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## The final dissemination conference of the INTERREG IVC project IPP presented advantages of internationalization



Last November in Valencia, Spain, the Interregional Partnership Platform (IPP) project organised a conference on the „Key strategies for the internationalisation: Innovation and Interregional cooperation”. The event with 160 participants from the partner regions (Saxony-Anhalt from Germany, Riga from Latvia, Valencia and Paterna from Spain, Eszak-Alfold from Hungary) provided a suitable platform to summarize the key findings of the project.

The IPP Project implemented two pilot projects. One aimed at improving the networking and coaching strategies of EU funds advisory service agencies. The second pilot project targeted further improvement of international activities in municipalities and regions. Both pilots were evaluated in a round table format during the conference.

At the conference, Mr. Máximo Buch Torralva (Regional Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce of Valencian Region) and Dr. Reiner Haseloff (Minister and President of Saxony-Anhalt) opened the event with their welcome speech. Then, the representatives of the CoR, the European Commission and of the Joint Technical Secretariat discussed the territorial cooperation as a tool for interregional collaboration. Mrs. Sarah Lambert (Deputy Head of the Representation of European Commission in Spain) shared her view that “the cheapest investment is the exchange of experience”.



After that, the representatives of the participating regions talked about their experiences and the main results of the project.



Thomas Steinmetz (deputy head of unit/ Ministry of Science and Economy of Saxony-Anhalt) said that „innovation can be obtained by cooperation at local and regional level”, and according to Mrs. Solvita Zvidriņa (Director of the State Regional Development Agency of Latvia), „by mutual learning and by the creation of knowledge assets” as well.

Ms Orsolya Gregán (Head of external relations of Innova Eszak-Alföld) talked about the experience of the project in the Hungarian region of Eszak-Alföld, and Mr. José-Luis Muñoz (Head of European Territorial Innovation of FCVRE), shared the main facts of the successful cooperation developed between the Valencian Region of Spain and the main actors of the different partner regions.

Two round table discussions followed the speeches. There, participants deliberated on the methodology of internationalisation strategies for local authorities and on the key factors of the development of European projects. Contributions during the table reviewed answers to questions like: What has been the experience with the IPP or what has been considered the most interesting about this initiative?

[www.i-p-p.eu](http://www.i-p-p.eu)

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In the panel about Pilot 1, where participants discussed the new opportunities and interregional cooperations after IPP project, Mrs. Dita Trapenciere (Head of Development Planning Department/ Municipality of Cēsis (Latvia) said that “international cooperation could be utilized the best by looking at the local cooperation also.” According to Zoltan Balogh (Head of unit of International Affairs, Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency, Hungary), “services shall be offered to overcome the barriers to cooperation, so these two shall work in parallel”. In the framework of IPP, several agreements for sustainable cooperation have been developed. Specifically, in Valencian Region and Saxony-Anhalt agreements were signed between the Valencian Ministry of Education, Training and Employment and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Saxony-Anhalt, between the Polytechnic University of Valencia and the Chamber of Engineers of Saxony-Anhalt, and also between the Clusters of automotive industries in both regions (AVIA and MAHREG).



In fact, the expected results of the project were exceeded by many additional contacts among the main actors and stakeholders of the partners: for example, by organization of a Regional Cooperation Summit between the lead partner region and the Valencian Region in the framework of the Final Conference, or by a deep agenda for cooperation in regional policies on employment, innovation, competitiveness, internationalization and financing. Both Regional Presidents and several Regional Ministries participated in order to continue the successful cooperation among the regions and establish plans for the sustainability of the cooperation, of the project results, and of the opportunities after the end of the project.



In Paterna (Spain), a “Joint Declaration for the Development of Competitive Territories” was signed among 8 entities of the partner regions, such as the the City of Paterna and the Federation of Municipalities of Valencian Region (FVMP) in Spain, the Cities of Valmiera, Cesis and Daugavpils in Latvia, the City of Magdeburg, and the County of Anhalt-Bitterfeld in Germany, and the Cities of

Nyiregyháza, Jászfényszaru and Jászság in Hungary. This Joint Declaration is open to other cities in the partner regions all over Europe.

### **About the IPP project:**

The Interregional Partnership Platform (IPP) is an INTERREG IVC project aiming to improve the capacity of regions for innovation by increasing the performance of innovation intermediaries at local and regional level in European co-operation and innovation programmes. The project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund with one million Euro and will run until March 2013. During the project the participating regions have identified and exchanged successful practices to increase the outward orientation of these organizations and to develop a long-term framework of interregional know-how transfer among the local and regional actors. Therefore the partners have jointly developed instruments within two pilot actions, a joint benchmark and an IT tool to regularly assess the participation rate of organizations. After all the results of the co-operation have been used to give policy recommendations to improve innovation policies and the structural funds mainstream programmes of the regions.