

EMBRACE II PARTNERS

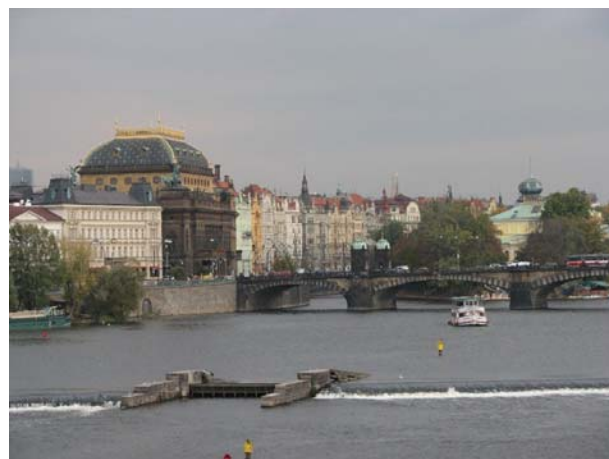


EMBRACE II PROJECT MEETING

4TH PROJECT MEETING

22 & 23 OCTOBER 2007

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY – USTI
REGION- CZECH REPUBLIC



Picture 1- Capital of Czech Republic

The **4th PR & SC Project meeting** took place in **Prague** at the **Populus Hotel, Czech Republic**, organised by the **Regional Development Agency Usti Region**. Main topic of the first day session was the review of the financial status of each WP of the project.

The Lead Partner presented the situation of all work packages in order to allow ERDF and non ERDF partners to have an idea of which actions need the best effort for their completion.

Regarding WP1, all actions have been completed in technical terms while there is a deviation in financial terms. The presentation of WP1 ended with the decision of the partnership that the absorption rates need to be accelerated.

During the presentation of WP2 the financial and technical status of each action was presented. Moreover, a draft version of the Pilot Observatory was presented and it was mentioned that the **training of administrators** is planned to take place in mid of December in Thessaloniki, Greece. The **Next steps** which have to be taken into serious consideration for the smoothest implementation of the rest of actions of WP2 are: specific deadlines on the system's development, content translation and uploading, pilot testing and fine tuning and

training of administrators. Furthermore, a thorough action plan on the implementation of the **"Formulation of proposals & policy recommendations"** accompanied with an executive summary, was also discussed and decided during the meeting.



Picture 2- 4th SC & PR meeting in Prague, Populus Hotel, 22-23/10/2007

For WP3 and WP4 the technical and financial status per action and partner was presented and the next steps were discussed among the partners.

The 2nd day meeting continued with discussion on project management and coordination issues.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be organised by the Prefectural Authority of Thessaloniki on 10th and 11th of December 2007.

At the end of the meeting the partnership agreed that the **Central and Closing Conferences** will be consolidated due to lack of time and one Conference will take place in Athens, Greece. The exact dates will be finalized in the next project meeting.



Picture 3- Promotion material of EMBRACE II project

NEWS FROM THE NEW NODES

The **new nodes** continued in the dissemination activities of the EMBRACE II services and organised local conferences addressed to their regional stakeholders and target groups.

KOPER - SLOVENIA

The **Regional Development Agency of South Primorska, Slovenia**, was mostly busy with the collection, analysis, and adaptation and processing of data related to local entrepreneurship and the economic development of the region, which will serve as the necessary data for the Pilot SMEs Observatory network. To further promote the EMBRACE II project RDA published in its monthly magazine, *"Entrepreneurial voice of Primorska"*, information about the progress of the project and implemented activities. It also carried out two additional regional conferences and the team also plans to implement at least one more in January.



Picture 4- Regional conference organized by RDA of South Primorska

NISH –SERBIA

Regional Chamber of Economy Niš

To enhance cross-border economic cohesion between the border regions in Bulgaria and Serbia for encouraging the contacts, co-operations and partnerships on a business and institutional level, on November 9th 2007, in Regional Chamber of Economy Niš a Regional Business Support centre was opened.

Guests of the Centre were Bulgarian Consul in Niš, HE Georgi Jurukov, entrepreneurs, local stakeholders, company representatives, partners from Bulgarian

Chambers as well as from Zaječar and Leskovac Chambers.

The center would afford free of charge information and consultation to companies and entrepreneurs in the border regions of Bulgaria and Serbia with a purpose of encouraging the bilateral relationships and contacts among the companies. The efforts of the center teams will be focused on the European business aspects: programmes, legislation, information resources, standardization and commodity compliance, environment.

One of the main factors for success of the future business centers is the networking and the permanent exchange of information and experience among the sixth Chambers. Using this opportunity, EMBRACE II team members from RCE Niš, presented also EMBRACE II project to the entrepreneurs and other interested participants.



Picture 5- Presentation of EMBRACE II at Nish

PLOVDIV – BULGARIA

Regional Development Agency with BSC for SMEs Plovdiv

7th European Congress of CEEC RDAs

27-28 September 2007, Sofia, Bulgaria

"European Integration, Regional Policy and Economic Growth"

The 2007 CEEC Congress was held in Sofia to celebrate the EU enlargement and to exchange views on how regions are being prepared to take advantage of the benefits coming from the new programming period 2007-2013 for enhancing their competitiveness.

During the event the participants shared experience in the following fields of responsibilities of RDAs:

- ❖ EU support for regional and entrepreneurial development;
- ❖ The new programming period 2007-2013: Role of RDAs;
- ❖ SME competitiveness and regional development: Contribution of RDAs;
- ❖ Regional attractiveness;
- ❖ Clusters and inter-cluster cooperation;
- ❖ Investment and financial opportunities for SMEs in EU27;
- ❖ Research and innovation: Investing for growth and employment

During bilateral meetings the Bulgarian Embrace II team presented the Project and preparation of pilot SME observatory and other ongoing activities. Participants in the Congress found the Project and its achievements very important for SMEs.

KOSICE-SLOVAKIA

Agency for the support of Regional development Košice, Slovakia

News from the EMBRACE 2 Project Implementation in Kosice Region, Slovakia

As the EMBRACE 2 Project focuses on rural areas and tries to provide incentives and guidance for the rural entrepreneurs, the project's trans-national partners organize events for promotion and support of the project tools.

Kosice region is situated in the south-eastern border area of the country. The region borders with north Hungary and Ukraine in the east. Despite the existence of rush industrial and economic development centres and hotspots around the regional capital – City of Kosice, the region consists of more than 400 municipalities – rural local self-governments. The region is among the poorest regions in the Europe and the lagging accessibility proves to be one of the barriers and future challenges.

The project team decided to organize 4 rural meetings and presentations for the so far achievements of the EMBRACE 2

project. The meetings were organized in district centres using the geographical advantage for gathering of stakeholders.

During the presentations, project offers and services were presented (webpage and portal) as well as possibility to establish public-private partnerships of local municipalities with rural born SMEs and individual entrepreneurs. The availability of Slovak language version of the EMBRACE 2 project tools enabled easier communication and understanding.

The local mayors who participated in the meetings attended the follow-up discussion on possible co-operation with the agency ASRD and local entrepreneurs, in future local development projects.



Picture 6- Rural meeting in Kosice

NEWS

NEW ON THE PORTAL!

The SMEs Pilot Observatory will be ready after the next project meeting. Here they are some useful tips:

SMEs PILOT OBSERVATORY AIMS TO:

- **Identify and quantify** the impacts of ICT on local/regional socioeconomic development in order to raise the awareness of policy makers
- Allow policy-makers adopting right policy decisions to **foster competitiveness of SMEs** operating in the participating regions
- **Analyse SMEs performance** across countries and regions and

geographical zones that can be used as market data

TO WHOM IT IS ADDRESSED

Benefits offered by such an innovative tool are addressed to all stakeholders in the country:

- **Policy Makers:** Ministries of Economy, Employment, Development, Agriculture, etc. by having accurate and constant information to adopt the best policy for fostering SMEs
- **National Institutions:** Banks, Universities, Business Service Providers, SME Development NGOs, Research centres, Regional Development Centres, Chambers etc.
- **International Organizations**

SMEs USEFUL INFORMATION

The SME Pilot Observatory includes a collection of relevant data, analysed both at local/regional, but also at transnational level, so as to identify particular patterns and trends.

Main areas involved are the following:

Macroeconomic Indicators - profile of the area of intervention (local GDP, inflation, unemployment)

Legal Framework - SMEs and Enterprise Policy

Microeconomic Environment - SMEs Sector & Size

SMEs And Foreign Trade

SMEs And Employment

Taxation, Finance and Financial State of SMEs

SMEs Standards, Investment in R&D and ICT

Incubator: the Business Incubators Service gives access to a list of incubators operating in the regions / countries of the EMBRACE II project partnership.

E-Government

Projects/Initiatives/Studies

Policy Recommendation

The documents developed and posted in this section aspire to influence policies concerning spatial development and regional integration so as to support SMEs in disadvantageous areas.

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