

NEWSLETTER

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Editorial - By Mr. Mattia Crosetto

Dear Readers,

The Zlín Region will take part to the **European Week of the Regions and Cities – Open Days 2007**.

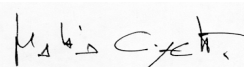
On 13 February 2007, the partnership **"ERRIN Regions for the Open Days"**, coordinated by West Midlands (UK), and composed by the Zlín Region, the Olomouc Region, South Sweden (SWE), Puglia (IT), Navarra (ES), Lodz (PL), Unioncamerere Piemonte (IT), Valencia (ES), Eindhoven (NL) and Municipality of Maribor (SLO) has presented its candidature to the Committee of the Regions.

The partners will be divided **'conglomerates'**, meaning consortia each one identified by a 'brand' name reflecting the nature of their partnership or main focus.

Each conglomerate is expected to organise two **events** within a common programme that will be coordinated by the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission. Each conglomerate should also organise an **exhibition** within one of its partner offices and should actively participate in the preparation and organisation of the Open Days. Based on the common programme, each partner office of OPEN DAYS should actively **promote their own events** and mobilize potential participants and groups of visitors and journalists from their home regions and cities to attend to the events that will take place in Brussels.

The edition of 2007 will be enriched with the Investors' Café and a series of decentralised events that the Regions will organise in their home countries. The **Office of the Zlín Region** is already working on some project ideas that will be presented in these pages and on the Office's website as soon as approved by the Committee of the Regions.

Mattia Crosetto



Zlín Region in Brussels

Contents

What's new in Brussels and around Europe

TRN – Best Practice Exchange Page 2

Focus on new EU programmes

Boosting innovation in the renewable energy sector Page 3

Public consultation on transnational cooperation in central Europe Page 3

Special 7FP: the four programmes and the thematic areas Page 4

Briefly about EU policies and programmes

Strengthening transport cooperation with neighbouring countries Page 5

Green paper on urban transport

Foreign Direct Investment in the Czech Republic: A Challenge for Domestic Firms

Calls' agenda Page 6

Events' agenda and Job Vacation Page 7



TRN – Best Practice Exchange Improving Regional Development in & through ICT

2007 will be an exciting year, full of new opportunities and challenges for the European Regions. The new programming period of the structural funds will start, as well as the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Unprecedented funding opportunities at a European level will open up, especially for the New Member States.

To use these funds most effectively, and to assist in its implementations, good ideas and approaches are needed. The aim of TRN is to exchange ideas, best practices, to work together for cohesion, growth, employment, and innovation in Europe. TRN would like to **bring together Regions**, but also **Business and Academia** – to work together and find solution to the pressing demand for regional development in ICT.

The approach TRN is pursuing is based on the experience of regional cooperation in the past. TeleRegions Network is setting up a best practice database to facilitate the access to ideas and experience across Europe to make it easier to find solutions without having to reinvent the wheel. TRN encourages a bottom-up approach to best practice exchange. Best practices will not be preselected. All regions are invited to propose any best practice example they perceive as successful and promising also for other regions. To raise the incentive to share this information, TRN is also inviting businesses and research institution to participate. Any of these organizations may participate on the requirement of having successfully implemented a project together with a region (this can be EU funded, but also any other form of joint projects – national funding, regional, local, etc.). If the region endorses it, it may be included in the **TRN-Best Practice Database**. By including these institutions they will have an incentive to promote themselves and assist the region in providing the details and required material. They will also be a direct contact for any interested region.

All parties will benefit from such an approach. It will give the regions access to a large variety of experiences and examples, and at the same time-sharing the burden of participation. The businesses and research institutions will directly gain from such best practice exchange by promoting their solutions, their technologies, experience, etc. and attract additional business and attention. By promoting regional companies this may also help **to foster the regional economy** by exporting the solutions offered by the companies and research institutions to other regions.

Sharing ideas, experience and solutions to common problems still bears much potential. The different expertise within the European regions needs to be utilized more effectively to promote growth and cohesion in the Regions. The TeleRegions Network with its TRN-Best Practice Exchange Database offers an effective contribution to this.

To make this process as simple, as broad and as accessible as possible, the TRN members have decided to considerably lower membership fee in 2007 for the regions, businesses and research institutions from the New Member States (EU10+2), if they are willing to participate actively. **Active participation encompasses:**

- identifying at least **three best practice** examples from the region and provide information about the project, the project partners, and how it can be applied also to other regions;
- identifying at least **three areas** where ideas, experience and best practice solutions are sought;
- designating a **key contact person** for TRN activities in general, and assign a contact person (a practitioner) for each best practice example and challenge (contact details will only be available to registered TRN members);
- participating in **active dialogue** with the other regions, e.g. in direct contact, within networking session, in workshops, seminars and conferences.

What is TRN?

TeleRegions Network (TRN) is an International Non-Profit Organization of European Regions. **Founded in 1997** by key regions from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the UK, TRN has been actively participating in the field of Regional Development and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). **TeleRegions Network is being relaunched** with a new structure, and an extended members base, making it more effective in an enlarged Europe, the New Programming Period, as well as more flexible to adapt to the future challenges.

Objectives

The TeleRegions Network aims at **improving cooperation to enhance regional opportunities in the information society** – to foster regional development in and through ICT. TRN offers practical solutions for the challenges of regional development and ICT by combining **Successful solution** – best practice solutions that have been successfully realized in the regions **Promising solutions** – cutting edge research and upcoming technologies, in development by the leading research institutions **Available solutions** – solutions that are available on the market, ready for implementation.

For further information, please visit website: www.teleregionsnetwork.org

Boosting innovation in the renewable energy sector



An EU funded project is boosting innovation in the renewable energy and energy efficiency fields by providing practical help to scientists whose research results have the potential to be transformed into commercially viable products or services. The project is called ProRETT (Promotion of Renewable Energy Technology Transfer).

The ProRETT project brings together **representatives of all the sectors** needed for the successful exploitation of research results including researchers, technology transfer professionals, a venture capital fund, a bank and the renewable energy industry. Together, they plan to address the technical barriers to transforming research results into innovations, promote the market uptake of new energy technologies by European companies and start-ups and develop best practices and policy recommendations.

The project has identified a number of R&D results from publicly funded research in the renewable energy and energy efficiency fields which are ready for innovation activities. The project partners are now helping the researchers to take their work to the next level by agreeing on a commercialisation vision and designing a set of business model options.

Services offered by the project partners include help developing a business plan, making contacts with investors, information on intellectual property rights management and advice on how to create a start-up or set up a licensing deal.

Access to funding for the exploitation of research results is extremely competitive. Uffe Bundgaard-Jorgensen, CEO of InvestorNet pointed out that the vast majority of proposals for funding sent to investors end up in the bin because they fail to convince the investor that the plan has a realistic chance of making money.

ProRETT aims to **help researchers develop business plans** which will get them a meeting with the investor, a stage reached by only 10 % of proposals. Through the ProRETT project and the EU's **Gate2Growth portal**, researchers can access tool which will help them assess whether their business plan is ready to be sent to investors.

One major problem is designing business plans is that many researchers underestimate how long it will take for their venture to become profitable.

Currently the ProRETT project partners are focusing their efforts on 16 initiatives from across Europe which they believe have the potential to develop products or services that could succeed on the market. At the workshop, case studies of some of these initiatives were presented. The FutureE initiative has developed high performance, cost efficient fuel cells. ProRETT has helped them to set up a start-up company and is now providing assistance in the hunt for investors.

Meanwhile the Lithojet project has developed a new drilling technology for geothermal wells. Currently, drilling takes a long time and is expensive; the new technique is much quicker and involves melting the rock to create the hole. With help from ProRETT, the Lithojet team decided to form a company and is currently applying for patents for their technology.



For further information, please consult the following web addresses:
www.prorett.eu and www.gate2growth.com

Public consultation on transnational cooperation in central Europe

The draft of the operational programme for the new central Europe programme 2007-2013 and the environmental report have been published on the CADSES (Central European, Adriatic, Danubian, South-Eastern Space) website for public consultation.

The programme area of central Europe includes Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and the partner state Ukraine. Environmental authorities and the general public are invited to send their comments on the public consultation to centraleurope@meu.maqwien.gv.at by 28 February 2007.

On the basis of the results of this public consultation the countries represented in the transnational Task Force of the central Europe programme will develop the final version of the operational programme to be submitted to the European Commission in March 2007.

CADSES Website:
www.cadses.net/en/New_Programmes_2007_2013/Central_Europe.html



7th FP : Tomorrow's answer starts today

Special section on Innovation: second sheet devoted to the opportunities offered by the new EU programme for research and technological development.

The Seventh Framework Programme is made up of four specific programmes plus a fifth specific programme on nuclear research. Cooperation (Collaborative research) is the programme that finances international cooperation projects across the European Union and beyond in 10 thematic areas, corresponding to major fields in science and research. Research will be supported and strengthened to address European social, economic, environmental, public health and industrial challenges, serve the public good and support developing countries.

In this special section, we describe the main aims and content of the four specific programmes of the 7FP. The first sheet has been published in the edition n.01 of January 2007.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTs) (Budget: €9.1 billion)



Information and Communication Technologies play a crucial role in boosting innovation, creativity and competitiveness of all industry and service sectors. We are entering a new phase of development that will drive growth and sustainable development for the coming decades; however, this growth will only be captured if we invest now in research and innovation for the next generation of technologies.

➤ **What's the benefit for citizens:**

ICTs are opening up many new opportunities for European citizens and consumers. There is a wide range of applications including healthcare provision, transport systems, as well as innovative interactive systems for entertainment and learning. Innovation in ICT can help improve illness prevention and safety of care, facilitate active participation of patients and enable personalisation of care and can also tackle problems associated with the ageing population.

➤ **What's the benefit for researchers:**

Under FP7, ICT research activities will cover strategic priorities in areas of European industrial and technological leadership, such as communication networks, embedded computing, nanoelectronics and technologies for audiovisual content.

Research areas will include:

- Network and services infrastructure stability and security;
- Performance and reliability of electronic systems and components;
- Personalised ICT systems;
- Digital content management.

➤ **What's the benefit for industry and SMEs:**

ICTs account for nearly half of the productivity gains in our economies today. The gains stem both from the production of innovative high value ICT-based goods and services and from improvements in business processes through the diffusion, adoption and use of ICTs across the economy. ICT-intensive sectors include manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and agro-food, as well as financial services, media and retail. Benefits reported by firms, as a result of increased use of ICTs, include faster product development, cost and overhead reductions, faster and more reliable transactions, better relationships with customers and suppliers, improved levels of customer service and support, and enhanced collaboration opportunities.

FP7 will facilitate the creation of new forms of networked business processes and applications, as well as new engineering approaches for the application of ICT in manufacturing.



www.ec.europa.eu/research



Strengthening transport cooperation with neighbouring countries

The EC adopted a Communication on "Guidelines for transport in Europe and neighbouring regions".

It outlines an ambitious policy in view of creating an effective transport market involving the EU and its neighbours and of spreading the principles of internal market. The Communication identifies the five most important transport axes for international trade between the Union and the neighbouring countries and beyond. It also puts forward a package of measures to shorten journey times along these axes including improvement of infrastructure, streamlining of customs procedures and reducing administrative obstacles.

The Guidelines outline the first steps of a comprehensive policy for closer integration of the EU transport system with neighbouring countries. This policy focuses on the main infrastructure for international transport and the legislation governing the use of these routes by different transport modes. Over time, it should lead to common rules and regulations for the transport sector as a whole and thus create an effective transport market involving the EU and its neighbours.

These Guidelines build on the recommendations of the High Level Group the Commission set up in 2004 and which submitted its final report to Vice-President Barrot in December 2005. The Group was chaired by the former Vice-President of the Commission, Loyola de Palacio. It included high level representatives from the EU 27 and from the 26 neighbouring countries in the North, East and South-East of Europe as well as from countries around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Three main international financial institutions also participated in this work.

Green paper on urban transport

The debate on the Green Paper on urban Transport started on January 31 with a major stakeholders conference in Brussels on Urban Transport.

Problems, Solutions and Responsibilities. The conference was organised in the context of the EU Sustainable Energy Week. Around 400 representatives from all sectors that have an interest in urban transport were present. High level representatives from European cities and from the European Institutions presented the expectations of local authorities from the Green Paper and addressed the added value of actions at the European level.

A public consultation will be launched shortly.

For further information, please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/clean/green_paper_urban_transport/preparation_en.htm

Foreign Direct Investment in the Czech Republic: A Challenge for Domestic Firms



An economic analysis concerning Foreign Direct Investment in the Czech Republic has been published by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs.

The Czech Republic has been one of the primary recipients of foreign direct investment (FDI) among Central and Eastern European countries. Soon after transition, it attracted the attention of foreign investors based on sound economic fundamentals and the opportunities offered by early privatisations. Substantial foreign investment over a fifteen year period has profoundly affected the structure and performance of the economy. This country focus looks at the way in which foreign investment has influenced productivity and market dynamics, including intra and inter-industry spillovers, and the expansion of the economy as a whole.

Calls' Agenda

Audiovisual and Media	Deadline	Link
Information notice for applications concerning the appointment of operators charged with providing the universal electronic communications service	To be defined	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/cs/oj/2007/c_009/c_00920070113cs00080008.pdf
Media 2007 Development, distribution and promotion Call for proposals — EACEA No 16/06 Support for the development of production projects (MEDIA New Talent, single projects and slate funding)	16.04.2007	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/cs/oj/2006/c_320/c_32020061228cs00240025.pdf
Media 2007 Development, distribution promotion and training Call for proposals — EACEA No 18/06 — Training	09.03.2007	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/cs/oj/2006/c_320/c_32020061228cs00260026.pdf
Research	Deadline	Link
7FP : Calls for proposals for the four Programmes		
Programme Cooperation Programme Ideas Programme People Programme Capacities	Various	http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm
Civic Society	Deadline	Link
Call for proposals on Violent Radicalisation	Various	http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/isecc/funding_isecc_en.htm
Education and Culture	Deadline	Link
Culture programme (2007–2013) Organisation and implementation of an annual EU prize scheme in the field of cultural heritage Conditional Call for proposals — DG EAC No 55/06	28.02.2007	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/cs/oj/2006/c_270/c_27020061107cs00180020.pdf
New calls		

Events of the Months

Conference	Symposium	Forum
26-27.02.07 Budapest	05.-06.03.07 Berlin	19.-20.03.07 Brussels
		
<p>Central and Eastern European Power <i>Panel discussions about new challenges of a new project development and emissions policies</i></p>	<p>International Annual Symposium 2007 EU-Funds <i>The new Period 2007-2013: New Funds – new Regulation. Background, strategies and practical approach.</i></p>	<p>The Brussels Tax Forum <i>The topic chosen for 2007 is Taxation for sustainable development</i></p>

Job Vacancies

European Investment Bank	<p>Intern Auditor Deadline: 16 February 2007 Place: Luxembourg Ref. no: IG07WWW01</p>
European Bioethanol Fuel Association	<p>Assistant of General-secretary Deadline: 8 March 2007 Place: Brussels</p>

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What's on in the Next Number

In within the 7th Framework Programme you will find the information on nanotechnologies...



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