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In a period that state funding "is drying up" and any idea about decentralization of taxes needs a deeper thought, self-financed municipal projects seem to gain ground via crowdfunding. Crowdfunding, or "financing from the crowd", is a new and simple way of finding capital bound to accomplish a creative idea or a business plan. Many projects have been supported with thousands even millions of dollars (euros) in this way, after their initiators had addressed to the final user for funding, taking into consideration that anyone can give the amount he likes. Recently, in Great Britain, Mansfield District Council successfully used the crowdsourcing platform *Spacehive* to raise over £36,000 to install free WiFi in the Mansfield. Similarly, the New York City Council has launched an official internet page to serve as a hub for crowdfunded community projects in low-income neighbourhoods. Crowd-funding platforms focused on funding local government projects are sprouting up in the U.S. and abroad, giving citizens a direct say in where government spends their money for the first time in history. Crowdfunding projects appeal to people who become passionate about the problem they will help to solve. People like to feel they are making a difference. They feel good when a target amount is raised for something they've contributed even a small amount to, and that project then comes to fruition. It seems that struggling cities survive only when they truly trust the people.

European Funding Programmes

Call for Proposals-Deadlines

1. MED Programme – Integrated Maritime approach

The MED programme is a transnational programme of European territorial cooperation. It is financed by the European Union as an instrument of its regional policy and of its new programming period. It continues the tradition of the European programmes for cooperation (previously named Interreg). The transnational setup allows the programme to tackle territorial challenges beyond national boundaries, such as environmental risk management, international business or transport corridors. So far, 144 projects have been programmed, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) up to a rate of 85%.

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As indicated in the Blue Growth vision of the European Commission, there is a great fragility in European sea basin and coastal areas but also a great potential of economic growth, needing to be exploited with sustainable and coordinated policies. The Mediterranean is a global biodiversity (and cultural) hotspot, concentrating 8% of marine species on a surface not more than 0,8% of global ocean areas. It is threatened by over-exploitation of halieutic resources, and land –sea based pollution from agriculture, industry, transport and other environmental threats (invasive species, chemical waste, ballast waters, oil spills, marine litter, etc). The area is more vulnerable towards coastal erosion and other effects of climate change, than most European coasts. Every year, this ecologically rich and fragile area receives 31% of world tourism. And it is confronted by a major economic downturn and massive unemployment. In this situation, the MED programme has decided to invest its remaining resources for a specific call for proposals that has been inspired by the recent progress in European level integrated maritime policy initiatives.

The objective of this call is to put in place new relevant partnerships that could later be involved in the implementing of the following operational programme. These partnerships should work on data collection, mapping, establishing a reliable state of the art and identifying policy gaps, lacks of common approaches and methodological frameworks, and other obstacles hindering transnational cooperation potential. Even if the projects are invited to position themselves on a particular Priority Axis, they are asked to work as much as possible on an integrated and systemic approach, taking into account the consequences of a specific sector of activity, to other sectors. The choice of the following priorities and topics should be understood as based on the major approach of the project but not preventing a holistic view:

Priority 1: Maritime Innovation and economic development
  ➢ Topic 1: Coastal and maritime tourism
  ➢ Topic 2: Innovation in new economic sectors
Priority 2: Environment protection
  ➢ Topic 1: Sources of land-based and sea-based pollution
  ➢ Topic 2: Environmental Risks
  ➢ Topic 3: Consequences of climate change to coastal zones
Priority 3: Transport and accessibility
  ➢ Topic 1: Development of ports
  ➢ Topic 2: Optimize maritime connections and interoperability of transport modes:
Priority 4: Governance and policy response
  ➢ Topic 1: Integrated coastal zone management and maritime spatial planning

The projects duration will be 12 months maximum (end of activities in June 2015 at the latest) and include data compilation and share, mapping and a transnational state of the art on a clearly identified area, and networks of local, regional and national authorities in particular for priority 4. The available ERDF budget for this call is 5M€. For IPA funds, the availability is limited to the 4th Priority axis: the IPA budget is 254.000€. No partner should receive more than 100.000€ of ERDF, except the LP whose budget should not exceed 150.000€ and should be justified by management tasks. No country must concentrate more that 50% of the total eligible budget of the project.

The partnership should be composed of at least 3 partners from at least 3 programme countries and justified by direct competency and clear division of tasks.

Deadline: 10 January
Additional Information:
Website: http://www.programmemed.eu/en/the-projects/ open- call.html

2. European Programme PROGRESS 2007–2013: Delivering on skills for growth and jobs

PROGRESS is the EU employment and social solidarity programme, set up to provide financial support for the attainment of the European Union's objectives in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities as set out in the Social Agenda, as well as to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This new strategy, which has a strong social dimension, aims at turning the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The European Union needs coherent and complementary contributions from different policy strands, methods and instruments, including the PROGRESS programme, to support the Member States in delivering on the Europe 2020's goals. The PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU's contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society.

The overall objective of the Call is to is to encourage new forms of collaboration through partnerships between public and private actors on the labour market (such as public and private employment services, companies including SME's, chambers of commerce, training and education providers, social partners, labour market intelligence entities) to address persistent skills shortages and mismatches to help fill the gap between labour supply and demand in the EU.

The activities should aim to achieve the following technical objectives:

1. Delivery to the end users of specific employment service(s) leading to sustainable placements in jobs and apprenticeships or other measureable outcomes by a mixed set of actors, including measures to support labour mobility at national and European level.
2. Provision of analytical and methodological evidence based findings related to the form and working method of the partnership between the co-operating organisations experienced during the development and implementation of the actions, including an assessment of success and failure factors, challenges and solutions for shortcomings.
3. Development of concrete labour market intelligence tools, allowing for the identification of skills gaps and needs resulting from structural shifts to a low carbon economy, as well as their impact on changing skills sets. Measures to be financed under this call should be concrete and action oriented and carry a true added value in terms of making a difference where rolled out. Some of the options to be envisaged could cover:
- ➢ implementation and delivery of placement and job insertion initiatives,
- ➢ labour market intelligence gathering,
- ➢ training measures,
- ➢ establishment of networks and the development and exchange of best practice through targeted events.

The Call will consist of four strands in line with the priority areas for job creation previously identified:

i) The first strand will seek to foster joint initiatives aimed at (a) anticipating green skills needs to facilitate matching process between labour supply and demand (b) supporting structural and sectorial adaptation through improving worker adaptability and mobility. The sectorial focus of this part of the call covers three key sectors: (1) Construction, (2) Recycling (included in Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste management and reme-

diation activities) and (3) Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply. This strand is in line with the objectives set out in the Commission's Employment Package of 2012 (COM (2012) 173 final).

ii) The second strand of the Call will identify effective implementation measures, good practices and innovative approaches with a special emphasis on the employment potential of ICTs and the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs (SWD(2012)96 final thus contributing to the implementation of the skills dimension of the flagship initiative "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs" and in particular to the Employment Package.

iii) The third strand will identify effective implementation measures, good practices and innovative approaches with a special emphasis on personal and household services, thus contributing to the implementation of the skills and jobs dimension of the flagship initiative "An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs" and in particular to the Employment Package

iv) The fourth strand will support the consolidation of European Sector Skills Councils that are beyond the feasibility phase. These bodies will provide a focal point at sector level for improving skills intelligence, highlighting skills mismatches and bottlenecks and for shaping the educational and training offer. They will also facilitate peer-learning at national level by creating a European platform of exchange between labour market actors, skills intelligence observatories and education and training providers active in the sector.

Under this call for proposals, the European Commission may finance up to 80% of the total eligible cost of the action. Contributions in kind (i.e. contributions for which no financial flow can be traced in the written accounts like unpaid charity work by a private individual or corporate body, etc.) will not be taken into account. Applications which request a grant of more than 80% of the total eligible cost will not be eligible.

The total indicative amount available for this call for proposals is EUR 5.658.000. The projects should start after signature of grant agreements. The indicative date for the start of the projects is June 2014. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the grant agreement (by both parties) is at the applicant's risk. The maximum project duration is 18 months. Applications for projects with duration in excess of 18 months will not be considered.

The grants will be awarded on the basis of a comparative evaluation of all the proposals meeting selection criteria with respect to the following award criteria, the respective importance of each one being expressed as a percentage:

i) the extent to which the action meets the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals (20%);

ii) the quality of the action proposed: including the working methodology, the extent to which the work programme is relevant, adequate and feasible for reaching the objectives and the overall clarity and completeness of the proposal and budget (30%);

iii) the quality of the partnership, i.e. the involvement of appropriate organisations and the clarity of the division of tasks among parties (20%);

iv) the added value, transnational dimension and cost-effectiveness of the action (30%). In order to be considered for co-financing, the projects must obtain the minimum of 70% of the total (100) available points.

Deadline: 15 January

Additional Information:

Website http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=398&furtherCalls=yes

3. Multi-level governance in support of Europe 2020

Within the DG REGIO study on multi-level governance in support of Europe 2020 we are searching for 16 regions or cities, which are interested in participating in a partnership exercise with the 8 case study regions of the study. The "Study on promoting multi-level governance in support of Europe 2020" aims at generating lessons from policy experiences and at stimulating the learning and exchange between regions. It has been commissioned by DG REGIO and is carried out by a consortium led by Spatial Foresight. The study focuses on two specific policy fields linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy, namely energy efficiency measures with a special focus on the existing building stock and social inclusion in urban areas. Four Case studies under each policy field shall serve as basis for the mutual learning and exchange process. This process is accompanied by the consortium both by providing technical assistance, facilitation support and by analysing the cases and activities.

The following case studies shall provide the above mentioned basis:

ENERGY-DE-Regional Energy Strategy Prignitz-Oberhavel

ENERGY-SI-Vrhnika: Local Energy Concept

ENERGY-IT-Lombardy-Regional Territorial Plan for the Alpine Valleys Area

ENERGY-FR-Energivie project Alsace: Resource efficient building stock

SOCIAL-SE-Stockholm: Sustainable Social Urban Development

SOCIAL-PL-Revitalisation Projects in Pomorskie Region

SOCIAL-RO-Timisoara: Migrant in intercultural Romania

The partnership exercise aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge on multi-level governance approaches and to stimulate learning between regions. For achieving these objectives, partnership meetings will be organized. The selected partnerships (ministries, regions or cities) need to have a desire for policy change: They should be open to learning and be prepared to make decisions on actions or action plans for initiating a change process with a view to improve policy making and policy implementation across different levels of governance. For each case study two partnerships will be selected. Each partnership institution will participate in one multilateral and one bilateral partnership meeting. Being a participant in the partnership will allow you to share experiences with regions in similar situations, to learn about experiences from one of the above case studies and gain new ideas of how to bring change. Each partner will be supported in preparing an action plan. There is a budget (maximum of EUR 3,000) available per partnership institution to cover costs of the multilateral and bilateral exchanges. Participation in the final conference will be financed by the Commission.

Deadline: 22 January
Additional Information:
Website: http://www.spatialforesight.eu/2020.html

4. The 10th European Urban and Regional Planning Awards

ECTP-CEU (European Council of Spatial Planners – Conseil européen des urbanistes), with the support of the Committee of Regions is proud to organise the 10th European Urban and Regional Planning Awards in partnership with SPECIAL project and Intelligent Energy Europe in collaboration with the TCPA (Town and Country Planning Association).

This partnership enhances the integration of sustainable energy and spatial planning. The ECTP-CEU's European Urban and Regional Planning Awards give recognition to planning strategies, schemes or developments which make an outstanding contribution to the quality of life in urban and rural regions of Europe. This is also a particular opportunity now that the European Charter of Spatial Planning has been refreshed, to stress the emergency for strategy, participation processes and sustainable development in all processes of spatial planning. The Award will be open to spatial planners and municipalities from the 47 European Countries of the Council of Europe.

The jury will take into account the following criteria:

Content:

➢ demonstrates the role of spatial planning in proactively supporting the uptake/ deployment of renewable/ sustainable energy solutions through embedding climate-change mitigation and adaptation in planning policies;

➢ application of the principles of sustainable development and the development and delivery of sustainable energy solutions, for the enhancement of the environment and any recognisable social and economic benefit resulting from the achievement in terms of human well-being or greater efficiency;

Methods:

➢ the originality and innovation of the achievement or approach; new methods and approaches, planning funding, participation, in the integration of planning policies and delivery and sustainable energy solutions;

➢ applicants must make an impact study during the project process and describe the results;

➢ the extent to which the scheme may serve as a transferable reference for other work elsewhere in the same country or across Europe, or as a base for the development of further related schemes;

➢ demonstrable success of local authority planners working with energy providers to create low carbon solutions to new or existing settlements.

Skills:

➢ the quality of the professional work involved in design, in communication, in cooperation, in the development of planning concepts or in the application of planning techniques directly related to creating low carbon communities and energy efficiency;

Engagement:

➢ the effective involvement of town planners to enable or co-ordinate young planners in the project and the demonstration of the added value brought to the project through this;

➢ the effective engagement by town planners with community groups, politicians and local stakeholders leading to better awareness and support for sustainable and, in particular, renewable energy solutions to create low carbon communities;

Deadline: 31 January

Additional Information:

Website: http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/

Business & Development Planning

The Logical Framework Approach as a Planning Tool for EU funded projects Implementation

The current architecture of European funds and grants offers a wide range of funding opportunities to support innovative projects. However, funding is often not used effectively or it may be denied due to poor planning. Although numerous programmes and initiatives have different features, the development and implementation of projects in practice follow common rules. For EU funded projects the European Commission requires the use of Project Cycle Management (PCM). A core tool within Project Cycle Management is the Logical Framework Approach (LFA). The LFA supports the different stages of PCM and should provide an information base for completing the required PCM documents.

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) was developed in the late 1960's to assist the US Agency of International Development to improve its project planning and evaluation system. It was designed to address three basic concerns, namely that:

➢ Planning was too vague, without clearly defined objectives that could be used to monitor and evaluate the success (or failure) of a project;

➢ Management responsibilities were unclear; and

➢ Evaluation was often an adversarial process, because there was no common agreement as to what the project was really trying to achieve.

The LFA is an analytical process and set of tools used to support project planning and management. It provides a set of interlocking concepts which are used as part of an iterative process to aid structured and systematic analysis of a project or programme idea. It is useful to distinguish between the LFA, which is an analytical process (involving stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, objective setting and strategy selection), and the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) which, while requiring further analysis of objectives, how they will be achieved and the potential risks, also provides the documented product of the analytical process. The Logical Framework Matrix (or more briefly the Logframe) consists of a matrix with four columns and four (or more) rows, which summarise the key elements of a project plan, namely:

➢ The project's hierarchy of objectives (Project Description or Intervention Logic);

➢ The key external factors critical to the project's success (Assumptions); and

➢ How the project's achievements will be monitored and evaluated (Indicators and Sources of Verification).

The Logframe also provides the basis on which resource requirements (inputs) and costs (budget) are determined.

The LFA provides no magic solutions, but when understood and intelligently applied, is a very effective analytical and management tool. However, it is not a substitute for experience and professional judgment and must also be complemented by the application of other specific tools (such as Institutional Capacity Assessment, Economic and Financial Analysis etc.).
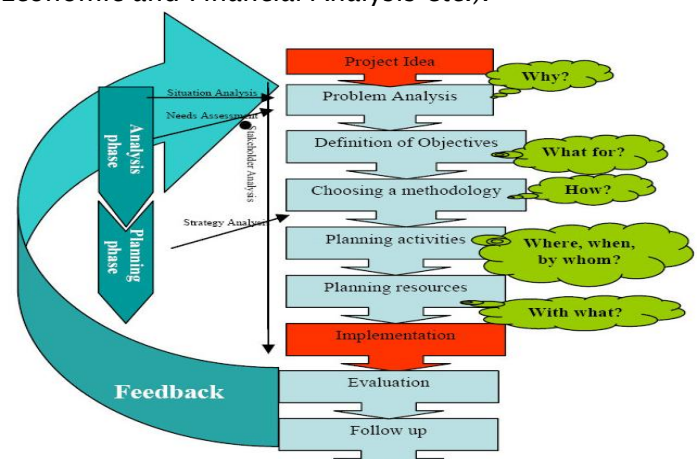
The Voice of E.G.T.C.s

Award for European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation 2014

The Committee of the Regions launches a bi-annual European award named 'Building Europe Across Borders' to recognise and give visibility to the best practice of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) related to the creation of growth and jobs in Europe. 'Building Europe across Borders' intends to raise the profile of an EGTC's potential as an instrument to deliver growth and opportunities. The award intends to recognise concrete achievements of existing EGTCs, showing the added value of this instrument and making them serve as an example for other groupings of similar structures.

The jury members will take into account:
1. Impact and outcome of the action, based on measurable indicators, that will be assessed in proportion to the size of the EGTC and the actual needs of the territory;

2. Innovative approach, transnational dimension and European added value due to the fact that the measure is conceived and carried out by an EGTC;
3. Implementation of the principle of multi-level governance and a bottom-up approach;
4. Effective contribution to implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy in fields related to the generation of growth and jobs;
5. Sustainability and permanence of the measure, integration of the measures in a wider strategy for the territory;
6. Visibility among the public of the territory;
7. Potential for transferability and replication as best practice.

Only EGTCs established at the latest on 31 December 2012 and included in the Register of the Committee of the Regions. The candidate EGTC shall submit a detailed description of its measure or project, which will be examined by a jury. The award will recognize concrete actions and projects implemented by EGTCs in their territory. The candidate EGTC shall submit a detailed memory of its action or project, which will be examined by the jury. The jury will examine the applications and will exclude those that do not fulfil the criteria of eligibility, those that are not properly documented and those that are manifestly not related to the scope of action of the award. The jury will be entitled to require additional information and verification if needed. This information will be provided as soon as possible. The jury will assess the applications according to the criteria of the call and to the general criteria of the award, and will decide about the winner. The jury will have the right to decide about additional honour mentions.

Deadline: 24 January
Additional Information:
Website: https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/en-US/ Platform/Pages/EGTC-Award.aspx

The new EGTC Regulation (no 1302/2013) has been adopted and published

The Council of the EU adopted the revised EGTC Regulation, together with the rest of the package on cohesion policy. The texts had been agreed by the COREPER on 9 November, and for this reason the Regulation passed as "A" point, which means without debate. The plenary session of the European Parliament adopted the revised EGTC Regulation in Strasbourg on 19 November with 630 votes in favour, 28 against and 33 abstentions.

The Regulation was subsequently published in the Official Journal of the EU after being signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament and of the Council, and entered into force the same day of its publication. According to the transitional provisions, the EGTCs that have not yet been authorised in the moment of the entry into force will have flexibility to apply the old or the new Regulation.

Under the provisions of the new Regulation, a series of changes are introduced concerning the following issues:

➢ *Nature of the EGTC*: there is a reference to the objective of territorial cohesion.

➢ *Applicable law:* The applicable law to the EGTC are the Regulation, then the convention (not the statutes) and then the national law of the Member State where the registered office of the EGTC is located. The Convention has to identify the law applicable to the activities of the EGTC.

➢ *Composition:* Public undertakings of Annex III of Directive 2004/17/EC (private law) and undertakings entrusted with operations of services of general economic interest can be part of an EGTC. EGTCs with one entity from one Member State and another one from a non-EU Member State are possible.

Photo: Council of the EU

➢ *Members from third countries or overseas countries or territories (OCTs):* An EGTC may be set up between members of one or more Member States and one or more third countries, but the third country must neighbour at least one Member State or its Overseas Country or Territories (OCTs), including maritime borders, or both the third country and the OCT or Member State must be eligible under a joint EU cooperation programme.

➢ *Establishment:* Includes the reasons for non-approval of the convention. Tacit approval after 6 months, except in the Member State where the EGTC' seat is located, where formal approval is required. The period is interrupted when the Member State requests more information, except if the prospective members of the EGTC provide the information in less than 10 days. In case of accession of a member from a third country, the approval is for the Member State where the EGTC's seat is based, consulting the other EU Member States concerned, if any. The amendments to the statutes shall only be notified to the Member States, no new authorisation will be required. The amendments to the convention need approval of the Member States, except the accession of new EGTC members from a Member State that already participates (only the Member State concerned has to approve) and the accession of new EGTC Members from a third country (the approval is for the Member State where the EGTC's seat is based, consulting the other EU Member States concerned, if any).

European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation

➢ *Participation of members from an Overseas Country or Territory (OCT):* The authorities of the Member State to which the OCT is linked are competent for the authorisation.

➢ *Acquisition of legal personality and publication:* The CoR will be in charge of publishing the establishment of the EGTC in the section C of the OJEU. The members of the EGTC are not obliged to do so any more.

➢ *Control of management of public funds:* The legislation of control of EU funds shall apply in relation with actions co-financed by the EU.

➢ *Tasks*: Territorial cooperation to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion is the general mission of the EGTC. The EGTC may also implement a part of an ETC programme, not necessarily the whole programme. The tasks of the EGTC shall fall within the competence of every member, but the Member State or the third country may authorise exceptions for members coming from their State. Actions carried out without a financial support from the EU can be limited by the Member States, but not if they concern the priorities of the ETC. The assembly of an EGTC may determine the tariffs, fees and other conditions of use of an item of infrastructure or a service of economic general interest provided by the EGTC.

➢ *Convention:* Contains new specifications about the content of the convention, related to the duration of the EGTC; its organs and competences; the applicable law to the registered office, to other possible locations/offices, to the activities and infrastructure, to the staff and to the liability; and the procedure of adoption and amendment of the statutes and of the convention. The applicable law to the staff is mentioned in recitals 26 and 27 and dealt with in a common declaration.

➢ *Statutes:* The obligatory mention of the organs of the EGTC and their competences is moved to the convention.

➢ *Budget and auditing:* The law of the Member State of the registered office applies always to accounts, auditing and publication of the accounts.

➢ *Liability:* If one member has limited liability, the other members can limit their liability but only if their national legislation allows it. In EGTCs of limited liability, any Member State may require schemes of insurance or financial guarantees (public or private) to cover the risks specific to the activities of the EGTC.

➢ *Final provisions:* The Member States shall inform the Commission about the national implementation of the Regulation. The Commission shall inform the other Member States and the CoR. The national provisions of the Member States also affect their respective OCTs. Two declarations are added: One engages the Member States to adopt efficient and transparent procedures; the other one supports the work of the CoR and its Platform of EGTCs.

➢ *Transitional provision:* Existing EGTCs are not obliged to modify their convention and statutes. EGTCs already authorised whose publication or register is pending, or whose procedure of authorisation started more than 6 months before the entry into force of the revised Regulation, shall be subject to the old version of the Regulation.

Other references to the EGTC in other Regulations related to cohesion policy provide:

➢ that the expenditure of an EGTC is always considered public expenditure; the EGTCs can be beneficiaries of the Joint Action Plans and the Integrated Territorial Investments (Common Provisions Regulation)

➢ that an EGTC can be a beneficiary of a Joint Action Plan, an intermediate body to implement an Integrated Territorial Investment, a single beneficiary of ETC projects, a managing authority of a programme or a part of it (European Territorial Cooperation Regulation).

Additional Information:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:SOM:EN:HTML

The CoR and the AEBR call for more participation of border regions and EGTCs in the Operational Programmes

On 19 November 2013, the Committee of the Regions and the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) organized jointly a seminar on the

issue of the participation of citizens of the border regions in Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes. The seminar also focused on the specific situation of the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), which are called on to have a more active role in the next programming period. The conclusions highlighted the following issues:

➢ The specific situation of the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) has to be taken into account. EGTCs are called upon to play a more active role in the future programming period: implementing programmes and new instruments like Joint Action Plans and Integrated Territorial Investments, acting in different fields of policy, developing macro-regional strategies, and consolidating cooperation with non-EU countries.

➢ Cross-border cooperation not only involves economic issues, but also addresses cultural, social and environmental needs, beyond the objectives of Europe 2020.

➢ For many border areas in Europe, this period will be crucial in overcoming the economic crisis and establishing the basis for a real economic recovery.

➢ It is important to remember the principles of multi-level governance and partnership, which are enshrined in Art. 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation and were expanded on most recently in the European Code of Conduct on Partnership.

Additional Information:
https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/en-US/Events/Pages/The-participation-of-citizens-from-border-regions-.aspx

EU funded Projects of Greek Local Authorities

1. Municipality of Pediada Minoa: CERAMEUS
(Cross-border Cooperation Programme "Greece-Cyprus, 2007-2013")

Thrapsano is one of the municipal units of the Municipality of Pediada Minoa located on the Prefecture of Heraclion, Crete. Thrapsano located 25 km southeast of Heraklion, is the largest pottery center of the island with a long historical ceramic tradition that goes back many centuries already in Minoan times.

The Minoan Civilization drew the freshness and ingenuity of the wonderful diversity of Cretan nature. This same diversity taught the inhabitants of Minoan Crete, the ability to transform the land into high quality ceramics. The Minoans ceramists have reached the peak of ceramic art by creating beautiful and high technique ceramic pots. In the same natural environment, there is a large quantity of high quality clay in the region, the artisans of Thrapsano create today pottery masterpieces, continuing the ceramic art of the Minoans. So potters from Thrapsano are worthy successors of Minoan pottery.

Thrapsano, also known as the region of potters, is identical with the renowned ceramic manufacturing traditional products. The famous jar of Thrapsano is the clearest example of pottery from Thrapsano. Even the name of the region is related to ceramic art, as it comes from "Thrapsala", which means the shells of broken pottery which are numerous around furnaces, so "Thrapsanos" is the furnace worker, the professional name of the one who bakes the pots.

Today, dozens of companies engaged in pottery have an active presence in Thrapsano, fulfilling a big production, which is one of the key drivers of economic growth in the region as well as maintaining the tradition and its historical identity. The export activity is very important for the potters of Thrapsano, as a large part of the production is exported on abroad.

The Municipal Authority of Pediada Minoa supporting culture, and entrepreneurship, develops various activities highlighting and promoting the tradition of pottery of Thrapsano. Under this condition, it participates as a partner in the project Cerameus, which is implanted under the collaboration of the Municipalities of Lesvos, Larnaca and Pediada Minoa. The main goal of the Municipal Authority of Pediada Minoa through its participation in the program is both the promotion of traditional ceramic products through actions that will help to improve the extroversion of businesses and to promote the folk culture of Thrapsano as a touristic source.

Additional Information:
Municipality of Pediada Minoa
E-mail: minoa@minoapediadas.gr

2. Municipality of Volos (KEKPA – DIEK) ROM-ACT Project (Lifelong Learning, 2007–2013– GRUNDTVIG)

The Municipal Enterprise KEKPA - DIEK belongs to the Municipality of Volos. The main objectives of KEKPA - DIEK fall in the field of Social Care. KEKPA - Dike's works programs of the Community Support Framework (domestic help for the elderly, Centres for creative occupation for kids, kinder gardens, centres for people with disabilities, support for unemployment, etc.), implementation of European Commission programs (Interred, Leonardo, Grunting, etc.), special programs to support the integration of vulnerable groups (i.e. Roma).

The ROM-ACT Project (2013 –2014), in which KEPKA-DIEK takes part, is aimed at widening access to non-formal and informal learning validation systems among roman and Traveller women in Europe in order to strengthen their educational, social, and labour inclusion.

The project has an innovative character as:

➢ Its approach: All the contributions will be gathered via inter and intra generational dialogue among roman and Traveller women from several ages and backgrounds. Specific recommendations made by roman and Traveller women; organizations and policy makers will be included to the project through the European Report and the Policy paper.

➢ Its methodology: involving non academic roman and traveller women in discussion groups and including their contributions in the main outputs.

KEKPA–DIEK's two centres supporting Roma, started their actions in 1998 during the implementation of an Integra project. The main objectives for both centres are the promotion of the employment and a bundle of actions tackling social exclusion, such as advocacy, awareness raising campaigns, informal vocational training, support for women, etc. Roma Support offices can contribute to the main aim of the ROM-ACT Project, that is, the improvement of the current non-formal and informal validation systems in Europe, bringing them closer to the needs of non-academic people and disadvantaged groups as Roma and Traveller community, as well as the improvement of the access of non-academic people to the non-formal and informal learning validation systems.

The main outputs of the project include five national reports and one European Report with the state of the art of non-formal and informal learning validation systems in Europe and policy recommendations done by Roma and Traveller women and representatives of centres for adult education and Roma and Traveller organizations. Secondly, an awareness raising campaign will be conducted, and finally, a lobbying campaign to impact validation policies will be carried out and a network of associations involved in validation accompaniment will be created.

Additional Information:

Municipality of Volos
Municipal Enterprise KEKPA - DIEK
Attn: N. Antonakis
Tel: (24210) 29908, 66208 2467350294
Website: www.rom-act.eu

International and European Conferences

4th International Conference on Future Environment and Energy-ICFEE 2014 (Melbourne, 4-5 January)

The primary goal of the conference is to promote research and developmental activities in Future Environment and Energy. Another goal is to promote scientific information interchange between researchers,

Developers, engineers, students, and practitioners working in Australia and abroad. The conference will be held every year to make it an ideal platform for people to share views and experiences in Future Environment and Energy and related areas.
Additional Information:
http://www.icfee.org/

International Disaster Conference (New Orleans, 7-10 January)

The mission of the International Disaster Conference is to unite public and private sector professionals from around the world for discussions, resulting in the mitigation of loss of life and property when catastrophic events occur.

Additional Information:
http://internationaldisasterconference.com/

Green Infrastructure and Water Management in Growing Metropolitan Areas (Florida, 14-15 January)

The aim of this conference is to engage researchers, engineers, planners, government policy makers, and other stakeholders in developing options and solutions that result in wi-

der implementation of green infrastructure practices to manage stormwater in our growing metropolitan regions. The main themes of the conference are as such: Defining the range of benefits of green-infrastructure practices; identifying barriers to implementing these practices; evaluating options and opportunities for funding, financing and valuing green infrastructure; and developing practical actions that government, communities and others can take to promote greater implementation of green infrastructure to address urban stormwater.
Additional Information:
http://patel.usf.edu/patel-center/2014-green-infrastructure-conference
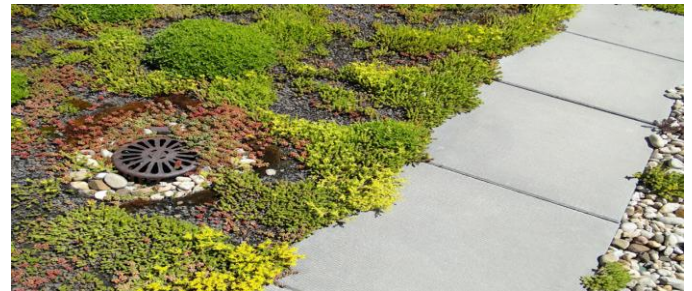
World Future Energy Summit (Abu Dhabi, 20-22 January)

The World Future Energy Summit (WFES) is the world's foremost event dedicated to renewable energies, energy efficiency and clean technologies. Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, WFES includes a world-class Conference, an international Exhibition, the Project & Finance Village, the Young Future Energy Leaders
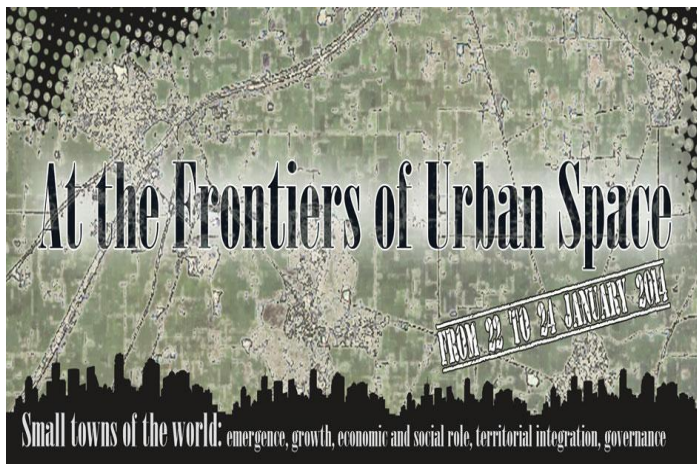
program, as well as a number of corporate meetings and concurrent social events. Hosted by Masdar, Abu Dhabi's multi-faceted renewable energy company, and staged at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, the WFES Conference attracts world leaders, international policy makers, industry experts, investors from the public and private sector and media, who gather in Abu Dhabi to discuss practical and sustainable solutions to future energy challenges.

Additional Information:
http://www.worldfutureenergysummit.com/Portal/home.aspx

The Small Towns of the World
(Avignon, 22-24 January)

The International conference "At the Frontiers of Urban Space. Small towns of the world: emergence, growth, economic and social role, territorial integra-

tion, governance" at the University of Avignon, organized by François Moriconi, Catherine Chatel et Julien Bordagi (UMR 7300 ESPACE - Avignon), aims to expose various issues concerning the bottom of the urban hierarchy and how these can enrich the urban concept.

Additional Information:
http://fronturb2013.sciencesconf.org/?lang=en

International Sustainable
Built Environment Conference
(Doha, 28-30 January)

Energy efficiency, renewable sources and high performance systems, water recycling, management and reuse, architectural practices,

innovations and passive designs, materials recycling, reuse and manufacturing for efficient performance, urban planning for human comfort and mitigation strategies for climate change are some of the key themes of the conference.

Additional Information:
http://www.isbe-conference.com/

Culture and Creativity: Europe's regions
and cities making a difference
(Brussels, 29-30 January)

In light of new EU funding opportunities for the period 2014-2020, the Committee of the Regions' conference will bring together policy-makers, ex-

perts, creative minds and trend watchers, artists and representatives of European associations and international organisations in order to discuss success stories from cultural and creative sectors and their impact on local development.
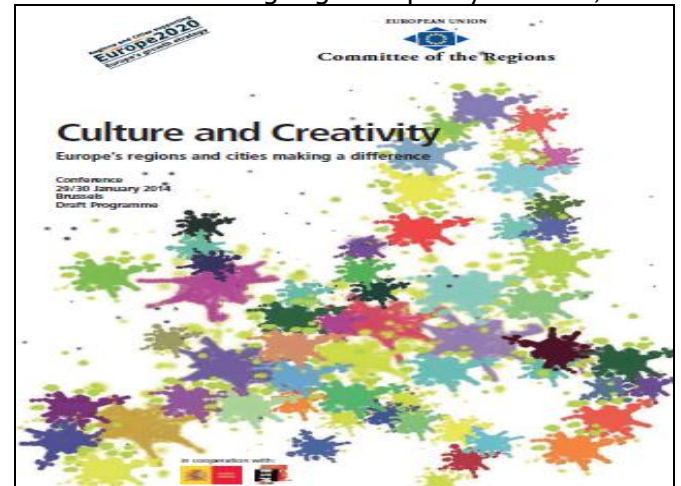
Additional Information:
http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/culture-and-creativity.aspx

European Affairs

Rīga and Umeå: European Capitals of Culture in 2014

Rīga (Latvia) and Umeå (Sweden) are the European Capitals of Culture in 2014. Rīga will open its festivities with special events at museums, cafes and other venues, including exhibitions on Baltic amber and on the impact of the First World War on culture. In 1989, during the 'Baltic Way' campaign, the people of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania formed a human chain to express their hope for independence from the former Soviet Union. On 18 January, the people of Riga will stand up for culture. Members of the public will recall the events by passing books from hand to hand, from the old National Library to the new building on the other side of the Daugava River. In the evening, at the river there will be fire sculptures created by teams from 12 countries – Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, France, UK, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Russia, USA and Australian- lightshow and fireworks. The city Mayor, Nils Ušakovs, will later host a concert at Riga Arena, in the presence of Commissioner Vassiliou, entitled 'Rīga through centuries and cultures'. The concert will feature Latvian classical, world and popular music artists, choirs and orchestras.

The launch of Umeå 2014 will take place over the weekend of 31 January to 2 February, day and night, with the opening 'Burning Snow' ceremony on Saturday as a high point. The city's residents will gather with guests from all over Europe to witness the launch of the year.

The main events will be held on and around the Umeälven River, with a choreographed festival of light, music, song and movement. The 'City of Winter' will be transformed with burning pillars of ice and fires to provide light, warmth and meeting points. The heart of Umeå, Rådhustorget, will be turned into a Sami village with glowing cauldrons and reindeer.

Additional Information:
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1313_en.htm?locale=en

Council adopted the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020

The Council adopted on 2 December 2013 the regulation laying down the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2014-2020. This follows the European Parliament's consent of 19 November. Council's decision marked the end of two and a half years of negotiations and allows the new generation of EU spending programmes to be implemented as from 1 January 2014. The MFF regulation enables the European Union to spend up to EUR 959.99 billion in commitments and EUR 908.40 billion in payments over the next seven years.

This is 3.5% and 3.7% respectively less than under the MFF 2007-2013, ensuring budgetary discipline for the EU and reflecting the particular budgetary pressure that member states currently face at national level. A strong emphasis is put on expenditure aimed at boosting growth and creating jobs, in line with the political priorities of the EU: the expenditure ceiling for sub-heading 1a ("competitiveness") is increased by more than 37% compared to the current MFF.

Additional Information:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/special-reports/mff

Committee of the Regions set out political priorities for 2014

Members of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) adopted on 29 November 2013 a resolution detailing their political priorities for the coming year, with particular emphasis on youth unemployment, the need to address geographical inequalities between EU regions and the review of the EU Growth Strategy.
The CoR calls on the European Commission to ensure greater coordination of economic and social policies to help address the competitiveness gap between the Member States. It also reiterates the urgency of tackling youth unemployment and addressing existing geographical inequalities between EU regions. Based on the assessment that the unsatisfactory state of play of the EU's growth strategy - Europe 2020 - is partly due to a lack of involvement of local authorities, CoR members call for a thorough mid-term review of the EU 2020 Strategy to give more prominence to the territorial dimension. Such review should include enhanced participation of local and regional authorities in setting targets and implementing the Strategy, as well as funding for long-term investments.

Regarding the EU cohesion policy, the CoR urges the Commission to promote the proper involvement of cities and regions in the finalization of the Partnership Agreements, which must be seen as a "pivotal element of multilevel governance in Europe's strategy for growth and jobs". The CoR is also concerned at the increase of "uncoordinated EU initiatives affecting urban development" and calls for the preparation of a White Paper on an integrated urban agenda for the EU. It further encourages the Commission to urgently move forward with the completion of the Banking Union and to make use of the new EU budget to promote social cohesion.

Additional Information:
http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cor-political-priorities-2014.aspx

Crisis and Decentralisation

How have local and regional authorities been affected by the economic crisis? Which reforms have been made concerning the practices of these governments? What is the role of the local and regional level within the inner workings of states? These are the main issues addressed in CEMR's new study, entitled *Decentralisation at a crossroads: territorial reforms in Europe in times of crisis*. The purpose of this publication is to provide a picture as complete as possible of the reforms that have been put in place since the beginning of the crisis. The study also aims to present an overview of the consequences of the crisis on local and regional autonomy in Europe.

An opening analysis offers explanations as well as conclusions regarding decentralisation reforms. The study also includes country sheets that provide specific information on the situation and reforms in 41 countries. The study concludes that although the crisis has not remodelled the overall architecture of local and regional authorities in Europe, it has had a major impact on Europe's approach to the organisation of services and the question of financial independence. The reforms currently in place take into account the desire for greater decentralisation, although certain governmental actions run counter to this principle and to that of subsidiarity.

Additional Information:
http://ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CCRE_broch_EN_complete_low.pdf

COSME – New Programme to foster the competitiveness of SMEs

COSME programme is the new programme for the competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

COSME aims to ease the access to credit problems that small businesses currently face. With a EUR 2.3 billion-budget over the period 2014-2020, the Programme for the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) will for instance provide a guarantee facility for loans to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) of up to EUR 150,000. From now until 2020, 330,000 EU firms are expected to benefit from this facility. In addition, COSME will assist businesses and citizens in the following ways: 1) entrepreneurs will benefit from easier access to markets in the EU and beyond, 2) citizens who wish to become self-employed but currently face difficulties in setting up or developing their own business will receive tailored services and assistance, and 3) Member States' authorities will be better assisted in their efforts to elaborate and implement effective SME related policy reform.

COSME aims at strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of the Union's enterprises, at encouraging an entrepreneurial culture and promoting the creation and growth of SMEs.

These objectives will be met by:
- ➢ improving access to finance for SMEs,
- ➢ improving access to markets, inside the Union but also at global level,
- ➢ improving framework conditions for businesses, and
- ➢ promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture.

Additional Information:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2012-0420&language=EN

A concrete Mediterranean Macro-Regional Strategy has the potential to re-start the process of economic growth in the South

The European Economic and Social Committee has recently highlighted the need for a Macro-Regional Strategy in the Mediterranean (EU MMRS) which will support regions facing financial and social challenges that cannot be effectively addressed by individual regions or countries in a standard way.

The Mediterranean has suffered as a whole from an on-off approach adopted by the European Union, with various initiatives and instruments being launched over the years. These initiatives have had some success, but they have not fully addressed the political, economic and social development goals initially set forth. "The coastal areas of the EU in the southern Mediterranean have the capacity to become innovative, dynamic centres of economic and social growth by turning their unique characteristics to good use," said the opinion's co-rapporteur, Stefano Palmieri (Italy, Workers' Group). A more integrated policy for Mediterranean regions, supported by a strong action plan that clearly identifies projects chosen for their cross-regional impact and importance for economic growth, would help address the causes of the currently prevalent uncertainty by increasing the value-added of the positive achievements of previously launched initiatives and the Europe 2020 goals.

The EU Mediterranean Coastal Regions (EU MCRs) have the potential to re-start the process of economic growth in uniquely innovative ways, which will also have a positive effect on the EU as a whole.
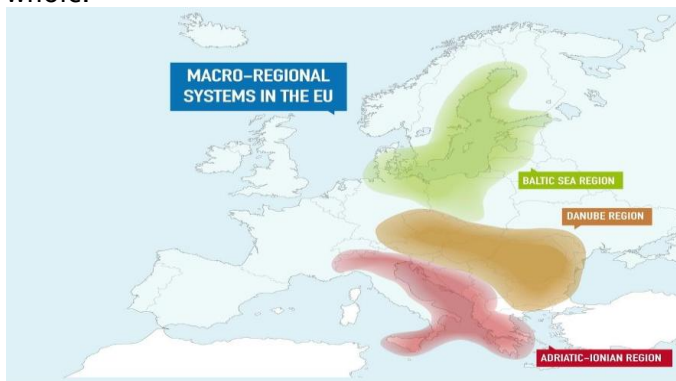
However, as the opinion's rapporteur, Stefano Mallia (Malta, Employers' Group), has pointed out, "There is an urgent need for the strategy to be concrete and of substance. Many initiatives exist on paper, but without immediate action there will be no progress". The EESC strongly recommends that this strategy be not just another paper document. Above all it must be a process.

According to the EESC, the Mediterranean MRS should be based on the following three pillars of growth: smart growth (with a particular emphasis on Blue growth), actively encouraging a knowledge-based economy supporting "innovation" and new technologies; sustainable growth, promoting a sustainable, greener and more competitive economy; and finally inclusive growth, promoting an economy which places strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction.

Moreover, a method must be introduced for measuring policy effectiveness, so that corrective action can be taken whenever necessary and in a timely manner, also to avoid duplication through multi-level cooperation and coordination. At the same time, reducing the bureaucratic burden of reporting and form-filling placed on NGOs, SMEs and regional authorities, particularly those in the smaller regions, which are often discouraged from participating by their lack of capacity and the discouraging task of going through and keeping up with all the bureaucratic procedures, is likewise important.

Additional Information:
http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.30378

New indicator of innovation has been launched

A new indicator of innovation output was developed at the request of the European Council to benchmark national innovation policies and monitor the EU's performance against its main trading partners. It measures the extent to which ideas stemming from innovative sectors are capable of reaching the market, providing better jobs and making Europe more competitive. The indicator also fulfils a commitment under the Innovation Union flagship initiative to "*launch the necessary work for the development of a new indicator measuring the share of fast-growing innovative companies in the economy*".
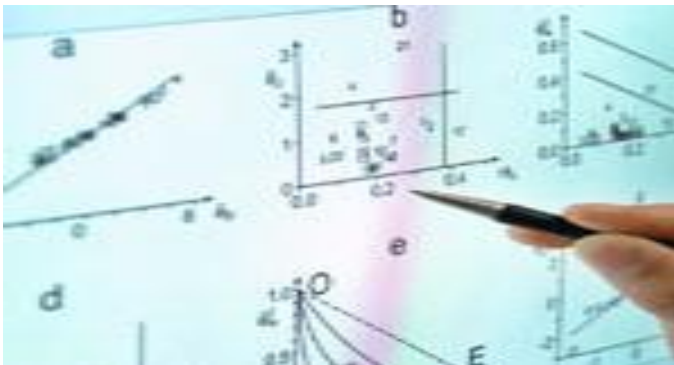
The new indicator complements the one on R&D intensity by zooming in on innovation output. It will support policy-makers in establishing new or reinforced actions to remove bottlenecks preventing innovators from translating ideas into successful products and services. Innovation output is wide-ranging and differs from sector to sector.

The new indicator on innovation output is based on four components chosen for their policy relevance, data quality (international availability and cross-country comparability) and robustness of results:

1) technological innovation, as measured by the number of Patent Cooperation Treaty PCT patent applications per billion GDP. This shows the ability of an economy to transform knowledge generated by investing in R&D into marketable innovations.

2) employment in knowledge-intensive activities (KIA) as a percentage of total employment. This focuses on how a highly skilled labour force feeds into the economic structure of a country. Investing in people is an opportunity for Europe, because education and training provide workers with the skills to generate innovations.

3) competitiveness of knowledge-intensive goods and services. This is based on both the contribution of the trade balance of high-tech and medium-tech products to the total trade balance, and knowledge-intensive services as a share of the total services exports. It reflects the capacity of a country to reach global markets with its innovations.

4) employment in fast-growing firms of innovative sectors. This provides an indication of the dynamism of fast-growing firms in innovative sectors as compared to all fast-growing business activities. It captures the capacity of a country to transform rapidly its economy to respond to new needs and to take advantage of emerging demand.

According to the new indicator, Sweden, Germany, Ireland and Luxembourg are the EU Member States getting the most out of innovation.

Additional Information:
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-782_en.htm

Eurocities 2013 Awards

The cities of Brighton and Hove, Gijon and Ljubljana have all been announced winners of the EUROCITIES 2013 Awards. The Awards were presented during the EUROCITIES annual conference which took place in Ghent, Belgium, between 27th – 29th November 2013.

The EUROCITIES Awards recognise the outstanding achievements of EUROCITIES members in the delivery of local activities or practices which improve the quality of life for citizens. Entries were judged in the context of the 'smart citizens' theme of the conference by an independent jury of representatives from the smart citizens sector, academia, EU institutions, media and NGOs.

BEACH is the go-to place for employability advice in Brighton & Hove and the innovative, creative and interactive website appeals to the young audience it's targeting. That's because young people have been the driving force behind the service from the outset. The city brought together a group of school students to discuss employability skills, employers' expectations and barriers to getting a job, and as a result produced a short film. The students then interviewed potential employers around Brighton & Hove to explore employment opportunities and ways to increase their chances of getting a job. All this culminated in a collection of film clips, accessible advice and information available on the BEACH website, which is targeted at students but also used by parents and as a resource for teachers.

Gijon's Citizen Card is an access and payment card that holds the key to a wide range of services across the city.

Developed in 2002, the scope of the card has continued to grow and it now provides cardholders with access to anything from electric vehicle sharing and public toilets to libraries and sports facilities. Today, 80% of Gijon's population holds a Citizen Card. The city has benefited from user data to identify patterns and changes in citizens' behaviour, allowing it to develop public policies that more closely meet the needs of its citizens. The card continues to be an important factor for Gijon's quality of life. It makes choosing healthier, greener options easier, such as hiring bicycles and using municipal sports facilities, and offers a 'social bonus' giving access to sports facilities to those who otherwise might not be able to.

Ljubljana admits that incorporating citizens' views hasn't traditionally been part of its mobility culture. But this is changing. The city now realises that by developing solutions together with schoolchildren, parents, and disabled citizens, it can make travelling around the city easier, safer and more convenient. For schoolchildren, it developed a web portal mapping transport options to different schools and identifying danger hotspots to help plan journeys. Recognising the complex needs of people with different disabilities, the city has developed a range of services to help them travel by public transport independently and with confidence. The move even required a change is legislation, as previously drivers were not obliged to leave their seats to help passengers board. Now, all drivers receive special training and Ljubljana has also introduced a pioneering system allowing citizens with downs syndrome or autism to travel independently, using an information card shown to the driver.

Additional Information:
http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/activities/eurocities-awards/awards2013

International Affairs

The Networked Cities

In order to better understand the triple bottom line impact of ICT in the cities, Ericsson and Arthur D. Little have created the Networked Society Cities Index which ranks cities in terms of their ability to use ICT to deliver triple bottom line benefits to their citizens. The aim of the Networked Society Cities Index is to create a broader discussion about the efficiency and innovation gains that ICT provides and to stimulate cross-sector dialogue on successful strategies for realizing these benefits, looking at both positive and negative experiences. The index and its components capture this ambition, identifying ways in which ICT enables triple-bottom-line development – social, economic and environmental –across society.

The fourth edition (2013) ranks Stockholm, London and Singapore as top three cities and shows ICT can be an effective way of supporting sustainable development. The 2013 index features 31 major world cities and measures their ICT maturity as well as the economic, social and environmental dimensions, called the "triple bottom line" effects.
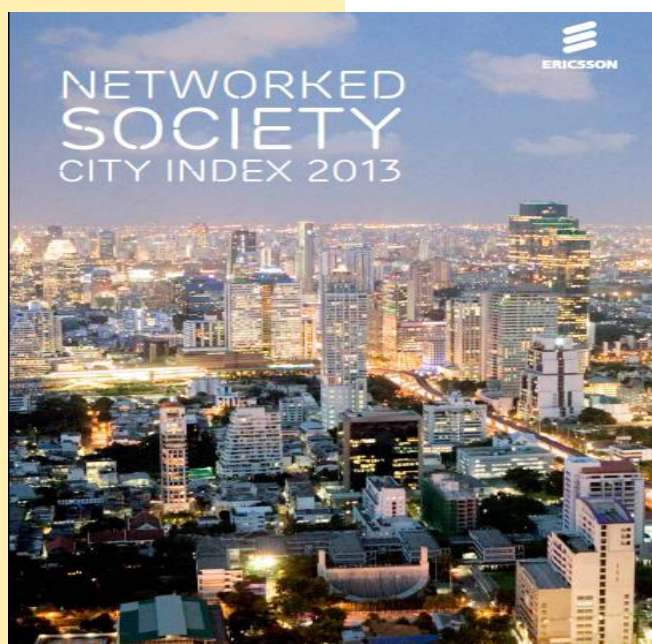
The report found a strong correlation between triple bottom line performance and ICT maturity. Data presented in the report shows that advances in ICT create opportunities for economic growth through efficiency gains in both production and services, as well as in creating new, leaner, means of delivery. Improving ICT maturity can be seen as a vital element of any sustainable urban development program for a highly-developed and connected society, the report says. Stockholm's top ranking is thanks to its well-developed ICT infrastructure, with a high penetration of smartphones and high-speed connections such as fiber-optic broadband and 4G LTE.

Additional Information:
http://www.ericsson.com/res/docs/2013/ns-city-index-report-2013.pdf

City life without Cars

Born from the synergies between ICLEI, host city Suwon (South Korea) and UN-Habitat, the Festival presented a miser-en-scène of a camomile neighbourhood – a model approach to be locally adapted and replicated in cities worldwide. EcoMobility World Festival 2013 was the world's first month-long presentation of an innovative and forward thinking urban transportation culture. Instead of using private automobiles, 4,343 residents in Suwon City used a combination of walking,

cycling, public transport and various other ecomobile modes for the entire month of September. The four day EcoMobility 2013 Suwon Congress underscored EcoMobility as an active concept - something to be developed, applied, and shared.

Additional Information:
http://www.ecomobilityfestival.org/fileadmin/Content/DOCUMENTS/EcoMobility-World-Festival-2013-Report-web.pdf

Consultations

EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)

The European Council of 13/14 December 2012 has formally asked the European Commission to present an EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region before the end of 2014"(…) subject to the evaluation of the concept of macro-regional strategies (…)" due in June 2013.The public consultation on the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) aims to reach relevant stakeholders and to gather their ideas in order to make sure that the Strategy is realistic in its starting point, appropriate in its objectives and responsive to the real needs of inhabitants of the Region. The overall objective of the EUSAIR is to promote sustainable economic and social prosperity of the Region through growth and jobs creation, by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity while at the same time preserving the environment and ensuring healthy and balanced marine and coastal ecosystems.

The results of this consultation will be published in the form of a summary report early in 2014. The contributions will be further discussed in the frame of the stakeholders conference organised in Athens, on 6-7 February 2014, and will support the preparation of the EUSAIR. A Communication concerning the Strategy will be adopted by the Commission during 2014.

Submission deadline: 17 January
Additional Information:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/eusair/index_en.cfmc

Review of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation

The EU has developed a solid set of rules on the consumers' economic interests to provide a level playing field to companies and equal consumer conditions to citizens in the single market. The Consumer Protection Cooperation network was set up to allow national enforcement authorities to work closely together to ensure compliance with these rules and tackle cross-border infringement cases.

The rules and conditions for the cooperation between the national authorities and the Commission in this network are set out in the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation (2006/2004/EC). The CPC Regulation provides mechanisms for mutual assistance requests to address concrete breaches of EU legislation involving at least two EU countries. Five years after it came into force, the functioning of this Regulation is to be reviewed to assess whether it achieves its objectives or whether it needs strengthening and how it should be improved. On the basis of the review, the Commission will report on the functioning of the CPC Regulation and will present an outlook on appropriate steps to the European Parliament and the Council in 2014.

Submission deadline: 31 January
Additional Information:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dgs_consultations/ca/consumer_protection_cooperation_regulation_201310_en.htm

The Seminars of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)

State Aid: Energy and Environment – Review of Critical Issue
Date: **23–24 January**
Location: **Maastricht**
Additional Information:
http://seminars.eipa.eu/en/activities09/show/&tid=5406

The Strategic Management and Planning Process for the Public Sector in Six Stages: Tools and Techniques
Date: **23–24 January**
Location: **Maastricht**
Additional Information:
http://seminars.eipa.eu/en/activities09/show/&tid=5423

EU Environmental Law for Non-Lawyers
Date: **30–31 January**
Location: **Luxembourg**
Additional Information:
http://seminars.eipa.eu/en/activities09/show/&tid=5358

Directive on Patients Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare: How to Implement it with Mutual Learning, Cooperation between Member States and Communication to Citizens
Date: **30–31 January**
Location: **Maastricht**
Additional Information:
http://seminars.eipa.eu/en/activities09/show/&tid=5415
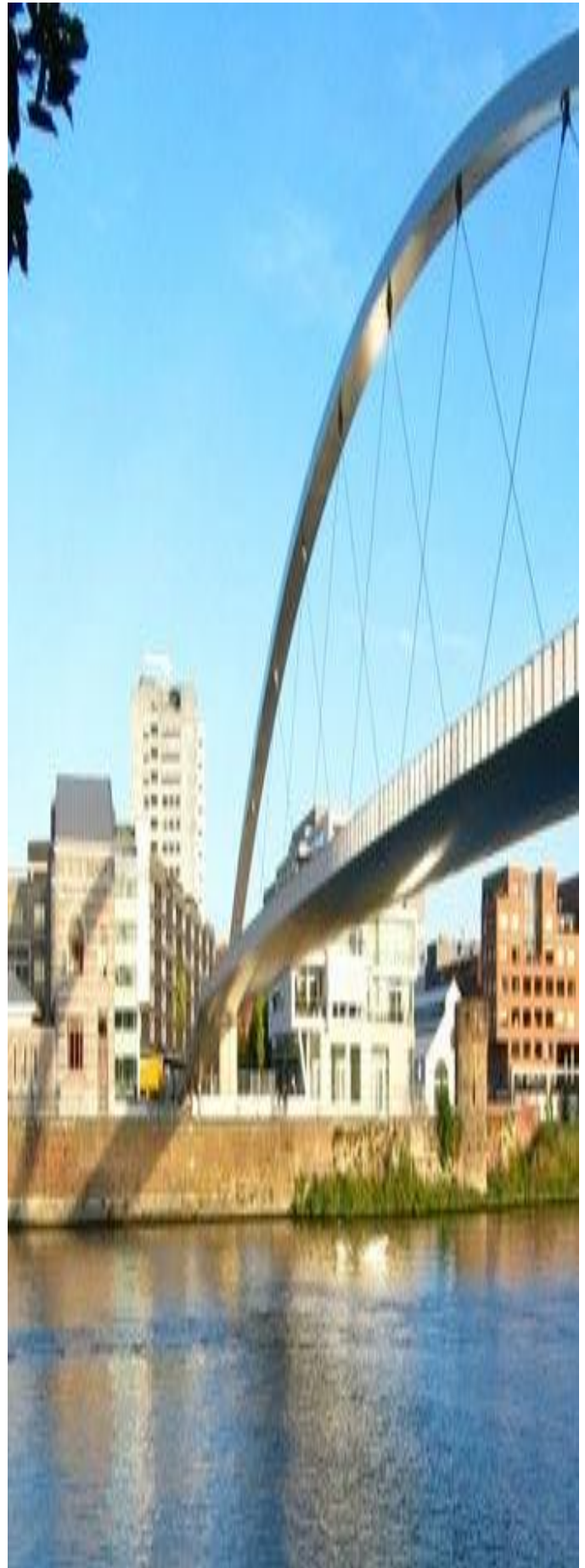
The Library of Local Government

Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers and the Quest for a New Utopia
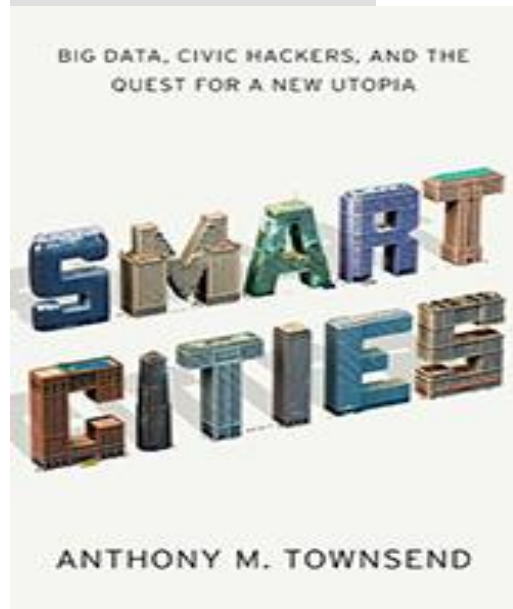
Pages: 400
A. Townsend
Publisher: W.W. Norton & Co, 2013

Smart Cities is a manifesto of the coming of age of cities. Lauding the technological potential to re-imagine urban planning in the vain of 'smart', yet also critical of the often short-sighted and technocratic-elite, Townsend speaks directly to the urbanist sceptical of technology-as-panacea.

Introducing a history of communication, social networking, data collection and the 'internet-of-things', Townsend both excites and warns readers of the monolithic IBM 'Smart City' vision of a top-down, all-sensing city of the future. He also turns his narrative to entrepreneurial, grassroots-minded 'geeks'. Overarching this dichotomy are the ethical and economic implications of the digital divide and his concern that technological ubiquity and mobile autonomy will lead to governments "casting off their responsibilities" at the expense of already excluded segments of society.

The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti
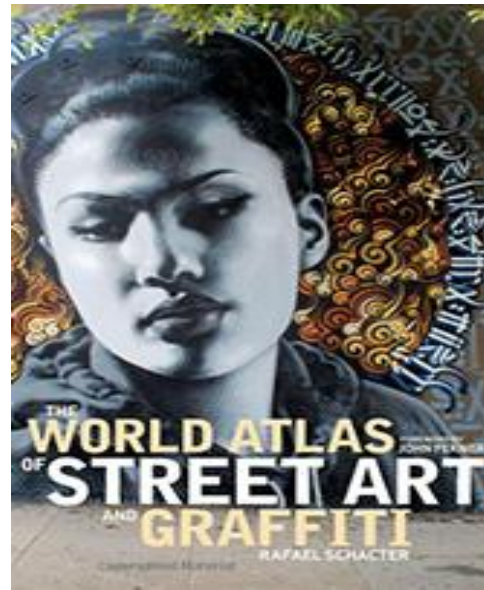
Pages: 400
R. Schacter
Publisher: Yale University Press, 2013

The World Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti is a visual journey to every corner of the globe. Author Rafael Schacter investigates 100 monumental urban artists from 25 countries in this comprehensive guide to street art, artists, schools, and styles. Organized geographically by country and city, the Atlas chronicles the historical development of urban art in each region. Through 750 stunning images and accompanying artist profiles, the Atlas offers deep insights into the evolution of street art and its relationship with community and environment.

As John Fekner explains in his foreword, the art presented in this volume is distinct from the graffiti of the mid-1980s and the "mass produced, post-street art shown in some galleries today." Through works that create "a sense of place" reflecting each artist's unique experiences and artistic vision, the pieces examined in this book are "redefining the concept of public art in the twenty-first century." Expert contributors aim to show that street art does not simply rely on slogans, politics, or self-promotion, but is "committed to a spontaneous creativity that is inherently connected to the city."