



Press release

AER Regions Support Economic Development in Southeast Europe

Trieste, 16th October 2006

“The best people to help a region to enhance its economic performance are not consultants, or representatives of European institutions, but rather officers and politicians from other European regions. One of the key strengths of the Assembly of European Regions is that it allows regions to learn from one another”, stated Klaus Klipp, Secretary General of the AER, at the evaluation of the AER/CEI Peer Review Initiative in Trieste on 16th October.

The peer review initiative, which is co-financed by the Central European Initiative (CEI), enables multinational teams of regional experts to undertake a mentoring visit to a host region in Southeast Europe, in order to examine their economic development policies and to make specific recommendations for improving policy design and delivery. Two pilot projects have already taken place, in the regions of Alba (RO) and Dubrovnik-Neretva (HR); a third review will be organised in Odessa in November, with participants from Kärnten (A) and Mazowieckie (PL). The teams have had face-to-face meetings with their counterparts and other stakeholders in the host regions and produced comprehensive reports including recommendations on further measures to enhance economic development in the host regions. The Alba review team (Steiermark (A), Devon (UK) and the Great Plains Region (HU)) was able to explore how the Romanian region could best prepare the challenges and opportunities of EU-membership. The Dubrovnik review team (Vienna (A), Hampshire (UK), Friuli Venezia Giulia (IT) and Salzburg (A)) focused specifically on how to ensure that the development of the Dubrovnik region could be achieved in a sustainable way, maximising the potential of the region to develop sustainable, quality tourism.

“There is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model for economic development in Europe’s regions. You cannot simply transfer the good ideas developed in one region to another region in another part of Europe, without considering whether the ideas are suited to local circumstances, and how they may need to be adapted”, stated Klaus Klipp. “By bringing together teams of economic development experts from a range of different countries and backgrounds, you diversify the experience that the team can bring to the project and thereby allow the host region to benefit from exposure to different approaches to economic development”.

The AER is currently in the process of producing a CD-ROM, which contains a toolkit that will enable regions across Europe to use the peer review methodology in order to implement similar projects. In 2007, the AER will set up a database of experts willing to participate in peer reviews and will establish a European-wide scheme designed to ensure the transfer of best practices in the development of regional economic policies.

The AER is the political organisation of the regions of Europe and their spokesperson at European and international level. Its vocation is to defend the regions’ interests in the political process and develop interregional cooperation. The AER brings together 255 Regions from 30 countries and 14 interregional organisations.

For further information about the Central European Initiative, please see: <http://www.ceinet.org/home.php>

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