



The European Learning Network newsletter – issue 2 – February 2005

The Network partners – Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Milan and Prague – are all actively developing and implementing policies to promote enterprise in deprived urban neighbourhoods. Through LNet the cities will develop common approaches to realising the economic and social potential of deprived urban areas and practical tools to support enterprise in these areas.

• LNet update

LNet takes off in style

LNet was launched in London on 24th November, successfully bringing together high level policy makers, politicians and practitioners from across the capital and the EU. At the Tate Modern museum, one of London's most successful examples of innovative regeneration, the event combined policy discussions with practical illustrations of enterprise promotion in deprived urban areas across LNet's five partner cities and beyond.

The crucial role played by enterprise promotion in combating urban deprivation was highlighted throughout the two days in the presentations and interventions, and the dynamism of the discussions clearly highlighted the crucial role played by LNet in bringing people together and acting as a catalyst for positive change in our cities.

John Healey, UK Economic Secretary to the Treasury, kicked the event off by emphasising the crucial role which enterprise plays in promoting growth and economic and social cohesion. Interventions from the five partner cities helped to bring to life local realities, placing the debate into the different local contexts and highlighting common challenges. The scale and pace of change in recent years, resulting from globalisation and increasing competition, have led to an urgent need to reform our economies. However, barriers to enterprise still persist, particularly in areas of deprivation, and there needs to be a long-term commitment to change, tackling discrimination, skills shortages and introducing support measures to make enterprise relevant to all.

The launch was followed by a day-long experts' workshop on 25th November, getting down to the details of LNet's transnational working method and thematic focus. The workshop was aimed at economic regeneration practitioners, senior policy makers and social entrepreneurs. After a general session focusing on the over-arching objectives of LNet and its ambition to influence future policy while maintaining a clear practitioner-focus, participants split into three workshops based on LNet's three themes: enterprise and the entrepreneurship gap; innovation; social enterprise. The workshops raised common concerns around the need for mutual understanding as a fundamental basis for sharing knowledge and experience, setting the challenge for LNet to develop appropriate tools and learning methods that will meet the test of transferability.

Launch conference evaluation

Questionnaires evaluating the LNET launch conference were distributed to all delegates and attracted returns of just over 20%. Respondents were positive about the quality of both events, all but two rating the event as excellent or good.

Most respondents found the event very useful in terms of networking and welcomed the opportunity to exchange experiences with international colleagues and to hear other points of view, and about half found the comparison of approaches between the partner cities the most useful element of the conference.

For future LNET events delegates asked for more case studies from other cities and more practical guidance on what works and what doesn't: many respondents insisted on the importance of learning from both positive and negative experiences. Some respondents were interested in hearing more about the role of skills, training and education.

Feedback from delegates will inform the planning of future LNET event, and the LNET approach to learning is clearly welcomed with most delegates looking for more practical case studies and concrete projects. Some respondents would welcome LNet support for joint enterprises and trans-national partnerships, including brokering contacts for them and providing opportunities for networking. Finally, regular information, organisation of events and influencing government policy were among the most frequent requests.

For the full minutes of the launch and the workshop and information on up-coming events, please visit the LNet website www.thelearningnetwork.net

Greater London Enterprise promoted the European Learning network at the 7th Central European Initiative Summit Economic Forum

Greater London Enterprise (GLE) took part in the 7th Central European Initiative (CEI) Summit Economic Forum held in Portoroz, Slovenia, from 24th to 26th November 2004.

The CEI Summit Economic Forum takes place each November on the occasion of the annual CEI Summit of the Heads of Government, and gathers government officials, entrepreneurs, investors, international organisations.

More than 1400 participants and 200 journalists gathered for this annual event. GLE Programme Management and Consulting (PMC) Team was very well placed, having a Business Info Desk within the main Interactive Business Area where participants could discuss projects, visit stands, and use the networking facilities.

During this Summit, GLE Programme Management and Consulting Team has actively promoted the European Learning Network which was very well received by Italy, Ireland and several Central and Eastern European Countries, especially Croatia and Romania. Many of them expressed a strong interest in taking part actively in the European Learning Network.



¹ The Member States of the Central European Initiative (CEI) are the new EU Member States, the Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Italy and Austria.

Milan thematic workshop on social enterprise

LNet's thematic approach will kick off on 10th and 11th February with a social enterprise workshop and study visit in Milan. On day one the partner cities will present case studies followed by a panel discussion on immigration and social entrepreneurship, the financing of ethnic minority entrepreneurs and the issue of social responsibility for profit making enterprises. Speakers on the second day will look at new approaches to supporting and developing the social economy and at the strategies and instruments for social enterprise development in the partner cities. This will be followed by field visits to relevant local development projects in the Milan area, including the CRIS Resource Centre for Social Enterprises and cooperatives active in the delivery of local social and cultural services.

First dissemination conference, Prague 28 – 29 April 2005

The first LNet dissemination conference in Prague is aimed at a wider audience of city managers and practitioners from cities outside the core partnership. The two-day event will begin with presentations on LNET, its objectives and approach to learning. Workshops led by the partner cities will focus on the three themes of entrepreneurship, innovation and social enterprise. The second day will look more widely at the value of inter-regional partnerships and projects, with speakers from the European Commission, Prague City Hall and the Central European Initiative. Presentations from successful inter-regional projects will provide delegates with practical information on developing inter-regional partnerships and projects, with a question and answer session.

Invitations for the event will be despatched in mid February and information will be available on the LNet website.

Hamburg promotes the LNet agenda locally

LNet is gaining momentum in Hamburg, where a series of initiatives on the theme of enterprise promotion are being set up. Tu-Tech, LNet's Hamburg partner, will be co-hosting a conference in June 2005 on the issue of migrant entrepreneurship. The event, entitled "Migration@Work" will showcase initiatives undertaken by migrants in Germany. It is co-organised with a local social enterprise (Enterprises without Borders www.untemeiner-ohne-grenzen.de). The event will be held in Wilhelmsburg, a deprived district of Hamburg with a high proportion of migrant residents.

• Getting involved

Interest in LNET has grown fast since the network was launched and a wide range of cities are asking how they can be involved in the network. The core partners are committed to sharing learning and best practice between themselves and with urban managers across Europe and are delighted that there is such interest from other cities.

There are already ways for non-partners to be involved in the work of the network by attending LNET conferences and by reading reports and bulletins on the website. However some cities are looking for closer involvement than this and the partners are considering how a wider network of Associate Partners might be established. Initial ideas are that Associate Partners could participate in seminars and thematic workshops that are currently only open to core partners, could have access to the restricted Members section of the LNET website and enjoy free participation in LNET conferences. Associates could also be invited to contribute to newsletters, bulletins and the LNET website and to provide examples of good practice for consideration by the Network

At the LNET Steering Group in Milan in February 2005 the Steering Group will consider whether a wider network of Associate Partners can be set up with cities who share the LNET objectives and who are interested in taking an active role in LNET activities. If the partners decide to go ahead with this approach, details will be posted on the LNET website and those who have already expressed an interest will be contacted with information.

• News from LNET partners

Hamburg studies barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation

Hamburg, as part of LNet, is also carrying out a major study on enterprises and barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation. The study will be based on a survey of companies based in Hamburg-Harburg, Hamburg's southernmost district, analysing their economic standing and seeking their opinions on problems and challenges they think that need to overcome to allow them to have a more stable basis. A special emphasis is given to innovation and portraits of set of companies are being prepared. The study will be completed in March. Previously, Hamburg's LNet partnership had organised a promotional event in Hamburg on 30th November 2004, to mark the launch of LNet and encourage local engagement in the project.

Further details are available from LNET Hamburg partners: l-net@tutech.de

London partners help shape EU enterprise and innovation policy

LNet lead partner Greater London Enterprise will host a London round table with the European Commission to develop a London view on the future of European enterprise and innovation policy. The event will shape a London-wide response to an EU Commission consultation on the future Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), (2007-13).

The event will focus on areas of key interest to the Learning Network, including:

- **Improving SME's access to finance, bridging the market gaps in SME finance and disseminating best practices of public-private partnerships in SME finance.**
- **Improving the business environment for SMEs and encouraging the exchange of experience and best practices between both enterprises and administrations; funding for impact assessment and evaluation in areas covered by the CIP.**
- **Encouraging innovation by supporting innovation in enterprises, through Intellectual Property Rights, finance for the transfer of technology, business support networks, and assistance to innovative start-ups.**

LNet representatives at the event will be particularly interested in promoting the view that the new programme should support *all* of Europe's businesses including, for example, social enterprises and SMEs in deprived areas.

The response will be submitted to the Commission by 7 February. For further details, please contact: emma.d@gle.co.uk

Please visit the LNet website: www.thelearningnetwork.net

If you have any comments on how our website could be improved, please email Nathalie.g@gle.co.uk



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