

OD

Magazine

2012



European Week of
Regions and Cities
Brussels 8 - 11 October

Europe's regions and cities: Making a difference



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



10th ANNIVERSARY
OPEN DAYS
European Week of Regions and Cities



The OPEN DAYS: Building regional bridges towards Europe's future

The OPEN DAYS - *European Week of Regions and Cities* is the annual key event for regional and local authorities. In October each year, thousands of local, regional, national and European decision-makers and experts gather in Brussels to showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs and implement European Union cohesion policy, hence demonstrating the importance of the local level for good European governance.

Organised by the EU Committee of the Regions and the European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO), the OPEN DAYS are the occasion to discuss common regional and local development challenges and to debate possible solutions. The communication and networking platform also provides a forum for those involved in implementing EU cohesion policy and managing its financial instruments while facilitating cooperation and networking among regions and cities.

In 2012, the OPEN DAYS are celebrating their 10th edition.

Edited by the Committee of the Regions
and the Directorate-General for Regional
Policy of the European Commission

© European Union, July 2012
Printed in Belgium



Welcome to the 10th European Week of Regions and Cities!

For the 10th time we are organising the OPEN DAYS, the European Week of Regions and Cities, and would like to invite you to join us between 8 and 11 October 2012. The biggest event in the world on regional and urban development will again consist of more than 100 workshops, seminars and debates prepared by the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, over 200 regions and cities and other institutions and organisations. It is a must for all those involved in EU cohesion policy.

We are currently changing cohesion policy into a forward-looking investment and growth policy and this shift goes hand in glove with a change of perspective on economic, social and territorial development. Cohesion policy will be more closely related than ever to an overarching vision: to make the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth work. Our common challenge is to bring all EU funds and instruments, including those for rural development, fisheries, research and innovation, the environment and social inclusion, together under an integrated territorial approach to create new jobs and to ensure the competitiveness of Europe's regions. Places matter and such an approach will answer the question of where, when and how to make change happen. This is why everybody matters, at each level of government in Europe.

We want to have you on board for the 10th European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels as well as the more than 250 local events held under the 'Europe in my city – Europe in my region' brand between September and November 2012. We invite everybody to present examples of good practice, results and ideas and to show that Europe's regions and cities make a difference. We look forward to meeting you during the OPEN DAYS 2012.

Mercedes Bresso

President of the Committee of the Regions

Johannes Hahn

EU Commissioner for Regional Policy

Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso

Incoming President of the Committee of the Regions

Contents

01	Welcome message
02-03	Programme overview
04-07	Themes in 2012
04	Smart and green growth for all
06	Territorial cooperation
07	Delivering results
08-11	Organisers and partners
12	Exhibitions
13	Local events: 'Europe in my region, my city'
14-19	Practical information
14	Registration
16	How to network
17	Mobile application
18	More information
19	Venues map

Europe's regions and cities: Making a difference

In the ten years of its existence, the OPEN DAYS has become a well-established forum where stakeholders from all levels of government and civil society – from politicians and officials to experts and researchers – gather from all around Europe to discuss, debate and help shape the future of the European Union and its cohesion policy.

As we celebrate a decade of the OPEN DAYS, it is not only a time for reflection on the successes of the past but also the challenges of the future. The OPEN DAYS 2012 will be used to ignite the debate on the future of Europe, its cohesion policy and its multi-level governance. It will showcase the added value of EU cohesion policy in times of crisis affecting both national and regional economies.

With the devastating shock waves of the financial crisis still rolling across Europe and beyond, there has never been a more important time to come together to discuss how the whole of Europe can meet the ambitions of the European Union by creating more jobs, greener energy and transport, better education, social cohesion and integration. Cohesion policy is there to help those regions worst affected by the crisis. Greater in-depth knowledge and a profound understanding of what is happening on the ground is also needed to help Europe to deliver on its objectives.

Whilst operating as a forum for discussing the challenges that lie ahead, the OPEN DAYS will once again provide a platform for the sharing of experiences and a forum for debating good practices. In addition to showcasing results and projects from current 'convergence', 'regional competitiveness and employment', and 'territorial cooperation' programmes, the OPEN DAYS will inspire discussions on good local, regional and cross-border governance and management of EU funding between practitioners, academia, and third countries, which are interested to hear and learn from European regions' experiences in regional policy as well as presenting their own.

This is why 6 000 participants from regions and cities from all over Europe, including companies, financial institutions, international associations and academic organisations, will come to Brussels to take part in the OPEN DAYS workshops, debates, exhibitions and networking opportunities at the OPEN DAYS 2012.

Under the heading '**Europe's regions and cities: Making a difference**', the OPEN DAYS 2012 workshops are structured around three themes:

- **Smart and green growth for all,**
- **Territorial cooperation: an asset for Europe,**
- **Delivering results.**

The **opening session** on 8 October will coincide with the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Parliament's Regional Development Committee's meeting. This will kick off the 108 OPEN DAYS 2012 workshops organised in Brussels from 9 to 11 October.

- Located on the Committee of the Regions premises (Rue Belliard,101), the **Meeting Place** will host **36 workshops**, with a special focus on community-led local development (CLLD), a new feature in the post-2013 cohesion policy package. Project representatives, experts, associations and EU, national and regional officials will be invited to exchange information and network on the basis of the proposals made by the European Commission in October 2011 on funding of CLLD in urban, rural and fisheries areas post-2013.
- The Meeting Place will also provide participants, journalists and organisers with a network hub where contacts can be made and ideas exchanged after the workshops (see page 16).
- **24 workshops** will be organised by the OPEN DAYS 2012 **regional partnerships**, i.e. the 219 regional and urban partners grouped in 24 consortia. Each of the workshops will be organised alongside one of the three themes of this year's edition. Europe, and delivering results.
- **40 European Commission workshops** will focus on all three thematic aspects of the OPEN DAYS 2012. The **Directorate-General for Regional Policy** (DG REGIO) will coordinate contributions to the programme made by other European Commission Directorates. Five of the sessions will showcase all finalists for the five categories of the RegioStars Awards 2013 (see below).
- **Eight workshops** will be organised by DG REGIO under the umbrella of the **OPEN DAYS University**. The Regional Studies Association and a selected number of academics from different European countries specialised in urban and regional studies will be invited to debate on new research on regional and urban development alongside the event's priorities.

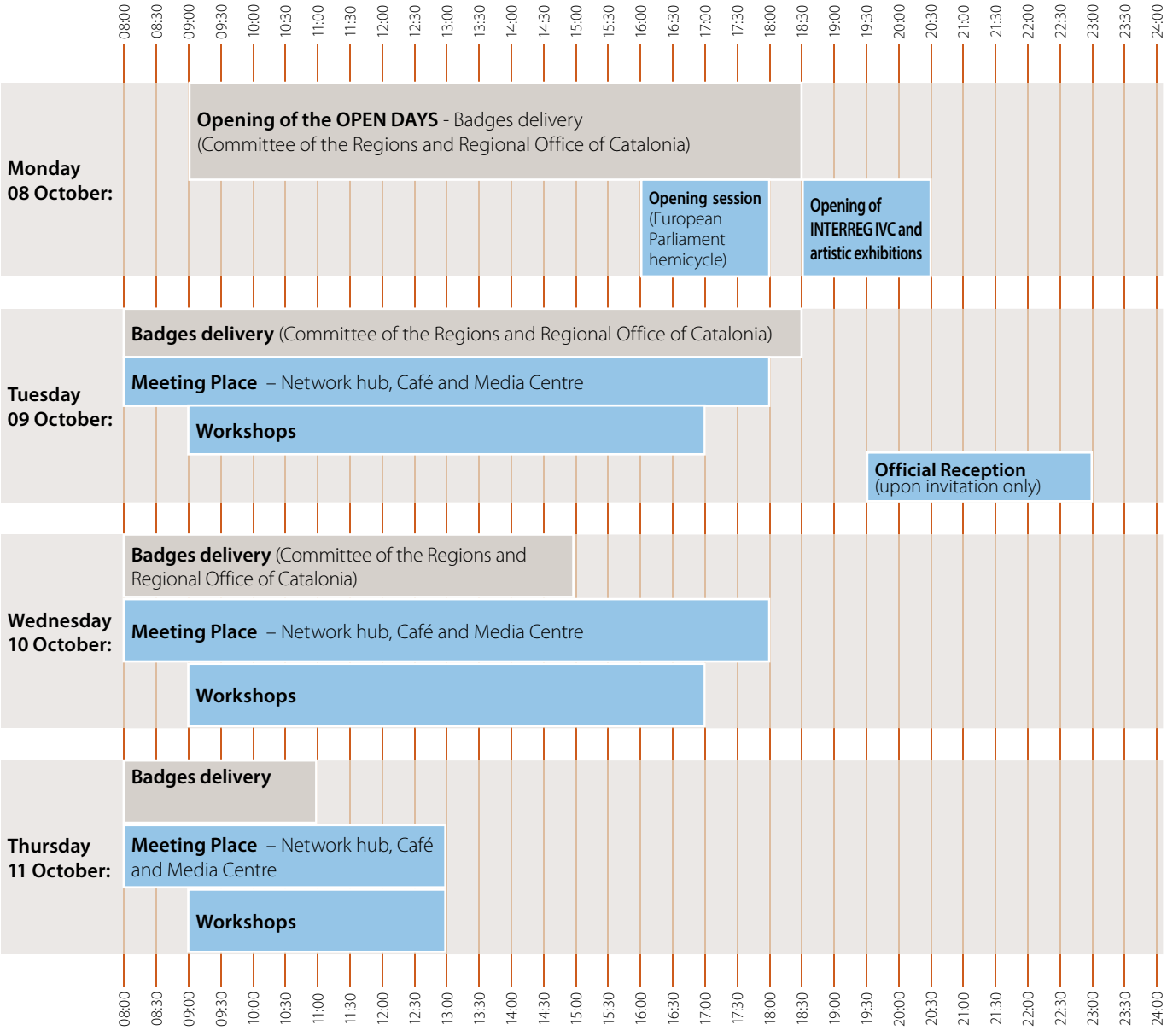
RegioStars Awards

Appearing in a series of special showcase workshops organised by DG REGIO will be the finalists of the **RegioStars Awards** 2013. Run by the European Commission since 2008, the competition was designed to identify good practices in regional development and to highlight original and innovative projects which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions. The nominated projects, all co-financed by EU regional policy funding, will be presented to both a jury and the OPEN DAYS audience during the seminars. In addition, a popular vote for the best or most interesting RegioStars 2013 project will be launched during the event. The final awards will be presented at a conference in early 2013.

For details on the OPEN DAYS programme and workshops please visit: www.opendays.europa.eu.



Overview



Themes in 2012



On 10 October, the European Parliament's regional Development Committee (REGI) will hold a joint seminar with the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy (COTER) of the Committee of the Regions on the legislative package for Cohesion Policy after 2013. The seminar will be co-chaired by Danuta Hübner and Marek Woźniak.

Smart and green growth for all

Future growth in Europe will largely depend on the capacity of its regions and cities to innovate and to develop a pathway towards green and sustainable growth. The new cohesion policy makes green and smart growth the number one priority in all regions of Europe. During the OPEN DAYS, 43 workshops and seminars will address this topic.

Being typically concentrated in capital and metropolitan regions, research investments currently exceed the 3% of GDP target of the Europe 2020 strategy in only 25 of the 271 NUTS 2 regions. This is where 40% of public and private expenditure in research and development is focused. Over the last decade, regions have learned from each other. **Smart specialisation strategies** are expected to form an important element of cohesion policy programmes during the period 2014-2020.

In particular in view of increased levels of youth unemployment over the past years, regions and cities have to invest in high levels of **education** attainment to facilitate the rapid diffusion and absorption of new knowledge and techniques. The Europe 2020 target is to increase the share of people aged 30-34 with a tertiary (higher education) degree to 40% by 2020, a level currently only reached by one in five EU regions. In addition, the share of early school leavers should be reduced to less than 10% by the end of the decade. This target is only reached by one in four of the more developed regions.

Sustainable growth has an important local and regional dimension. The Europe 2020 strategy aims at enhancing resource efficiency and at helping the EU prosper through **low-carbon economic**

development while preventing environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. It promotes greater water efficiency, the use of waste as a resource as well as renewable energies and more efficient energy supply systems. The development of better and more intelligent energy networks is the key to ensuring the faster transportation of renewable energy across territories.

For the period **2014-2020**, the allocation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for energy efficiency and renewables, innovation and SME support shall form at least:

- 80% in developed and transition regions;
- 60% in more developed and transition regions whose GDP per capita in 2007-2013 is below 75% of EU average;
- 50% in less developed regions.

In addition, the support to energy efficiency and renewables within this allocation must form at least 20% in more developed and transition regions and 6% in less developed regions.

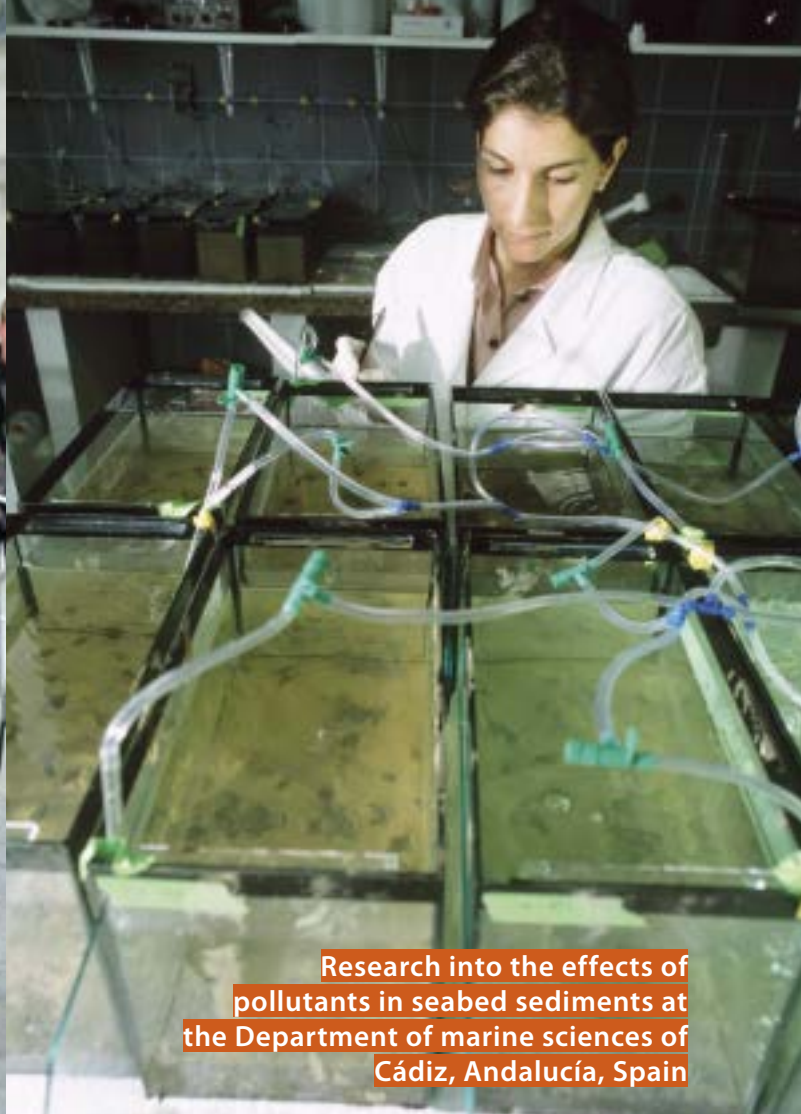
For details on the OPEN DAYS related workshops please visit:

www.opendays.europa.eu.





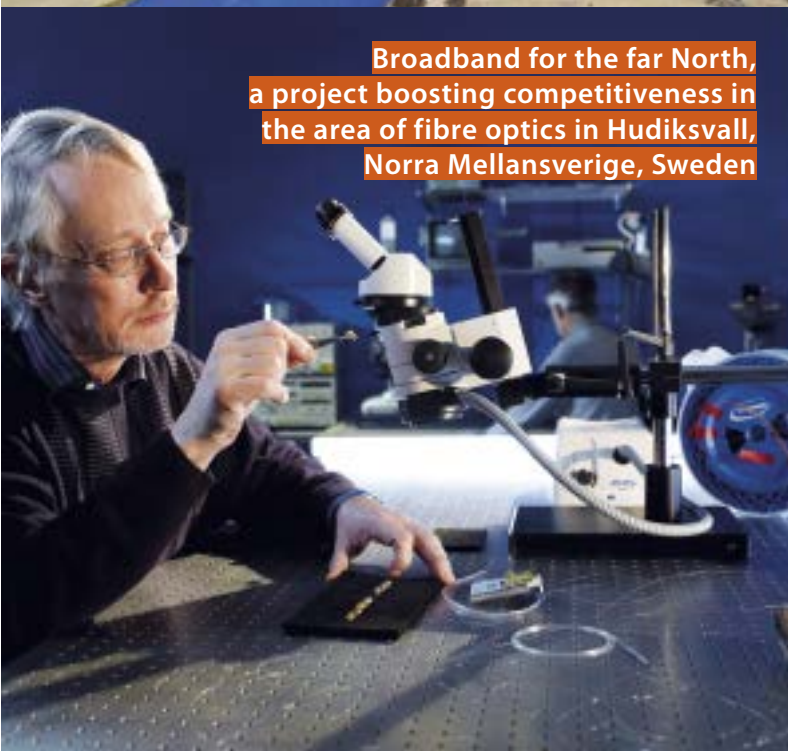
Bikers in Copenhagen, a city planning to become the world's first carbon-neutral capital by 2025



Research into the effects of pollutants in seabed sediments at the Department of marine sciences of Cádiz, Andalucía, Spain



Extensive upgrading of water supply and treatment networks, Neris River, Lithuania



Broadband for the far North, a project boosting competitiveness in the area of fibre optics in Hudiksvall, Norra Mellansverige, Sweden



Electric Vehicles in Urban Europe / EVUE, a project funded by the URBACT programme, facilitating the shift to electro-mobility in partner cities from 9 countries

Territorial cooperation: an asset for Europe

European Territorial Cooperation programmes help ensuring that borders are not barriers, bringing Europeans closer together, facilitating the sharing of ideas and assets, and encouraging strategic work towards common goals. Over the past year, experiences of some 20 European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation and macro-regional strategies have also contributed to develop cross-border governance structures. A total of 32 workshops during the OPEN DAYS will address current achievements and prospects of cross-border, transnational and interregional programmes.

During the period **2007-2013**, the budget of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has been EUR 8.7 billion. It financed 52 cross-border cooperation programmes, 13 transnational programmes – covering larger areas of co-operation such as the Baltic Sea, Alpine and Mediterranean regions–, one interregional cooperation programme (INTERREG IVC) and three networking programmes (Urbact II, Interact II and ESPON). The latter cover the whole EU and provide a framework for exchanging experience between regional and local bodies in different countries. Finally, EU acceding, potential candidate and candidate countries and neighbouring countries can participate in EU external border cooperation programmes supported by other instruments: the Instrument for Pre-Accession and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.

The proposals for the next programming period between **2014 and 2020** suggest:

- a separate regulation for European Territorial Cooperation;
- an increase of financial resources;
- a concentration of programmes on up to four thematic objectives;
- a simplified programme management.

The suggested financial allocation for future cross-border cooperation programmes would be EUR 8.6 billion (73% of the total earmarked for territorial cooperation), EUR 2.4 billion (21%) for transnational cooperation and EUR 700 million (6%) for inter-regional and networking programmes.

The **European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation** (EGTC) enables regional and local authorities and other public bodies from different member states to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality. The proposed regulation suggests making it easier to create and run these EGTC groupings.

For details on the OPEN DAYS related workshops please visit: www.opendays.europa.eu



Delivering Results

Measuring the results and impact of cohesion policy and letting the public know is key to its success, transparency and accountability. For the period 2014-2020, there will be a shift of focus from financial inputs and outputs towards progress in terms of contributing to outcomes reflecting the objectives of the policy and its relation to the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. Actors at all levels will be encouraged to explore the impact of cohesion policy interventions on the well-being of citizens, be it economic, social or environmental, or a combination of all three. 23 workshops and seminars will be dedicated to this thematic priority during OPEN DAYS 2012.

'Results orientation' will include all the funds covered by the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) through monitoring, reporting and evaluation. **Common provisions for all CSF funds** in the area of monitoring and evaluation include the role and composition of the monitoring committee, annual implementation reports, annual review meetings, progress reports on the implementation of the Partnership Contract, *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations. 'Focus on results' will be based on a shared management approach and is suggested to include:

- the definition of common and programme-specific indicators, reporting, monitoring and evaluation;
- a performance framework for all programmes;
- clear and measurable milestones and targets;
- a performance reserve 5% of national allocations;
- *ex-ante* conditionality to ensure that conditions for effective investment are in place;
- macro-economic conditionality;
- alignment with new economic governance.

The ***ex ante* evaluation** should be carried out in interaction with the establishment of the programme and shall be submitted to the Commission at the same time as the operational programme. At the level of the latter, **monitoring** will be based on financial and output data for projects (operations) and result indicators when it comes to investment priorities. Monitoring data will feed into the annual implementation reports. Specific impact or implementing evaluations during the programming period will be part of a long

term **evaluation plan** and can cover programmes, priorities, themes across programmes, etc.

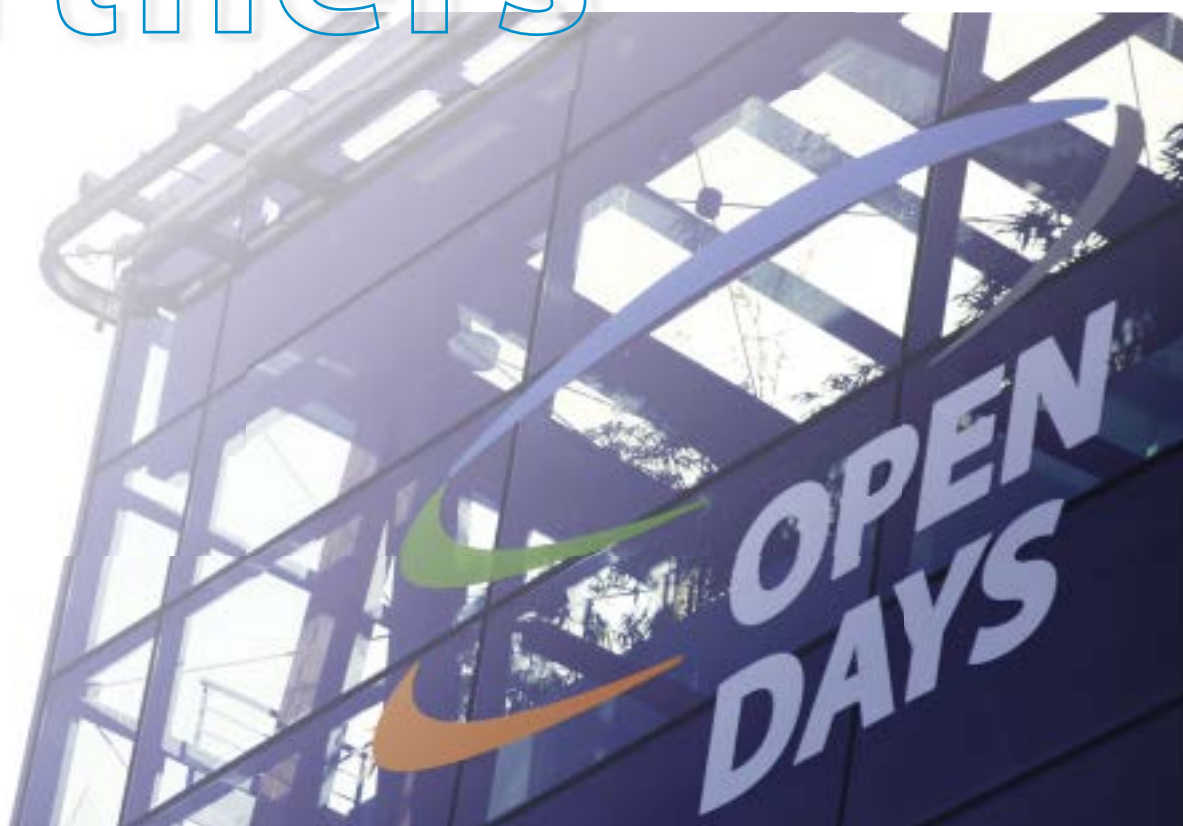
Finally, the purpose of the ***ex post* evaluation** is to obtain a view of the programming period as a whole. Being a responsibility of the European Commission in close cooperation with member states and managing authorities, it will be finished by 31 December 2023 in order to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the funds, their impact on economic, social and territorial cohesion and their contribution to the EU priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

For details on the OPEN DAYS related workshops please visit:

www.opendays.europa.eu



Organisers and partners



Jointly organised by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO), the 10th OPEN DAYS is supported by the following event partners:

EU Institutional partners

The OPEN DAYS are held with the support of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Policy, the Cypriot EU Presidency and the European Commission Directorate-General for Communication.

Regional and local partners

169 regions and 50 cities are participating in the 10th edition of the OPEN DAYS, one of the highest numbers in the history of the event with 219 regional and urban partners. They are grouped in 24 regional partnerships (see page 10), each of which is hosting a Brussels-based workshop during the event. In parallel, they will also hold events in their regions or cities, known as 'local events' (see page 13). Regional partnerships are responsible for their events in terms of content, organisation and costs.



Meeting Place event partners

This year the Meeting Place will showcase projects from urban and rural community-led initiatives and present current and future possibilities to implement integrated local development strategies and networking at EU level. The OPEN DAYS 2012 Meeting Place partners are:

The Committee of the Regions

Political Groups

European People's Party (EPP)
 Party of European Socialists (PES)
 Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)
 European Alliance (EA)

Commissions

Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy (COTER)
 Commission for Economic and Social Policy (ECOS)
 Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX)
 Commission for Natural Resources (NAT)
 Commission for Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE)
 Temporary Ad-hoc Commission on the EU Budget (BUDG)

Networks

Subsidiarity network, Europe 2020 Platform, Covenant of Mayors, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

Euro-Mediterranean Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities (ARLEM), Portal of Decentralised Cooperation, Contact group with Council of Europe

The European Commission

Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO)
 Urban Development Network Programme (URBACT)
 INTERREG IV C

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI)
 European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)

Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries/ European Fisheries Areas Network (DG MARE/FARNET)

Directorate-General for Climate Action/International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (DG CLIMA/ICLEI)

Other EU institutions, regions, networks and associations

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Veneto Region
 Centro Region of Portugal

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
 European Leader Association for Rural Development (ELARD)
 The Local Development Network (LDnet)
 Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)
 Energy Cities
 BUSINESSEUROPE

Adriotic-Ionian Macroregion

Abruzzo (IT), Basilicata (IT), Dubrovnik - Neretva Region (HR), Emilia-Romagna (IT), Canton of Herzegovina-Neretva (BA), Marche (IT), Molise (IT), Districts of Nišava, Toplica and Pirot (RS), Puglia (IT), Sicily (IT), Republic of Slovenia (SI), Republika Srpska (BA), Sumadija-Pomoravlje Districts (RS)

Advanced Co-operation in the North Sea-English Channel Area

Lower Saxony (DE), Noord-Holland (NL), North Denmark (DK), Northern Netherlands Provinces (NL), South Norway (NO), Southern England (UK), Upper Normandy (FR), Zuid-Holland (NL)

Atlantic Regions Alliance

Aquitaine (FR), Basque Country (ES), Brittany Region (FR), Cantabria (ES), Finistère (FR), Irish Regions (IE), Lisbon and Tagus Valley (PT), Liverpool (UK), Navarra (ES), Pays de la Loire (FR), Poitou-Charentes (FR), Wales (UK)

Baltic Sea Group

East-Sweden (SE), City of Malmö (SE), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE), Schleswig-Holstein (DE), Szczecin (PL), Tallinn City (EE), West Finland (FI), Westpomerania (PL), Zealand (DK)

Be SMART - Think CITY!

Aragon (ES), Basque Smart Cities (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastián) (ES), City of Helsinki (FI), City of Łódź (PL), Lubelskie Region (PL), Pomorskie (PL), City of Riga (LV), Sardinia (IT), Silesia (PL), Sofia (BG), South Sweden - Småland Blekinge (SE), City of Vejle (DK)

Border regions making a difference

Alentejo (PT), East Border Region (IE/UK), Extremadura (ES), Hedmark County (NO), Olomouc Region (CZ), Opolskie Region (PL), Öresund Region (DK/SE), Värmland (SE), City of Varna (BG)

Capital Cities and Regions Network (CCRN)

Brussels Capital Region (BE), City of Budapest (HU), G-4 EU Office (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht) (NL), Ile-de-France (FR), London (UK), Comunidad de Madrid (ES), Nicosia (CY), Prague (CZ), Rome Capital City (IT), City of Vienna (AT)

Contributing to rural-urban bonds in peri-urban regions

Communauté urbaine de Dunkerque (FR), Elche (ES), Flanders (BE), Regional Authority FrankfurtRheinMain (DE), Nord-Pas de Calais (FR), Randstad Region (NL), South Moravian Region (CZ), Stavanger Region (NO), Stuttgart Region (DE), Surrey County (UK)

EU2020 Going Local

Regio Achterhoek (NL), City of Duisburg (DE), Gelderland (NL), Ljubljana Urban Region (SI), Luxembourg (LU), Örebro Region (SE), Riga Planning Region (LV), Sörmland Region (SE), Yorkshire and Humber (UK), Zemgale Planning Region (LV)

Europe of traditions - A bridge between euroregions

City of Braga (PT), Carinthia (AT), Friuli Venezia Giulia (IT), Galicia (ES), City of Guimarães (PT), Istria (HR), North of Portugal (PT), Veneto Region (IT)

Euroregions for territorial Cooperation

Aosta Valley (IT), Balearic Islands (ES), Catalonia (ES), Languedoc-Roussillon (FR), Liguria (IT), Malopolska (PL), Midi-Pyrénées (FR), Piedmont (IT), Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (FR), Rhône-Alpes (FR)

Healthy Ageing: acting for innovation at regional and local level

Doubs (FR), Limousin (FR), Lodzkie Voivodeship (PL), Saxony (DE), Region of Southern Denmark (DK), City of Tampere (FI)

Innovative Regions for Smart Growth

Bratislava Region (SK), Limburg (BE), Limburg (NL), Lower Austria (AT), Nitra Region (SK), Northern Ireland (UK), Podlaskie (PL), Tuscany (IT), Umbria (IT)

Internationalisation Strategies for Smart Growth

Province of Barcelona (ES), Region of Hanover (DE), City of Lille (FR), Merseyside (UK), Province of Rome (IT), Wielkopolska (PL)

LIA's cooperation for European territorial dimension

Aude (FR), Diputación de Cáceres (ES), Province of Catania (IT), Côtes d'Armor (FR), Eure (FR), Province of Liège (BE), Seine Maritime (FR)

Local authorities for development and results

Diputación de Badajoz (ES), Deux Sèvres (FR), City of Dobrich - NAMRB (BG), Gironde (FR), Kreis Lippe (DE)

Local Urban Development European Network

City of Amadora (PT), Bacău Municipality (RO), Seine-Saint-Denis (FR), City of Sevilla (ES), City of Starogard (PL)

Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA)

East Finland (FI), Mid Sweden (SE), North Finland (FI), North Norway (NO), North Sweden (SE)

Partnership of European Regional Innovation Agencies

Andalucía (ES), Basse-Normandie (FR), Champagne-Ardenne (FR), Észak-Alföld (HU), Mazovia (PL), Región de Murcia (ES), Saxony-Anhalt (DE), Valencian Region (ES)

Regions promoting sustainable tourism infrastructure development in rural regions

Auvergne (FR), Croatian Pannonia (HR), Gozo (MT), City of Lahti (FI), Pomurje (SI), Shannon region (IE), South Transdanubia (HU)

Smart Partnerships for jobs and growth

Beşiktaş Municipality (TR), Castile and León (ES), Central Denmark (DK), Centro Region of Portugal (PT), East of England (UK), City of Gothenburg (SE), Kadıköy Municipality (TR), Mid Norway (Trøndelag) (NO), Oslo Region (NO), Region Västra Götaland (SE), Warmia and Mazury (PL), West Norway (NO)

The Future. Now. An Insight into Regional Transport Systems.

Birmingham (UK), Eindhoven (NL), Stara Zagora (BG), Zaragoza (ES), City of Wrocław (PL)

Towards EU 28

Central Hungary Region (HU), City of Kotor (ME), Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship (PL), Municipality of Maribor (SI), City of Rijeka (HR), Canton Sarajevo & Macro Region (BA), City of Skopje (MK), Styria (AT), Swietokrzyskie Voivodeship (PL), Varazdin County (HR), Vojvodina (RS)

Upper Rhine Metropolitan Region, Great Region and partners: the citizens at the heart of territorial cooperation

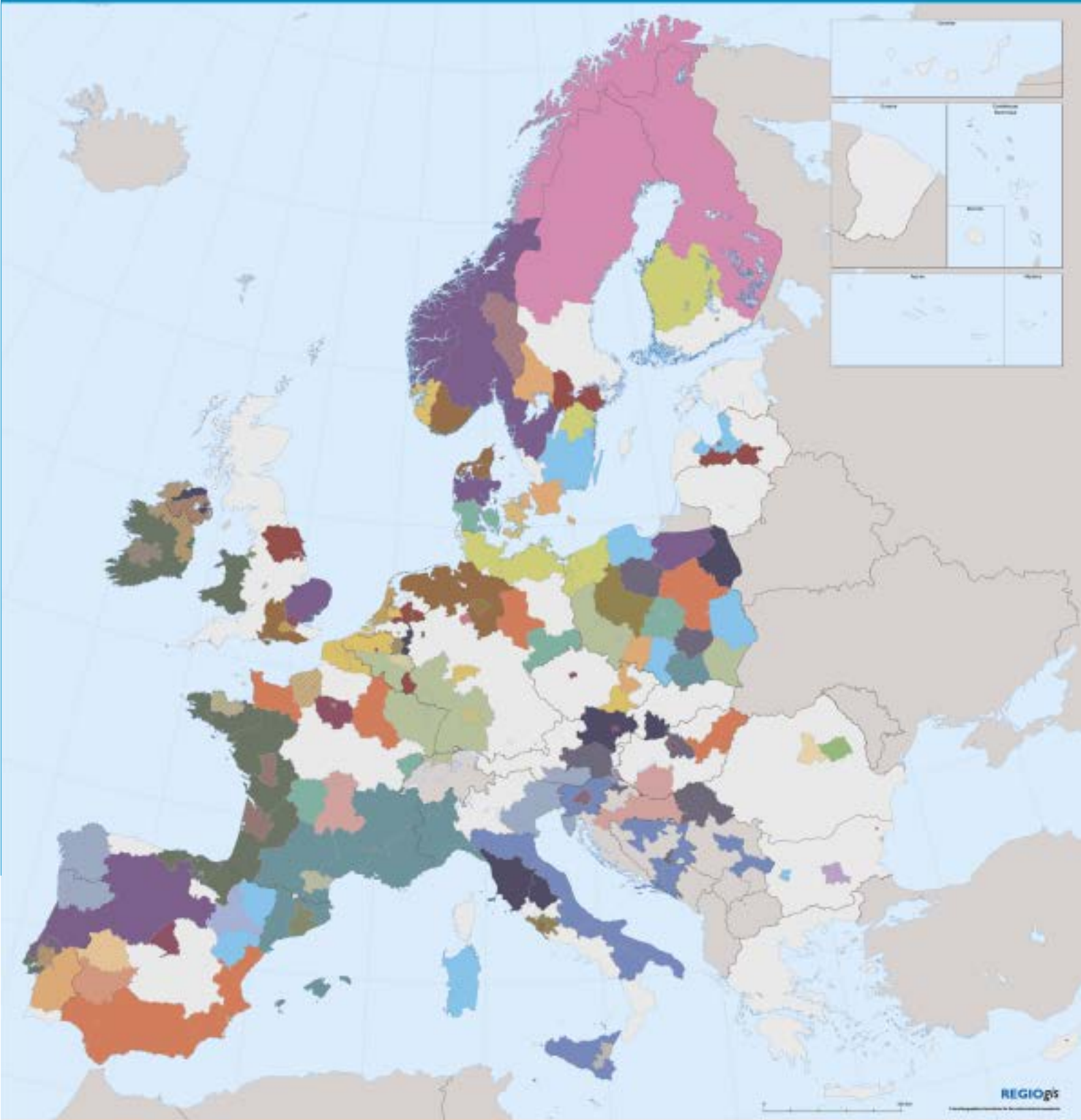
Alsace (FR), Baden-Württemberg (DE), German speaking Community of Belgium (BE), Lorraine (FR), Lower Silesia (PL), Lubuskie (PL), North-western Switzerland (Jura, Soleure, Bâle-Ville, Bâle-Campagne, Argovie) (CH), Podkarpackie (PL), Rhineland-Palatinate (DE), Saarland (DE), Wallonia (BE)



10th European Week
of Regions and Cities
Brussels 8-11 October 2012

Europe's regions and cities: Making a difference
Smart and green growth for all • Territorial cooperation: An asset for Europe • Delivering results

Partner regions & cities



Exhibitions

B 'Beautiful, Green, Smart and Inclusive: Colourful Cities'

The exhibition entitled '**Beautiful, Green, Smart and Inclusive: Colourful Cities**', which was first shown at the Committee of the Regions' 5th European Summit of Regions and Cities in Copenhagen last March, will be open during the OPEN DAYS 2012 at the Piazza in the European Commission's Berlaymont headquarters. The thematic installation showcases 28 urban projects submitted by regional and local authorities, associations and other organisations from across Europe. The exhibition highlights examples of best practice by 21st century European cities and regions in the four areas of: architecture and town planning ('Beautiful Cities'); energy efficiency, sustainable transport and development ('Green Cities'); innovation and smart specialisation strategies ('Smart Cities'); and inclusion, social innovation and employment ('Inclusive Cities').

Location: Berlaymont Piazza, European Commission, Rue de la Loi, 200

10 '10 years, 10 artists'

To celebrate the 10th edition of the OPEN DAYS, the Committee of the Regions has invited 10 artists to illustrate the participation and cooperation of regions and cities as events' partners since 2003. Starting from the regional partnerships maps which visualize the OPEN DAYS partner regions and cities year after year, the artists will showcase a series of 10 individual unusual art works.

By opening up territories and fostering regional collaboration and exchange of good practices, regional policy is indeed a European policy which can change the features of European geography. The exhibition will bring together a colourful collection of blurring boundaries and mingling maps, celebrating the notions of movement and identity and the changing dynamics between partner regions and cities.

Curator: Maria Clara Art Point

Location: Committee of the Regions, Rue Belliard 101, Jacques Delors building, 5th floor (foyer)

I INTERREG IVC good practices exhibition

The results of 204 projects conducted under the Interreg IVC Interregional Cooperation programme – which involves 27 EU countries, Norway and Switzerland, and about 2 300 project partners – will be displayed during the OPEN DAYS 2012. The projects, based on ten themes ranging from Innovation, Research & Technological Development and Employment, Human Capital and Education to Water Management and Energy and Sustainable Transport, have generated valuable results and collected over 2 800 good practices that were identified across Europe.

In addition to the exhibition, two thematic networking meetings will offer attendees an opportunity to meet good practice owners, to get insight about the good practices they identified and transferred, and to learn from their experience.

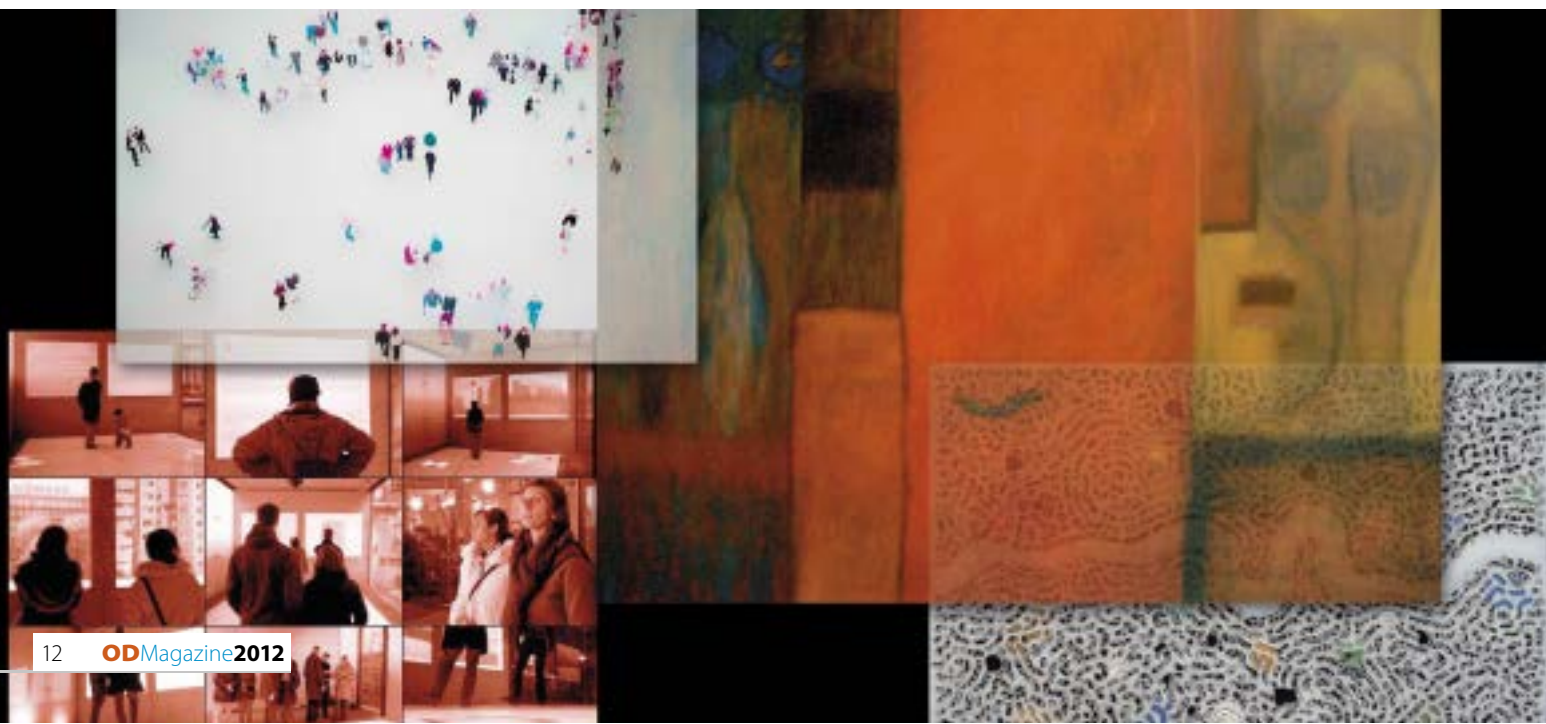
Find out more and get involved by visiting www.opendays.europa.eu

Location and opening hours:

Committee of the Regions, Rue Belliard 101, Jacques Delors building, 5th and 6th floors (foyer)

9-10 October: from 09:00 to 18:00

11 October: from 09:00 to 13:00





Local events



Europe in my Region|City
September|October|November 2012

'Bringing Europe home' to its regions and cities through debates, conferences, and media activities is the idea behind the local roll-out of the OPEN DAYS. More than 200 such events will be organised in 33 countries and are scheduled to take place between September and November. The local events will follow the three thematic priorities set for the OPEN DAYS 2012 - 'Europe's regions and cities: Making a difference'.

Hundred of speakers – including members of the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament and national or regional parliaments, mayors, local organisations, such as chambers of commerce, Europe Direct Info Centres, public institutions, schools and universities – will take part in the events.

More information will be made available on an interactive online map, available from August on the OPEN DAYS website. All local events will be listed on the map in English and in the language(s) of the country where they will take place. Country leaflets will provide details of all local events planned in each respective country.

If you want to share your knowledge about Europe with your citizens and organise a local event in your region or city, please email to: localevents-opendays@cor.europa.eu.



Practical information Registration

Participants

The OPEN DAYS target an audience specifically interested in regional policy, namely:

- Officials of European, national, regional and local administrations and experts in the field of managing and evaluating cohesion policy programmes;
- Members of the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee;
- National, regional and local politicians;
- Representatives of private companies, banks and European and national associations and organisations;
- Journalists from European, national, regional and local media.

How to register for a workshop

The OPEN DAYS website www.opendays.europa.eu is the only way you can sign up for an OPEN DAYS 2012 Brussels-based seminar. Online registration begins in mid-July. Programme details will also be exclusively available on this website.

Please note that group registrations are not possible. Participation in the OPEN DAYS is free of charge.

Step 1:

Registration for seminars or workshops can be done on the OPEN DAYS website by using the search tool to identify the events you may be interested in attending:

- Enter key words, themes, speakers' names, programme codes or dates to find the appropriate events.
- Select those you wish to attend by ticking the appropriate box. You can select as many as you want.

- The registration system will then ask you to fill in your personal data.
- Once completed and submitted, the request to attend the selected workshops will automatically be sent to the workshops' organisers.

Step 2:

You will receive an automated email acknowledging the receipt of your request(s).

Step 3:

Within two weeks following your request(s) to participate, and depending on the number of seats available, participants will be informed whether or not they can attend their selected workshop(s). They will receive an email either confirming or rejecting each request. Attendance at the workshop will only be confirmed by email if the request has been accepted.

The process might take longer than two weeks over the summer period.

You can always check the status of your requests by clicking on the 'My requests' button which is accessible on the OPEN DAYS website.

Step 4:

Confirmed participants will receive an email with the final list of workshops for which they have been accepted by the end of September. After this date, registration will be confirmed on a case-by-case basis. Participants are requested to print their confirmation email as proof of registration for the various seminars they are attending.

Participants will then be able to download their personalised OPEN DAYS programme in PDF format at any time from the OPEN DAYS website registration pages.

Smart phone and tablet users will be able to download a dedicated OPEN DAYS application to search, flag and locate seminars (see page 17). The mobile application is available for download from the iTunes store and the Android Market from early September. Please check the OPEN DAYS website for further information.

Please note that marking a seminar does not equal registration.

Badges

Each OPEN DAYS participant will receive a badge for identification and registration purposes. Participants will be given one personal badge, which indicates their name and organisation. This badge will be valid throughout the entire event.

Badges will be handed out from Monday 8 October at two locations:

Committee of the Regions

Rue Belliard, 101, Jacques Delors building
Metro station: Maelbeek (lines 1 and 5)

Regional Office of Catalonia - Espai Catalunya Europa

Rue de la Loi, 227
Metro station: Schuman (lines 1 and 5)

Opening hours:

Monday 8 October:	09:00 – 18:30
Tuesday 9 October:	08:00 – 18:30
Wednesday 10 October:	08:00 – 15:00
Thursday 11 October:	08:00 – 11:00



Media registration

All journalists must register, either at the Committee of the Regions or at the Regional Office of Catalonia. Locations and opening hours are detailed above.

A special media programme, with press conferences, press panels, technical briefings and other events, will be provided during the OPEN DAYS 2012. Press information packs and audiovisual material, as well as a TV studio and media facilities, will be made available throughout the event.

For more information, including the full media programme, please check the event website for updates or contact the team by email at press@opendays.eu or by telephone on +32 (0)2 333 59 94.

The organisers encourage regional media to enrol with the possibility of covering travel expenses. Travel and accommodation costs will be available for a limited number of journalists.



Practical information How to network

Before – online

Networking is much more than a simple exchange of business cards. Now it can even start before the event gets going by making contacts online. If you are interested in making connections before the event begins, you can sign up to a dedicated website called RegioNetwork 2020 at www.regionetwork2020.eu. There you can contact regional representatives, exchange ideas with other regional professionals, or arrange a get-together at the OPEN DAYS Meeting Place via the 'OPEN DAYS 2012' discussion group.

During – The Meeting Place

Located in the Committee of the Regions (rue Belliard, 101), the Meeting Place will host 36 workshops mostly focusing on community-led local development (CLLD). It will also provide participants, journalists and organisers with a network hub where contacts can be made as well as information and ideas exchanged. Some of the workshops will offer the possibility for participants, journalists and organisers to continue the discussion through informal networking events in designated areas.

In addition to the workshops and networking sessions, the Meeting Place will also feature the Meeting Place Café, VIP rooms, the OPEN

DAYS Media Centre, including a TV studio and a special area for larger receptions.

Twitter users will be able to exchange information and views during the 2012 OPEN DAYS by using the hashtag #euopendays. The Commission will be tweeting about the OPEN DAYS from the @EU_Regional account.

Up-to-date information on the event will also be provided via regular bulletins on the OPEN DAYS website:

www.opendays.europa.eu.

After – online

When the curtain comes down on OPEN DAYS 2012, it does not mean an end to discussions. Networking and debates can continue via the RegioNetwork 2020 online platform at www.regionetwork2020.eu. Presentations and background documents will be available after the event on the OPEN DAYS website:

www.opendays.europa.eu.



Practical information **Mobile device application**


Whilst the OPEN DAYS seminars are spread over different places in the European quarters, negotiating Brussels and moving between the various sites can be daunting for participants. This is why the OPEN DAYS 2012 will be providing a full service for smartphone and tablet users during the event.

Participants will be able to use the application to check the complete OPEN DAYS programme at the tap of a screen, search through the seminars, identify networking opportunities and tweet with other OPEN DAYS participants using the hashtag #euopendays.

To help avoid missing that particular seminar, participants can favourite events and set alerts to remind them when their chosen event is taking place. And should things get too hectic, a map giving their GPS location and directions to the specific venue will make sure they will make it in plenty of time.

The mobile application is available for download from the iTunes store and the Android Market from early September. Please check the OPEN DAYS website for further information.





Practical information More information about the OPEN DAYS

Info Points

Committee of the Regions

Rue Belliard, 101 - Jacques Delors Building
Metro station: Maelbeek (lines 1 and 5)

Regional Office of Catalonia - Espai Catalunya Europa

Rue de la Loi, 227
Metro station: Schuman (lines 1 and 5)

Welcome stands

Zaventem airport
Gare du Midi/Station Brussel-Zuid

OPEN DAYS secretariat

contact@opendays.eu
+32 (0) 484 100 619
+32 (0) 2502 06 15

Information about Brussels

'VISITBRUSSELS' stand

(Accommodation, flights and tourism)
Committee of the Regions
Rue Belliard, 101 - Jacques Delors Building
Metro station: Maelbeek (lines 1 and 5)
www.visitbrussels.be



- 1 Abruzzo Region**
Avenue Louise – Louizalaan, 210
- 2 Antenne interrégionale Auvergne Centre Limousin**
Rue de la Loi – Wetstraat, 67
- 3 Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg**
Rue Belliard – Belliardstraat, 60-62
- 4 Brussels Info Point (BIP)**
Place Royale – Koningsplein, 10
- 5 Bureau Bourgogne Franche-Comté Europe**
Rue d'Anlon – Aalterstraat, 55
- 6 Centre of the Regions**
Boulevard St Michel – Sint-Michielslaan, 80
- 7 East Finland EU Office**
Rond-Point-Schuman – Schumanplein, 6
- 8 Euroregion Alps-Mediterranée Representation Office**
Rue du Trône – Troonstraat, 62
- 9 Fundacion Galicia Europa**
Rue de la Loi – Wetstraat, 38 2°
- 10 Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Office**
Boulevard St Michel – Sint-Michielslaan, 80
- 11 Northern Ireland Executive**
Chaussée d'Etterbeek – Steenweg op Etterbeek, 180
- 12 Norway House**
Rue Archimède – Archimedesstraat, 17
- 13 Permanent Representation of Portugal**
Avenue de Cortenbergh – Kortenberglaan, 12
- 14 Résidence Palace**
Rue de la loi – Wetstraat, 155
- 15 Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU**
Rue Montoyer, 47
- 16 Stockholm Region EU Office**
Avenue Marnix – Marnixlaan, 28
- 17 vieva, Liaison agency Flanders-Europe**
Avenue de Cortenbergh – Kortenberglaan, 71
- 18 Vojvodina European Office**
Boulevard du Régent – Regentlaan, 53
- 19 West Midlands European Centre**
Avenue d'Auderghem – Auderghemiaan, 22
- 20 Wielkopolska Region Brussels Office**
Avenue de l'Yser – Ijzerlaan, 19
- A** Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors building
Registration, Meeting Place, Media Centre, Info Point, exhibitions
Rue Belliard – Belliardstraat, 101
- B** Committee of the Regions, Van Maerlant Meeting Place
Van Maerlant, 2
- C** European Commission, Berlaymont Exhibition
Rue de la Loi – Wetstraat, 200
- D** European Commission, Centre Borschette
Rue Froissart – Froissartstraat, 36
- E** European Commission, Charlemagne OPEN DAYS University, RegioStars Awards, Poster session
Rue de la Loi – Wetstraat, 170
- F** European Parliament Altero Spinelli building
- G** European Parliament József Antall building
- H** Regional Office of Catalonia Registration, Info Point
Rue de la Loi – Wetstraat, 227

10th anniversary

A DECADE OF EXCHANGE AND DEBATE

OD
Magazine



**European Week of
Regions and Cities
2003-2012**

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions





Contents

01-03	OPEN DAYS Milestones
04-05	Achievements – A decade of cohesion policy
06-09	OPEN DAYS regional partners 2003-2012
06	Regional partnerships' map 2003-2012
07-09	Discussion with OPEN DAYS pioneers
10-13	Personal stories
14-16	OPEN DAYS quotes
17-19	A unique way to go local – Experiences

'Managing regional development'

- 62 Brussels-based regional offices, organised in 11 'regional groupings'
- Wider institutional frame: Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO) joins as co-organiser, the European Parliament hosts the closing session
- 64 workshops, of which 30 structural funds trainings
- 2 000 participants
- First, simplified partners' map and online visibility



Pre-accession instruments help candidate countries to prepare for cohesion policy. The **enlargement** to 10 new Member States in 2004 increases the EU disparities in income and employment (+20% population increase, only + 5% growth).

2004

2003 The first OPEN DAYS



- 10 regional offices open their doors in Brussels, under the auspices of the Committee of the Regions
- 16 Seminars, 1 200 participants
- Exhibitions, wine tasting and regional delicacies

The **Lisbon Strategy** initiates a paradigm shift in cohesion policy starting in 2000 with its focus on growth and jobs. **Cohesion policy 2000-2006** moves towards **simplification**: Structural Funds objectives are reduced from six to three, Community Initiatives from 13 to four.

2005 'Working together for regional growth and jobs'



- 106 partner regions and cities, organised in 16 'conglomerates'
- 66 seminars, 330 speakers, 2 500 participants
- Citizen-oriented events in the regions and cities involved
- "The event should be continued" according to 96% of respondents
- The OPEN DAYS becomes the 'European Week of Regions and Cities'

OPEN DAYS help Member States and regions to prepare for the **next generation of Structural Funds (2007-2013)**.

'Making it happen: Regions deliver growth and jobs'

- 212 regions and cities, 24 regional partnerships
- 30 partners from business, banks and other organisations
- 150 seminars, 700 speakers, 5 500 participants
- 'Meeting Place' follows up on the Investor's Café
- New international dimension: high-level seminars with China, Russia and Brazil
- Doubling of local events
- Nobel prize laureate Michael Spence as keynote speaker



2007

With **enlargement** to Bulgaria and Romania, **cohesion policy 2007-2013** brings the highest concentration ever of resources on the poorest Member States and regions.

Objectives 1-3 are replaced by the Convergence, the Competitiveness and Employment, and the Territorial Cooperation Objectives. INTERREG is transferred to the latter. Other Community Initiatives are integrated into mainstream programmes.

Four new policy instruments are developed: JEREMIE and JESSICA for financial engineering, JASPERS and JASMINE for technical assistance to high-quality projects and for micro-credits.

Cohesion policy earmarks resources for research and innovation, environmental infrastructure and to fight climate change, following up on the **Europe 2020** strategy.

The new **European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation** helps regional and local authorities to set up legal entities to implement cross-border projects. The **Regions for Economic Change initiative** highlights good practice in urban and regional development and speeds up the transfer of good practices.

2006 'Investing in Europe's regions and cities'



- 135 regions and cities, grouped in 14 partnerships
- Several European banking, business and civil society organisations
- 115 seminars, 600 speakers, 4000 participants,
- An Investor's Café for networking opportunities, hosting an exhibition, seminars and a media platform
- 50 'Events in regions' held throughout Europe

In 2006, the European Commission's DG REGIO concludes a Memorandum of Understanding on regional policy co-operation with China. Memoranda are signed with Russia and with Brazil (2007), with Ukraine (2009), and Chile (2010). The EC also developed co-operation with other third countries.

2008 'Regions and cities in a challenging world'



- 216 regions and cities, 22 regional partnerships
- 145 seminars, 7 400 participants
- 220 local events
- First limited event report

The **RegioStars Awards** are launched. They identify **good practices in regional development** and highlight **innovative**, potentially attractive and **inspiring projects**.

'Europe 2020: competitiveness, co-operation and cohesion'

- 245 regions and cities, 28 regional partnerships
- 130 seminars, 5 000 participants
- 263 local events
- Early career research competition 2010, organised with the Regional Studies Association



From 2010 onwards, the debate on the European Union's '2020' agenda, its policies and future budget, has continued among European institutions and stakeholders. OPEN DAYS offers a Forum to discuss the new plans for cohesion policy 2014-2020.

2010

'Europe's regions and cities: Making a difference'

- 219 regions and cities, 24 regional partnerships
- Meeting Place on 'Community-led local development'

2012

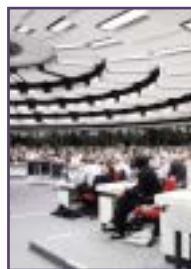
2009 'Global challenges, European responses'

- 213 regions and cities, 24 regional partnerships
- 122 seminars, 6 000 participants
- 233 local events, open to a wider range of organisations
- New Meeting Place concept with public and private partners
- OPEN DAYS University with renowned academics
- The future president of the US Conference of Mayors explores ways of cooperation with Europe
- First full event report



2011 'Investing in Europe's future'

- 206 regions and cities, 24 regional partnerships
- 110 seminars, 4 800 participants
- Meeting Place on 'Public-Private Partnerships'
- 254 local events



ACHIEVEMENTS

A decade of cohesion policy

Ask any of the regions and localities in Europe who have benefited from cohesion policy over the past ten years and they'll all tell you that it has made a great difference to their development. By investing as much as 4% of a country's GDP in some cases, cohesion policy has helped to reduce the gap between poorer and more affluent regions; a success documented in the evaluation reports published in 2010 which give a clear indication of the policy's achievements during the period 2000-2006.

Impact on the economy

Rapidly increasing income in the poorest regions: programmes in the EU's least developed regions (the Objective 1 regions) increased both the long-term productive potential of the economies and the level of GDP. In these regions, GDP per capita grew from 66% of the EU-25 average in 2000 to 71% in 2006. The cumulative effect of cohesion policy on GDP from 2000 to 2009 in these regions was estimated at +0.5% in the EU-15 and +3.7% in the EU-10. A macroeconomic simulation suggests that the entire EU – not just the major beneficiaries – was better off with cohesion policy than without it, notably because of increased trade effects.

Creating additional jobs: an estimated 710 000 jobs were created in the EU's least developed regions and 730 000 in the more developed regions (the Objective 2 regions). One million of these jobs were created in enterprises.

Helping to reduce regional disparities: in levels of development between the most and least developed regions, the index of disparities fell by roughly a sixth thanks to sustained high growth in the less developed regions.

Impact on the environment

- Cohesion policy made an important contribution to help regions comply with EU environmental standards. For example, 20 million more people have been connected to modern water supply systems, 23 million more people have wastewater treatment (i.e. roughly 50% of the total additional population connected up in the EU during the period).

Impact on transport

- Cohesion policy funded almost 100 000 km of new or redeveloped roads and motorways, nearly 4 000 km of railways, and supported the modernisation of 31 airports and 45 sea ports. In cohesion fund countries, 4 700 km of motorways and 1 200 km of high-speed rail links were funded, i.e. 77% of motorways and 56% of high-speed rail links in these countries.
- 24% of all motorways and 13% of all high-speed rail links constructed in the EU between 2000 and 2006 were co-financed by cohesion policy.

For the period 2007-2013, there are no evaluation reports yet. However, some information on key achievements in the regions can be obtained from the annual reporting of programmes based on a set of so-called 'core indicators' which show the progress towards the objectives. These were introduced in 2006 and measure some of the more usual types of operations. Although core indicators are not obligatory, most operational programmes use them. We know, for example, that by the end of 2010, the current generation of programmes created some 200 000 jobs, gave broadband Internet access to 900 000 people, built 630 km of new or renewed railroads and 900 km of new roads, and connected an additional 4 million people to wastewater treatment systems.

Showcasing achievements via projects

For citizens the achievements and impact of cohesion policy is often best perceived via indirect or direct benefits of the projects. Information and communication actions are performed by the individual programmes managed by Member States or regions, including showcasing projects and their results. This is complemented by actions at European level by the Commission which has, for example, made available on the Inforegio website a database with a selected number of projects from each Member State¹. It has also published two books highlighting good practice; one showcasing 150 projects in 10 different thematic fields² and another showing the benefits of territorial cooperation projects through testimonies of people either being involved in projects or benefitting from the results of cooperation projects³.

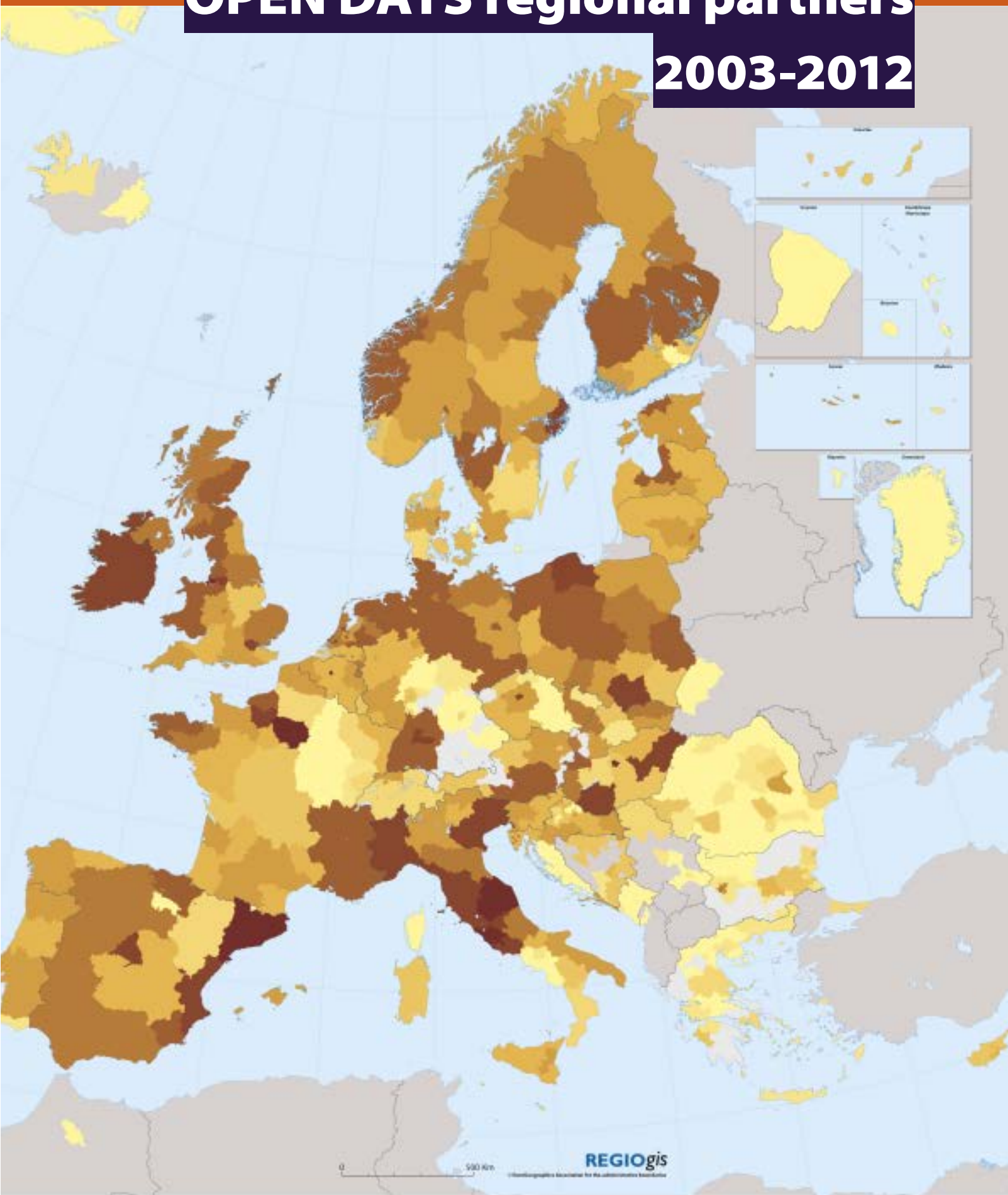


Furthermore, the RegioStars Awards, which the Commission has organised annually since 2008, provide an excellent opportunity to identify, highlight and disseminate high-quality and innovative projects that can serve as sources of inspiration for others⁴

- 1 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm
- 2 "Investing in our regions – 150 examples of projects co-funded by European regional policy" (2010)
- 3 European Territorial Cooperation – Building bridges between people (2011)
- 4 Further details of the finalists and the winners over the years, including in 2012, are available here: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/regions_for_economic_change/regiostars_13_en.cfm

OPEN DAYS regional partners

2003-2012



Number of times regions/cities have participated



Mighty oaks from little acorns grow

Discussion with OPEN DAYS pioneers

There were ten of them in 2003 – ten regional offices setting off on an adventure that would become the keystone event of European regional policy. Of those ten, three territories would go on to take part in every OPEN DAYS since then. As the 10th anniversary of the OPEN DAYS approaches, those three pioneers on a beautiful Brussels spring morning: Françoise Chotard, Director of Ile-de-France Europe; Pascal Goergen, former diplomatic representative of the Brussels Capital Region to the European Union, and Santiago Mondragón, former member of the Catalonia Delegation to the EU. An occasion to share memories, but also to evaluate the progress made by the event to date and look to the future.

Where it all began



Santiago Mondragón (SM): In 2003, the Committee of the Regions had asked us to organise some seminars – not necessarily about regional policy. At the time, applications had to be in by the end of June/early July, and my boss said to me: “Santi, we have to be a part of this!”. That first year, **it was like a big family**. There were 40 of us and we all knew each other well. We organised a football tournament, went out in the evening and made really strong bonds.



Françoise Chotard (FC): The OPEN DAYS were first born out of a desire to highlight the regional offices and bring them closer to the Committee of the Regions. Later, they became an opportunity for our representatives and administrations to come to Brussels. It all feeds into one of our office's missions: that Europe gets closer to our local authorities.



Pascal Goergen (PG): I think it's fair to say that the objectives have changed a bit since 2003. At first, it was just us. Later, it was more about getting people to come to Brussels. In the end, we were a bit disappointed since we were supposed to organise our own seminars and we couldn't go to any of the others. Then I understood that the OPEN DAYS really had become European Week of Cities and Regions, a truly unique event.

SM: Yes, and as time went on, the OPEN DAYS became more professional...

PG: Nowadays, of course, it's the regional experts who come, the civil servants, the administrators, the representatives. Between individual offices the links are there but maybe people know each other less well than before.

FC: I think we know each other in a different way. At the time, the Hesse region organised receptions for all the regional offices which were much less in number. I think that's something you don't see as much these days in the regional offices in Brussels. Still, the offices got organised and we've learned to work together.

SM: I think the OPEN DAYS did help integrate the new regional offices. On that note encouraging the ones of the new Member States' to join existing conglomerates was a good idea.

FC: When the offices started having to take part through conglomerates, there was a change of perspective. The focus was no longer only on opening up the offices. It became more about bringing Europe deeper into the regions. This was helped by the various local events.

The voice of European regions and cities

PG: Focusing the whole event on regional policy was a stroke of genius: **the OPEN DAYS have placed regional policy firmly at the centre of policies.**

FC: Thanks to the OPEN DAYS, local authority representatives and offices have started to come to Brussels regularly and understood how things worked. At the time, it was very hard to get our representatives to understand that the operational programmes for 2007-2013 had to be prepared as early as 2003. This long term preparatory work has become evidence today. And the offices' work has therefore changed as well. Nowadays we try to argue a case, and show that we do exist as a large metropolitan area.

SM: Nowadays there is often a political decision in the choice of a conglomerate. The first year, Catalonia took part by itself. In 2004, we took part via the 'Four motors for Europe'¹ conglomerate, and then there was the policy project for the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion. For some years now, it's been Pyrenees-Mediterranean and Alps-Mediterranean, the very political objective being to make this Euroregion more widely known in Brussels.

FC: Where regional conglomerates are set up around shared views, you can band together to defend common positions. In the past as regions and capital cities we could prepare cases that were presented during the OPEN DAYS. There's a dynamic to it. Beyond that, everyone has their own particular influence strategy. In recent times we've worked with capital regions and cities. This is of course only one aspect of an influence strategy. For instance, there also are the networks we belong to, such as Purple, ERRIN, and others. The OPEN DAYS are a key opportunity to put the spotlight on the positions developed by our local authorities.

PG: Everyone knows that the OPEN DAYS are in the first or second week of October, so we try to make sure we arrive at the event with a joint position. We've always tried to work like that, although we haven't done it every year since there hasn't always been a need to take a joint position. For example, our lobbying on the urban dimension, utterly absent in regional policy in 2002, has borne fruit.

FC: If you look back to the beginnings of the OPEN DAYS in 2003, it was all about preparing for 2007-2013. One can really see today that there has been a shift from a cohesion or regional policy towards an investment policy with a cohesion dimension. Today cohesion policy is more than ever relevant, while there was a time when it could have disappeared or have only focus on certain European regions. All the debates that happened during OPEN DAYS were crucial in that respect. The OPEN DAYS have meant that cohesion policy has stayed strong and, crucially, that it's a policy for all the European regions. Until four years ago, I don't think that battle had been won.

¹ Catalonia, Baden-Württemberg, Lombardy and Rhône-Alpes have been drafting common positions within the framework of the "Four motors for Europe" initiatives in a number of policy areas since the mid-1990s.



Europe with the regions

PG: In ten years, we've gone **from a Europe of the regions to a Europe with the regions** – that's a huge difference because Europe of the regions means that the regions are central to and active in the debate. Europe now needs its regions, its territories. We need more than European summits to get out of the crisis. Who actually makes policy in the territories? It's the local and regional authorities. The very fact of bringing together civil servants and experts in the OPEN DAYS encourages networking, exchanges and sharing. That's what drives ideas and processes forwards.

FC: For us, the OPEN DAYS are also a factor in the issue of European governance. What's important is that the regional and local levels shouldn't be absent from that governance. What we're really touching on here is the issue of democratic deficit. It feels these days as though regions aren't always very present. Council discussions about the period 2014-2020 on the issue of partnership contracts, with the Parliament pushing for local and regional authorities to become proper stakeholders in the contract, are important. The Parliament even goes as far as discussing the possibility of territorial agreements, echoing the territorial pacts concept launched by the Committee of the Regions

for the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy at national and regional level. But that's not the whole battle won at the Council. As soon as you touch the infra-national level, it's more difficult again.

PG: Isn't one of the objectives of the OPEN DAYS to place regions and regional policy at the centre of the European policy agenda? The OPEN DAYS Open Days show the importance and mobilization in Brussels of Europe's regions and cities. With its 243 regional representations offices, Brussels has become the world capital of local and regional lobbying. The Committee of the Regions and the OPEN DAYS has contributed to this reality.

Pascal Goergen is nowadays Secretary General of the Assembly of European Regions (ARE). Santiago Mondragón is a member of the private office of Mercedes Bresso, President of the Committee of the Regions. Françoise Chotard is still Director of Ile-de-France-Europe, the association for the European development of the Ile-de-France region.



PERSONAL STORIES

The OPEN DAYS is not a typical European institution-driven forum. It results from the cooperation between European institutions and regions and cities from all over Europe, as well as from contributions by companies, financial institutions, international associations and academic organisations. The OD magazine interviewed some of the many faithful participants to the OPEN DAYS.



Eva Srnova, Assistant to European Parliament Vice-President Oldřich Vlasák and former policy officer and EU coordinator of the Union of Towns and Municipalities, Czech Republic

You first became involved in the OPEN DAYS when the Czech Republic entered the EU in 2004.

What was your role then and why did you participate in the OPEN DAYS?

Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO) advocates the interests of local governments and promotes principles of subsidiarity. I was responsible for European Affairs and

especially for the lobbying in the field of European regional policy. My mission was to bring new ideas and solutions back home and provide reference points to mayors and councillors. At the same time I tried to bring a taste of local life to the officials from the ministries and implementing authorities so that the programmes they drafted reflected local needs as well as development opportunities. The OPEN DAYS definitely helped me in that. I could experience opportunities that local governments have in terms of development and what new solutions could be used.

So the OPEN DAYS mainly helped you to get some practical references?

Indeed, but not only. Coming from a country whose democracy had not been re-established for long, one comes to Brussels with a rather distorted, almost naïve, picture that everything behind your borders is far better and functioning much more easily. Over the time I found out that that each country has its specifics, that the EU faces problems of its own and that it is actually us, so even me, who can either change things or conserve them. The OPEN DAYS were one of the elements that helped me modify this view.

How important has the OPEN DAYS been in terms of connecting the regions with Europe?

The OPEN DAYS is a great opportunity to meet, talk to and, over time, cooperate with representatives of local and regional governments and the EU institutions. The EU institutions, which have to provide for the policy and legal framework, need feedback from "real life" which is where the people from the cities, towns and municipalities come in. It's a favourable exchange for all.

In your experience, what has been the most useful addition to the OPEN DAYS programme over the years?

I think that adding the OPEN DAYS University, introducing a transfer of knowledge in cooperation with educational institutions, was very important. We often hear that businesses should cooperate with universities and that research and development should go hand in hand with business needs. The public sector also needs innovation and creativity from universities and training institutions to survive current demands, and in return can provide investment. Bringing innovation and new ideas via universities closer to public administration life is a must.

What is, in your opinion, the reason behind the success of the OPEN DAYS?

The OPEN DAYS evolved from a pioneering event to one which offers the exchange of experience and training on practically implementing EU cohesion policy. In business terms, this is highly demanded by professionals dealing with this topic. The people on the national level working within the scope of cohesion policy or with local or regional development simply needed such a kind of regular open event. The Committee of the Regions happened to offer it and that is why it is now so successful. Another reason stems from the rising presence of permanent representatives of local and regional authorities in Brussels. OPEN DAYS provide an excellent opportunity for them to show their political representation why it is so important to have a delegation in Brussels.

As we look towards Europe 2020, how would you like to see the event develop?

I believe that the OPEN DAYS should not lock itself into the EU space. We need more examples from other areas around the world, from other local and regional authorities in America, Asia and other continents. The EU needs to open up. We need to find the best practices which efficiently combine public regulation and support for city development or sustainability of city life. For example many European cities could learn from the example of Singapore. These examples should be brought back to the OPEN DAYS and Europe for practitioners to be able to learn from them and to implement them.

Since March 2012, Eva Srnova works as the Assistant to the Vice President of the European Parliament Oldřich Vlasák, who is in charge of relations with local and regional governments as well as the Committee of the Regions. As her role now is focused on developing closer cooperation between the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, Eva will continue to be involved in the OPEN DAYS.



Wolfgang Schuster,
President of the Council of
European Municipalities and
Regions (CEMR) and Mayor
of Stuttgart.

What will be the CEMR's involvement in this 10th edition of the OPEN DAYS?

I am pleased to say that CEMR will be actively involved in this year's edition of the OPEN DAYS. We are organising, along with a number of our national member associations of local and regional authorities and four European Commission directorate generals, a workshop on a vital issue in today's crisis-ridden context: local development as a key pillar of the 2014-2020 EU territorial development policies. In this workshop, we will bring together national and European officials and decision-makers as well as local, regional and national elected representatives to examine how public authorities will apply the principle of local development in their partnership agreements and operational programmes.

The CEMR workshop will examine new approaches to local issues but in what way are municipalities and regions involved in European governance?

The vital role municipalities and regions play in the European governance is indisputable. Many of the challenges tackled at the European level are also challenges being faced by local, regional and national governments. With this in mind, CEMR has proposed and advocates a model of 'governing in partnership' as a further development of European multi-level governance to create vertical and horizontal partnerships of local, regional, national and European authorities, citizens, civil society, businesses and other relevant stakeholders in order to achieve common goals and tackle major issues together. The target is to establish more sustainable projects and create a sense of 'ownership' among all spheres of governance and citizens, which is all the more important when considering the general and increasing disillusionment vis-à-vis the European project.

What, in your opinion, have been the main achievements of the EU cohesion policy in the last programming period (2007-2013)?

The European cohesion policy's biggest success over the last seven years, in my opinion, has been its capacity to provide a stable source of financing to help with the integration of municipalities and regions, notably in newer member states and peripheral regions. Indeed, thanks to the different cohesion-related funds, local and regional authorities have successfully launched 335 aid programmes from 2007 to 2013, benefiting also from increased flexibility and simplification in the distribution and management of funds. Moreover, €230 billion out of the total cohesion policy budget of €347 billion have helped boost investment in research, technological development and innovation, which is vital when investing in the long-term future of our cities, municipalities and regions. The scope of this is in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, whose success depends on the active involvement of local and regional authorities and on effective multi-level governance.

In addition to your position as CEMR President, you also are the mayor of Stuttgart. How has cohesion policy helped your city?

The European cohesion policy is one of the EU's clearest commitments when working to improve the lives of citizens throughout Europe and is vital to economic growth and social cohesion across Europe. For Stuttgart, as for many other cities, structural funds provide essential support to major investment programmes which directly impact on the quality of life of citizens and on the attractiveness of municipalities. The instruments given by cohesion policy have been successfully used and implemented by Stuttgart throughout the last three funding periods. The most progress, I must say, has been achieved in urban development, which not only includes land management but also the urban level, where environmental degradation has its most acute impact on the citizen and where social problems are most pronounced in places of opportunity for implementation of sustained and sustainable economic growth. It will be vital to maintain the strong urban dimension of the future cohesion policy to ensure an adequate level of investment in our municipalities across the EU.



Philippe de Buck, Director General, BUSINESSEUROPE

You've been involved in the OPEN DAYS for some time now. What is it about the event that keeps bringing you back?

The OPEN DAYS 2012 will be our fifth consecutive year as an event organiser but we were involved in various capacities before that. We have always had positive experiences which is why we have remained involved for so many years. The OPEN DAYS is a good networking opportunity where it is possible to find business and regional representatives with whom to exchange best practices, develop ideas and learn more about cohesion policy.

As a regular attendee and partner, you must benefit from enhanced exposure through the OPEN DAYS. How have they helped BUSINESSEUROPE?

The OPEN DAYS attracts so many people from different backgrounds from all over Europe, which helps to disseminate BUSINESSEUROPE's work. We have also become closer to the regional authorities with whom we enjoy an exchange of views on specific topics.

Are there any developments at the OPEN DAYS over the years which you would particularly like to mention?

The OPEN DAYS has developed greatly since its first edition. The balance between the number of workshops, social activities, case studies, and networking opportunities is now quite good. The Meeting Place concept is also a welcome development, and is now established as the place for discussing new ideas over a cup of coffee.

It sounds like you're happy with the current format but would you change anything in the future, say, for OPEN DAYS 2020?

I believe the challenge will be, on the one hand, to make the OPEN DAYS interesting every year by adding something new to it. I believe that technology will have to play an even stronger role as years go by. I hope that it will be used to better connect with those who cannot be present in Brussels.

As well as bringing people closer together, what other OPEN DAYS successes would you highlight, for example, in the area of cohesion policy over the past 10 years?

The OPEN DAYS provides a good platform to bring people together to discuss cohesion policy, not only at its yearly event in Brussels but also in the local events that happen throughout the year all over Europe. This also brings Europe closer to the citizens and we praise the organisers for this. I think that it is realised, more and more, that **regional policy is about people and regional and local actions.**



Petra Masacova, Head of INTERACT Programme Managing Authority, Bratislava Self Governing Region

What is it about the OPEN DAYS that keeps bringing people back and what is it that attracts so many newcomers to the event every year?

The OPEN DAYS have been an extremely useful platform for networking, exchanging knowledge and ideas and connecting the regions. We know our regions can benefit from what goes on at the OPEN DAYS and those successes are clear to others. But it's not all work – the social and cultural events are equally important. People go back home feeling that they know more about each other and are part of something bigger.

What role and future do you see for the local events in bringing Europe closer to the citizens?

Local events are very important as not everyone can come to Brussels for the OPEN DAYS. By organising local events, we can inform those people with an interest in what we and the EU are doing for them on a European and regional level. Our president's aim has always been one of inclusion, and local events help to bring our citizens closer to the policies that affect them and help them to shape what we do on their behalf.

How has the Bratislava Region benefited from cohesion policy over the past 10 years and where can the best examples be seen?

Being involved with the cohesion policy over the last 10 years has helped our region and Bratislava immensely. The city is unrecognisable to how it was a decade ago; the infrastructure is far better, the universities are more modern – and all this attracts people to live and study there. Talented people come to the region to work, boosting the economy, while improved education helps build a solid future for our youth.

If you could look into the future, what do you think the OPEN DAYS 2020 would look like?

Hopefully, we'll all be very happy that we have achieved the Europe 2020 goals and we will have a whole new agenda to look forward to!



Philip McCann, special advisor to Johannes Hahn, the European Commissioner for Regional Policy

How long have you been participating in the OPEN DAYS

and how did you become involved in the first place?

I've been involved with the OPEN DAYS for the last three years in various capacities. In 2009, in my role as a member of the Regional Studies Association, I was a speaker at various sessions. At the same time I was also involved in compiling the Barca report on the effectiveness of cohesion policy and the negotiations between DG REGIO and the member states. In the last two years I've been involved in the OPEN DAYS in my role as special advisor to Johannes Hahn, the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, organising and attending workshops and plenary meetings.

As someone who has been involved in many roles and has seen many aspects of the OPEN DAYS at work, what has impressed you most over the past decade?

The OPEN DAYS have been massively successful over the past ten years and as far as regional events go, there are few more important. I attend a lot of academic events regarding regional policy and they're very important too but in terms of wider influence, the OPEN DAYS are immense. I can't speak highly enough of the event, especially the OPEN DAYS University which is a wonderful and very necessary bridge between academics, policy makers and the public and private sectors. As a knowledge transfer tool between top level people in these fields, it's second to none.

What would you change about the OPEN DAYS if you were handed a leading role in shaping the event for 2020?

I wouldn't want to see anything change with the OPEN DAYS as such but it's important that we don't rest on our laurels. In 2020 we should be looking at 2030; we shouldn't settle for what we have and get comfortable, **the OPEN DAYS should always be forward looking** and that each programme should be a precursor to the next. Let's don't lose momentum; let's keep reporting and reassessing.

You've been very close to the coal face when it comes to cohesion policy. What role has the OPEN DAYS played in the evolution of the debate on cohesion policy over the last 10 years?

In terms of cohesion policy, the OPEN DAYS has been hugely instrumental in disseminating knowledge. When reforms to cohesion policy were being discussed in October last year, many people knew what was happening and where things were going because of the OPEN DAYS. The general communication has been great and the OPEN DAYS have really shifted the debate through its panel discussions and workshops over the years. The discussions have been very open and have helped to pass on the information and enthusiasm to those out in the field.



Frank Jensen, President of Eurocities and Lord Mayor of Copenhagen

Copenhagen is a strong advocate of smarter and greener cities. How important

can smarter and greener cities be in shaping Europe's future?

Smarter cities are essential for green growth and innovation in government can be the driver behind that. Increasingly, as city leaders we are turning to new technologies to deliver public services, to optimise public transport systems and control traffic, and of course to engage with our citizens. In fact cities are 'living labs' for new integrated solutions. These can be conceived, piloted and rolled out in our neighbourhoods before scaling up to cover wider areas. In this way, investment and innovation in cities drive social and economic development for all.

Cooperation is key to a Europe-wide initiative – but just how important is it in this context?

Investment in the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth we are all aiming for should not be hindered by bureaucratic rivalries. If it is at metropolitan area level that development strategies coordinating economic, social and environmental actions are best implemented, it is essential that the regional authorities managing EU funds also adapt to that. Cities and regions need to work together on the basis of real economic geography if metropolitan Europe is to lead the recovery.

What role can cohesion policy play in helping cities reach their Europe 2020 goals?

We will only achieve the Europe 2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth if we have smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive cities. The EU can provide vital support for creating jobs and prosperity. As Europe's centres of growth, skills, innovation and employment, investing in our cities provides clear payback. So when it comes to cohesion policy, our message is clear: more urban, more impact. With the right support, city mayors can do more to drive down Europe's carbon emissions and boost energy efficiency; to generate and attract the skilled talent we need to secure Europe's global competitiveness. So it's essential that the 'strong urban dimension' promised by Commissioner Hahn is carried through to the future cohesion policy.

In what way have connections made through cohesion policy helped in Copenhagen's pursuit of its goal of balancing green growth, education and development with attracting international businesses to the city?

Partnerships and resources, not only with the EU but also the private sector, are central to a green growth future. Together we must find a model for renewed economic growth that does not further aggravate our climate and environment. I have put this at the heart of our city strategy in Copenhagen. I believe that if we can tackle climate change, grow our green technology sector, create jobs and at the same time make the economy grow as a whole, we will be on a much more secure footing for the future. It is both possible and profitable for the EU to meet economic needs while advancing environmental priorities and I do believe it is in cities that we can kick-start the continent's green growth and improve overall quality of life for citizens.

OPEN DAYS quotes



Péter Balázs (2004):

“... such large scale convergence between regions and countries never happened at any other time in Europe's history and would not have happened over the last 20 years without the European Union's Structural Funds.”



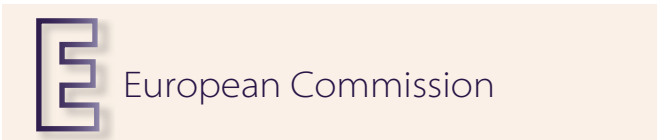
Danuta Hübner (2006) :

“Growth strategies that are run from the centre are no longer sufficient: to be effective, they must be integrated with local and regional strategies”



Johannes Hahn (2010):

“Cohesion policy is about strategic investment. It has a vital role to play in fostering smart, inclusive and sustainable growth in all our regions.”



Commissioners for Regional Policy



Michel Barnier (2003):

“Europe's regions and cities are our roots, our history, our culture, our economic realities. The very notion of local and regional identity has a deep, structuring meaning that does not exist anywhere else in the world.”



Jacques Barrot (2004):

“2004 is a crucial year for the Union's cohesion policy. With enlargement, 75 million citizens in the new Member States have become beneficiaries of the structural funds and instruments.”

President of the European Commission



José Manuel Barroso (2011):

“There is no excess of regional policy in Europe, there is no excess of cohesion in Europe, there is no excess of Europe. On the contrary what we need in Europe is more solidarity, more responsibility. We need, in fact, more Europe.”



Presidents



Albert Bore (2003) :

“The concept behind this event is to demonstrate the reality of the presence and influence of more than 200 Brussels offices of local and regional authorities in the EU 15+10.”



Peter Straub (2004):

“Our regions and cities are the lifeblood of the European economy. Make them strong and we make the European economy strong.” (2004, Closing session and plenary of the Committee of the Regions)



Michel Delbarre (2007):

“The exponential growth of this event over the past five years confirms the strength and vitality of Europe at local and regional level, pursuing an ambitious plan for cohesion, competitiveness and solidarity.”



Luc van den Brande (2008):

“Cohesion policy makes linking Europe with its territories and citizens. This is politically speaking the most important asset of this European policy.”



Mercedes Bresso (2010):

“Our regions and cities have enough power and ideas to move Europe forward. Let us do it.”



Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso

(incoming President, 2012):

“At the OPEN DAYS, we, the regions and cities of Europe, learn, exchange experience and influence - or more precisely, guide - the European institutions involved in the main decisions relating to cohesion policy. All levels of governance can make their voice heard and help the institutions in shaping or evaluating policies and programmes.”



European Parliament

President of
the Regional Development Committee



Danuta Hübner (2010):
"Territorial cohesion is not only a goal to achieve. It is also an instrument to achieve more and better growth."

President of the European Parliament



Jerzy Buzek (2011):
"It is at local and regional level that Europeans engage. It is the place where our hearts truly beat and where we can be ourselves in our own identity."

Vice-President of the European Parliament



Oldřich Vlasák, responsible for relations with Local and Regional Authorities and the Committee of the Regions (2012):
"Cohesion policy contributes to Europe's attractiveness. It has very tangible benefits for everyday's lives of cities, towns and communities, and at the same time it brings an added value for businesses in their decision making whether to come and invest in Europe."



Companies



Philippe de Buck, Director General, BUSINESSEUROPE:
"In this difficult moment Europe is facing, the importance of cohesion policy for regions is even greater. All efforts must be focused on improving the efficiency of this policy, ensuring a good implementation of each single project and enhancing the competitiveness of the EU regions."



Academics



Professor Michael Spence, winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize for economics, Chairman of the Commission on Growth and Development (2007):
"Regional development is a central part of economic growth and development. Mobile resources change regions and people move to cities and to new higher productivity sectors and types of employment. Underlying this is a process of integration into the global economy."



Experiences

A UNIQUE WAY TO GO LOCAL

In 2005, the OPEN DAYS went local with a series of decentralised events held from September to November in the European regions and cities. Year after year, the initiative became a success with up to 263 local events organised throughout the autumn in 2010.



Robert Collins, Head of Office,
Irish Regions Brussels Office

What has been the main focus of the Irish Regions since becoming involved in local events and what have been the outcomes from that?

Over the last two years, our local events have focused on the forthcoming Integrated Strategy for the Atlantic Area and its implications for Irish Regions. As a result of these events, we have forged linkages between the key stakeholders, raised the profile of the issues at stake and helped engender political buy-in. This, we hope, will result in an effective approach to the ongoing elaboration of the Atlantic Area Action Plan and ensure that Ireland and its regional and local authorities, in conjunction with key stakeholders such as the national Marine Institute, maximise the opportunities this strategy will present.

Did the OPEN DAYS local events have an impact locally in your region?

To be honest, our local events didn't bring direct change in the region. However, the events that we have run over the last

few years have helped to prepare our regional partners to be more strategically active in the EU policy-making process by demonstrating to them the potential impacts that emerging EU developments would have on the regions. Our events have also afforded our partners the opportunity to engage with the other levels of governance, from EU to national to regional and local on issues of mutual interest.

Would you say that the local events have helped the Irish Regions develop a closer relationship with Europe?

We have used the OPEN DAYS local events as an instrument to inform and engage on relevant EU policy matters. We have therefore invited policy-makers, at EU and national levels, to discuss policy developments with local and regional representatives. This process helps to inform the debate at local/regional level, keeps our regional partners abreast of relevant developments and means that they are better placed to take advantage of opportunities to co-operate with other regions when these arise. The fact that our events are part of the OPEN DAYS provides some kudos and gives leverage when inviting key speakers.

Steven McGregor, Acting Head, Welsh
Government EU Office, Brussels

What would you say has been the most satisfying outcome to arise from the Welsh Government office's involvement in the OPEN DAYS?

The OPEN DAYS is a great event for making and strengthening connections. It has always provided regions such as ours with an opportunity to consolidate our existing relationships with other regions while also providing new and exciting opportunities to collaborate with regions with which we haven't had a working relationship in the past. The OPEN DAYS benefits everyone as it's a real forum for knowledge exchange and we have always appreciated the opportunities the event has provided us with to share our experiences and approaches to best practice and learn from others as to how they meet shared challenges.

Experiences

How have you applied that principle of passing on knowledge in your local events?

We've always regarded our involvement in local events as one of the most important aspects of our participation in the OPEN DAYS. One of the events we're most proud of is our mock European Council for young people where we bring together students from our region and from one of our partner regions to discuss the key themes of the OPEN DAYS event and another topical issue. We've found that this raises awareness of the EU, the theme of the consortium and the region's involvement in the EU decision making process among the young people.

Apart from educating students on European issues, in what other ways have local events helped the citizens of the Welsh Regions learn more about Europe?

One of the main targets of local events is to bring Europe and its policies closer to the people who are affected by them in their everyday lives. Most people don't realize that effects at local level often originate from work done at an EU level. The local events have provided individuals not normally involved on a day-to-day basis in EU issues with an opportunity to see how others are addressing shared challenges and to build up links that could be useful for the future. These events paint a bigger picture and just as the OPEN DAYS in Brussels help the regions and cities to consolidate existing relationships and build new ones, so the local events provide the region itself with increased exposure to others and the chance to build connections.



Helene Deswarte, Head of the Partnerships Unit, Dunkirk Greater Council

What has been the most satisfying connection you have made at the OPEN DAYS local events since your first participation?

The OPEN DAYS create opportunities to initiate or reinforce cooperation with our European partners. One such example is

the joint contribution agreement signed by the Dunkirk Greater Council and the Medway Council during the OPEN DAYS local event on 10 November 2012. The "Joint contribution related to the preparation of the European programming period 2014-2020: Importance of combining the social, economic and urban dimensions at EU policy level" contains key messages of territory for the future cohesion policy, especially regarding territorial cooperation, which will be defended towards the EU institutions in Brussels as well as towards the French government.

Did the OPEN DAYS local events change things locally in your region?

Over the years, the OPEN DAYS local events in Dunkirk have provided a forum for debates and exchanges on a number of topics which address the territorial dimension of cohesion policy and issues which have a particular influence on the future of the projects conducted within the Dunkirk area, such as the urban strategy, social cohesion and the maritime dimension. They have also highlighted the dynamics created by the European projects in the territory. Additionally, local events have helped foster cooperation in industry by bringing brought representatives of the big companies of the territory such as Europipe, Entrepouse Contracting, Dalkia, and EDF together with those of small and medium-sized enterprises.

How would you say the local events have helped the Dunkirk Greater Council improve its relationships with its partners and deepen its connection with the rest of Europe?

The Dunkirk Greater Council has organised the OPEN DAYS local events in Dunkirk since 2008. A European subject directly concerning the actors of the territory is dealt with every year. The aim is to inform them regularly about the impact of Europe on the territory and to raise public awareness about European issues. We have made a choice to experiment with a different format every year for the local events; seminars, workshops, conferences. These events have provided us with the opportunity to gather together the actors of the territory, as well as European and national actors, around European topical issues. One example is when we established a link with the cluster of Lille after the Innovation Forum in 2009



Milan Panacek,
Vice-President, Trenčín Region
Brussels Office

The Trenčín Region Brussels Office has been organising OPEN DAYS local events since 2008. What has been the most satisfying connection you have made at these events since your involvement began?

The Trenčín Region started with local events with the aim of disseminating the information about the EU and the possibilities offered by EU institutions like grants and programmes for local and regional authorities, schools, young people and entrepreneurs from

our region. We organised round tables, discussions, workshops and we invited those who actively took part in the OPEN DAYS. In this way, the Trenčín Region has built a connection between the EU and the population in the region, including socio-economic partners, educational institutions and associations.

Where has the Trenčín Region's focus been in its local events?

Over the last three years of organising local events, the Trenčín Region has focused on youth and dialogue with youth organisations based in the region. The regional authority, together with the Europe Direct Centre, informs young people about regional youth policy, institutions they can use and other possibilities. We also try to help young people and educational staff better understand the range of European cultures, languages and values which are important to acquire basic life skills and competences necessary for personal development, future



employment and active citizenship. By delivering information on EU programmes, we encourage mobility of young people and language learning.

How have the OPEN DAYS local events helped in keeping Trenčín connected with the rest of Europe?

The OPEN DAYS local events have helped to connect with the regional population and explain in concrete terms complicated European Union issues such as use of EU funds in our region and the impact of EU legislation on daily life. Local events also help to spread information among regional actors and to promote involvement in European projects and partnerships. The Trenčín regional TV is helping us in to bring the EU to the region through coverage of the OPEN DAYS and the Trenčín Region's active presence in Brussels.