

europa metropolles newsletter

AGENDA

15 November 2005

Workshop of the Committee of Regions in Brussels entitled: Regions Stimulate the Lisbon Strategy. Representatives of local and regional government share their experiences in the application of the Lisbon Strategy.

28-29 November 2005

First annual conference of the "European Campaign for Sustainable Energy" in Brussels. This first conference offers to actors in the domain of energy the possibility to share their experiences in the implementation of sustainable energy in Europe. Representatives of European institutions and representatives from the public and private sector will be present.

02 December 2005

Europe Metropoles is organising in the Auditorium of ENA, in the 7^e arrondissement of Paris a seminar on the theme: "Elected Officials and Territorial Agents: What Place for Public-Private Partnerships in Local Governance?"

The seminar will assemble locally elected officials, territorial civil servants, representatives of public authorities and specialists of French and European finance so that they can apprehend the different parameters that modify local financial actions on a daily basis.

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N° 2

NOVEMBER 2005

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Editorial

Cohesion Policy : Time Is Pressing

A paradoxal situation that the European Union is accustomed to : the moment where, on the 13th of October, Margot Wallström, vice-president of the Commission charged with Institutional Relations and Communications Strategy, was presenting the Plan D of the Commission – for Democracy, Debate and Dialogue, whatever the order – the Committee of Regions the same day was warning European institutions against the temptation to undo cohesion policy, due to the lack of financial perspectives being adopted among other things. Thus, Brussels, which has known other contraindications, sounded the bell twice: on the one side, the resolution of Ms Wallström – "Our attention should be directed towards policies concerning the life of citizens" – and on the other side, the worry of regional policy actors expressed by Peter Straub: "Interregional and cross-border territorial cooperation should not be the object of substantial budgetary reductions or a game

piece in budgetary negotiations".

To drive the nail in further, the president of the Committee of Regions reaffirmed the demands of cities and regions for 'a larger budget for cooperation for the 2007-2013 period'. Gerardo Galeote, the European Deputy who presides the Commission of Regional Development of the European Parliament, defended with the same energy the role of regions and cities in this face off with the Council, inclined to reduce structural funds and distribute them with parsimony. "We should re-center the funds on the poorest states", assured John Prescott, British vice-prime minister. According to him, the richest member states should finance their regional programmes from their own domestic budget. If such is the case, one could bet that the debate desired by the Commission would quickly end. After all, the greatest disparities develop within the largest urban communities, no?

Growth : 19 measures for innovation and research

The principal cause of weak economic growth in the EU: investments of the EU in research are inferior by a third to those of the US. Also, China and India are in the process of rapidly becoming centers of research and innovation on a world class scale. In China, investment in research progresses by 20% a year. The Commission presented on the 12th of October, an integrated action plan which suggests a reform of state aid, a

more effective protection of intellectual property rights, the mobilisation of supplemental funds for research, the creation of innovation poles and the betterment of partnerships between universities and industry. "The best strategy are worthless if member states don't bring the necessary funds to realise their goals", regretted Günter Verheugen, vice-president of the Commission charged with Enterprises and Industry.

The dossier of the month

The 2005 Statistical Yearbook of European Disparities

Eurostat published, the 13th of October, a new edition of the Statistical Yearbook that covers 254 regions of the 25 member states of the EU, as well as the 14 regions of Bulgaria and Romania. This year's edition includes a chapter on cities.

Level of education the highest in Inner London and Brabant Wallon

Nearly one inhabitant in two between 25 and 64 years of age in region of Inner London in the UK had a higher studies degree in 2002. Brabant Wallon in Belgium came in second with 41,6%.

In the regions of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire (37.4%), Outer London (37.0%), North Eastern Scotland (36.4%) and Eastern Scotland (35.2%) as well as Surrey, East and West Sussex (35.5%) in the UK, Brussels (37.3%) in Belgium, Etelä-Suomi

(35.9%) in Finland, Stockholm (35.1%) in Sweden and Ile-de-France (35.0%) in France, the figures were 35% or higher.

The lowest percentage of the population having attained a higher studies degree was observed in Madère in Portugal (5.1%), followed by the region of the Azores (5.2%), Algarve (6.8%), Norte (7.2%) and Centro (7.9%) in Portugal.



« In Umea, in Sweden, more than 30 % of inhabitants go to work by bike »

The inhabitants of nordic capital cities are the most satisfied with the cultural installations and green spaces of their city

Among the perception indicators figures the satisfaction index of cultural installations such as concert halls, theaters, museums and libraries.

The citizens of Stockholm (97), Copenhagen and Helsinki (96 each), Paris and Rotterdam (95 each) were the most satisfied with their cultural installations

of their cities in 2004, as opposed to the citizens of Malaga (52), Braga (53) and Héraklion (55). Concerning green spaces, the citizens of Helsinki and Stockholm (91 each), Munich (90) and Rennes (89) were the most satisfied, in opposition to Héraklion (27), Athens (35) and Naples (38).

The laureates in urban transports: Scandinavian cities, the Netherlands and Hungary

Copenhagen, following the example of other Scandinavian and Baltic cities, has the longest network of public transport per inhabitant. A spread out public transport network is also available in Portugal, Luxembourg, Northern Ireland and in the majority of Italian and Slovenian cities. Polish cities, in this matter, are the worse placed.

Those behind the 2005 Eurostat Yearbook also analysed modes of transport chosen for home-work paths. Budapest

and Miskolc, in Hungary, as well as Ostrava and Brno in the Czech Republic, had the highest percentage of the active population using rail-based transport for daily commutes.

In Groningen and Enschede, in the Netherlands, and Umea, in Sweden, more than 30% of inhabitants go to work by bike, whereas the British use essentially their car : nearly 90% in Wrexham, Stevenage, Worcester and Gravesham.



Berlin : Europe Metropoles meets the Confederation of European Councillors



Europe Metropoles participated in the 6th Annual Conference of the Confederation of European Councillors (CEC) which took place from the 12 to 14 October, 2005 at the Hotel Park Inn in Berlin. The CEC hopes to enlarge its actions through the develop-

ment of new relations with governments and local councillors in the whole of Europe. Berlin appeared to be the ideal place for the conference. During this conference, Europe Metropoles was able to share its experience in networking local and regional councillors by presenting the different possibilities for exchange and cooperation, as well as the difficulties encountered. The conference also allowed for the coming together of the two associations that will reinforce, in the future, their cooperation.

They said...

Public service in transport: Jacques Barrot fine tunes his thoughts

Jacques Barrot, vice-president of the European Commission charged with Transport, assured Thierry Breton, French Economy and Finance Minister, that he'll receive the SNCM dossier and make sure there is fair trade and competition in the maritime lines between the continent and Corsica. "In the case that a public enterprise having already received important public financing and knowing recurring finan-

cial difficulties, the opening of its capital to private operators is essential to guarantee that public financing will not be repeated and also to ensure the economic and legal viability of the enterprise." Jacques Barrot highlighted that EU law permits public authorities to finance public services when these aides are "executed in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner".

José-Manuel Barroso wants a decision on the financial perspectives

Even though the financial perspectives of the EU for 2007-2013 are not on the agenda of the information meeting of Hampton Court, the 27th of October, José-Manuel Barroso, president of the Commission, indicated, the 20th of October, that the Commission will insist on 'the urgency to reach a decision in December'. 'Without an accord, he added, the means to assure the normal functioning of the Union are in danger'. He reaffirmed 'there will be accord' without the accord of the Parliament.

Gerardo Galeote, European Deputy and president of the Commission of Regional Development of the European Parliament, estimated that it is vital 'that the heads of state and government be in agreement in December on the financial perspectives, under the British presidency. (...) The Parliament would not be able to agree to any accord, this accord must have as a basis solidarity and a step by step approach, for old member states as well as new ones.'

23 rue de Saint Petersburg
75008 Paris
FRANCE

Tél: +33 (0)1 58 59 00 10
Fax: +33 (0)1 58 59 00 11
Email:
contact@europemetropoles.com

