

The Parliament Magazine's  
**REGIONAL**  
EUROPE'S REGIONS AND CITIES REVIEW

# EUROPEAN REGIONAL CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2008



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## SHORTLIST GUIDE

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A man in a dark suit and glasses is sitting on a modern, light blue sofa. The sofa has a graphic print of a green field under a blue sky with white clouds. He is sitting on a sidewalk at night. In the background, there is a city street with several Philips streetlights, some of which are illuminated. The city buildings are lit up, and a large domed building is visible in the distance. The sky is dark blue.

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## **EU-villages** Smedjebacken, Sweden

The municipality of Smedjebacken in Central Sweden led a transnational pilot project with the objective of creating EU villages across Europe with the aim of increasing the knowledge, understanding, cooperation and solidarity between EU citizens. The villages are meant to be meeting points for ordinary people – a place for discussions, seminars, conferences and for passing on information on different themes and issues.

Smedjebacken is the lead partner among various municipalities in central Sweden, as well as Tralee in Ireland, Larnaca in Cyprus and Petrosani in Romania. The project included a series of national and international meetings and activities with representatives of the participating regions.

The project aimed not only to offer information and cooperation, but also strived to create a positive local development and drive economic growth. Faced with the lack of support from ordinary citizens for the EU, the EU villages created a meeting point for ordinary people to discuss important EU issues on a local level. The feeling and opinion that democracy is not strong enough within the Union was challenged, and it became clear why it sometimes is difficult on an EU level to work and co-operate on different and important issues. But it also showed how the successes of the EU have benefited its citizens.

## **Europe Game Booklet** Austria

This project came about because there is not enough information about the EU available to schools in Austria. The project was created especially for secondary schools, in order to reach as many children as possible between the ages of 10 and 14 and their teachers.

The “EUROPE-GAME” is a booklet with two parts: general and regional EU matters. This booklet enables children to learn about Europe and the EU in an easy and playful way and is focused on geography, history, languages and the different cultures, among other topics.

The distinctive feature of the “EUROPE-GAME” is its interactivity: pupils can decorate the booklet with stickers and have fun while learning about the EU. The answers to the questions are included as well.

The 2008 edition of the booklet was made by EuropeDirect Lower Austria. The first edition (in 2006) was based on an idea from the EuropeDirect Network Austria, and we had 5000 copies for our region that first year. Because of enormous demand for the “EUROPE-GAME”, we were nearly out of stock at the end of 2007, which is why we decided to create an updated edition. We presented the 2008 version, of which 4000 were printed, on Europe Day, 9 May 2008, and ever increasing numbers of schools in Lower Austria are asking for the game. Due to this continuous demand we are planning further editions and we have also decided to promote the game to other countries through the EuropeDirect Network. Some countries like Germany, Hungary and Lithuania have already reproduced it.

## **VoicE - Giving People a Voice in EU-Legislation** Baden-Württemberg, Germany

How is the safety of toys guaranteed? Which additives are allowed in food? Will the European market for electricity be liberalised? EU legislation in the area of consumer protection is barely comprehensible for many consumers and raises a multitude of questions. In the future, citizens will have a unique chance to discuss current topics linked to consumer protection with their representatives in Brussels via the eParticipation platform “VoicE”. The discussion will focus on five main topics: energy, telecommunications, nutrition, toy safety and Consumer Market Watch.

The site offers background information on all the above topics as well as on EU legislation and the European institutions. Through a graphic visualisation tool, users can see which stage a legislative proposal has reached and when voting on the proposal will take place in the European parliament. Using state-of-the-art communication tools like blogs and online forums, the platform facilitates a constructive dialogue between citizens and their elected representatives at EU level.

VoicE involves a consortium of nine partners from three countries (Greece, Spain, Germany), and now has a regional subdivision as well: one platform has been set up in Baden-Württemberg (Germany) and one in Valencia (Spain). Citizens can thus directly contact the MEPs from their local region, ask relevant questions and voice their opinions. Politicians have an opportunity to react immediately to citizens' proposals and answer their queries, and VoicE allows them to listen to their voters' concerns and learn more about their expectations of European politics.



LITERATUR  
PORT



## Give life to books Montforte, Spain

'Give life to the books' is a cultural and educational project directed at kindergartens and junior schools, a total of 228 students. The project aims to bring library services to people, especially children, who do not normally have easy access to them. We visit the schools - all in the Montforte district - at the start of the year with a small suitcase of storybooks. There are 10 suitcases in total, one for each classroom. The wooden suitcases can be simply transformed into bookcases where the children can choose their favourite books.

The history suitcase, for example, holds books on heroes and characters from the past, transported from the central library to schools across the district. The books are chosen according to the national reading plan and are sorted according to age group. When a child takes a book, they also take a piece of paper so that they can write down their thoughts about the book when they are at home. Each fortnight, the suitcases are replaced by others, ensuring that they do the tour of each classroom. During the year we also run events, such as visits from authors and illustrators. Children will also be asked to write or draw about their experiences, and the resulting works will be exhibited during the International Day of the Children's Book.

## Literaturport.de Berlin, Germany

Literaturport.de is a new website dealing with the literary region of Berlin/Brandenburg in Germany. Past and present are treated equally; the website covers the literary history of the region, but also demonstrates the present variety and vitality of literary life.

The dictionary of authors is a good example of this approach. It covers almost 4000 writers from both the past and the present, complete with pictures and a variety of additional information. It is the website's intention to cover every historical author that has ever lived in Brandenburg, and (if possible) also in Berlin.

Contemporary authors in the dictionary are listed according to a new principle - as a general rule, each author writes his or her entry herself. This way, the information is as reliable and up-to-date as possible. Authors may use Literaturport as a representative space, and many well-known authors such as Günter Grass or Judith Hermann have already participated in the project. Authors' profiles are also linked to free audio clips of new books (many of which are read by the writers themselves). The background of the region is explored by material on literary institutions, foundations, libraries and memorial places. The website also features historical texts, written by classic local authors like Kleist or Fontane. There is also a selection of daily literary events, as well as the extremely successful "Literatouren" - tours by well-known local authors such as Katja Lange-Müller or Tilman Rammstedt through their very personal Berlin using a literary text.

## Network for the commercialisation of local products and rural tourism

Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain

The network for the commercialisation of local products and rural tourism project aims to unite the rural tourism of three Mediterranean areas: Sierra de Segura - Andalusia (Spain), Vibo Valentia - Calabria (Italy) and Central Crete (Greece). The aim is to establish a model of services offered across all three regions based on high quality standards and characterised by common elements such as shared natural resources, a common commitment to hospitality and a warm welcome, the quality and variety of the local gastronomy and the richness of the cultural and historical heritage.

This transnational cooperation project has as its main objective an increase in the number of tourists visiting Monte Poro, Serre Vibonesi, Sierra de Segura and Central Crete through new initiatives and the qualitative development of existing activities related to the rural tourism. These are complemented by other actions such as the protection of the environment and the promotion of the local tradition and culture.

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## Announcements for agricultural workers Puglia, Italy

The Apulia regional government has, since 2006, taken a firm stance in the struggle against the black economy and irregular work, endorsing a thorough employment policy [PEP – Programma Emersione Puglia]. It aims at creating open-ended contracts and regular work, strengthening control over working conditions, implementing a database that enables different public administrations to share information about the local labour market and regional economic conditions.

In December 2007, two new provisions were made – granting business support, regular employment and care for migrant workers, ensuring that seasonal agricultural workers with have a better life and working conditions. In particular, the rules are designed to help private employers and local authorities to provide services connected to agricultural work, such as accommodation (for example by giving grants to renovate buildings), meals, and sanitation and transport services. And the provision that accommodation must be maintained for the use of migrant workers for five years (by private businesses) or ten years (by local authorities) highlights the long term perspective of this regional law.

## Young Workers Integration Programme Valencia, Spain

Fundación Comunidad Valenciana – Región Europea (FCVRE) is a foundation that was created with the support of the Valencian regional government and other bodies which represent the social, economic and cultural framework of the Valencian region. FCVRE has made it possible for many young people to complete their training by carrying out internships at its offices, becoming a leading organisation for hosting young trainees. These trainees come not only from the Valencian region, but also from the rest of Spain, from all over the EU and from third countries.

FCVRE is considering the possibility of consolidating this training experience by implementing the project called: Young Workers Integration Programme among Regional Offices (YWIPRO). The main aims of this programme are to facilitate staff exchanges between different regional offices (RO) and to offer ROs the opportunity to make the most of the synergies derived from interregional cooperation.

## Södertälje Iraqi Refugees Södertälje, Sweden

At local level, diversity should be interpreted as a source of richness and the integration process should be promoted along with with employment. This is the experience of Södertälje, which hosts more than 5,000 Iraqi refugees. This small city in the region of Södermanland has a population of 83,000 and has accepted more Iraqi refugees than the United States and Canada combined.

Thanks to public programmes created by the region and the participation of several companies, Södertälje has become an example of how the integration of immigrants should be carried out at EU level. The Södermanland region succeeded in involving public society in this process, whilst avoiding any form of racism and intolerance. Moreover, good management of the immigrants at regional level has helped this town to cooperate with other towns in the region to create jobs and facilitate the integration of this community.



## Eco-efficient city energy from co-generation Helsinki, Finland

Helsinki's district-heat and power company Helsinki Energy is the world leader in co-generation efficiency and continues to strive for further improvement. The energy company possesses unique capabilities and know-how among the world's city energy producers. It not only generates energy for the city, it also feeds electricity to the national grid. Approximately 93 per cent of all City of Helsinki buildings are heated with co-generated district heat.

In co-generation, the extra energy generated when producing electricity, is used for producing district heat instead of discharging it at sea as lost heat. Helsinki Energy produces electricity and district heating for the Helsinki metropolitan area primarily at local power stations, the advantages of combined production often leading to a fuel consumption efficiency rate exceeding 90%. Besides combining district-heat and power production, Helsinki Energy has for the past five years used the technology also to produce district cooling, setting a world standard – Helsinki Energy's model has been accepted as a Best Available Technology (BAT) by the EU. In the summer, absorption chillers using condensing heat from power generation, which would otherwise be lead to the sea, produce district-cooling. This procedure increases the efficiency of the thermal power plant.

## Regional Climate Agenda Rotterdam Region Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Within the Rotterdam region, all 16 municipalities have organised a pact to reduce CO2 emissions, the Regional Climate Agenda Rotterdam Region. This industrial region represents over 25% of the total CO2 emission of the Netherlands. The chairmen of the environmental committees agreed in June to reduce CO2 emission in the region by 40% in 2025, in comparison to 1990. All municipalities contribute, some even going as far as 50% CO2 reduction (Rotterdam), a CO2 neutral municipal government in 2012 (Maasluis) or total CO2 zero-emission, such as glasshouse municipality Lansingerland in 2050.

All communities will work together on 10 regional initiatives, not only involving the environmental policy, but making environmental policy part of economics, agriculture, housing policy and mobility etc. The initiatives in the region include a programme for isolation of housing and office-buildings, so reducing the need for warming and air-conditioning, low CO2 emissions for new buildings and the encouragement of sustainable energy – mainly wind energy or biomass.

## Sustainable energy programme Alytus City, Lithuania

The sustainable energy programme for small communities in Lithuania-Poland border project is aimed at increasing energy sustainability of small communities through reducing overall energy consumption, mainly heat for heating buildings, and an increase in the use of biofuels in energy production. We carried out energy audits on three public buildings (a school and two kindergartens) in Alytus, created two energy efficiency laboratories in Alytus and Gizycko (PL) equipped with modern energy metering equipment and devices and some equipment for research on biofuels, introduced a new training programme for building fitters, implemented cost-effective heat saving measures in a public building, constructed new energy plants and set up a renewable energy educational centre in Gizycko equipped with a biomass boiler, solar heaters, pellets production equipment.

Both groups of activities were supplemented by an awareness campaign consisting of two seminars in Alytus and Gizycko, leaflets and articles in the local press and on websites.

These measures had considerable cross-border impact. There are similarities on both sides of the Lithuanian-Polish border not only in the local conditions for biofuels production but in terms of energy consumption and saving habits too. It was useful to share best practice in both countries and make use of the existing opportunities.





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# REGIONAL

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**GREEN HEALTH CARE**  
Öresund

## **INAWARE**

**Bauska, Biržai**  
**Latvia, Lithuania**

The overall objective of the INAWARE project is to strengthen cooperation among the Bauska and Biržai regions for better nature and water management. The key word is cooperation, with local farmers, governments, citizens and NGOs, to explore the relationship between the legislation on both sides of the border to create information tools to help reduce pollution levels. The aim of this project was to stress the importance of nature and assess the practical means of ensuring the efficient protection of rivers and nature in one of the most remarkable natural territories in Latvia and Lithuania.

This territory is famous not only for the almost untouched environment, home to a large number of different animal, plant and habitat species, but also for its cultural heritage and its unique geological nature. This so-called karst process is well known, and is going on all over the world, but only in very rare areas is it possible to observe surface displays of this process - karst lakes and holes. This project promotes awareness of the natural biodiversity, beauty and singularity of the territory, demonstrates nature conservation and water management measures, and presents a common approach to nature protection and water resource management. As a result of INAWARE, several other projects are going to be implemented by other stakeholders to solve similar problems in this region as well in the wider neighbourhood.

## **Centre of Excellence for Environmental Technologies**

**Slovenia**

The "Environmental Technologies" Centre of Excellence (COOT) brings together the resources of research institutes and universities with the needs of enterprise and industry so as to ensure an integral approach towards solutions for environmental problems. The vision of the centre is to develop competitive knowledge, technologies and products which will preserve the environment in line with the principles of sustainable development. Through the Centre, a network of research and engineering capacities has been created that is capable of increasing the innovation potential of the Slovene economy, accelerating regional development and offering new possibilities for education and training in R&D and technology.

The Centre provides innovative methods and fields of co-operation with enterprises and industry to young researchers from the academic sphere and access to top research facilities and knowledge of partners in industry. COOT and the Slovenian Ecological Cluster established a Slovenian Technological Platform for water (<http://www.tpvoid.si>) with 32 partners from across Slovenia. The Slovenian TP for Water has actively entered the European Water Supply and Sanitation Technological Platform (<http://www.wsstp.org>).

## **Green Health Care Öresund**

**Öresund**  
**Denmark, Sweden**

A green hospital is a hospital where environmental considerations are incorporated in daily routines and development. The Interreg III A Öresund project "Green Health Care Öresund" has evoked interest and shared experiences in green hospital management in the Öresund region. The Danish-Swedish interregional project has created an inspirational and fruitful exchange of ideas on how to move towards greener hospitals. The project has developed criteria and models for a sustainable ward, as well as an energy saving scheme that includes monitoring of energy consumption and training of staff.

With a small dedicated team, highly transparent working method, and efficient information strategies, the project has managed to involve the hospital personnel to a level far beyond expectations. Concrete hands-on examples and visual displays that are easily approached by non-experts have successfully been embraced by the hearts and minds of the hospital personnel, despite their busy schedules. For the larger audience the project has gathered written and visual testimonies on an attractive homepage ([www.greenhealthcare.eu](http://www.greenhealthcare.eu)). The project is a good example of how an initiative can create momentum on the practitioners' level and seed a greener thinking in the energy intense social services that hospital provides.



## JINNOVE

Nord-Pas de Calais, France

Collaboration between innovation actors is crucial for effective support to innovation – both in terms of working with the stakeholders in a particular region, and of investing in European projects. A strong regional network (i.e. JINNOVE) is the foundation of the collaborative strategy in the French Nord-Pas de Calais region. Collaboration for JINNOVE means groups of regional innovation professionals working with different actors involved in innovation and technology transfer. Over the years, JINNOVE has become known and respected for its efficient functioning and the excellent cooperation and knowledge sharing between its members.

JINNOVE's web portal ([www.jinnove.com](http://www.jinnove.com)) has been a large part of the project's success. It is the main port of call for anyone wanting to find out about innovation in the Nord-Pas de Calais area, and it provides well-organised and vital information on what enterprises need to know to carry out innovation projects – such as the availability of financing tools and a database of regional scientific and technological competencies. The website is also a platform for all actors working in innovation in the area to discuss ideas.

Regional enterprises have benefited from JINNOVE on different levels. For example, they can ask for different financing schemes (regional, national or at European level) to enable them to get involved in innovative projects which they could not have carried out without JINNOVE's help. The information provided and the events organised by JINNOVE have enabled the enterprises to create good relations with potential partners. These effects are being further developed in the context of other activities, such as a study of key technologies that will take place in the Nord-Pas de Calais region in 2010.

## Lofar

Northern Netherlands Province, The Netherlands

The LOFAR project is developing and constructing a sensor network for the collection and processing of real-time streaming data. Early ideas for the project stem from designs by ASTRON in Dwingeloo (The Netherlands) for the development of the Square Kilometer Array (SKA), a global project to build an extremely sensitive radio telescope from 2015. LOFAR will pioneer much of the technology that will be needed for the SKA. In contrast with traditional radio telescopes, which rely on heavy and expensive dishes, LOFAR makes use of large numbers of relatively inexpensive antennas to collect signals from the sky.

It was quickly realised that the infrastructure needed to house a distributed radio telescope would provide opportunities in other areas as well. This has led to the inclusion of two other disciplines in the project. Geophones and infrasound sensors will be used for geophysical studies. Dedicated sensors will also be included to monitor the climate in crops and the movements of animals for precision agriculture. Further sensors and/or applications may follow. Over the past few years, international interest in LOFAR has increased greatly. Consortia have been set up in Germany, the UK, France, Sweden and Poland to build local LOFAR stations, which will all be connected via a dedicated fibre network, sending their signals to the same supercomputer in Groningen. LOFAR will soon be a European sensor network which has been developed in, and will be controlled from, the north of the Netherlands.

## ProAct

Podkarpackie Voivodship, Poland

The ProAct Project (Practical Regional Research and Innovation Policy in Action) implemented from 2006 to 2007 by Podkarpackie Voivodship under the sixth framework programme, gathered partners from eight European countries: Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. Its general objective focused on the exchange of experiences in respect of the elaboration of strategies and implementation of innovation policies between developed EU regions and less-developed areas.

While implementing the project, a number of conferences on regional innovation and research policy were organised in Podkarpackie Voivodship. A case study was also produced, presenting the Aviation Valley as a successful example of an innovation-led industrial cluster. The possibility to compare with other regions and to exchange experiences allows for the improvement of existing systems in order to optimize the way they work.



## **Baltic Sea Challenge** Helsinki, Finland

The mayors of Helsinki and Turku have made a commitment to improve the state of the Baltic Sea and have challenged hundreds of other organisations to take part in the challenge. The measures presented in the Baltic Sea Challenge commitment aim to decrease the burden on coastal waters and the entire Baltic Sea caused by the functions of the cities of Helsinki and Turku themselves. One of the aims is to decrease the environmental effects of sea traffic.

The main themes of the actions which are to improve the sewer network, decrease the load caused by the waste water of scattered settlement and agriculture, dredge and deposit polluted sediments as well as decrease the emission of waste water from ferry and boat traffic. The cities can implement some of the planned actions, but for further actions a more extensive cooperation with other authorities is needed. Therefore, Turku and Helsinki challenge also other municipalities, companies, organisations, educational institutions and other instances to participate in the protection of the Baltic Sea.

## **AQUAMARINA** Brittany, France

The Region of Brittany has been very active in maritime issues. In 2007 it created Aquamarina, a working group of 40 maritime regions within the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR). The main goal of Aquamarina is to follow up the implementation of the EU action plan resulting from the Blue Book "An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union".

The member regions of the Aquamarina group will devote their meetings to the various themes within the Blue Book Action Plan, namely: maritime spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, maritime transport, maritime economy, research, employment and training. Aquamarina plans to meet three times a year for two years (2008 and 2009), corresponding to the timetable fixed by the European Commission for the introduction of its maritime policy.

LIFE-project "The reintroduction of Alis Shad to the river Rhine system" Germany

## **LIFE-project** France, Germany, The Netherlands

The LIFE-project, the reintroduction of Alis Shad to the river Rhine system, is a European project that aims to conserve and protect an endangered fish species in Europe and to restore the biodiversity in one of the largest rivers in Europe. The Allis shad was one of the most important commercial fish species in the Rhine and hundreds of thousands of fish migrated into the river each year until the end of the 19th century. Only 30 years later the population collapsed. Today large shad populations exist only in France.

With partners in the USA, France, the Netherlands and Germany, this project developed mass production techniques and built the first shad fish farm in Europe together with regional fish farmers in France. The first 500,000 allis shad were stocked in the River Rhine in 2008. Monitoring campaigns, scientific exchange and research build a sound basis for this ambitious project. Exceptional public awareness campaigns with e.g. national and international talks, a multilingual website ([www.alosa-alosa.eu/](http://www.alosa-alosa.eu/)), symposia, exhibitions, a multilingual project video explain the goals of the project to the public.

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## The Ray of Hope Šalčininkai district, Lithuania

“The Ray of Hope” (“Vilties Spindulėlis”) is a public institution established mainly for mentally disabled people, although physically disabled people attend the centre as well. The founders of “The Ray of Hope” are the council of Šalčininkai district municipality and the wardship community “Hope” (“Viltis”) of Lithuanian mentally disabled people. Workers of the institution believe that mentally disabled people should be a part of healthy people’s community. They also should get the necessary help to develop. The mission of the institution is to encourage mentally disabled people to integrate into society, to discuss and solve problems on their own as much as possible.

The aim of “The Ray of Hope” institution is to prepare mentally disabled people for as independent a life as possible. Workers of the institution help mentally disabled people to develop everyday skills: people are learning how to wash themselves and how to dress. The transport provided by the institution drives mentally disordered people to the institution in the morning and back home in the evening. The educational and social work is done in two groups. One group is made of children from six to 21 years old. The other group is made of young people (from 21) and adults, whose age is unlimited. There are people with the Down’s syndrome, epilepsy, and other disabilities. Almost all have speech disorders. The activities provided at “The Ray of Hope” centre include art therapy, art and crafts, work therapy, cooking, physical education, discussions, excursions, acting lessons and music therapy.

## Partyfriends Belgium

Partywise is a concept aimed at reducing alcohol and drug related health problems in the Flemish nightlife. The general concept was launched in 2003. Every two years we develop an awareness campaign focusing on one topic. In 2005 we did a summer campaign aimed at nightlife tourism at the Belgian coastline. In 2007 we came up with a new campaign focusing on peers in the nightlife scene called Partyfriends. The idea of motivating friends to take responsibility for their party friends is completely new within the framework of a campaign. The principals of the Partyfriends campaign are based on research that shows that friendship and solidarity have a good potential to prevent problems in nightlife. Peer groups play a vital role in providing information, sharing tips, and helping each other in case of problems. What’s more, youngsters find it easier to talk with their peers, especially about topics like sexuality and drug use.

The Partyfriends campaign uses a positive approach towards young people and nightlife and emphasises the positive role of friends and the responsibility they have towards each other. In addition, the campaign is in part driven by the community feeling that exists in the nightlife scene. In reality, the community spirit is underlined by the creation of a Partyfriends Myspace webpage and a contest where party people can send in a picture from their party friends. The core information for the party people is gathered in six categories in a dynamic website. The reaction from the nightlife professionals and the party people on the Partyfriends campaign was unanimously positive. The same reactions were obtained when we recently presented the Partyfriends campaign at an international conference on nightlife protection in Ibiza.

## Taste of Europe Pärnu, Estonia

The “Taste of Europe” project was for young people with special needs. They went to Portugal, to the city of Peniche, to get knowledge about food and how to cook it. As well as Estonians, there were people with special needs from Portugal and Sweden there, and the aim was for them to spend time with each other, cooking and sharing experiences.

After the trip three books in the three different languages were published, consisting of recipes and pictures of the different foods as well as the emotions experienced by the young people during the trip to the Portugal.



## CityMobil / TVRCas Valencia, Spain

The CityMobil project seeks to validate and demonstrate the capabilities of new mobility solutions in different European cities. In five horizontal sub-projects, the issues that still prevent full scale implementation of innovative automated transport systems were investigated and solutions developed. The aim was to achieve a more effective organisation of urban transport, resulting in a more rational use of motorised traffic with less congestion and pollution, safer driving, a higher quality of living and an enhanced integration with spatial development. This objective can be brought closer by developing integrated traffic solutions: advanced concepts for innovative autonomous and automated road vehicles for passengers and goods, embedded in an advanced spatial setting.

The city of tomorrow is in need of integrated traffic solutions that provide the required mobility in an efficient, safe and economic manner. It is inevitable that all possible forms of automation, from providing information at one end of the spectrum, to fully autonomous driving at the other, will play a major role. We wish to make significant steps forward that will, in the short to medium term, support a sustainable development of European cities. The Spanish city of Castellón, in the region of Valencia, has adopted automated bimodal buses (TRVCas) that are capable of operating both manually and automatically (with no driver) – depending on where they are – running on reserved lanes. These vehicles officially started operations on 25 June 2008

## UpCode on Helsinki bus and tram stops Helsinki, Finland

A number of Helsinki city bus and tram stops are testing new electronic timetables which are operated by a mobile phone equipped with a camera, Internet access and the “Upcode” software. When the user points the phone’s camera at an Upcode smart screen at the stop, the phone automatically takes a picture which triggers the phone to perform the task defined in the smart screen: the phone accesses the Internet site that contains the stop’s timetable.

The advantage compared to printed timetables is real-time service information. The system also makes announcements of service interruptions. The service is free of charge to users. One of its applications is voice synthesised timetables for the visually impaired. The trial is part of Helsinki’s efforts to boost accessibility.

## Rapid-transit railway Styria, Austria

The rapid-transit railway system was started in December 2007, and was a major challenge for Styria and its capital Graz (population around 250,000): more than 70 additional daily train connections to and from Graz were established. The introduction of the rapid-transit railway system was a great success. Many people are now encouraged to go to work by train, or to travel to their leisure destinations by public transport.

The introduction of the rapid-transit railway has been accompanied by a powerful marketing campaign. Car drivers were informed via traffic message channels about the new public transport offer, while a roadshow informed interested people at various mobility events. A manual, “How to use public transport”, was produced and sent to every household in the catchment area of the rapid-transit railway, together with the timetable. Last but not least, on the rapid-transit railway website, a fare-saving calculator showed people how much money they could save by going by train instead of by car.

All in all, the province of Styria has invested about €10m per year in the rapid-transit railway and we think this is a good investment. We see the success not only in the increase in the number of passengers (about 10% in the last year) but also in the more positive attitude towards public transport as a whole.



## Knowing each other through diversity

Isla, Malta

Children and adults alike in Isla shared their views on diversity during a day dedicated to intercultural dialogue on 2 May 2008. As part of the campaign '1001 Actions for Dialogue' and supporting the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Isla Local Council's aim was to create a communicative process between people of different races, culture, colour and religion. On the day, the Local Council organised two different events - one aimed at children and another one for adults with the theme "knowing each other better through diversity".

The morning activity aimed at children consisted of a dialogue between the local primary school children and local children attending Junior Lyceum with the participation of children from refugees Open Centres. The second activity consisted of an open discussion between the local residents, foreigners living in Isla, refugees from the various Open Centres in Malta and members from different social and religious local organisations. The evening session includes ethnical music performances from a group of refugees. The events were open to the general public.

## Dialogue through Images

Italy

Network NEI is designed to aid cooperation between European and non-European regions in the Mediterranean area, working within the Barcelona process.

The association involves institutions, cities and regions around the Mediterranean (Sardinia, Calabria, Lazio, (IT), PACA (FR)) that have developed policies of inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

The "Dialogue through Images" project involved the creation of various documentary films representing the way of life in the various regions involved in the project - the story of the old tobacco factory of Cagliari told through the eyes of its workers, the story of social desegregation in Los Angeles, London and Cagliari, etc.

## Executive Council of AP Vojvodina

Vojvodina, Serbia

The executive council of the autonomous province of Vojvodina is the only regional institution in the Republic of Serbia. In the process of Republic of Serbia's accession to the EU, regional intercultural dialogue is very important: during the turbulent times of the break-up of the ex-Yugoslavia, the executive council of Vojvodina, with its clear politics, managed to maintain peace, stability and understanding between people.

There are six official languages in Vojvodina: Serbian, Hungarian, Croatian, Slovakian, Romanian and Russian. As such, Vojvodina represents a unique example of the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the full acknowledgement of national minorities.

We believe in the future and our young people and, therefore, there is a network of pre-, elementary and secondary schools and faculties in the languages of all the national minorities in AP Vojvodina. Education is provided in the Serbian language, whereas members of national minorities attend school in their first languages. In approximately one-fifth of the total number of elementary schools lectures are in Hungarian, in twenty schools in Slovakian, in twenty-seven ones in Romanian and in three schools in Russian.

## Bristol Intercultural Dialogue Events

Bristol, UK

The 'Intercultural Dialogue: The Way Forward' conference held in Bristol during April 2008 was an initiative that brought together academics, policy makers, community groups and organisations from across Europe to discuss the positive social and economic impact of migration and cultural diversity and the challenges of a multicultural society.

The conference was just one of a series of intercultural dialogue events that was held in the city of Bristol this year, including "A Passage to Bristol", a gala celebration showcasing the diverse origins & talents and stories of modern Bristol and "Refugee week", a city-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrates the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. These events involved in many different capacities people from a range of backgrounds whose roots of origin are from 64 nationalities/countries proving the wide appeal of the events and the vibrancy of Bristol's many communities.