



Press Release

**ECREIN+
European interregional cooperation to strengthen eco-innovation**

Uppsala (S), 19 February 2010.

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) participated these days in the kick off event of a new European interregional cooperation project, aiming at fostering eco-innovation. ECREIN+ (European Clusters and Regions for Eco-Innovation Network Plus) is an Interreg IVC project led by the region Rhône-Alpes (F), to which AER is a partner. The kick-off event took place in Uppsala (S), an internationally recognized region for its expertise in the field of environmental technology.

ECREIN+ aims at raising awareness and broadly sharing techniques, financial instruments and best practices all over Europe. It will reinforce and complement the ongoing eco-initiatives existing in the partner regions. The partners wish to share expertise on how to better support SMEs and clusters which are already involved in eco-innovation or would like to develop strategies that go into that direction.

“ECREIN+ is of critical importance if we want to turn our regions into green excellence territories. It is an ambitious and comprehensive project that will lead us all, should we truly work together, to foster a prosperous green economy in our regions. But to reach this objective, we need a strong political involvement from all partners.” stated **Hélène Blanchard**, Vice-president of Rhône-Alpes Regional Council (F), in charge of environment.

“We look forward to participating in this cooperation. Partly because we have a lot to contribute with, but also much to learn. This is a kind of cooperation that we believe will produce tangible results. This can and must contribute to solving our global environmental problems,” says **Arne Sandemo**, Chairman of the Uppsala Regional Council.

12 regions are working together in ECREIN+ and AER is completing the partnership, bringing its wide network for dissemination and its expertise in interregional cooperation at the service of this promising initiative. The partners are: Rhône-Alpes (F - lead partner), Andalucia (E), Baden-Württemberg (D), Galicia (E), Ile-de-France (F), Lombardia (I), Malopolska (PL), Romanian Municipalities Association (RO), Stara Zagora (BG), Uppsala (S), Wallonie (B), West Midlands (UK) and the Assembly of European Regions.

*The **Assembly of European Regions (AER)** is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe. Bringing together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 interregional organisations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for interregional co-operation.*

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