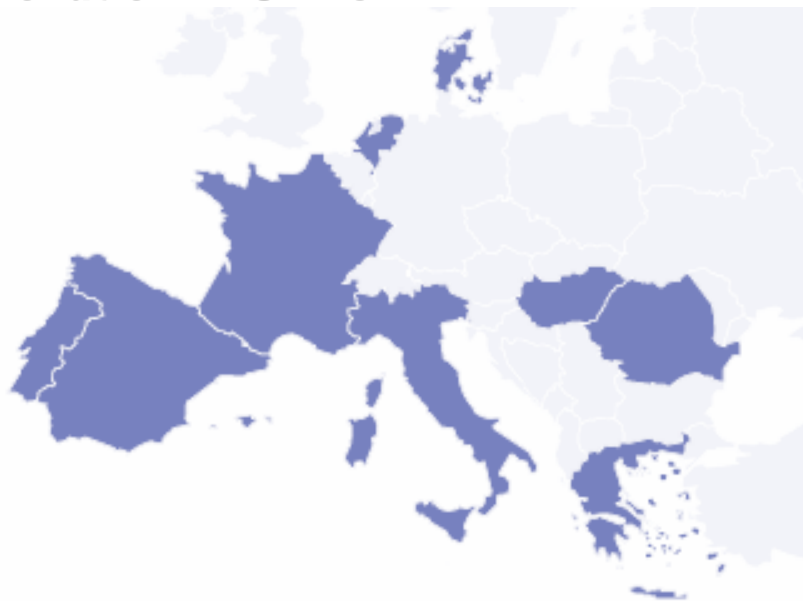


Fostering Innovation in SMEs

ERMIS Newsletter Late Edition December 2010



Work in Progress



The main output of the ERMIS project is the elaboration of an innovation systems model designed to boost enterprises within the regions involved in the project. "It is to be expected that European regions differ quite strongly in their ability to develop a regional innovation system". For the past 6 months we have been in the process of identifying characteristics of each region's local innovation system, in order to design guidance procedures & criteria for a SWOT analysis", says **Ludovic Di Biaggio**, ERMIS Innovation Expert, leading the research.

Ludovic Dibiaggio,
 Dean of Research of Skema Business School on the
 "Challenges of Innovation" & ERMIS innovation expert

Zoom on the ERMIS SWOT Analysis process!

ERMIS partners are currently gathering relevant information through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats) of partner regions, in order to define and support the development of local and regional policies stimulating the innovative performance of SMEs as a source of sustainable growth. This will guide future action plans in the project. This SWOT will help analysts evaluate their region on the basis of the relevance and effectiveness of policy actions in place enhancing the innovative capacities of local SMEs.

The study will first carry out a cluster analysis in order to establish the economic

The **SAMOS Chamber of Commerce**, partner of the ERMIS project based in Greece, is currently investigating other European regions with similar geographies and sectorial contexts in countries such as Spain, (Balearic islands, Canary islands), the UK islands off the coast of Scotland & Wales, and Scandinavia. Our Italian partner **CISE** has chosen Valencia in Spain, Baden Wuerttemberg in Germany and Piedmont in Italy, as their reference regions. They have carried out interviews within clusters pertaining to the upholstered furniture, shoe-making, food, mechanical and green economy sectors.

environment and the business context of local firms. It will then focus on the super-structural level, (interactive learning, network functioning, co-operative culture) of the region and subsequently, on the infrastructural level, (regional policies and governance structures), in order to test their impact on cluster dynamics favouring SMEs innovation capacities.

In-depth interviews with economic actors in selected regions are currently being conducted by all ERMIS partners. "We are very pleased with the first round of responses and are looking forward to moving on with the next steps of reviewing the data that has been collected over the past few months", comments Philippe Chéreau, Director ERMIS project.

ERMIS partners, the French Riviera Chamber of Commerce and the CASA, have conducted comparative analyses in the Isère and Bas Rhine areas in France, as well as Northern Bayern in Germany.

Based on the work carried out within these analyses, the final SWOT will examine the cluster's situation and will focus on the relevance and impact of policy actions, in order to estimate the effectiveness of governance structures promoting innovation in SMEs.

1st Brussels Briefing at the European Parliament!

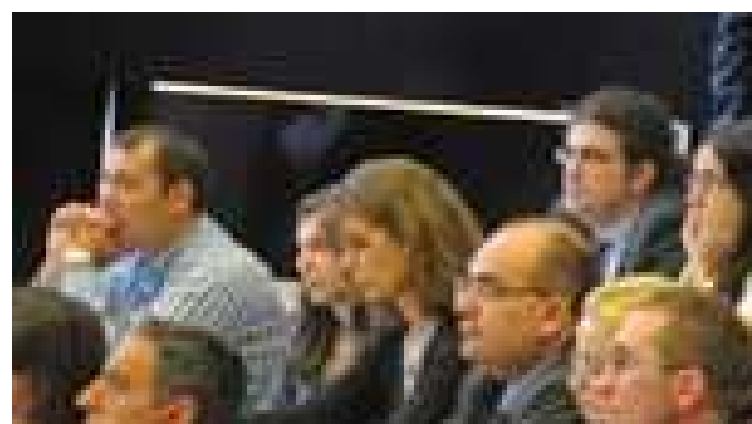


Philippe Chéreau, Marion Dewar, Judith Merckies, Caroline Mancel, Anthony Van De Ven, Ludovic Dibiaggio

European regional policymakers, technology experts, as well as invited stakeholders involved in best practice issues regarding innovation, gathered for the Brussels Briefing held at the European Parliament on the 1st December 2010.

The objectives of the conference were twofold: to take stock of the European policies and measures currently in place to stimulate and facilitate innovation within SMEs and give the opportunity for policy makers, academics and industry to contribute to the debate by commenting on these political initiatives.

The morning started with introductions to the innovation policy at European level followed by practical information about the ERMIS





Judith Merkies,
*Host of the Brussels Briefing event,
 MEP (NL,ESP) & Rapporteur of the
 European Parliament of the
 Innovation Union*

Judith Merkies, featured host of the event, opened the meeting by outlining what the Innovation Union does to facilitate access to finance for research & innovation throughout Europe, ensuring that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs.

In her feedback, she commented on the grand societal challenges facing Europe today, regarding climate change, ageing, health & food, energy supply..., and expressed her belief, that the clear policy guidelines put into place by the EU, in the form of seven flagship initiatives, will enable a clear improvement by 2020.



Marion Dewar,
*European Commission, Cabinet
 commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn &
 keynote speaker at the Brussels
 Briefing Meeting 1st December,
 2010*

Marion Dewar, reminded the audience that the European Innovation Union flagship initiative is the EU's economic blueprint for the next ten years. She went on to underline, "innovation is changing and is becoming a more open, collaborative process. Major concepts of networking, pooling and sharing cross border ideas are becoming key success factors. The aim of the Innovation Union is to stimulate different types of innovation especially in service & industrial activities since manufacturing values need to be maintained in Europe. They are strongly interdependent and are essential for a stronger economy".

"The Brussels briefing was a great success, comments Philippe Chéreau, *ERMIS Project Director*, where keynote speakers provided a broader understanding on current and future innovation policies at a European level, focusing on the many changes and challenges that are present in an ever increasing competitive environment". Attendees reacted enthusiastically and

project, its priorities and progress to date.



"The EU Presidency has research and innovation high on its agenda", says Caroline Mancel. "The value of SMEs to the European economy is recognized as well as the need for governance to set framework conditions that lead to an effective business environment supporting innovation in SMEs and that is the primary aim of the ERMIS project".

Caroline Mancel,
*Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU-
 Belgian Presidency EU Keynote speaker at the Brussels
 Briefing Meeting 1st December, 2010*

Caroline Mancel, keynote speaker at the Brussels briefing began her talk with interesting references to the priorities of the Belgian presidency and commented on recent policy updates at EU level. She commented that, "all relevant stakeholders of the Innovation Union have to be involved if the EU 2020 is to be achieved".

She added, "an innovative way to achieve an integrated market approach was proposed through the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP). This aims at fostering synergies and mobilizing expertise & resources across the innovation chain throughout Europe, by combining supply and demand policies in order to bring innovation with societal benefits more rapidly onto the market place". She went on to highlight the current European economic climate with its budgetary constraints, and situated the Belgian Presidency in the context of the institutional changes taking place within the new European Parliament and Commission, currently in place for a five-year term.

Up coming events!
 We are pleased to announce the
**1st ERMIS Interregional
 Innovation Workshop in Miskolc,
 Hungary, March 2011**

For more information about upcoming events

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actively participated during a lively question and answer session. The objectives of the Brussels briefing were attained by bringing a participative contribution to the debate. The event gave the opportunity to discuss and respond to the new EU political initiatives underlining new opportunities for innovation.

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