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■ The “Regions of Knowledge” Network

The “Regions of Knowledge” Network (“Coordination action to improve trans-national co-operation of NCPs Regional”, TRANS REG NCP project) supports the development of research-driven clusters across Europe, associating universities, research centres, enterprises and regional authorities, through the FP7 “Regions of Knowledge” programme. Interested parties can contact TRANS REG NCP for information and support on European “research and cluster” policy, synergies and funding from FP7 and the Structural Funds, strategic partnerships building, networking, success stories and useful contacts. More information: www.transregncp.eu

■ FP7 Calls Update

- **REGIONS-2011 call results:**

8 projects are finalising the negotiations for funding, under REGIONS-2011 call, and are expected to start in September-October 2011. The Coordinators are from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria, France, Spain, UK and Sweden. The requested budget per project varies from 1.5 to 2.7 million euro.

- **REGIONS-2012 call**

The call for proposals "REGIONS-2012-1" is expected to be launched on 20 July 2011, with deadline on 31 January 2012. The topics cover “Resource efficient technologies” and “Regional digital agenda”. Special focus is given on “smart specialisation” and “internationalisation”. The call targets high potential clusters with capacity to upgrade. Modifications are introduced regarding the mentoring activities of less developed research-profile regions (now optional), the internationalisation activities (now compulsory), the coordination of the projects (not compulsory by regional authorities, etc).

- **Evaluation of REGIONS programme:**

An Impact Assessment Study on “Regions of Knowledge” programme was conducted for the European Commission. The study work was carried out from June 2010 to March 2011. The survey covered 41 projects from the calls 2007-2009 and evaluated their efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Questionnaires were sent to co-ordinators, followed by data base analysis, social network analysis, interviews, case studies, comparative analysis, synthesis and recommendations. According to the results, the programme has played an important role in the smart specialisation of regions. Most projects focus on a key area for future regional economic development; or it is a traditional area of specialisation undergoing restructuring. According to the survey, the projects contribute to the improvement of strategic vision in the cluster area, the formation of new, long-term relationships with clusters at the EU level, the knowledge transfer between research organisations and enterprises, the access to a pool of complementary competencies and the improvement in the strategy making process. More information will be available soon.

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■ News & Events

● **Annual Forum of Regional NCPs on 13-14 October, in Istanbul**

The Annual Forum of Regional NCPs will be organized in Istanbul, on 13-14 October 2011. The Forum will be organized jointly with a workshop on research-driven Clusters. TRANS REG NCP project will cover the costs for participation for one National Contact Point per country. More information about the exact date, agenda and logistics will be sent soon.

● **ResPotNet Info Day and Brokerage event, 22 September 2011, Brussels**

Unlocking the potential of convergence and outermost regions is one of the main European long term goals in research regional policies. However, these tasks can never be accomplished unless excellence is not pursued.

The Research Potential National Contact Points' Network, the ResPotNet project, is organizing on September the 22nd an Info Day (in the morning) and Brokerage Event (in the afternoon) for all stakeholders interested in the regional FP7 Programme to receive information about the forthcoming calls 2012 and to meet other relevant stakeholders. There will also be the opportunity to request specific information to the Regional NCPs.

During the event, the presentation of the priorities for regional innovation strategies and an overview of 2012 calls will be done by Dimitri Corpakis, Head of Unit Regional Dimension of Innovation, DG R&I, and the EC staff. Profiles of successful organizations funded by REGPOT will be disseminated as well. A networking lunch will conclude the Info Day.

[Agenda & Online Registration>](#)

● **“Innovation for Stronger Regions: Opportunities in FP7”, 14 July 2011, Brussels**

The Conference "Innovation for Stronger Regions: Opportunities in FP7" is organized by the European Commission, on 14 July, in Brussels. TRANS REG NCP will support a booth during the Conference to inform potential participants about the programme and the services offered by the Network.

The Conference aims to encourage local/regional actors to get acquainted with FP7, to provide an opportunity for mutual learning on how regions are developing their research/innovation capacities, to stimulate partnerships between regions and to inspire learning on smart specialization, etc. The event is hosted in the EU Committee of Regions (CoR) which is the political assembly that provides the regional and local levels with a voice in EU policy development and legislation.

[More>>](#)

● **Conference "Inspiring Clusters in the Beginning of the New Decade", Tallinn (Estonia), 30-31 March 2011**

TRANS REG NCP project participated in the Conference "Inspiring Clusters in the Beginning of the New Decade", which was organized in Tallinn, Estonia, on 30-31 March 2011. The participants had the opportunity to learn more about the latest trends in the field of clusters, the

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national and European policies, the conclusions of the European Cluster Policy Group, etc. TRANS REG NCP representative presented the programme “Regions of Knowledge” and the services of the NCPs Network. Other speakers in the same session, entitled “Do We Need New Cluster Policies in the New Decade?” were Olivier Brunet (European Commission), Dr Günter Clar (Steinbeis Europa Zentrum, Germany), Karin G. Høidahl (Innovation Norway, Norway), Steffen Buhl (Economic Development Karlsruhe, Germany), Karin Nygård Skalman (VINNOVA-Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems, Sweden).

The Conference attracted around 250 participants from Europe, USA, Australia, Argentina, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, etc. The presentations included cluster policies, efficient strategies, evaluation methodologies, etc.

[Online Presentations>>](#)

- **“Regional Clusters” in WIRE II, 7-9 June 2011, Debrecen, Hungary**

The coordination of national and European policies on Research Infrastructures, the dedication of at least 30% of Structural Funds on research and innovation and the sustainable collaboration of European clusters for “smart specialisation” of regions were among the proposals of WIRE II Conference (“Week of Innovative Regions in Europe”) that was held on 7-9 June 2011, in Debrecen, Hungary. The Conference was organised by the European Commission and the Hungarian Presidency and focused on Regional Clusters and Research Infrastructures, as tools for innovation and regional development.

[Online Presentations>>](#)

- **OPEN DAYS 2011, 10-13 October 2011, Brussels**

Since 2003, the OPEN DAYS has become an annual key event at which cities and regions showcase their capacity for creating growth and jobs, implementing European Union cohesion policy, and prove the importance of the local level for good European governance. This year, OPEN DAYS will consist of about 100 sessions -workshops and debates- exhibitions and networking opportunities for the about 6,000 participants coming to Brussels.

[More>>](#)

- **Quality of Government in EU regions**

A report on “Quality of Government in EU Regions” was recently published in December 2010. The report has analysed a wide range of governance indicators and shows that a significant number of EU Member States score poorly on all of these indicators. Poor governance undermines social and economic development and can reduce the impact of Cohesion Policy. For example, poor governance can hinder economic growth, damage the environment or reduce personal safety and well-being. The report concludes that four issues are particularly relevant for the EU: 1) corruption, 2) rule of law, 3) government effectiveness and 4) voice and accountability.

[Report-Part 1](#) and [Report-Part 2 >>](#)

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■ Research Driven Clusters in Europe

• **Regional ICT based Clusters for Healthcare Applications and R&D Integration (RICHARD)**

Chronic diseases represent for healthcare systems the heaviest cost burden. Aside from the social costs in terms of suffering, they account for 70% on European average of public healthcare systems in the EU. A plethora of ICT based applications have been developed in the last years, allowing tackling at least partially problems related to specific pathologies. However, even advanced experiences have had limited impact, mostly focusing on pilot applications entailing little or no change on the whole healthcare system.

The RICHARD project arises from the need to make healthcare systems more efficient while managing effectively their costs. ICT can be a major change agent in this process, but only if systemic aspects are duly taken into account, such as the interrelation of ICT with organisational and non-technological components of healthcare systems. To do so, a significant shift is necessary to evolve from an application based model, to a comprehensive and sustainable chronic care model, likely to be adapted to the broadest possible range of chronic conditions. The RICHARD project will therefore focus its analysis on the pathologies-specific ICT applications being implemented in leading European regions and elaborate a Joint Action Plan oriented to the integration of those technologies for the deployment of sustainable chronic care models for European regions. It is funded by “Regions of Knowledge” programme, with 2.75 million euro, and is coordinated by Tuscany Region. Partners are clusters from Italy, UK, Sweden and Poland.

[More >>](#)

• **Linking research organisations in the fields of Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine through European cooperation between regional research clusters (TERM)**

The development of innovative 'Advanced Therapies' offers new approaches to tackle major diseases such as cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer or Parkinson. The progress made in the fields of 'Tissue Engineering' and 'Regenerative Medicine' (TERM) promises to deliver long awaited new solutions. They are recognized as potential sources for medical progress and significant economic growth where Europe should position itself. Since advanced therapies are often based on personalized medicine, the translation of medical developments into real-life, sustainable therapies are challenged by several hurdles. We need new scientific, economic and structural solutions. Europe has to improve its research capacities and accelerate translation to catch up with the US and keep ahead of rapidly developing Asian countries.

TERM project aims at a consolidating skills and infrastructures among European regions and their research clusters through the definition of joint actions and mentoring. The goal is to derive high potential, translation-oriented projects from joining skill-sets, infrastructures and networks and from recognizing the requirements of the market forces. The financing situation shall also be analyzed and adapted to the requirements. It will develop knowledge and strategies on how to use resources of the regions and clusters more efficiently with more synergy and focus.

The project is coordinated by Syndicat Mixte Atlanpole and includes clusters from France, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Italy and Germany. The EC contribution amounts to 2.5 million euro.

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■ Publications & Links

- [European Cluster Excellence Initiative \(ECEI\) Platform](#)
- [Regional Policy for smart growth in Europe 2020](#)
- [Regional Policy contributing to sustainable growth in Europe](#)