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Editorial

Mattia Crosetto

Dear readers,

the Semester of Czech Presidency clearly represents a unique opportunity for the Country as a whole and for its local communities too for directly expressing a vision about the future of the European integration process. The strategic value of this opportunity is even raised by the historical moment in which it will take place, as at the beginning of 2009, the new Treaty of Lisbon should enter into force. In fact, the Lisbon Treaty brings one cycle of the EU integration to an end and opens a phase totally new.

Because of these reasons, the Zlin Region in Brussels has defined a concept that recognizes full vitality to the European integration process together with the respect of each individual role - that of the national and regional governments - and of individual cultures and experiences. In that way, it should be possible to develop common policies at the European level that could have a real positive impact also for the local communities.

The Czech Regions can directly contribute to the progressive building up of those policies, supporting a moving forward that keeps continuity between the European dimension and the final beneficiaries.

On the basis of the inputs collected within the Regions, and taking into account also the considerations formulated by the Association of the Czech Regions, the initiatives we proposed for the Semester of Presidency in Brussels have a twofold aim: 1. the durable promotion of the Czech Regions at the EU level, throughout events that can leave long-lasting outcomes among the European partners ; 2. the highlighting of critical issues for the Regions in the EU perspective, and notably the role that the Regions can play in cooperation with the national and European Authorities in areas such as the cross-border cooperation, the future of the Cohesion policy, the completion of the Single Market and the services to the local communities. Today, we present you our ideas in this Newsletter.

Sincerely,

Mattia Crosetto
The Head of Office
Zlin Region in Brussels

WHAT'S NEW IN BRUSSELS?



The initiatives proposed by the Zlin Region in Brussels aim at highlighting the specific contribution of the Czech Regions in general and of the Zlin Region in particular to the European dimension, both in technical and cultural terms. They also try to raise the attention of the European Institutions on the problems and needs of the Czech Regions in fully participating in the integration process.

Planned activities for a joint programme of the Czech Regions

The Zlin Region in Brussels has proposed a first group of activities that could be realised jointly by all the Czech Regions.

This list includes:

- a seminar at the Committee of the Regions
- an artistic contest with final presentation to the Committee of the Regions
- a special publication "Visions of Europe from the Czech Regions"
- a gastronomic promotional dinner

The Zlin Regions in Brussels has proposed these proposals within the frame of the "Days of Czech Regions" already agreed with the Regional Representatives in Brussels.

These events are intended as complementary with the proposals coming up to now from Prague House, South Bohemia in Brussels and Karlovy Vary in Brussels. As proposals, they can be subject to integrations, modifications, updating following the open discussion with all the parties interested in the organisation of the Regional participation in the Czech Semester of Presidency to the EU.

Czech artistic contest for the promotion of the Czech Regions in Europe

After the first exam of the proposed initiatives, the Czech Regions has positively judged the idea of the common artistic contest and of the gastronomic dinner. Immediate agreement has been defined for a joint initiative in that sense.

Artistic contest: description

Each Czech Region chooses one local artist (sculptor, painter, etc.) who has to provide an original masterpiece dedicated to the ideals and principles of the European Union: peaceful dialogue among communities, solidarity, equality of chances, freedom and citizens rights protection. The masterpieces will be exposed to the public in an exhibition within a EU Institution (for example the EC seat in Berlaymont). An international jury, made up of high representatives of Czech Republic, EU Institutions and international cultural personalities, will judge the best masterpiece on the basis of jointly agreed criteria.

The winning masterpiece will be formally donated by the Czech Regions to the CoR during a ceremony at the presence of the artists, the Czech and European Institutions, the European and international press. The masterpiece will remain exposed in the official premises of the CoR as a memory of the participation of the Czech Regions in the Semester of Czech Presidency 2009. A catalogue presenting all the Czech participating artists and their masterpieces will be edited for the event.

Gastronomic event

Inspired to the formula of the "Official Reception" of the Open Days, the event is conceived with the specific target of promoting in Brussels the Regional gastronomic specialties and the local high-quality businesses (beer and wine producers, agro-food operators, typical and bio farmers, etc.). The event could be conceived as a "gastronomic exhibition", with catering companies coming from the Regions and a degustation offered to EU personalities (MEPs, CoR Members, EU Officers).

It is important to distinguish the event from a normal reception or party. Here, the aim (and thus the organisation) has the specific aim of promoting the producers that should be put in condition of being clearly identified and remembered during the event and after.

The event should be realized with the active participation of the interested businesses that should - at least - contribute by assuming the costs of their missions to Brussels as well as of the food transport fees. The Regions could pay for the costs of the catering companies and for the premises-related costs (cleaning, security, etc.).

The idea is to organise this event in cooperation with Prague House in Brussels.

Specific events presented for the Zlin Region Thematic and promotional initiatives

The two initiatives imagined by the Zlin Region in Brussels are based on the experience made during these years of representation of the Region to the EU.

The problems of insufficient infrastructures - and specifically in the field of transport - have led the Region to a reinforced dialogue with the EU Institutions in the frame of the TEN-T programme. The proposals take also into account the cooperation established in 2007 upon initiative of the Representative Office of the Zlin Region in Brussels with the Brussels Film Festival. Finally, they correspond to the general philosophy of the present Concept that aims, at the same time, at realizing a durable promotion of the Region in Europe and at discussing issues of critical importance for the Region with the EU partners.

Seminar at the Committee of the Regions

TEN-T Projects: state of the art and possible evolution

The Seminar is proposed to raise the attention of the EU Institutions and partners on the still missing elements for the completion of the Internal Market. The issue of the transport infrastructures, especially in the New Member States, is one of them.

The Seminar could try to find the answers to some "recurrent" questions, such as, for example:

- after several years of implementation, which is the balance of the TEN-T investments?
- which is the state-of-the-art of the PPP in this field?
- are there new formulas that could be experimented for a better combination of the EU, National, Regional and private capitals for the realisation of the transport infrastructures?
- is there any possibility that the scheme of the concession be modified for new forms of involvement of the local communities for participating in the financing of those project?

Other questions, specifically relating to the matter of the local connexions to the TEN-T schemes, can also be prepared and presented.

The Seminar corresponds to the interests of the Zlin Region in completing and upgrading its local transport system, with specific reference to the transport sector. The importance of the issues in a transborder perspective could even suggest the organisation of the event in partnership with the Slovak Region of Trenčín.

Promotional event

Film Festival Zlin in Brussels

The Zlin Region is engaged in the promotion at the international level of the Film Festival Zlin, the International Film Festival for Children and Youth. After a first promotional event realised in Brussels in 2006, in cooperation with the Czech Permanent Representation, the Zlin Region in Brussels has established a cooperation with the Brussels Film Festival.

On the basis of the realised partnership, the Film Festival Zlin will be a special guest of the Brussels Film Festival in the pilot edition of 2008 (similarly, the Brussels Film Festival will be hosted in Zlin). The official programme of the Brussels Film Festival will include an evening devoted to the presentation of the winner movie of one of the Zlin Film Festival categories.

Complementary events (exhibition, reception, press conference, presentation of the movie-makers, etc.) are also envisaged.

The final programme of the event will be defined after the trial edition of 2008.

The event perfectly correspond to the priority of the Region for the international promotion of the Film Festival Zlin. The event would also provide a high-profile image of the Zlin Regions at the EU level.

The Zlin Region in Brussels has already started working on the realization of this event by establishing a frame of collaboration with the Brussels Film Festival.

A pilot initiative is presently under organization for the edition of the Film Festival Brussels of June 2008.

For more information about the Brussels Film Festival, go to:

www.fffb.eu

FOCUS ON EU PROGRAMMS



Special Section on Innovation

Within this section, you can find some examples of successful projects realized in the field of innovation. A good source of inspiration for new initiatives in the Region.

CASE 10

Academic label for digital SMEs

In the heart of Liverpool, a business incubator with academic roots is giving birth to start-ups whose innovative ideas for the modern digital industry subsequently benefit from the international renown of the John Moores University.

An old and declining port area, Merseyside faces persistent problems and has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country (6.5 % in 2003, 37.3 % of which are long term unemployed). Support for innovative companies in growth sectors is a major priority for the region. DigitalINC, co-financed by the ERDF and the North-west Regional Development Agency (NWDA), is the UK's leading business incubator for the digital industry and one of the cornerstones of the 'Digital Academy' project that is focusing on innovation in digital content for education, the information society, aid to SMEs and research. The Digital Academy is itself managed by the International Centre for Digital Content (ICDC), part of the John Moores University, in central Liverpool.

The ICDC regards business incubation as the best possible way of creating viable companies by providing them not only with a work space but also with a genuine launching pad in the form of efficient services and equipment at every stage of the way: pre-launch, launch and first development stages.



The cases presented in this special section, have been selected among those published by the EC in "Regions for Economic Change". The first sheet has been published in the edition of 31 of October 2007.

The incubation lasts three years, with a viability evaluation of the business after the first three months followed by tutorship.

DigitalINC is housed in a specially designed building and has a team of specialists active in various technological fields, including business plans, marketing, administration, financial set-ups and brokering industries such as BNFL (British Nuclear Fuels) the university's reputation is a major asset.'

All the companies are like-minded and pursue compatible activities. They work together on joint projects that bring them mutual benefits, thereby further reinforcing the climate of cooperation.

Since it was launched in April 2002, DigitalINC has incubated about 20 companies, some of which have won prestigious prizes in sectors ranging from graphic design to remote teaching and including animation and electronic games, marketing consultancy as well as security systems. Examples include Eek Films (digital animation), Abacor Ltd (electronic payment systems for salaries), Taecanet (online teaching), Splinter (design of company labels, multimedia products for the education and social sector), Neat 3D (3D imaging), etc.

"Our aim", explains Peter Leather, one of the ICDC managers "is to make Liverpool the digital hub of the north-west of England".

DigitalIDC gains both credibility and stability from being a part of the ICDC within the John Moores University. It also opens doors to companies that would otherwise be closed. Our start-ups come up with innovative ideas but when it comes to selling these ideas to big corporate industries the university's reputation is a major asset.'

Details of the project

Project: Digital Academy

Programme: Objective 1

UK 2000-06

Total cost: EUR 35.017.000

EU contribution: EUR 9.775.000

Fund: EU Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Contact

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SHORTS FROM BRUSSELS



The European Commission has assigned its prizes to honour leading scientists for groundbreaking research into everything from dark energy and black holes to killer T-cells and food-borne pathogens. An important event to promote EU creativity and innovation potential.

Science and Research Awards: Europe celebrate top researchers

For the first time from their creation, the EU's three most prestigious science awards have been presented together – the science communication prizes, Marie Curie excellence awards and the Descartes research prizes – at an award ceremony in Brussels on 12 March 2008.

Describing the winners as "the best Europe has to offer", EC science and research commissioner Janez Potočnik said the awards honoured excellence, openness and creativity.

Science communication awards

Three prizes, each one for a value of €60 000, were awarded to projects that boost public interest in research and promote the understanding of science.

Mister Jean-Pierre Luminet picked up the prize for communicator of the year. The prize for the best writer went to Delphine Grinberg from the Palais de la Découverte français.

Peter Leonard and Andrew Cohen got best audiovisual documentary for "Most of our universe is missing".

Marie Curie excellence awards

Linked to the Marie Curie actions, these awards are for outstanding achievement in science. Five winners were each presented with €50 000: Dr Luisa Corrado from Cambridge University for research into wealth and its impact on happiness; Dr Batu Erman from Sabanci University in Istanbul for targeting killer T-cells to combat cancer; Dr Andrea Ferrari from Cambridge University for research into nanotubes and new electronic devices; Professor Robert Nichol from the University of Portsmouth for providing insight into dark energy, and to Dr Valerie O'Donnell from Cardiff University for her work on free radicals and inflammation.

Descartes research prizes

These prizes go to transnational research teams that have achieved exceptional results together in any scientific discipline. The three winning teams shared a total of €1 360 000: Virlis looked into fighting infection through its study of the bacterial genus *Listeria*; SynNanoMotors gained recognition for producing some of the world's first working synthetic molecular motors and mechanical nanomachines; EPICA was given an award for its analysis of ice cores in Antarctica, which has led to greater understanding of climate change, its mechanisms and consequences.

Environment and climate change: the European Commission engaged in linking these topics to a strategy for economic growth

The EU has already made ambitious commitments on climate change, including a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020. It now has to decide how, in practical terms, it will meet all the targets it set last year. On 23 January, the Commission issued a raft of climate and energy proposals to transform words into action – although it could do much more with a new international agreement following on from the Kyoto protocol.

After a slow start, the EU growth and jobs strategy is starting to deliver results: budget deficits have been cut in half since 2005, economic growth hit 3% in 2007 and 6.5m jobs have been created in the last two years. But eager to build on these achievements, on 13 March, EU leaders launched the next phase of the strategy.

The stability of the financial markets was also discussed, along with international relations and the union for the Mediterranean, an initiative designed to strengthen EU-Mediterranean cooperation.

To know about the EU strategy for growth and occupation:

http://www.ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index_en.htm

Calls for proposals

Internet	Multiannual Program Safer Internet Plus Deadline: 28. 05. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:067:0048:0049:EN:PDF
Education	'Youth in the world': cooperation with countries other than the neighbouring countries of the European Union Deadline: 15. 04. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:038:0008:0009:EN:PDF
Education	Tempus IV — Reform of higher education through university international cooperation Deadline: 28. 04. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:031:0014:0015:EN:PDF
Media 2007	Development of interactive works on all platforms both online and off line Deadline: 15. 04. 2007 / 15. 04. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/c_204/c_20420070901en00090009.pdf
Media 2007	Support for the transnational distribution of EU films and the networking of distributors - The 'selective' scheme Deadline: 01. 04. 2008 / 01. 07. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/c_311/c_31120071221en00200020.pdf
Civil Protection	Cooperation projects on preparedness and prevention Deadline: 30. 04. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:065:0004:0004:EN:PDF
Health	II Programme of Community action in the field of Health (2008-13) Deadline: 23. 05. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:056:0030:0030:EN:PDF
Transport	Call for proposals under the new Marco Polo II Program Deadline: 07. 04. 2008 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:031:0013:0013:EN:PDF



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CALENDAR

MARCH

31. 03. 2008

Open Days 2008

Investors' Cafè

Deadline for the presentation of the candidatures Committee of the Regions Brussels, Belgium

APRIL

01. 04. 2008

Journée Portes Ouvertes 2008

Deadline for the presentation of the candidatures Committee of the Regions Brussels, Belgium

17. 04. 2008

European Alcohol and Health Forum

European Commission Brussels, Belgium

26-27. 02. 2008

EU International Affairs and Business Conference

European Commission Brussels, Belgium

Vacancies in Europe

European Environmental Agency

• Project Manager

Air emissions expert

Vacancy notice: EEA/AD/2008/1

Grade: Temporary agents

Place of work: Copenhagen, Denmark

Deadline: 11. 04. 2008

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

European Environmental Agency

• Project Managers

Sustainable consumption manager

Vacancy notice: EEA/AD/2008/1

Grade: Temporary agents

Place of work: Copenhagen, Denmark

Deadline: 11. 04. 2008

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

European Chemicals Agency

• Manager

Quality management expert

Vacancy notice: ECHA/TA/2008/08

Grade: Temporary agents

Place of work: Helsinki, Finland

Deadline: 07. 04. 2008

Info: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/index.asp?section=3&sub=4>



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Form closed:
15. 3. 2008

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