



UBC ANTENNA NEWS

Stockholm Region – UBC Antenna Office
Nr. 1 2008

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ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK

On 7 February Vice President Günter Verheugen launched Enterprise Europe Network, a new and powerful European support network for enterprises. All major players of the business support community in Europe have united to offer a one-stop service to assist especially small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to develop their full potential and innovative capacity. The Enterprise Europe Network includes more than 500 contact points for entrepreneurs in Europe. They provide a full range of support services in close proximity to SMEs covering the whole EU territory and going even beyond. More concretely, the Enterprise Europe Network offers the following services: Assisting companies in going international; Innovation, new products and grasping opportunities in the single market; accessing EU projects and funding; providing feedback from the Commission. The new Enterprise Europe Network is part of the Commission's integrated policy for promoting entrepreneurship and growth of enterprises in Europe. It will support SMEs from all sectors to take greater advantage of the opportunities of the Single Market.

More information here: http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

COVENANT OF THE MAYORS

On 29 January 2008 Commissioner Piebalgs launched, on behalf of the European Commission, the Covenant of Mayors, the most ambitious initiative to date involving the citizens in the fight against global warming. It came after an informal consultation process with many cities in Europe. Mayors of several of those European cities joined the Commission in launching the Covenant. The Covenant consists of

the formal commitment of the pioneering cities joining it to go beyond the objectives of the EU in terms of reducing their CO2 emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy actions.

The Covenant of Mayors will be a result-oriented initiative, focusing on concrete projects and measurable results. The adhering cities and regions will formally commit to reduce their CO2 emission more than 20% by 2020. In order to do that, they will develop Sustainable Energy Action Plans. Citizens will be informed on the achievements of their respective cities through periodic reports, which can be monitored by a third party.

The draft text of the Covenant is to be uploaded in the Commission's website and is until the 30th of April in a phase of consultation with stakeholders.

In parallel to the internet consultation, mayors present their intention to join the Covenant to their City/region councils. Municipal councils should formally approve the final text before 15 December 2008 to get into the first group of cities and regions joining the Covenant.

More information here:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/climate_actions/mayors/index_en.htm

THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF REGION SPOKE AT THE EU COUNCIL'S SPRING SUMMIT

On the EU council's spring summit the 13-14th of March the president of The Committee of Regions Luc van den Brande presented a report where the revised Lisbon strategy was analyzed from a region perspective. This was the first time The Committee of Regions was invited to speak to the council.

In his speech president Van den Brande meant that regional governments should be more involved in European policymaking. The only possible way to realize the Lisbon strategy is that all decision-making levels are involved. Van den Brande also requested the council to give regions an adequate place in the institutional system. According to CoR, regions and cities deliver more than 66 per cent of all investment in the EU, but their voices are not being heard.

Read more here: <http://www.theparliament.com/EN/News/200803/06cc8a27-2a70-4199-935a-74d565910cdc.htm>

EUROPEANS ARE POSITIVE TO EU REGIONAL POLICY

A survey conducted for the Euro barometer shows that Europeans in general are positive towards EU Regional Policy and are welcoming efforts in their region. Seven out of ten people that are familiar with this policy area, thinks that the effects are positive. Over 85 percent of the people asked did support the main focus of EU Regional Policy – to support its lesser developed regions in their efforts to match the living conditions of the more affluent ones. Concerning the perceived benefits of the policy, it was most often in those countries where awareness of the EU support was the highest that also saw the most advantages.

However, people felt that the EU Regional Policy should take on more challenging tasks. Respondents wanted globalization, climate change and demographic change to be addressed by EU Regional Policy in the future.

Read more about the survey at:

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_234_en.pdf

REGIONS FOR ECONOMIC CHANGE 25-26 FEBRUARY 2008

Over 600 regional bodies gathered at EU regional conference "EU regional policy conference" (25- 26 February) in Brussels to share good practice and promote sustainable development and competitiveness. The conference, organized by the commission and the EU ' s committee of regions, focused on competitiveness and sustainable development and offered a wide range of workshops on topics like business clusters and initiative to promote sustainable transport.

The different regions I EU have many issues in common: ageing populations, adapting to globalizations and sustainable energy supply, just to name a few. Sharing ideas can help different regions to improve policy and to tackle these challenges more effectively.

During the conference regions were given the opportunity to explain their strategy and showcase their projects.

CALL FOR PROPOSAL: SECOND PROGRAMME OF COMMUNITY ACTION IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH (2008-13)

To ensure appropriate participation in the Second Programme of Community action in the field of Health (2008-13) and fulfilment of all the programme objectives, a wider variety of financing mechanisms are offered. Both the Programme and its Work Plan for 2008 foresee financial contributions for specific actions ('grants for an action') and support to the functioning of particular bodies or specialized networks ('operating grants'). The actions may include typical projects but also the organisation of conferences. The financial contributions may, where appropriate, include joint financing by the Community and one or more Member states or by the Community and the competent authorities of other participating countries.

The deadline for submission of proposals to the calls is 23 May 2008.

For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/phea/calls/call_for_proposals_en.html

SEMINAR: IBSG BALTIC SEA STRATEGY

On Tuesday 22nd of April 2008 the Informal Baltic Sea Group, which represent over 50 regional offices in Brussels, organises a seminar on the Baltic Sea Strategy. The seminar takes place at 10.00-14.00 in the Conference Hall at VLEVA, Avenue Cortenbergh 71 in Brussels. The main purpose of the seminar is to provide a platform for discussions on the regions contribution to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy. Speakers from the Member States and the European Commission will present their views on the topic in a concise seminar. The program will include presentations of DG Regio's Head of Unit Territorial cooperation Mr. Colin Wolfe, Finland's Ambassador of the Baltic Sea Issues Mr. Ole Norrback, and Strategy Coordinator in the Swedish Prime Minister's office Ms. Mikaela Kumlin-Granit. The presentations will be followed by discussion between the assembly of the IBSG members and the speakers. We hope this seminar will be a start for an active debate between the Baltic Sea regions for their contribution to the forming of EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

UBC will be represented at the seminar by the Antenna Office.

For registration and more information you can contact: info@northfinland.fi