



Newsletter 2, Spring 2010

Project Workshop Lyon

The Delegation of Tarare from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lyon (CCIL) welcomed the COMUNIS project team on December 3-4, 2009. With the exception of Slovenia, all project partners attended. The representatives of the French and Swiss contact points and a representative of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO were present, too. Intense exchanges were necessary to validate the ongoing work and prepare for the next work package (WP). Visits to local authorities allowed the participants to seize the main challenges of Tarare region in terms of economic development strategy and cooperation.

Considering the importance of formal and informal networks, François Parvex from the Swiss Association for Regional and Municipal Services presented the challenges and advantages of disseminating the project results through social networks. A proposal was made to extend the project's knowledge network and spread the information by creating a COMUNIS web based community.

The Swiss observer SECO communicated high interest in the diffusion of best practices of commercial location development (CLD) in Switzerland. SECO cooperates with the Canton of Valais to implement the three pillars of the Swiss regional policy: strengthen the economy in the regions; coordinate regional policy with the federal agencies; create know-how for the actors involved. In terms of CLD, SECO promotes a pragmatic approach and is thus particularly interested in obtaining and applying the project results.

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Official reception of the project partners at the Communauté de communes du pays de Tarare. © CCIL 2009

Regional analysis: examination of the pilot areas (WP 4)

In Lyon, the project partners discussed intensely the analysis tool. It will be implemented in each pilot area to examine the preconditions and underlying structures for inter-municipal CLD. The chosen tool is based on a combination of the methods Balanced Score Card (BSC) and SWOT-analysis. The BSC is a strategic performance management tool. For instance, it is commonly used to assess a company's performance. The SWOT-analysis, a strategic planning method, can be employed in various domains to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, e. g. of a project or a business venture.

In COMUNIS, the aim is to analyze and evaluate the existing systems and framework conditions for inter-municipal CLD. At

the same time, the project team is gathering examples of best practices in the Alps concerning inter-municipal CLD. This work is central to all subsequent activities which aim at establishing a concerted strategy for CLD that will be applied in all pilot areas. The method's application in the framework of COMUNIS requires an adaptation to the project needs and expected outcomes. Discussions during the Lyon-workshop revealed three main axes, followed by sub-axes:

- **Location profile:** situation and location; economy; job market; human resources; image.
- **Inter-municipal cooperation:** intensity of already existing cooperation; attitudes and expectations of stakeholders; political and legal framework conditions.

- **Commercial land use management:** availability and use of land; spatial framework conditions; land prices.

The tool can be used flexibly, allowing project partners to adapt it to their pilot area's characteristics. The objective is to interview public and private stakeholders of each pilot area about their municipality's (and the greater region) status quo

with regard to these three core themes. This will permit project partners to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the individual pilot areas and to identify differences and commonalities in dealing with inter-municipal CLD. Interviews will be conducted and assessed until March 2010.

Development of a strategy for inter-municipal commercial location development (WP 5)

Work package 5 *Development of a common and coordinated strategy for Commercial Location Development (CLD)* started on December 1, 2009, shortly before the second project workshop in Lyon. WP 5 is a central work package aimed at conceiving both a strategy for CLD and the associated tools for cost-benefit analyses, while taking into account possible environmental consequences.

Initially, the main components of CLD will be identified, e. g. organisation and finance, spatial planning and land use policies,

(qualitative and quantitative) analysis of supply and demand, marketing, etc. Using the practical examples collected in WP 4, successful and flexible solutions and tools will be designed and made available in the form of guidelines, which are in fact the main output of WP 5. These guidelines are intended to provide municipal and regional authorities with a selection of measures for the proper planning and implementation of an agreed inter-municipal CLD strategy.

City marketing ONLY LYON – an international strategy

Aderly (**A**gence pour le **D**éveloppement **E**conomique de la **R**égion **L**yonnaise) is an economic development agency founded in 1974. It aims at promoting Lyon and its region and facilitating the set-up of companies by inward investment. The strategy's presentation was part of the workshop agenda.

The launch of the ONLY LYON initiative is a result of a common observation from local stakeholders based on a lack of coherence between communication tools of the city and the ones of the various local stakeholders. This initiative is mainly based on a network of "Ambassadors" promoting the city. Indeed, the best people to "sell" and promote Lyon are those who, through their activities, are already contributing to the city's economic growth and development nationally as well as internationally.

While Lyon's marketing strategy may not entirely be transferable to the COMUNIS pilot areas, certain aspects may be applicable. An essential point is to create and develop a sense of belonging and an identity for the territory around its specificities and what makes it different from others: its so-called "unique selling proposition" (USP). There are numerous best practice examples which COMUNIS will study as CLD and territorial marketing are closely related and need to be integrated in a concerted strategy. Additional information on <http://www.onlylyon.org> and <http://www.aderly.com>.



COMUNIS on site – project launch in the region Alpsee-Grünten

In the Alpsee-Grünten region, COMUNIS was initiated on 28 September 2009, in Sonthofen. The mayors from the cities and municipalities of Sonthofen, Immenstadt, Blaichach, Burgberg and Rettenberg, and the district authority of Oberallgäu met with the project team to set the course for project activities until the first quarter of 2010. It was agreed that a common, comprehensive strategy for the region is needed: it should include land management plans shared at inter-municipal level. Medium- to long-term the southern neighbouring municipalities should be involved as well.

In the first quarter of 2010, a survey will be carried out among local enterprises of the processing, handicraft, logistics, trade and service sectors, to explore needs- and demand-related issues concerning transport connections, infrastructure, surface areas, locations etc. The final aim of said survey is to take stock of the existing situation with a view to improving it jointly. The company survey will involve also southern neighbouring municipalities.

Mid-February 2010, field visits were organised to three practical examples of inter-municipal commercial location development, namely the industrial estate Unterallgäu in

Mindelheim (inter-municipal industrial park), the urban development association Ulm/Neu-Ulm (marketing pool using a common location marketing strategy) and the regions Neckar-Alb and Schwarzwald-Baar-Heuberg in Baden-Württemberg (pool of industrial estates which share and mutually offset risks and advantages). The purpose of these field visits was to learn from the mayors and representatives of the municipal governments about the different models implemented in the Alpsee-Grünten region, their prerequisites,

successful outcomes and difficulties. The discussion on the findings of the company survey and the impressions of the field visits will be the core agenda items of the first regional COMUNIS workshop in Sonthofen in spring 2010.

The German project partners are glad to host the next project meeting from **June 7-9, 2010**. In addition to continuing the project activities, the project team will have the opportunity to gain an insight into the specific situation of the COMUNIS pilot region Alpsee-Grünten.

Strategic development of South Tyrol as business location

The location development project for South Tyrol was presented on January 26, 2010 in the framework of the conference “Business location South Tyrol – A strategic development approach “. The project aims at strengthening the long-term performance of South Tyrol as a business location, involving all areas of the region,



Dr. Widmann, Provincial economic councillor © BLS 2010

including peripheral districts. It is the result of the joint effort of South Tyrol’s provincial authorities, the Association of South Tyrol’s municipalities and all municipalities in the region, who actively support the project. The South Tyrolean provincial association for business settlements and location marketing Business Location Südtirol (BLS) coordinates and implements the project.

The main objective is to produce a clear profile of South Tyrol as a business location. In that respect, a number of crucial questions should be answered, such as: which business sectors is South Tyrol particularly strong in? Which branches should be expanded, which should be located? Which areas of the provincial district possess specific strengths and

expertise that could be developed in a targeted way? Is it possible to define functional areas? The project’s implementation phase should take approximately 18 months.

Moreover, a database will be created with all commercial properties for sale in South Tyrol to offer the most suitable properties to companies willing to settle in the area or to enlarge their existing facilities.

Prior to this action, the European Academy Bolzano (Eurac) will prepare a regional analysis for the municipalities of the Passeier Valley and collect data for the commercial property database.

Further information available on <http://www.bls.info>

Werkraum Bregenzerwald

Entrepreneurs take over control of commercial location development

In the Bregenzerwald, a region with 24 municipalities and 30,000 inhabitants in Western Austria, local entrepreneurs have successfully taken over control of commercial location development. The project “Werkraum Bregenzerwald” (literally “Atelier Bregenzerwald”) was initiated by the local municipalities in the framework of a regional development programme. Farsighted entrepreneurs laid the foundations and advocated cooperation, shaped a programme to promote entrepreneurship, established a

management structure, and successfully implemented business development actions. The implemented activities are intended to improve quality in the fields of handicraft and design, in the field of social skills as entrepreneurs will cooperate with schools, to guarantee generational continuity through promotion of young entrepreneurs. Their success is clearly visible! Today, the region is populated by a variety of dynamic small-sized companies, and visitors perceive it as a solid combination of residential and

commercial development in a pleasant landscape. Currently, the inter-municipal cooperation for the promotion of commercial location development is building its own seat with the help of the famous Swiss architect Peter Zumthor. In the future, a building called the *Werkraumhaus* (literally the “Atelier House”) will showcase all products by local companies under one roof. Read more <http://www.werkraum.at>

**BEST
PRACTICE**



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Bregenzerwald

Gorenjska: from processing industry to information and communication technologies

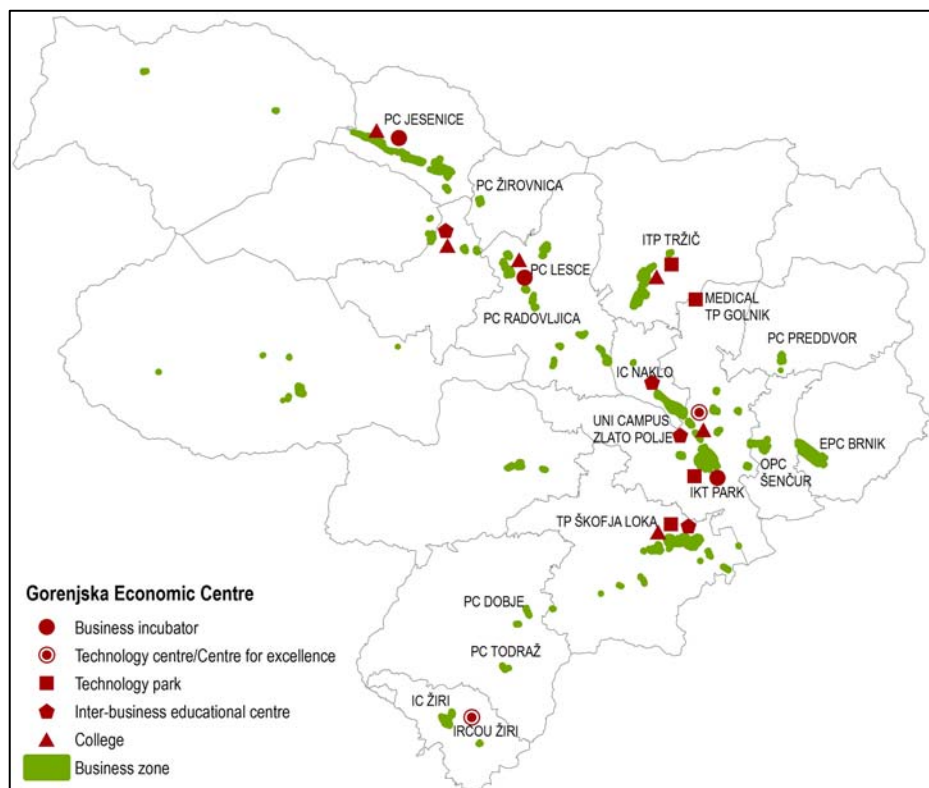
Gorenjska used to be the most powerful industrial region in the southeast of Europe at the end of the 19th century. Today, we build on development of modern technologies (e. g. ICT, new materials, medicine, sports equipment) and tourism.

We are the region with the most technical enterprises and engineers on average in Slovenia. Some enterprises are among the top in the world in their branch. We wish to attract more dynamic and innovative enterprises in the region and are therefore reorganizing industrial areas into technological parks and incubators, equipping new building areas and spreading the airport area for new services and business activities.

The region has over two million m² business zone land scattered around the region. In recent years, the biggest challenge for the region has been to upgrade the approaches in business zones development and connect them to new challenges in the region (plans for ICT parks, medicine parks, materials park). It has been an important issue to upgrade the methods to attract SMEs in the region. We see the project COMUNIS as one of the key elements to develop a well integrated and cooperative strategy

for CLD. Topics like location profile, inter-municipal cooperation and land use management are key challenges in the way to develop comprehensive and sustainable CLD. After the first initial talks with stakeholders in the region, we also believe that comprehensive CLD will bring additional added value to the

region (to the private and public sectors, SMEs needs, employment opportunities and attractiveness of the region). Few larger business zones are in development and will be elaborated during the project; also new plans (e. g. ICT and medical parks) will be evaluated as part of long-term objectives in the region.



Map indicating the economic centers in the Slovene pilot area Gorenjska © BSC 2010



COMUNIS aims at developing an integrative and cooperative strategy for **Commercial Location Development (CLD)**. By **enhancing inter-municipal and intra-territorial cooperation**, COMUNIS wants to overcome individualistic attempts of problem solution on the level of single municipalities. COMUNIS will provide broadly adaptable guidelines to apply this strategy and offer practical instruments for assessing the local and regional demand for and the steering of commercial development. The project will result in a transnational knowledge management and establish sustainable structures for managing CLD in the COMUNIS pilot areas. COMUNIS runs from July 2009 to June 2012.

Project partners

Lead partner: University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland, Institut Economie et Tourisme (CH)

ERDF-Lead partner: Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Lyon (F)

Other partners: Stadt Sonthofen (DE), Eurac-Research, Institute for Regional Development and Location Management (IT), Canton du Valais Service du développement économique (CH), Ministero dell'Ambiente e delle Tutela del Territorio e del Mare (IT), Bosch & Partner GmbH (DE), Regionalentwicklung Vorarlberg (AT), Società Consortile Langhe Monferrato Roero, settore progetti europei (IT), BSC Poslovno podporni center, d.o.o., Kranj (SI), Association Suisse pour le Service aux Régions et Communes (CH)