaboration between two different Primary Care Trusts, notably, Medway and Kent.

Mr Regnault, GE Healthcare, introduced a new concept of hospital, the so-called 'green hospital', based on cost-

efficient solutions such as intelligent use of materials and resources, efficient water management, indoor environmental quality and innovative design to increase productivity and reduce wastes.

Mrs Aitamurto, Päijät-Häme Central Hospital, showed how the investment in day surgery operation has led to a significant increase of productivity as well as patients' and workforce' satisfaction.

Ms Kainz, Health and Social Fund of Lower Austria, explained how the Lower Austrian Hospital Holding manages the hospital system according to commercial and medical criteria by using a strategic instrument, the Reformpool, to realise integrated healthcare and improve efficiencies.

Mr White, North West England Brussels office, illustrated ChaMPs Public Health Network, the public health network aiming at creating a platform for Cheshire and Merseyside primary care.

Conclusions of the works

The first part of the seminar pointed out the challenges that hospitals face in today's ever-changing climate and how its re-thinking should be conceived according to the broader context in which the hospital setting represents part and parcel of an integrated healthcare system. The second part presented a series of best-practices that demonstrated how regional authorities can respond to common problems with different innovative solutions.

Europe in my Region



Olomouc, October 21, 2008

The Olomouc Region in cooperation with its Representation in Brussels organized the seminar called **Europe in the Olomouc Region** that was devoted to exchange experiences within management and organization of health care in the regions of the European Union. Speakers coming not only from the Olomouc Region, but also from the Zlin Region and Trencin Region explained the environment of health care and problems of hospitals from practical point of view as well as the political goals, strategies and management of investments to the health care. At the end of the seminar, the representatives of the Olomouc Region discussed together with the speakers the results of the investments to the health care, impact of health care reforms and the relations between hospitals and health insurance agencies. It was proved that the Health Care is the contemporary hot issue attracting many professionals as well as public, thus the topic affecting all of us.

Zlin, October 22, 2008

Zlin Region in Brussels in cooperation with Eurocentre Zlin organized as a local event following Open Days in Brussels a seminar **Problems of Health Care in the EU** that targeted students and tutors of Health Care studies of Tomas Bata University in Zlin, health care oriented high schools in the region, and representatives of health care oriented institutions in the region. The participants had an opportunity to get informed about the Open Days, specifically about BIRTH conglomerate and its events organised in Brussels during European week of Regions and Cities. Furthermore, the Strategy of Zlin Region on Health Care and the possibilities of European financing in the health care sector were presented by experts of the Zlin Region. The second part of the seminar focused on possibilities of studying abroad, mainly for students of medicine and the procedures and administration of the internships abroad.

