



Best Practice Award winners

Annual Conference special!

The Network in Italy

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Monthly news for Network partners October 2010

In Focus

Dawn of a new era

More than 900 Enterprise Europe Network partners gather in Antwerp 13-15 October to brainstorm ideas for SMEs.



Business Support on Your Doorstep



Enjoying Belgian hospitality in Antwerp

"AS THE EUROPE 2020 era opens before us, I am sure you will continue to bring SMEs closer to the single market and help them innovate and encourage more international partnerships," Heinz Zourek, Director-General of DG Enterprise & Industry, said in opening the third and so-far biggest Annual Conference of the Network.

Partners from 47 countries spent the next 48 hours exchanging ideas on how to do all that and more -- whether at workshops, more informal mini-sessions or through oodles of networking opportunities from the b2match fair to impromptu strolls through the Antwerp Zoo. "We tried to create an atmosphere that was very human," says Lutgart Spaepen, Flanders consortium leader from Agentschap Ondernemen. "It was a challenge, but I think everybody felt at home."

network bingo and the gala dinner at the Royal Museum for Fine Arts.

Outside the formal programme, 170 partners took part in 430 bilateral meetings through the brokerage event, far exceeding expectations of organiser Kurt Burtscher of the Austrian Research Promotion Agency.

"Based on the feedback so far, I have a strong feeling that a large number of meetings will lead to concrete projects," says Kurt.

Meanwhile in the Exhibition Hall, Brigitte Tanti and Dennis Vella of Malta Enterprise handed out 600 jars of Gozo delicacies to promote a regional B2B event for SMEs in Malta next May.

"Due to the regional aspect of this event, we expect to also attract a lot of participants from Northern Africa and the Middle East," Brigitte says. "That is what really got people's attention."

The full schedule included workshops on IT tools, finance and entrepreneurial creativity as well as a standing-room only session on social networking. There was also plenty of time for fun, like

As the conference ended, partners returned home with a renewed sense of mission. "Now more than ever, we are determined to cooperate more closely with our EU colleagues," notes Olga Ermakova, of the Russian Agency for Small and Medium Business Support.

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More information

Partnership profiles from the brokerage event
www.B2Match.EU/antwerp2010

NetView



Spotlight on best practices

Award ceremony recognises top tools and methods



FOR THE SECOND year in a row, four creative ways of helping SMEs developed by partners were honoured as Best Practices. Acting as emcees for the ceremony, Anastasia Constantinou of NATS and CIP-Hellas and Toni Saraiva of EISC presented the awards on the final day of the Annual Conference.

Sitdowns with SMEs

Category: Organisation of business panels and participation in Commission on-line consultations

How do you get more SMEs to take part in the Commission's online consultations? Ask Enterprise Europe Flanders, which has lured 70-plus participants to three round tables since 2009. "We try to involve a second party with close links to the target audience," explains Els Compennolle of Agentschap Ondernemen. "This allows us to mobilise more SMEs."

Get in touch

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Networking the Viking way

Category: Transnational collaboration between Networks partners in order to provide services to SMEs and to foster co-operation

Fun, informal networking among advisors is the name of the game at the 'Viking Days' brokerage event dreamed up by Jasper Hemmes of Syntens, and Agro Business Park's Simon Poulsen. "International matchmaking works much better if you meet colleagues and have a laugh together," says Jasper. He and Simon are ready to help organise Viking Days elsewhere in Europe.

Get in touch

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No stone left unturned

Category: Synergies within consortia: integration of services implementing the "no wrong door" principle

In northeastern Italy, companies can link up more easily with potential business, research and technology partners by using a web search engine that connects directly to the BCD, BBS and the CORDIS database. "It enables clients to always knock at the right door for assistance with the profiles," explains Francesco Pareti, coordinator of the Friend Europe consortium.

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Getting the show on the road

Category: Media relations and campaigns

For five days in 2010, a road show toured the German state of Hesse – getting the word out to some 160 companies in remote areas about EU, national and regional support programmes as well as cooperation possibilities. Ilga Vis of Enterprise Europe Network Hessen sums up the campaign as "a great effort, much networking and good media attention – a big success!"

Get in touch

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To make the Annual Conference a success, you need a mix of ingredients...

Skilled chefs: organisers Lutgart Spaepen and Sophie



An exceptional venue



A pinch of stars



Tons of business cards



A tablespoon of relaxing moments



Some fun: the EACI perform their surprise song, Waka Waka



Food for thought



A slice of directions



Find all the pictures from the Antwerp Annual Conference on the Intranet.

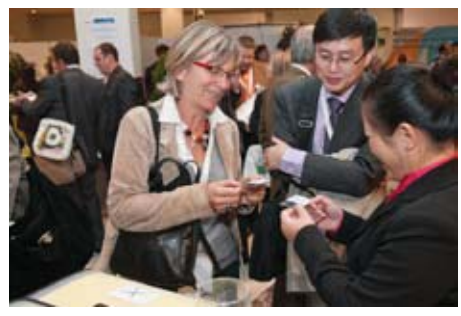


Plenary session

Europe 2020: a wealth of opportunities for SMEs



Network networking...

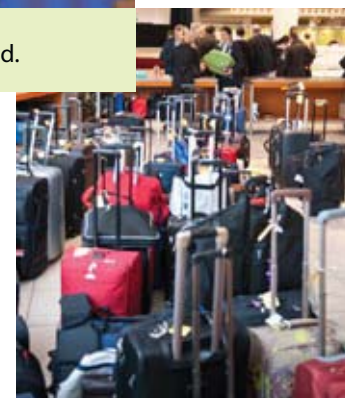


... and enjoying





See you next year in Poland.



News in Brief

Network Stars shine brightly

Four Network clients are honoured for making the most of the single market.

HELPING EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEURS go international and source or license new technologies are among the key services of the Enterprise Europe Network. The Annual Conference was thus a perfect opportunity to honour hard-working clients who have seen their dreams come true.

The first-ever 'Network Stars' were chosen from a long list of success stories. One set of awards went to Belgian Serge Vleeschouwer, who has designed a special bed as a first course of treatment for infants suffering from gastroesophageal reflux; and AirMedPlus, a German medical-device maker now test-marketing the bed in hospitals. "This prize proves to our Flemish companies and organisations that the Network's brokerage activities can help our companies internationalise," says Marleen Heyse of Agentschapondernemen, who advises Vleeschouwer. Juan-J. Carmona-Schneider of ZENIT, who organised a business matchmaking event that brought the two parties together, says he is "very proud" of the award.

Honours also went to Rodica and

Mircea Chloean, the Romanian co-founders of French-based Westline, and Gryftec, Westline's new distributor in Poland. Gryftec is now selling Westline's SmartDrive-S3, a device that can operate motors and other moving parts in machines. "Working with entrepreneurs like Westline's founders is truly rewarding every day, and it is a real pleasure to see the direct impact on their market share, sales turnover and recruitment strategy," says Pierre Arribe of CCI Versailles Val-d'Oise/Yvelines.

Michal Olan of the Szczecin-based Regional Centre for Innovation and

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Infant business grows across borders

Technology Transfer, says the award means just as much for his organisation and the B2Europe West Poland consortium as much as it does for Gryftec.

"We will continue to offer professional services to our clients, believing that it will be noticed again."

Hopefully, the new awards category will inspire all partners to reach for the stars in working with some of Europe's top innovators. ☺

Making a difference

In the spirit of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, several partners are running projects benefiting their local communities.

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH is a cornerstone of the Europe 2020 strategy, which seeks to help at least 20 million people out of poverty -- mainly by improving education and training. In the Network, projects with a social dimension make their contribution to this aim. In Slovenia, for example,

the ACTrain project was conceived to develop ICT training for deaf and blind people in the ceramics sector. "It is really unbelievable to see what handicapped people can achieve with just a tiny bit of understanding and support," says Larisa Vodeb of the Ljubljana-based Chamber of Craft and Small Business, which helped SME client Ozara secure funding from the EU's Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Another initiative with a social dimension is an academic summer camp for disadvantaged teens supported by the IHK Chamber of Industry and Commerce for Munich and Upper Bavaria. "Besides gaining new skills and employment, the

youngsters are given a real opportunity to get jobs and not be left out of economic life," says Friedhelm Forge of the IHK. ☺

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 More information

http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm



Summer camp for disadvantaged teens

The Network in Italy



A well-oiled machine

Teamwork is key for the 63 partners and five consortia that make up the Enterprise Europe Network in the southern European nation.

“SMES ACROSS ALL regions face the same difficulties as well as opportunities to be internationally innovative and competitive,” says Paolo Bonaretti, Italy’s country coordinator. “That is why we try to be as coordinated as possible in terms of strategic planning and initiatives.”

Paolo also represents SIMPLER,



Looking up to Europe

one of five consortia organised by region. In practice, the Network assists entrepreneurs ‘on the spot’ or puts them in touch with a specialised branch in their region even better placed to serve them.

Recently, all Italian partners participated in their first national event – a brokerage fair and national conference connected with the Ecomondo green technology expo in Rimini, 3-6 November.

Although each organisation regularly organises its own networking events and company missions, this was the first crossregional effort.

Other examples of a more coordinated and harmonised approach are the planned national Steering Committee and the fledgling working groups on clusters and communication.

The clusters group, which is headed

by Ivan Boesso of Veneto Innovazione, aims to promote Italian clusters internationally. One of the first tasks is to identify Italian clusters across all sectors and then build links with clusters in other Enterprise Europe Network countries.

Similarly, the communication group aims to coordinate communication activities at national level. Led by Cinzia Giachetti of Consorzio Piza Ricerche, the group is brainstorming on various initiatives.

Paolo says: “Italian SMEs can overcome the current economic crisis through innovation. Our role as part of the Network is fundamental, in developing the right tools and ideas to help companies realise their full potential.” ☺

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News in Brief

A round of applause for a dedicated colleague



NetLife would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Karsten Gravesen of Denmark’s Business Development Centre Herning & Ikast Brande for 20 years of service for the Network. Karsten, an EU and international affairs consultant, joined the Network via the Euro Info Centres. In particular, he provides information and guidance on export and internationalisation, and has held numerous seminars on opportunities abroad for local and regional firms. As a TED Alert agent, he also flags upcoming tenders and public procurement opportunities. “Karsten is an experienced and well-respected colleague, and he puts that experience to good use when working with clients. We will miss him when he retires later this year,” says project manager Thomas C. Andersen.

Tip of the Month

Staff exchanges and mentoring

Sharpen your skills in any area by working with colleagues abroad through a staff exchange or mentoring programme. The former allows you to visit or host a partner organisation, provided you enrol and find your match. Alternatively, find a mentor to help you expand into new services or bolster existing ones – or become a mentor yourself if you have expertise to share. In this case, after setting up the match, the agency provides ongoing support. Both programmes foster a team spirit through good-practice exchanges.

[Intranet > Network Operations > Staff exchange](#)
[Intranet > Network Operations > Mentoring Scheme](#)

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