

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Is Europe 2020 delivering?
An analysis of eight local and
regional case studies
on the Europe 2020 strategy

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Background and objectives of the study

The Europe 2020 strategy is the successor to the Lisbon strategy and the current European strategy for growth and employment. In this context, the report “*Is Europe 2020 delivering? A preliminary enquiry to the CoR general overview survey on Europe 2020 for 2012*” was commissioned by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) as part of its Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform and as a follow-up to a survey on the Europe 2020 strategy¹. The objective was to examine **how Europe 2020 and its seven Flagship Initiatives² are being implemented on the ground**, and how local and regional authorities (LRAs) are involved in it. The report was conducted to highlight the **Committee of the Regions' commitment to promoting the multi-level governance approach** and to contribute, on this basis, to **EU debates and implementation actions**.

The report is based on **eight case studies³** that were selected in an attempt to cover, as extensively as possible, a wide range of features that would suitably characterise the local and regional authorities in Europe. The eight case studies are: the Walloon Region (Belgium), the City of Achim (Germany), Central Region Denmark (Denmark), the Government of Catalonia (Spain), Greater Dunkirk Council (France), the Marshall's Office of the Wielkopolskie Region (Poland), Porto Municipality (Portugal), Harghita County Council (Romania).

Each case study consists of interviews with **three representatives of the local or regional authority** and provides a presentation of different positions and viewpoints on the implementation of Europe 2020 and its impact on the local or regional levels. These viewpoints include a **general policy-making perspective** (higher level of governance/administration, e.g. policy officers, mayors, etc.), an **initiative implementation perspective** (lower level of governance/administration, e.g. project manager), and a **stakeholder perspective** (e.g. stakeholders, partners of the initiative). However, despite the attempt to select a good sample of the various features that are representative for the European Union's Member States (i.e. a balanced selection of small and large countries, countries with a “stable” and “unstable” budget situation, EU-15

¹ Survey “Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?” conducted in autumn 2011.

² http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/flagship-initiatives/index_en.htm.

³ The eight case studies were selected by the Committee of the Regions on the basis of suggestions from RIMAS (Research Institute for Managing Sustainability). The cases collected by the CoR through a survey carried out in preparation for the 2nd Monitoring Report (“Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?”) in autumn 2011 were used as the main source. For each case, three interviews with respondents from three different background areas/perspectives (1. General coordination and policy-making perspective; 2. Initiative implementation perspective; 3. Stakeholder perspective) were conducted over the phone following the questionnaires in Annex I and Annex II. For more information on the methodology see Chapter B.4.1: Methodology.

and EU-12 countries, etc.), the report does not aspire to be all-inclusive or to encompass the whole range of situations in Europe.

The two main goals of this study were (i) to provide an insight into the **implementation of Europe 2020** answering a broad range of questions (e.g. presence of multi-level governance approach, impact of Europe 2020 on local and regional policies, funding, etc.), and (ii) to provide a **draft questionnaire** for the general overview survey to be carried out in early summer 2012 and whose outcome will feed into the 3rd CoR Monitoring Report on Europe 2020.

1.2 Findings of the case studies

The **communication of the Europe 2020 strategy varies among different levels of governance**. While it appears to be quite effective among higher levels of governance where the concept of Europe 2020 is very clear and widely acknowledged, the strategy's communication and information to lower levels of governance seem to have been much less successful. Yet, LRAs still use European policies as strategic frameworks implementing their specific local and regional initiatives.

From the findings it seems that, although **most initiatives of local and regional authorities were designed before the Europe 2020 strategy was adopted in 2010**, responding to given problems and needs on the ground, **all the cases have linked their initiatives to Europe 2020**, especially through their objectives that usually refer to the strategy. Despite this, **existing local and regional policies have not been adjusted** much as a result of Europe 2020 and the Flagship Initiatives. One exception is the Catalan case, where, starting in 2011, the "ECAT 2020" strategy was set up on the basis of Europe 2020. Overall, however, since respondents from LRAs explained that their current policies were based on the former European strategy, the Lisbon strategy, **it is likely that future local and regional policies will be closely linked to Europe 2020 and the Flagship Initiatives**.

The majority of the cases also link their objectives to the **National Reform Programmes (NRPs)**. However, in the course of the analysis it became clear that local and regional authorities did not feel that they have been given sufficient consideration in the preparation of the NRPs, or else they have not been considered at all. It seems that since LRAs do not get much opportunity to participate in preparing the NRPs, they do not feel part of the overall Europe 2020 strategy either. An improvement in the LRA's involvement in the framing of the NRPs in order to strengthen a multi-level governance approach is needed. Within the case studies under analysis, there is a mixed perception of **collaboration and cooperation between the different tiers of government**.

The presence of **multi-level governance** varies considerably between the different case studies, yet a few interesting common features can be identified. Firstly, it appears that most of the cases share **good horizontal coordination** especially among departments on the same level. Secondly, **at the regional level, there is more coordination and cooperation with the national level than with the local level.** Thirdly, in some cases, the role of the Europe 2020 strategy seems important to **increase vertical cooperation** among different levels of government. However, since this process has started only recently, its impact may not be fully visible yet. Nevertheless, **better integration of policies and better coordination and cooperation among the different levels of government** were suggested in most cases as being necessary in order to help the planning processes and implementation of the initiatives. Having and pursuing **common objectives among the different levels of government** and also with the European level is perceived as a necessary means for improving multi-level governance.

On the whole, **Europe 2020 is seen as an important strategic planning tool for creating smart, sustainable and inclusive regions.** Europe 2020 has clear targets and provides a tool for addressing common problems. But unfortunately, in none of the cases analysed, had a “**Territorial Pact**” had been adopted, except in the case of Central Region Denmark, which has a partnership contract with the national level.

Funding for LRA initiatives was reported to be an issue for most of the case studies under analysis. Since there are **no funding streams issuing directly from the Europe 2020 strategy**, the most prominent source utilised in most of the cases is the Structural Funds. Other funding schemes include the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

While the Structural Funds appear to be generally well-managed, they are not easy to secure. Respondents criticised the long allocation processes (1-2 years) and delays and difficulties mainly linked to bureaucracy and the lack of flexibility. According to the respondents, it is necessary to simplify the award processes, improve financial controlling, and strengthen the subsidiarity principle with respect to funding, while increasing the responsibilities of the local and regional levels. Additionally, more funding should be directed towards rural areas and made more accessible for the local and regional levels. Overall, in spite of existing difficulties, the **Structural Funds** are perceived as an **opportunity for supporting the initiatives at local and regional level.**

While European funding sources provide substantial support for the initiatives, the largest proportion of funding often comes from own budgets, depending on the specific characteristics of each local or regional authority. As the **economic,**

financial and debt crises cut heavily into local and regional public sector budgets, coordination between EU, national and territorial policies, and related funding, is more important than ever.

The general impression is that Europe 2020 and the Flagship Initiatives are recognised as providing **added value for the local and regional authorities**. The **Europe 2020 strategy is assessed positively**, especially as regards the general sense of confidence and common direction the strategy has given. Its presence is deemed helpful by both higher and lower levels of governance. Among higher levels of governance, there is general support for Europe 2020-related policy-making, while in lower levels of governance it is building a solid base and has facilitated the implementation of Europe 2020-related measures, e.g. through the provision of (European) funding.

To sum up, the **Europe 2020 strategy and the Flagship Initiatives** are broadly seen as an **opportunity**: both can provide useful guidance and enable action through the Flagship Initiatives. If Europe 2020 is successfully linked to the concrete needs of the local and regional levels, the implementation of Europe 2020 can provide a real opportunity. However, the implementation of Europe 2020 needs **financial support** for policies and programmes related to the strategy.

2. Introduction

2.1 The implementation of Europe 2020 as seen from the viewpoint of Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs)

Europe 2020 is the successor to the Lisbon strategy and the current European strategy for growth and employment. It was set up as a response to the financial crisis of the past two years. Published by the European Commission in March 2010⁴ and adopted by the European Council in June 2010⁵, Europe 2020 is aimed at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which represent the three mutually reinforcing **priorities** of the strategy. The Europe 2020 strategy is intended to achieve **five ‘headline targets’**⁶ by 2020, which focus on boosting employment, research & development, innovation, education, and reducing poverty, while also addressing the crucial challenges of climate change and energy. To this end, seven **‘Flagship Initiatives’**⁷ have been put in place. With the intention of reflecting the current situation of each Member State (MS) and its level of ambition regarding these targets, the EU targets should be translated into **national targets and trajectories** through the so-called **National Reform Programmes (NRPs)**. NRPs are the key delivery tool for Europe 2020 and describe how governments intend to meet the targets and overcome obstacles to growth. NRPs are produced each year by national governments at the same time as the Stability/Convergence Programmes, which aim to ensure more rigorous budgetary discipline through surveillance and coordination of budgetary policies.

A crucial role is also assigned to **Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs)**, which should implement the strategy, closely involving parliaments, as well as social partners and representatives of civil society, contributing to the drafting of the NRPs and their implementation. Indeed, in order to bring the EU’s priorities **closer to the people and develop a sense of ownership**, dialogue between national, regional and local government is seen as necessary and essential. In fact, *“in many EU countries, the regional or local authorities are **responsible for policy areas linked to the Europe 2020 strategy**”*⁸. Therefore, all levels of

⁴ [European Commission \(2010\) Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, COM\(2010\) 2020.](#)

⁵ [European Council \(2010\), Conclusions of the European Council \(Brussels, 17 June 2010\), EUCO 13/10.](#)

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/eu-targets/index_en.htm.

⁷ The seven Flagship Initiatives are “A digital agenda for Europe”, “Innovation Union”, “Youth on the Move”, “A Resource-Efficient Europe”, “An Integrated Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era”, “An Agenda for new skills and jobs”, and “The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion”; see http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/flagship-initiatives/index_en.htm.

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/who-does-what/member-states/index_en.htm.

governance are seen as crucial and inter-connected for the effective implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy on the ground.

A survey conducted by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) on the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy⁹ showed that the **LRA's viewpoint** was generally felt to be given too little consideration, and that it was taken into account only to a limited extent in the process of developing the NRPs. Furthermore, the NRPs have not always adopted adequate country targets and indicators and have generally thwarted opportunities for LRAs to develop more ambitious and dynamic policies. In addition, multilevel governance and territorial pacts are generally not implemented sufficiently, and the 'partnership approach' (involving all government levels and other relevant stakeholders) does not work efficiently yet. In the view of the CoR, which – in EU governance – is meant to help mobilise regional and local authorities, "*National Reform Programmes should have been developed, drafted and implemented in cooperation with all tiers of government, if possible via the **Territorial Pacts***"¹⁰.

Nevertheless, according to the CoR's survey¹¹, the NRPs have had several **constructive effects**, such as identifying the main macro-economic challenges at EU and global levels, amending regional policies in order to achieve the Europe 2020 goals, etc. However, in some countries, the NRP is not considered to be a strategic document but rather a follow-up document for the Commission, and it therefore cannot be applied by LRAs. There have also been criticisms that one-off meetings and/or submissions of documents by LRAs have occurred only at an intermediary stage in the preparation of the NRP, with the result that these contributions had a minimal impact on the final version of the NRP.

According to the CoR's 2nd Monitoring Report on Europe 2020¹², greater efforts are needed to ensure **joint coordination** of actions in all tiers of government. The report shows that a 'partnership gap' exists between LRAs and the national governments. Therefore, the CoR suggests that in order to **close this partnership gap**, national governments should increase partnership and cooperation with LRAs and involve them in the development and implementation of the NRPs. In addition, Member States should share their objectives, targets, policy programmes and timelines with the LRAs. Different tiers of government should be united at round tables or similar arrangements to initiate **Territorial Pacts**. The European Commission should regulate both

⁹ The survey results have been published in the CoR's 2nd Europe 2020 Monitoring Report; see [Committee of the Regions \(2011\) Second Monitoring Report on Europe 2020. The EU's Assembly of Regional and Local Representatives.](#)

¹⁰ [Committee of the Regions \(2010\) First Monitoring Report on Europe 2020. The EU's Assembly of Regional and Local Representatives.](#)

¹¹ See footnote 9 above.

¹² See footnote 9 above.

cohesion policy¹³ instruments as well as the other main EU funding channels, such as the structural funds, available for coordination within the new EU Common Strategic Framework 2014 - 2020¹⁴.

2.2 EU economic governance and Europe 2020

The EU economic governance is based on three main blocks¹⁵:

- 1) Reinforced economic agenda with closer EU surveillance, including:
 - agreed policy priorities and targets as part of the **Europe 2020 strategy**;
 - tighter EU surveillance of economic and fiscal policies as part of the **Stability and Growth Pact**, and new tools to tackle macro-economic imbalances;
 - a new working method – **the European semester** – to discuss, monitor, and respond to economic and budgetary priorities at the same time every year;
 - additional commitments taken on by Member States participating in the **Euro Plus Pact**;

- 2) Actions to safeguard the stability of the euro area, setting up temporary support mechanisms for its Member States, which is conditional on rigorous fiscal consolidation and reform programmes;

- 3) Actions to repair the financial sector, establishing new rules and agencies to prevent problems earlier and make sure all financial players are properly regulated and supervised.

Of outstanding importance is the **Stability and Growth Pact (SGP)** that represents a rule-based framework for the coordination of national fiscal policies in the economic and monetary union (EMU), designed to limit budget deficits and government debts through more stringent surveillance. In December 2011, the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) was strengthened through the so-called '**Six-Pack**', which can be considered as "*the most comprehensive reinforcement of economic governance in the EU and the euro area since the launch of the Economic Monetary Union almost 20 years ago*"¹⁶.

¹³ <http://www.euractiv.com/regional-policy/eu-cohesion-policy-2014-2020-links dossier-501653>.

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm.

¹⁵ See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/priorities/economic-governance/index_en.htm.

¹⁶ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/898&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&gui>.

The ‘Six-Pack’ is a new set of measures for economic and fiscal surveillance that comprises five regulations and one directive. It has four broad goals¹⁷:

1. Toughening the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP);
2. Introducing new controls on macro-economic imbalances across the EU, (e.g. housing bubbles);
3. Setting standards to ensure the correct and independent compilation of statistics;
4. Improving the transparency of the decision-making processes and the accountability of decision-makers.

In March 2011, a complementary agenda with additional reforms fully embedded in the new economic governance framework – the **Euro Plus Pact** – was agreed by Eurozone Member States as a reflection of their deeper interdependence¹⁸. The **Euro Plus Pact** focuses on four areas: (i) competitiveness, (ii) employment, (iii) sustainability of public finances, and (iv) reinforcement of financial stability.

The Europe 2020 strategy is an essential part of the EU economic governance architecture. Firstly, Europe 2020 is the **growth strategy** for the coming years in Europe; in this sense, it represents the **main economic framework and engine** of the European Union with a series of *policy priorities and targets*, which have been agreed by all 27 Member States.

Secondly, Europe 2020 is also, in practice, completely embedded in the European economic governance architecture. The **Stability and Growth Pact (SGP)** and the reporting of the **Europe 2020** strategy are carried out *simultaneously*. Therefore, although keeping the instruments separate and maintaining the integrity of the Pact, every Member State has to complete two main official documents: (1) Stability/convergence programmes and (2) the National Reform Programmes (NRPs).

Thirdly, monitoring of the Europe 2020 Strategy is now integrated into the ‘European semester’¹⁹, which represents the main working agenda of the European economic governance architecture. The purpose of the European semester for the EU and the Eurozone countries is to *ex-ante* monitor and coordinate their budgetary and economic policies.

¹⁷ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20110920BKG27073/html/FAQ-on-the-economic-governance-six-pack>.

¹⁸ Also six non-Euro area countries have chosen to sign up: Bulgaria, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/chart_en.pdf.

Finally, the Europe 2020 strategy is part of the **Euro Plus Pact** because the commitments made under the ‘pact’ are included in the National Reform Programmes of the interested Member States.

Recently, the European Council has taken other steps in three specific directions²⁰:

1. stimulating employment, especially for young people: this will be provided by adding ‘National Job Plans’ in the NRPs;
2. completing the Single Market, and the Digital Single Market;
3. boosting the financing of the economy, in particular SMEs.

2.3 Europe 2020 and the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020

Annual EU budgets are based on the **Multiannual Financial Framework** (MFF) agreed between the European Parliament, Council and Commission in an inter-institutional agreement. The financial framework sets the maximum amount of commitment appropriations in the EU budget each year for broad policy areas.

As outlined by the European Commission²¹, the principles for the next Multiannual Financial Framework covering the period 2014-2020 will be to:

- Focus on delivering key policy priorities;
- Focus on EU added value;
- Focus on impacts and results;
- Deliver mutual benefits across the European Union.

The programmes and instruments included in the Multiannual Financial Framework proposal for 2014-2020 have been designed to ensure that their outputs and impacts are in line with the key policy priorities of the EU. The new MFF’s focus centres on results, on simplification of delivery, and on an increased use of “conditionality”, which means that Member States and beneficiaries will be required to demonstrate that the received funding is being used to promote the achievement of EU policy priorities. The results will be clearly related to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy and the

²⁰ [EUROPEAN COUNCIL, Brussels, 30 January 2012: *towards growth-friendly consolidation and job-friendly growth*.](#)

²¹ [European Commission \(2011\) *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A Budget for Europe 2020*.](#)

achievement of its targets. Work is currently being undertaken to simplify both the general rules and the sector-specific rules.

While facing the challenges of the debt crisis, strengthening economic policy coordination, and accelerating the pace of structural reforms, the European Union is simultaneously aiming at increasing economic, social, and territorial cohesion.

In this respect, a crucial feature of the Commission's proposals is the '**Development and Investment Partnership Contract**' between the EC and each Member State, coordinating cohesion policy expenditure at the EU and country levels, with a view to the Europe 2020 objectives.

According to the CoR, at the country level, Partnership Contracts should be drawn up and implemented in partnership by all tiers of government on the basis of Territorial Pacts, in order to translate the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) set by the European Commission into the actual conditions in EU Member States²².

LRAs in the EU are funding policies related to Europe 2020 from a varied mix of sources at European, national, regional, and local levels. In some cases, public-private partnerships (PPPs) also bring some private funding into play. The only funding channels that are present in basically all situations are the **EU Structural Funds**²³, which play an essential role in helping all regions build research and innovative capacities corresponding to individual situations and priorities. This confirms their crucial role in funding the new strategy. As the economic, financial and debt crisis cuts heavily into local and regional public sector budgets, coordination between EU, national and territorial policies, and related funding, is more important than ever²⁴.

2.4 Objectives of this study

The main objective of this study was to monitor how Europe 2020 is implemented on the ground and to contribute, on this basis, to EU debates and implementation actions. This objective was addressed by carrying out eight case studies on local and regional initiatives related to the Europe 2020 strategy's flagship initiatives. These case studies were aimed at providing a fresh update on aspects such as: is Europe 2020 bringing added value to growth prospects in the EU? Is there enough funding for the public investments needed? Is it being used as an opportunity to set more ambitious policy goals against a "business as

²² See footnote 9 above.

²³ Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund are financial tools set up to implement the EU Cohesion policy.

²⁴ See footnote 9 above.

usual” scenario? Is it being implemented on the basis of a multilevel governance approach?

Based on the experience gathered in the course of carrying out the case studies addressing the abovementioned objective, a second objective was to **provide a revised questionnaire for the 2012 general overview survey**. The revised questionnaire is included in Annex III of this report.

2.4.1 Methodology

a) Selection of case studies

Eight case studies were selected with the Committee of the Regions. The cases collected by the CoR through a survey carried out in preparation for the 2nd Monitoring Report (“Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?”) in autumn 2011 were used as the main source.

The selection process was based on the following criteria:

- the cases should have a **strong link with the Europe 2020 strategy**, i.e. the policy programmes and initiatives should have specific relevance for the three pillars (smart, sustainable inclusive growth, or cross-cutting cases) and for the seven flagship initiatives of the strategy;
- the cases should be relevant in terms of **cohesion policy objectives** (Convergence, Competitiveness and Employment, Territorial Cooperation);
- the eight cases should cover **different country features**, i.e. they should cover large (e.g. Germany and France) and small (e.g. Belgium and Portugal) countries, from the old (EU-15) and new (EU-12) Member States, countries with a centralised (e.g. France) and federal (e.g. Belgium) governmental structure, countries with high (e.g. Germany and France) and low (e.g. Poland and Romania) GDP per capita figures, and with a “stable” (e.g. Germany) and “unstable” (e.g. Spain) budget situation;
- if possible, cases with **multilevel arrangements** should be chosen;
- **feasibility of the case**: in all selected cases it should be ensured that at least three experts would be available for interviews, to be conducted mainly in English or, where possible, in the mother tongue of both interviewer and interviewee.

b) Carrying out the studies

To begin the study, **preliminary desk work** was conducted to gather the main information about the actual region or city being analysed. Where available, websites of the regional or local authorities were screened. Further information was collected from the compiled questionnaires of the survey ‘Europe 2020: what’s happening on the ground?’ conducted in autumn 2011 in preparation for the Committee of the Regions' 2nd Monitoring Report.

For each selected case, there was at least one contact person indicated. RIMAS (Research Institute for Managing Sustainability) initiated contact via e-mail and telephone and **requested the main contact person to indicate further contacts** who would cover what in this report is called the “general policy-making perspective”, the “initiative implementation perspective” and the “stakeholder perspective”. The “general policy-making perspective” was mainly covered by politicians (or their representatives) and officials from the lead institution. The “initiative implementation perspective” was covered by the person responsible for the implementation of the initiative (e.g. project manager). The “stakeholder perspective” was covered by a stakeholder or partner of the initiative.

In total, **24 interviews, three for each case study**, were arranged and the questionnaires sent to the interviewees in advance to allow preparation. There were **two different types of questionnaire** used; the first one for the interviewees covering the “general policy-making perspective”, and the second one for the initiative’s “implementation perspective” and the “stakeholder perspective”. The former asked questions mainly concerning the general policy-making aspects on the overall implementation of Europe 2020 at regional or local levels, while the latter asked detailed questions concerning the (practical) implementation of the initiative. The questionnaires are included in Annexes I and II of this report.

The interviews were carried out between 27 February and 16 March 2012. Each interview took on average one hour. Most of the interviews were conducted in English, except for seven interviews that were conducted in the mother tongue of the interviewee and interviewer (three interviews in Polish²⁵, four interviews in German²⁶).

The general impression was that the interviewees were well prepared to answer the questions and able to provide detailed information on the actual situation on the ground. It seemed that the interviewees were delighted that their initiative had been chosen for the report and very concerned to collaborate effectively. In

²⁵ Interviews in Polish were conducted in the case of Wielkopolskie Region, Poland.

²⁶ Interviews in German were conducted in the cases of Achim, Germany and Catalonia, Spain.

a few cases, additional informational material was sent after the interview was conducted to facilitate drafting the report.

The language aspect did not prove to be an issue in the analysis of the cases. On the whole, each interviewee provided extensive information, which was probably a result of having been able to prepare for the interview in advance. The information gathered from the interviewees was more than sufficient to gain a profound insight into the various perspectives of each initiative.

2.4.2 Data Sources

In total, eight case studies were selected. Finally, it was possible to conduct three interviews per case. The main contacts were taken from the survey ‘Europe 2020: what’s happening on the ground?’, conducted in preparation for the Committee of the Regions 2nd Monitoring Report.

Each case study is organised into the following sections:

- **Summary:** the summary contains qualitative conclusions of the case study;
- **Presentation:** the presentation contains factual elements of the case study;
- **General coordination and policy-making point of view:** this section summarises the findings of the interviews with respondents from the “general policy-making perspective” and gives an overview of how Europe 2020 is being implemented from this approach. It gives an insight into how flagship initiatives are being addressed with regional and local policies and presents the most important issues and topics for each region or city;
- **Objectives of the initiative:** this section summarises the findings of the interviews with respondents from the “initiative implementation perspective” and the “stakeholder perspective” (e.g. project management level) and presents the specific initiative(s) conducted with reference to Europe 2020. It also describes the objectives and the implementation of the initiative;
- **Funding issues:** in this section, detailed information on the funding sources of the specific initiative or project is provided;
- **Multilevel governance:** this section describes processes of cooperation and collaboration between different levels of governance, from both the “general policymaking perspective” as well as from the “initiative implementation perspective” and “stakeholder perspective”;
- **Added value of Europe 2020:** in this section, the added value of Europe 2020 for regional and local policymaking is presented;
- **Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges:** in this section, opportunities and challenges arising from the implementation of Europe 2020 are shown.

In carrying out the case studies, the experts indicated in the table below were contacted:

Table 1: Selected case studies and position/job description of the interview partners

Country	Case	Initiative	Position	Job description
BE	Walloon Region (Région wallonne)	Continuation and expansion of the competitiveness centre policy	1: general policy-making perspective	Economy department of the region, monitoring European policies and NRP at the regional level
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Responsible for the Competitiveness Poles in Wallonia
			3: stakeholder perspective	Director of SkyWIN, the Aerospace Competitiveness Cluster in Wallonia
DE	Achim City	Educational success through designing diversity	1: general policy-making perspective	Local business development, business support and EU-funding
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Project implementation
			3: stakeholder perspective	Association of craftsmen
DK	Central Region Denmark (Region Midtjylland)	A globally competitive region - Business development strategy 2010-2020	1: general policy-making perspective	Coordinator of the activities related to the Regional Growth Forum
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Chairman of the initiative at local level
			3: stakeholder perspective	Project manager of KOMPETENCEmidt
ES	Government of Catalonia (Gobierno de Catalunya)	Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020)	1: general policy-making perspective	ECAT 2020 coordinator
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Director-General of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Economy and Knowledge
			3: stakeholder perspective	CCOO Trade Union (Comisiones Obreras de Catalunya)
FR	Greater Dunkirk Council	Creation of Sustainable City Learning Center in Dunkirk	1: general policy-making perspective	EU policy officer in the Cabinet of the President of Dunkirk

Country	Case	Initiative	Position	Job description
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Responsible for the Learning Centre in Dunkirk
			3: stakeholder perspective	Director of the "Halles aux sucres" project, of which the Learning center forms part
PL	Marshall's Office of the Wielkopolskie Region	Innowacyjna Wielkopolska (Innovative Wielkopolska)	1: general policy-making perspective	Regional policy-making and regional development
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Department of Economy in the Marshall's Office - Responsible for Innovative Wielkopolska
			3: stakeholder perspective	Coordinating the SynergIT cluster
PT	Porto Municipality	Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)	1: general policy-making perspective	Energy Agency of Porto
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Deputy mayor of Porto
			3: stakeholder perspective	Metropolitan Transport Authority of Porto
RO	Harghita County Council (Harghita Megye Tanácsa)	Developing the business environment in Harghita County	1: general policy-making perspective	Development Directorate -European projects
			2: initiative implementation perspective	Project manager of the initiative
			3: stakeholder perspective	President of association of SMEs

In addition to the interviews with the interview partners mentioned above, information from the following sources was used for preparing the case studies:

- **Second CoR Monitoring Report on Europe 2020** (December 2011);
- Completed **questionnaires** from the CoR survey 'Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?' (provided by the CoR);
- Where available, **websites** of the initiatives in question were screened for additional and background information;
- In three cases, information material was provided by the interviewees by **e-mail** (France, Germany, Spain).

3. Summary of the eight case studies

3.1 The added value of the Europe 2020 Strategy

3.1.1 The general policy-making perspective

From the cases analysed, the Europe 2020 strategy is generally seen as a very important strategy with the potential of having a significant impact on the policies developed at local and regional levels. In fact, all the cases seem to have linked their initiatives and policies to Europe 2020, especially through their objectives that usually refer to the strategy in one way or another. The most interesting example in this regard is probably the case of the Catalonia region from Spain. The Catalonia region is in fact developing a new strategy, namely ‘Catalonia 2020’ (ECAT2020), which is based on Europe 2020 and specifically on the flagship initiatives.

The majority (5/8) of the cases also relate their objectives to the National Reform Programs (NRPs).

The communication of Europe 2020 was perceived in a different way among higher levels of governance/administration (i.e. from a general policy-making perspective) and lower levels of governance/administration (i.e. initiative implementation/stakeholder perspective). While in higher levels of governance, in most of the cases, communication of Europe 2020 was stated to be very good and clear, in lower levels of governance it was reported to be not clear enough, not sufficient, or non-existent. However it appears that the **European level** is felt to be “*closer*” than the national level, which **seems to be distant from the initiatives**, as suggested by one interviewee: “*Brussels is closer than Lisbon*” (Porto municipality, Portugal). The cases of Germany and France also confirm this fact. The information related to Europe 2020 seems to be “*available and easy to obtain*” (Catalonia, Spain). In the example of the Polish case, “*the communication was very good, both with the European and national institutions (...), [and] the regions are constantly updated*” (Marshall’s Office, Region of Wielkopolska, Poland).

It is important to note at this point that the majority of the initiatives of the respective cases had already been developed before the Europe 2020 strategy was adopted. But although the majority of **the initiatives would have been designed even in the absence of Europe 2020** as a response to local problems or needs, it was very often stated that the presence of Europe 2020 as a powerful European strategy had facilitated the implementation of local and regional Europe 2020-related policies and initiatives.

Table 2: Case study initiatives and their starting years²⁷

Country	Initiative	Year
BE	Continuation and expansion of the competitiveness centre policy	2005
DE	Educational success through designing diversity	2007
DK	A globally competitive region - Business development strategy 2010-2020	2010
ES	Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020)	2011
FR	Creation of the Sustainable City Learning Centre in Dunkirk	2005
PL	Innovative Wielkopolska	2008
PT	Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)	2009
RO	Developing the business environment in Harghita County	2007

Despite this, the impression is that Europe 2020 is recognised as an added value for the local and regional authorities. Success, credibility, visibility, and inspiration are often mentioned when referring to Europe 2020. For instance, in Romania, the initiative in Harghita County “would not have been as successful without Europe 2020”. Therefore, there is a positive assessment of the Europe 2020 strategy, especially when considering the general sense of confidence and common direction that the strategy has brought: “the Europe 2020 Strategy has without doubt facilitated the design of [our] programme (...) To have European objectives agreed by all EU governments facilitates agreement with stakeholders about the key priority areas” (Catalonia, Spain).

The following table shows an aggregation of some interesting points taken from the case studies with respect to the *added value of Europe 2020*. The colourful variety of the responses might help to give a better presentation of the interviewees' perceptions in this regard.

²⁷ Year in which the planning/development of the initiative in question started.

Table 3: Excerpts from the case studies

Country	Initiative	Quote
BE	Continuation and expansion of the competitiveness centre policy	<i>It appears that Europe 2020 facilitated the design of the policy and the regional contribution of the NRP for which it provided helpful guidance. However, the Europe 2020 strategy did not play a real role in the design and implementation of the initiative.</i>
DE	Educational success through designing diversity	<i>Neither Europe 2020 nor the NRP played any role since the project was designed in 2007, three years before the European strategy was established. Nevertheless, the project is related to the former European strategy, the Lisbon Strategy.</i>
DK	A globally competitive region - Business development strategy 2010-2020DK	<i>Europe 2020 is perceived as something that has brought the different levels of government closer together, especially through the flagship initiatives that are seen as platforms where the same interests can be shared.</i>
ES	Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020)	<i>The guideline from the European level for a common strategy has helped to define the objectives of ECAT 2020 in a very positive sense. Without Europe 2020, a different regional strategy would probably have been designed, and coming to an agreement on the contents of the strategy would have been more difficult.</i>
FR	Creation of the Sustainable City Learning Center in Dunkirk	<i>Since the idea for the Sustainable City Learning Centre was born in 2005 and eventually adopted in 2008, it was influenced by the Lisbon Strategy, which was in force at that time. Nevertheless, the Cohesion Policy has a supportive role in implementing the objectives of the community plan.</i>
PL	Innovative Wielkopolska	<i>The “Innovative Wielkopolska” initiative was developed and launched before the Europe 2020 strategy came into force. The latter therefore did not play a significant role in establishing the initiative.</i>

Country	Initiative	Quote
PT	Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)	<i>Although the initiative was launched in 2007 in the context of the Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE) programme, the Porto Sustainable Energy Action plan aimed to respond to the commitments entered into under the ‘Covenant of mayors’, which was launched by the European Commission after the adoption, in 2008, of the EU Climate and Energy Package.</i>
RO	Developing the business environment in Harghita County	<i>Although the initiative started in 2009, Europe 2020 now represents an example and a guide for the initiative. It serves to give ideas, especially on the most important areas for the future such as innovation, sustainability, and industrial policy.</i>

On the whole, **Europe 2020 is seen as an important strategic planning tool for creating smart, sustainable and inclusive regions**. Europe 2020 has clear targets and provides a tool for addressing common problems. However, in two cases (Porto and Dunkirk), Europe 2020 is felt to be too broad to be a planning tool, especially because the issues at the local level might sometimes fail to be addressed, and in some situations Europe 2020’s objectives might therefore be rejected in favour of the needs of the region.

3.1.2 The initiative-specific perspective: the Implementation and the stakeholder’s side

From the cases analysed, the **Europe 2020 strategy is much more relevant at the general policy-making level**. In fact, most of the interviewees stated that they had not taken Europe 2020 into account when developing their initiatives, because, as already indicated, almost all of the initiatives examined started before 2010, when Europe 2020 was adopted. The same was said of the role of the National Reform Programs (NRPs), but again, this is very much related to the fact that the NRPs did not exist when these initiatives started. It is also important to note that in almost all the cases studied, not much was known about the NRPs as such, somehow suggesting the lack of relevance of these documents regarding the implementation of local or regional initiatives. The stakeholders are almost completely unaware of the existence of NRPs.

However, in the case of Catalonia, both the Europe 2020 strategy and the Spanish NRP seem to have been taken into consideration to a large extent. In fact, all the interviewees confirmed that the new Catalonia 2020 strategy was

based on Europe 2020 and was in line with the NRP. In any event, the impression is that since the Catalan strategy is still in the development phase, this could provide a simple explanation for the different approach they are adopting towards Europe 2020. Accordingly, this is the only initiative considered that was developed after the Europe 2020 strategy was adopted.

The most important message received is therefore that most of the initiatives would also have been developed without Europe 2020 as a response to the needs and issues that are present at the local and regional levels.

However, most of the interviewees agreed on the importance of Europe 2020, especially as a help for the initiatives that have similar objectives, and especially for bringing people together to work on common goals.

In terms of communicating the Europe 2020 strategy, it is generally felt that this is not clear enough. The impression given is that the local and regional levels were not really provided with sufficient information either from the national level or the European level. In fact, many interviewees stated that there was a need for more dissemination, promotion, and stronger communication.

3.2 Opportunities and challenges arising from implementing Europe 2020

3.2.1 The general policy-making perspective

On the whole, Europe 2020 was considered to be an opportunity for regions and cities. From the cases analysed, it seems that the most important aspect of implementing Europe 2020 is improving **cooperation**:

- Cooperation between all levels of government, especially between national and regional level;
- Cooperation between private and public sector.

Applying the ambitious objectives of Europe 2020 at the regional and local levels is an opportunity and challenge at the same time. If Europe 2020 can be successfully linked to the actual situations of the regional and local levels, the implementation of Europe 2020 can offer a real opportunity. A need for a long-term policy that comprehensively addresses all current challenges and takes into consideration the needs of the regional and local levels was expressed by the interviewees.

Implementing Europe 2020 requires **financial support** for policies and programmes related to the strategy. The financial crisis, restrictions on public spending, unemployment, globalisation, demographic change, and growing social needs were indicated as the most challenging aspects faced by regions and cities. It seems important that Europe 2020 helps to develop a system that takes into consideration all aspects of **sustainable development and growth**. If Europe 2020 manages to tackle these obstacles, it seems a very promising strategy for the future of the European Union.

3.2.2 The initiative-specific perspective: the implementation and the stakeholders' side

From the initiative-specific perspective, the implementation of Europe 2020 and the flagship initiatives is generally seen as an opportunity. Greater focus on a more efficient and clearer communication of Europe 2020 and the flagship initiatives will be important in the future since the results indicated that there was room for improvement in this area. Implementation of the strategy needs to improve vertical and horizontal cooperation. Adequately responding to the financial crisis and at the same time providing funding for initiatives at the local and regional levels was stated as one of the main opportunities for the strategy.

Beyond this, Europe 2020 is seen as an opportunity for making improvements in the social situation, education, and quality of life. The opportunities and challenges seem to be very much defined by the individual region or city and are difficult to compare. It seems, however, that the key factors are improvement of education and the quality of life and several social aspects such as demographic change and the brain drain. The specific opportunities and challenges on the ground vary considerably, and will be described separately in each case study.

Nevertheless, it seems that whatever the problems and challenges may be on the ground, Europe 2020 provides a useful guideline for these situations and makes it possible to act in problematic areas through the flagship initiatives.

3.3 Implementation: multilevel governance approaches

As a premise to this chapter, it seems necessary to define multilevel governance as it is understood in this report. Elaborating on the work of Kohler-Koch and Rittberger²⁸, multilevel governance is well defined by von Homeyer and Knoblauch²⁹:

“Multi-level governance (...) refers not only to the distribution of authority among national governments and other decision-making authorities on different levels, but also to the interdependence of these different levels.” (2008, p.3)

A definition for multilevel governance in the European Union is given by the Committee of the Regions:

“The Committee of the Regions considers multilevel governance to mean coordinated action by the European Union, the Member States and local and regional authorities, based on partnership and aimed at drawing up and implementing EU policies. It leads to responsibility being shared between the different tiers of government concerned and is underpinned by all sources of democratic legitimacy and the representative nature of the different players involved. By means of an integrated approach, it entails the joint participation of the different tiers of government in the formulation of Community policies and legislation, with the aid of various mechanisms (consultation, territorial impact analyses, etc.)”³⁰

3.3.1 The general policy-making perspective

The case studies portrayed show a mix of experiences in the way multilevel governance is organised. Even though these cases differ greatly from one another, some very interesting common points can be noted.

First, as a general remark, it appears that most of the cases share a **strong degree of horizontal coordination**, especially among departments on the same level. However, this depends on the type of local and regional authority (LRA) examined. In the case of municipalities, it is suggested that good cooperation occurs among departments, but there is also a good level of coordination with the higher regional level and other municipalities. In this respect, the case of the

²⁸ Kohler-Koch, B. and B. Rittberger. 2006. The ‘Governance Turn’ in EU Studies. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44 (Annual Review), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 27-49.

²⁹ http://ecologic.eu/projekte/epigov/documents/epigov_paper_31_homeyer_et_al.pdf.

³⁰ [The Committee of the Regions’ White Paper on Multilevel Governance \(2009\)](#).

initiative in Porto (Portugal) is exemplary: Following the success of the first years of the “Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)”, the initiative has been enlarged and now encompasses seven other municipalities in the northern Portugal region.

By and large, respondents from **regional authorities** highlighted cooperation with the national level much more than cooperation with the local level. One exception is the German initiative put forward by the City of Achim, which was described as a good example of very close cooperation between the local and regional levels and of good collaboration with other municipalities.

It is also worth noting that in some cases there is also a certain **involvement with and consultation of local stakeholders**. For instance, in the Romanian Harghita county, a ‘methodology’ has been developed to take stakeholders into consideration in the short term.

On the other hand, as in the Polish case, it is suggested that there is **hardly any cooperation or coordination** between the regional and local levels.

An example of strong coordination and cooperation between the **regional and the national level** is the initiative “A globally competitive region - Business development strategy 2010-2020” of the Central Denmark Region, where the region concluded a ‘Partnership agreement’ with the national level through the Central Denmark Growth Forum³¹. The case of the Polish initiative “Innovative Wielkopolska”, which is an example of good coordination between **European and national level**, is similar.

An intriguing example of **cooperation and collaboration between the national and the regional level** is the Belgian case, where the Walloon region is being consulted by the national level in the process of establishing the Belgian annual National Reform Program (NRP).

In terms of **framing the NRPs**, the general impression is that there should be more careful consideration of the local/regional demands and greater efforts from the national level to include the Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs). For instance, in Poland, there was no cooperation and coordination between the national and the regional levels for drafting and launching the National Reform Program. In fact, the suggestion from Catalonia was that “*the participation of regional governments in the definition of the NRP should be strengthened*” also because it seems very beneficial for a better multilevel governance to share

³¹ <http://www.rm.dk/om+regionen/english/regional+development/about+regional+development/growth+forum>.

‘common goals among different levels of government’ (as suggested particularly in the French and in the Spanish cases).

The perception of the European level is mixed. There are only a few good examples of coordination and cooperation among the local/regional levels and the European level. But in some cases, this relationship works well. As already mentioned, the Polish initiative is a good example. Also, in Portugal, there is the impression that Europe is closer than the national level. In some cases, communication to and from Europe seems to work as well, as in the German example. However, in other cases, there is the impression that the European level is not interested or is too far removed from the local/regional level, especially because it appears that the European level pays more attention to the national level than the local level. In any event, LRAs are trying to move closer to the European level and seek more cooperation with it.

A few suggestions for greater coordination and integration of policies between the different levels of governments were put forward from the general policy-making perspective. By and large, it seems that LRAs would appreciate more consideration, especially when developing strategies, not only at the national level but also regarding European strategies. In this respect, LRAs should be consulted and given more responsibilities. Accordingly, the bottom-up approaches should be emphasised when drafting policies and ‘coordination platforms’ could be established and formalised. The European ‘subsidiarity principle’³² should be emphasised to give more responsibility to the local/regional level. This would reinforce the idea that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizens. Also, EU funding should be made more accessible to the local/regional level.

It is also worth noting that in the cases analysed in Poland, Belgium, and Denmark, it was stressed that the coordination among different levels was working quite well.

In some cases, the Europe 2020 strategy seems to play an important role in increasing vertical cooperation among different levels of government. The Polish example has in fact suggested that “*undoubtedly, the work on the Europe 2020 strategy has intensified and tightened the cooperation/coordination of the policy-making processes between different levels of authorities*”. Others

³² The *principle of subsidiarity* regulates “the exercise of powers in the European Union. It is intended to determine whether, in an area where there is joint competence, the Union can take action or should leave the matter to the Member States. The subsidiarity principle is based on the idea that decisions must be taken as closely as possible to the citizen”.
(from: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/subsidiarity.htm>).

suggested instead that the process was still ongoing, or that it was especially helpful to set common objectives for all levels of government.

Table 4: Excerpts from the case studies

Country	Initiative	Excerpt
BE	Continuation and expansion of the competitiveness centre policy	<i>Coordination with other levels of government is perceived as strong, especially between the regions, whilst with the national level it mainly occurs in preparing the NRP. Concerning cooperation with the European level, this is seen mainly as relating to the national level, while regions are not taken into account.</i>
DE	Educational success through designing diversity	<i>The initiative reveals well-established cooperation at the sub-national, particularly the local level, while cooperation with the national level is ensured through funding aspects only. Although the European level seems to be closer to regions and cities than before, cooperation with it remains quite limited.</i>
DK	A globally competitive region - Business development strategy 2010-2020DK	<i>Due to the network structure of the Growth Forum, there is strong horizontal coordination between all stakeholders involved. Vertical cooperation is achieved through the Partnership Agreement between the regional Growth Forum and the national government</i>
ES	Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020)	<i>In the implementation of ECAT 2020, the Catalan Government will work with other levels of government to guarantee the necessary coordination and to strengthen synergies and complementarities. Most cooperation will take place at regional and European levels.</i>

Country	Initiative	Excerpt
FR	Creation of Sustainable City Learning Center in Dunkirk	<i>General coordination for Dunkirk is the strongest with other sub-national levels that share the same interests and issues. There seems to be room for improvement with the national level. The cooperation with the EU level is felt as a “top-down process” with the regions remaining left out of the policy-making process.</i>
PL	Innovative Wielkopolska	<i>From the perspective of the regional authorities, the cooperation and coordination between EU, national and regional institutions are very good. From the stakeholder viewpoint, it is suggested that there is very little coordination between national and regional level.</i>
PT	Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)	<i>The initiative works in close collaboration with the European level, especially in terms of objectives. The initiative is very well coordinated at the local level and especially horizontally among departments. By contrast, the national level seems to be far removed from the initiative.</i>
RO	Developing the business environment in Harghita County	<i>The initiative was developed essentially at the local level, among different local governments and involving local enterprises as well. No regional, national, or European levels were involved in its planning. The process was characterised by very effective horizontal cooperation. However, the initiative matches the national strategies regarding innovation and industrial development.</i>

3.3.2 Territorial pacts for Europe 2020

A special question in our analysis was dedicated to territorial pacts to ascertain whether any of these cases was involved in such pacts. A territorial pact³³ is described as “*an agreement between a country’s tiers of government (local, regional, national). Parties signing up to a Territorial Pact undertake to*

³³ <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/TerritorialPacts/Documents/1003%20territorial%20pacts%20EN%2017x24.pdf>.

coordinate and synchronise their policy agendas in order to focus their actions and financial resources on the Europe 2020 Strategy goals and targets”.

Unfortunately, no LRA consulted for this study seemed to be involved in such territorial pacts. Interestingly, the Polish case revealed that the region would adopt territorial pacts as of the following year.

3.3.3 The initiative-specific perspective: the implementation and the stakeholders' side

It is interesting to notice that with regard to the initiative-specific perspective, the results are very much in line with those related to the general policy-making perspective, therefore confirming the information collected.

In many cases, there is very good coordination horizontally, among departments. In general, it is also suggested that the local level and the regional level are cooperating, and that especially at the local level there are relationships with local stakeholders, diverse partners, local enterprises, and so on. On the other hand, the national level again appears to be less involved in most of the cases.

What seems to be somehow different from the general policy-making perspective is the perception concerning the European level. On the one hand, as described above, the mixed results for general policy-making showed that there were good examples of coordination and cooperation among the local/regional level and the European level (e.g. PL, PT), but also that in other cases it appeared that the European level was not interested or too far removed from the local/regional level (e.g. BE, FR). On the other hand, from the initiative-specific perspective, no initiative had been developed in coordination with the European level. Therefore, it is suggested that there is not much cooperation with the European level, probably also reflecting the fact that the initiative perspective concentrates predominantly on the implementation of the initiative and therefore works almost exclusively on the day-to-day issues of the area in question. Europe in this regard seems to be very far away and mainly perceived as a source of funding for helping to implement initiatives, but also in some cases as a source of inspiration and guidance.

Although the initiative-specific perspective seems to receive enough support from the local/regional levels of government, there is a widespread need for more support, especially from the national level, **confirming again a good level of horizontal coordination but weaker development on the vertical line of governance.**

Better integration of policies and better coordination and cooperation among the different levels of government are in most cases suggested as effective ways to help the planning processes and implementation of the initiatives. Therefore, having **common objectives** among the different levels of government, and also with the European level, is perceived as a necessary means for improving multi-level governance: *“it is not easy to make progress if the common goals are not shared with your neighbourhood”* (PT).

There are also suggestions for **less bureaucracy, more networking, and easier access to knowledge and funding**. Interestingly, *“the Europe 2020 strategy could provide impetus for an institutional change which would lead to new monitoring, evaluation and coordination practices based on content”* (PL). Again, it seems important to involve the local and regional levels in the preparations for the National Reform Programs (BE), which is in line with the idea of developing policies ‘bottom-up’ (RO).

3.4 Funding

First and foremost, it is important to note that the general economic situation in Europe is having consequences at the local level, and this is impacting on initiatives and activities. This is especially true for countries such as Portugal and Spain that are being more seriously affected. However, the case studies reflect a range of experiences and financial issues that are in some ways portraying different circumstances, but in others revealing certain similarities. One of the features is of course the economic crisis that is hampering many projects and initiatives.

3.4.1 The general policy-making perspective

While the crisis is also seriously affecting projects at the local and regional levels as asserted in most of the cases (DK, BE, ES, PT, FR), a topical issue for these entities is whether there is enough funding. In most cases, the general comment is that there are not enough funds (RO, PL, ES); it is suggested in fact that *“funding is never enough”* (RO). In other cases, the impression is of a certain resignation to the fact that they are used to making do with what they have (DK, PT) and this seems to be the basis of their day-to-day work. For example, in Portugal, the crisis is seriously impacting all those initiatives that started with certain expectations, especially in terms of counting on bank credit and favourable financial and macro-economic conditions.

Since there are no funding streams available through the Europe 2020 strategy, the structural funds, which are utilised in most of the cases (RO, PT, DE, DK, BE), are a great help. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and

the European Social Fund (ESF) seem to be the European funding schemes that are used most frequently. For instance, in Harghita County (Romania) the funds that have been successfully obtained have mostly been from the structural funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and more specifically from the Regional Operational Programme. On the other hand, in Poland, two innovative instruments were utilised, JEREMIE³⁴ that supports SMEs and JESSICA³⁵ that supports investment in revitalisation of urban areas. Wielkopolska region was one of very few in Poland which took advantage of these initiatives and was the first to participate in the JESSICA programme.

The structural funds appear to be well-managed in general (RO, PT, DK) but not easy to acquire (FR, DK, BE). In fact the processes are long (1-2 years), involving delays (RO, PT, DK) and difficulties mainly linked to bureaucracy. In many cases *“the European funding is designed in such a way that it is very inflexible and difficult to implement”* (PL).

It is therefore suggested that the processes for securing funds should be simplified (FR, BE, DE, PL). Financial controlling should be improved because, at the moment, it seems to be too demanding (DE, DK, FR). There should be more flexibility regarding the distribution of funding (FR, PL) while *“administrative demands should be simplified”* (DE). The subsidiarity principle should also be strengthened with respect to funding (PT), giving more responsibilities to the local and regional levels. Also, more funding should be directed towards rural areas because it appears that funds are usually designed for cities rather than for the rural level (RO). It was also suggested that funding schemes be created to *“give incentives to the regions to apply Europe 2020”* (ES).

Although European funding appears to provide considerable support for those initiatives, the largest percentage of funds often comes from own budgets, depending on the specific characteristics of each local or regional authority (e.g. city, municipality, county, region, etc.) but also from the national level. In other

³⁴ JEREMIE - Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises: http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/jeremie/index.htm. The JEREMIE initiative developed by the European Investment Fund (EIF) in cooperation with the European Commission, offers EU Member States, through their national or regional Managing Authorities, the opportunity to use part of their EU Structural Funds to finance small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by means of equity, loans or guarantees, through a revolving Holding Fund acting as an umbrella fund.

³⁵JESSICA - Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas: http://www.eib.org/products/technical_assistance/jessica/index.htm. JESSICA – is an initiative developed by the **European Commission** and the **European Investment Bank**, in collaboration with the **Council of Europe Development Bank** (CEB). Under new procedures, Member States are being given the option of using some of their EU grant funding, their so-called Structural Funds, to make repayable investments in projects forming part of an integrated plan for sustainable urban development. These investments, which may take the form of equity, loans and/or guarantees, are delivered to projects via Urban Development Funds and, if required, Holding Funds.

cases, private funds are also being used. There are certain monitoring and evaluation arrangements linked to most of the initiatives.

Table 5: Excerpts from the case studies

Country	Initiative	Excerpt
BE	Continuation and expansion of the competitiveness centre policy	<i>Funding was not an issue for the Walloon region. On the contrary, there was “enough funding for each thematic policy”. Nevertheless, in some cases, the financial crisis had made it difficult to allocate the financial resources to fund projects, and very often the delivery of funding was delayed.</i>
DE	Educational success through designing diversity	<i>From 2008 to 2011, the initiative was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Since 2011, the initiative has been financed by the City of Achim (80%) and through donations (20%).</i>
DK	A globally competitive region - Business development strategy 2010-2020DK	<i>The Business development strategy is funded through national and local authorities, national development grants, and European Structural funds.</i>
ES	Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020)	<i>ECAT 2020 has no additional budget. Most of the funding for measures comes from the Catalan government at the moment, but individual measures will be funded by various funds (national funds, European Structural Funds).</i>
FR	Creation of Sustainable City Learning Center in Dunkirk	<i>The funding for the Sustainable City Learning Centre comes from different sources: ERDF (17 – 20%), regional funds (30 – 35%); and infra-regional funds from the “Nord” region of France (6 – 7%). Further local funds are provided by the Dunkirk Greater Council.</i>
PL	Innovative Wielkopolska	<i>The “Innovative Wielkopolska” initiative is financed from the European, national, and regional funds. Enough funding is available and is relatively easy to secure.</i>

Country	Initiative	Excerpt
PT	Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)	<i>The initiative uses funding coming from a range of different sources, mostly because the majority of the actions are not exclusively 'energy-specific' but very much related to different areas and sectors. 15% comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), 35% is diversely co-financed from other national funds and private funding (i.e. donors, stakeholders, owners).</i>
RO	Developing the business environment in Harghita County	<i>Financial streams usually come from the county budget and from European funds. In some cases, the national level also provides some funds. The successfully acquired funds are EU Structural Funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the context of the Regional Operational Programme.</i>

3.4.2 The initiative-specific perspective: the implementation and the stakeholders' side

From the implementation point of view, it is interesting to note that the results are in line with the general policy-making perspective. Again, the crisis is having a major impact on initiatives (ES, PT), and in many cases funds do not seem to be sufficient (DE, ES, PT, RO). But in other cases, funds appear to be sufficient although there are attempts to secure more funding (FR), or funds have been heavily cut “*by the national government in the middle of many initiatives*” (PL). However, the funding seems to be sufficient for the initiatives in both Denmark and Belgium.

Although European funding appears to be an important support for the initiatives, the largest percentage of funds often comes from own budgets, depending on the specific characteristics of each local or regional authority (e.g. city, municipality, county, region, etc.), as has been stated already. For instance, the initiative “Continuation and expansion of the competitiveness centre policy” (in Belgium) is 100% funded by funds from the Walloon Region. In the City of Achim (DE), the initiative “Educational success through designing diversity” is now 80% financed from the city budget and 20% from donations, but also employs voluntary workers. In other cases, private funds are also being used, as in the example of the Portuguese initiative “Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)”, where private funds account for 25% of the total sum needed to finance the initiative.

As regards securing European funding, this is generally not an easy task (DE, DK, FR, PT, RO): the processes are very bureaucratic and sometimes not particularly well-organised, there are too many criteria and requirements, too much documentation is requested and everything takes a long time and much work is devoted to the task. However, structural funds are perceived as an opportunity to support the initiatives at the local and regional levels.

Funding and objectives are generally monitored and evaluated (BE, ES, FR, DE, DK, PL). In terms of timing, these evaluation/monitoring arrangements range between 6-monthly (DK) and yearly reports (BE, ES). In some cases, these arrangements are left to the discretion of the various LRAs as is the case in Dunkirk (FR) for instance. In other cases, evaluation and/or monitoring are carried out through external processes. In the City of Achim (DE), for example, NBank monitors the financial aspects of the initiative. In the Danish example, a private company takes care of the mid-term evaluation while Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are used. In the Belgian case, the Ministry of the Economy evaluates and monitors the initiative, in cooperation with the statistical services of the Walloon region. In the yearly evaluation process of the Catalonia region (ES), stakeholders are also invited to participate in the evaluation.

4. Case studies

4.1 Case 1 - Walloon Region (Région wallonne) (BE)

Name: **Walloon Region (Région wallonne)**

Typology: **Region**

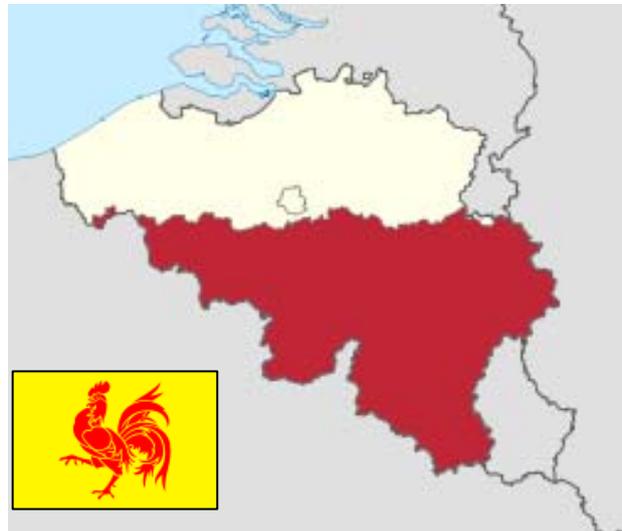
Web-link:

<http://www.wallonie.be/en/index.html>

Country: **Belgium**

Population: **3.5 million inhabitants**

Initiative: **Continuation and expansion of the Competitiveness Cluster Policy**



4.1.1 Summary of the findings

The case study is based on three interviews with experts from the Walloon Region. The first interviewee works at the economics department of the region and monitors European policies and regional cooperation for the NRP. The second interviewee is responsible for the Competitiveness Clusters in Wallonia and the third interviewee is Director of SkyWin, one of the six Competitiveness Clusters included in the initiative.

The case study was complemented by desk research using mainly online resources and information provided by the Committee of the Regions.

The **Competitiveness Clusters Policy** is a large initiative that encompasses several industrial sectors in the region. It is aimed at boosting the regional economy, stimulating the industrial economy, and strengthening efforts in the fields of innovation, research, and development. Improving competences, skills, and employment together with implementing green growth in all activities are the main objectives of this policy, which is part of the regional Marshall Plan.

The policy was developed in 2009 and will remain in force until 2014, which means that it was “*not triggered*” by Europe 2020, but was nevertheless described as “*a sum of European thematic policies*”. The five headline targets were described as being very important for the regional policies.

The first Competitiveness Clusters were launched in 2006 and have proved to be a very successful initiative, which led to the policy being expanded and creating a sixth cluster. The initiative ensures cooperation with regional partners and has given the regional industrial sectors a major boost. Since the clusters have proved very efficient, an expansion to the trans-regional, trans-national, and international levels is envisaged.

The Competitiveness Clusters Policy is financed mainly through regional funding; individual projects are financially supported by EU funding (e.g. Structural Funds, FP7, SIP, Interreg) which is allocated through a competitive process.

Europe 2020’s description as a **strategic planning tool** for creating smart, sustainable and inclusive regions has raised certain doubts. It was pointed out that the strategy might certainly be useful for the EU level, but that the European semester does not really include the regional level.

4.1.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

The **Walloon Region**, commonly referred to as **Wallonia**, is one of the three federal Regions of Belgium. The Walloon Region represents 55.18% of the surface area of Belgium with nearly 3.5 million inhabitants (32.4% of the Belgian population). The capital city of Wallonia is Namur with 108.950 almost exclusively French-speaking inhabitants.

Launched in 2005 by the Government of Wallonia, the “**Competitiveness Centre Policy**” aims to build up the region's growth sectors so that they attain a level of excellence, which will generate a new growth dynamic and give Wallonia an international profile. In July 2006, the government defined five competitiveness centres as priority areas: SkyWin for aerospace, WagrALIM for agro-industry, MecaTech for mechanical engineering, Logistics in Wallonia for transport and logistics and BioWin for life sciences. The sixth pole (GreenWin) and its projects were defined at the end of February 2011, covering the sustainable chemistry and sustainable materials sectors.

Various actions designed to maintain and step up the dynamics of competitiveness centres and business networks are being implemented:

- adoption of a decree which puts these policies on a more permanent footing;
- establishment of a sixth centre for environmental technologies;
- increased SME involvement;
- strengthening of synergies between regional, national, and international centres;
- opening-up to businesses in neighbouring regions;
- launching a call for "sustainable development" projects and integrating this concept across-the-board in all centres;
- strengthening funding (for research, public investments, and export support, especially);
- strengthening the training dimension (developing one joint strategy for the centres).

This policy translates first and foremost into strengthened synergies between all the actors and the networking between them. It also harnesses the full set of policies relevant to shared objectives: R&D policy, training policy, policy for enhancing regional appeal, export support policy, funding tools, etc.

4.1.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

The overall policy in Wallonia refers to European policies in terms of defined objectives and was described as a “*sum of European thematic strategies*” which served as inspiration for the regional policies. The five headline targets of Europe 2020³⁶ are very important. The objectives of the regional policy are linked to the Europe 2020 strategy, but were “*not triggered by it*” since the regional policy programme was developed in 2009 and will be in force until 2014. It was reported that the regional objectives and policies were created bottom-up (each Minister develops their own strategy linked to the European context), without a “*centrally coordinated approach to translate Europe 2020 into regional policies*”, but using a “*debating approach*”. This “*debating approach*” consists of political negotiations in the context of the “*regional government agreement*” where the NRP – coordinated by the Prime Minister's Cabinet – is also prepared.

³⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/eu-targets/index_en.htm.

4.1.4 Objectives of the initiative

The Competitiveness Clusters Policy is part of the 2005 Marshall Plan, a broader regional economic plan launched by the Walloon government. The economic plan aimed to develop sectors of activity creating a new dynamic growth, boost the economy and achieve international importance.

In July 2006, the first 5 competitiveness clusters were established:

- **SkyWin**, the Aerospace Competitiveness Cluster;
- **WagrALIM**, the Competitiveness Cluster dedicated to the food industry;
- **MecaTech**, the Competitiveness Cluster in Mechanical Engineering;
- **BioWin**, the health competitiveness cluster that brings together all the stakeholders from Wallonia participating in innovation and training in the field of biotechnology and health;
- **Logistics in Wallonia**: is the Transport and Logistics Competitiveness Cluster.

Each cluster is managed by the respective industry.

With the expansion of the Clusters Policy, **GreenWin** was set up in February 2011. This Competitiveness Cluster aims at innovation in green chemistry and durable materials, incorporating their applications in zero or near zero energy buildings.

Generally, the aim of the Cluster Policy is to create international cooperation and establish a good reputation on a global scale. Networking activities between all members of the clusters are regarded as highly important.

The Cluster Policy covers a wide range of **objectives**, such as:

- Creating growth and added value for the Walloon industry;
- Increasing employment, training, research and development (R&D), and exports;
- Designing and selecting cooperative projects at R&D and training level between Walloon Members;
- Attracting foreign investors and achieving international merit as an industrial sector;
- Including Green Growth in all activities;
- Getting “*ready for the new technological challenge*”.

Each cluster is responsible for the innovation and technological aspect of its activities. In the context of a cluster, every project is developed bottom-up and needs to consist of four different participating units (at least 2 units from industry – of which 1 must be an SME – and 2 units from research/university). Projects developed in the cluster are selected in two steps: the first selection is made at cluster level, and if the project is deemed to be relevant and promising in terms of outcomes, it is presented to an international jury which evaluates the economic return of the project. This process takes place at regional level.

The main challenges for the implementation of the Competitiveness Cluster Policy seem to be the low employment rate. The policy aims to create jobs and skills and boost the economy, which has sustained great losses in industrial productivity. At the beginning of the 20th century, Wallonia was the 2nd largest industrial region in Europe, while nowadays it is “*very far from this*”.

It was reported that when the policy was first implemented, coordination of the administration and cooperation between the regional level and the clusters presented a real challenge. Sometimes funding arrived late from the Walloon administration, but these problems occurred only at the beginning of the policy implementation phase and now things work very well.

4.1.5 Funding issues

Funding was not an issue for the Walloon region. On the contrary, there was “*enough funding for each thematic policy*” since the Cluster Policy was the first priority of the 2005 Marshall Plan. Nevertheless, in some cases the **financial crisis** had made it difficult to allocate the financial resources to fund projects, and very often, the delivery of funding was delayed.

Mainly **regional funding** was used for the implementation of the initiative; some projects were financially supported by EU funding (e.g. Structural Funds, FP7, SIP, Interreg) obtained through a competitive process. No national funding was used in the initiatives. All of the clusters' projects have their own funding and must allocate it as part of a specific application procedure: a regional decree sets the conditions and modalities of financing from the regional level.

In the context of the Competitive Cluster Policy, 200 projects have now started and about 20 to 30 are completed. **Monitoring and Evaluation** are conducted by the Ministry in cooperation with the statistical services of the Walloon region. In this context, specific importance is placed on macro-indicators (such as budget, number of projects, number of employees, etc.).

In this regard, for instance, the monitoring and evaluation system of SkyWin is the following: each year, an **annual activity report** is published. It contains formal indicators and figures and sets the objectives for the following year. Every year, the Jury and the regional administration provide continuous assessment. The results concerning progress on the financial and administrative aspects are then submitted to the Cluster coordination and to the Walloon regional administration. On the whole, there have been no problems regarding the availability of the funding. However, sometimes the timing and delays have created some difficulties.

In order to improve funding, it was suggested that funding should be made more easily accessible for regions, since *“the financing does not always take account of regional actors”*.

4.1.6 Multilevel governance

The regional Competitiveness Centre Policy is linked to the European strategy, which is seen as a political guide.

Coordination with other levels of government is perceived as very good, especially between the regions; coordination with the national level mainly occurs when preparing the NRP. As regards cooperation with the European level, there is a good flow of information from the European to the regional level, but it was reported that the *“European level is mainly concerned about the national level, regions are not taken into account”* and that *“there is a lot of communication coming from the EU but not cooperation with the regions”*.

By and large, coordination with other levels of government is not really an issue for the Walloon region, since it does not depend on the national level and mainly draws up policies on its own. It was admitted that *“in some cases it would be better to have coordination because we need a critical mass, because we’re stronger together”*, but in general, policy-making is a regional matter. It was also felt that **Europe 2020 did not help to strengthen vertical cooperation** between different levels of governance.

From the initiative implementation perspective, cooperation with other sub-national levels is seen as essential and was highlighted as the most important form of cooperation, since the region is responsible for administering the initiative. Cooperation with other regions of Belgium takes place in the context of implementing certain projects.

Cooperation with the European level only occurs through the funding allocation process for individual projects, and cooperation with the national level is basically non-existent.

It was hoped that **trans-regional cooperation could be improved**, since this issue had created funding problems in the past when cooperation with a university in the Flemish part of Belgium could not go ahead because the Walloon region did not provide funding for other regions.

4.1.7 The added value of Europe 2020

Communicating Europe 2020 to the regional level was perceived to be very efficient as far as the **policy-making level** was concerned. The Walloon region not only has regional delegations at the parliament representation for the EU, but also uses “*classical communication channels*” (e.g. newsletters, brochures). There has been no communication on Europe 2020 from the national level at all, but it is suggested that there is generally very little cooperation with the national level, since the Walloon region does not depend on it and is allowed to set its own regional policies.

Nothing has been done about communicating Europe 2020 and its policies to the **lower levels of administration**.

It appears that Europe 2020 facilitated the design of the policy and the regional contribution of the NRP for which it provided helpful guidance. However, the Europe 2020 strategy did not play a real role in designing and implementing the initiative – probably also because it was developed in 2005 (and actually started in 2006) when Europe 2020 had not yet been set up.

Certain doubts were expressed as regards Europe 2020’s description as a **strategic planning tool** for creating smart, sustainable and inclusive regions. The strategy certainly seems to be useful for the EU level, whilst the European semester does not really include the regional level, and mainly focuses on the macro-level, being too far removed from the definition of a region (micro-level, e.g. SMEs, industry, education, etc.).

4.1.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

It seems that the highest hopes for the outcomes of implementing Europe 2020 relate to the possibility of improved transnational and international cooperation and the internationalisation of projects, provided they have the necessary EU funding. So far, cross-border financing is still an issue and has been an obstacle for successful cooperation between regions and nations.

Opportunities are seen for enhancing and facilitating international cooperation, attracting foreign investors (e.g. Interreg), taking part in international projects for universities and companies and, as a consequence, increasing skills and competences in the region. Improvement of employment prospects for young people and supporting SMEs are priorities of the region and are being addressed by several initiatives under the policies of the Marshall Plan.

Some doubts were expressed concerning recent proposals from the European Commission regarding provisions for the European Semester that provide for the use of sanctions. It was said that these sanctions “*could be a danger for regional policies*”. It seems that there is a desire for the European strategy to be “*more linked to regional policies*”.

Furthermore, the coordination between national and regional initiatives should be improved and turned into a “*win-win situation*”. Funding for small programmes should also be improved.

4.2 Case 2 - Achim City (DE)

Name: **Stadt Achim**

Typology: **City**

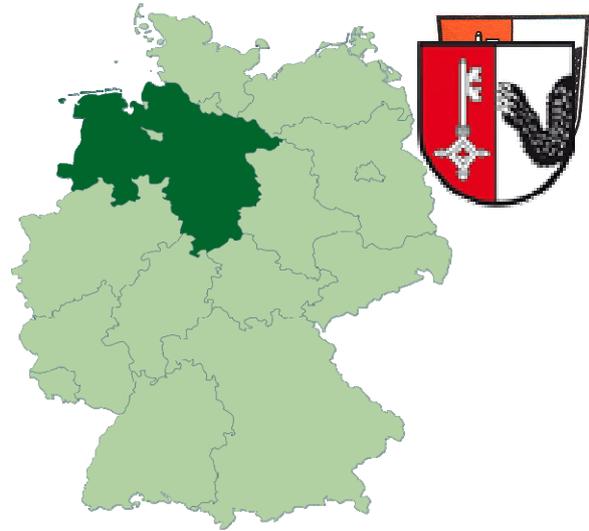
Web-link: <http://www.achim.de>

Country: **Germany**

Region: **Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony)**

Population: **31.844** (2011 figures)

Initiative: **“Educational success through designing diversity”**



4.2.1 Summary of the findings

The case study is based on three interviews with experts from different areas of the City of Achim: the local business development that deals with business support and EU-funding; the project management of “Educational success through designing diversity” and the directorate of a trans-regional association of craftsmen that supports the initiative.

The case study was complemented by desk research using mainly online resources and information provided by the Committee of the Regions.

The initiative “Educational success through designing diversity” is a small-scale project and regarded as a very important form of support for the educational success of young people from Achim, especially for those with migrant backgrounds. It is intended to run for a long time and has successfully continued beyond the funding period that finished in 2011.

From a general policy-making perspective, the city administration of Achim is very interested in European policies, and works in close cooperation with the

European level through a communication network established in and expanded since 2006.

The initiative was developed as a response to local education issues without paying much attention to European policies. Nevertheless, the objectives of the initiative are **in line with the European 2020 strategy**, especially with the two **headline targets** “employment” and “education”. Furthermore, the existence of a strong European strategy such as Europe 2020 provides local policy-makers with essential ideas and inspiration for tackling current local challenges. In particular, sharing common goals with Europe 2020 has helped to raise awareness concerning possible difficulties at the local level.

The initiative is financed by the City of Achim (80%) and through donations (20%). An essential part of the work is done on a voluntary basis.

Generally, the initiative is perceived as very successful and necessary for the City of Achim. From the beginning, it was cleverly coordinated and designed in order to continue beyond the funding period. The initiative requires a well-established system of cooperation at the sub-national and especially the local levels.

Cooperation with the national level is ensured through funding aspects only, while cooperation with the European level is quite limited. By contrast, from a general policy-making perspective, the European level seems to be closer to regions and cities than before, in the sense that contributing to and profiting from European policies now seems much more possible. Nevertheless, a **higher level of independence for regions and cities and more easily available funding** for activities in the region were suggested.

The Europe 2020 strategy is perceived as a strategic planning tool for the creation of ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive’ regions (or local authorities), since they reflect and provide solutions to a wide range of difficulties encountered on the ground.

4.2.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

The City of Achim (Stadt Achim) is a small city (31.844 inhabitants), located to the south-east of Bremen, in the northern region of Lower Saxony, Germany. The initiative was built on the flagship initiative “Inclusive growth” and entitled “Educational success through designing diversity”. From February 2008 to July 2011, the initiative was supported by EU funding from the ERDF

(Convergence). Since then, the initiative has been supported by the Achim city authorities.

The initiative aims to improve educational outcomes for children and young people in Achim, focusing particularly on the ‘Magdeburger Viertel’ located in the north of the city, and especially addressing people from stigmatised and socially disadvantaged groups. The project has sought to improve learning outcomes (improvements in language skills, school grades, and qualifications) for children and adolescents from an immigrant background, not only by establishing general language support and early childhood education (e.g. a child-centred learning workshop), but also by making changes to the curricula and organisational structures of educational institutions.

It provides holistic, sustainable, and demonstrable support, using concepts and measures tailored to local needs.

The initiative is based on the assumption that, where individuals face difficult life situations, support can only be provided in a meaningful and holistic way if the focus is on the entire span of the educational process, and if educational institutions succeed in developing joined-up approaches and measures that reach beyond the confines of their own walls. This requires close collaboration between the different actors from the various institutions and sectors involved in educational processes, i.e. collaboration between those directly concerned with education, both within the various branches of the school system (primary, general, and vocational secondary schools and grammar schools) and outside it (child care, youth work, family welfare, community work, and the education department of the public library), others outside the educational domain itself (mosques, churches, business advisory councils, and local politics) and, not least, the groups the project is aimed at (parents, children, and adolescents) and their representatives.

Source: Achim (DE), survey Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?

4.2.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

Generally, Achim’s main objectives and targets are **very much in line** with the Europe 2020 Strategy. These objectives are pursued at the local level, responding to the current situation and the City's specific problems. In Achim, the awareness of the demand for sustainable and resource-efficient solutions has increased. For example, there has been a political decision to renovate buildings to improve their energy efficiency and to use only eco-electricity in these buildings. Therefore, it seems that local decisions are already influenced by decisions made by the European level.

In order to help to implement Europe 2020, communication and cooperation with regional partners (e.g. citizens, companies, institutions, communities, etc.) is regarded as very important and seen as necessary for tackling the difficulties – in many cases similar – that communities experience.

4.2.4 Objectives of the initiative

The **objectives of the initiative** is to improve the education levels of children and young people in Achim, especially in the “Magdeburger Viertel” district which is located in the north of Achim and has approximately 1.800 inhabitants. The main objective is to increase the number of people with university entry qualifications, or generally to increase the level of education among young people. The initiative is primarily aimed at children with a migrant background and is intended to promote the acceptance of diversity.

The initiative is being implemented on different levels and in different contexts and embraces many local institutions (e.g. schools, companies, etc.) which have helped to establish a local “educational network” to improve young people's level of education.

The main **challenges of the initiative** are to raise the funds and resources for implementing the initiative. Another important challenge is to find a way to access and change the existing context in which the students live (e.g. family education and structures, cultural context, etc.) as well as the educational system of Germany, which is not uniform and has different school typologies in every area.

4.2.5 Funding issues

From 2008 to 2011³⁷, the initiative was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). From the outset, the main aim was to develop an initiative that could continue beyond the funding period.

Since 2011, the initiative has been financed by the City of Achim (80%) and through donations (20%). However, these figures can only be estimated, since the employees of the *Bürgerzentrum* (community centre) in Achim devote working hours to implementing the initiative, while some rooms and buildings belonging to the *Bürgerzentrum* may be used for this purpose. In addition, much work is undertaken on a voluntary basis: all of the current 25 tutors are unpaid. Tutors are older students with migrant backgrounds who look after younger

³⁷ 1st of February 2008 until 31st of June 2011

students with – not necessarily the same – migrant background in terms of their education and educational success.

A source of “indirect” funding is the **national programme “Soziale Stadt”** that provides funds for city restructuring. A prerequisite for granting funding is the city’s commitment to properly addressing its social issues. Infrastructure related to this programme (e.g. rooms and buildings) can be used for implementing “Educational success through designing diversity”, for instance for meetings and events.

It can be assumed there has been a good overview in terms of timing and availability of the different funding sources. However, it is suggested that the **framework conditions for fund-raising should be simplified** as regards the allocation, the approval procedure and the official requirements of proof, especially for the local level. The application for funding included many formal criteria and was deemed to be very challenging for a small-scale project.

*NBank*³⁸ conducted the **financial monitoring**. Regarding the **contents**, the monitoring was implemented by the *Kultusministerium Niedersachsen* (Ministry of Education). Sometimes there was no real coordination between these two institutions. The **evaluation** was carried out by the University of Oldenburg, which conducted a study on the project that involved the participation of students in the projects. The results have not been evaluated yet. Nevertheless, the employees of the City of Achim are submitting **progress reports** on a regular basis.

The **legislative tools and instruments** applied in the implementation of the overall strategy were taken from the EU Directives in the framework of the Regional Fund.

4.2.6 Multilevel governance

From the general policy-making perspective, the communication of Europe 2020 goals and targets from the **European level** worked really well, especially because the administration of Achim established a very good **network of communication** that also included collaboration with consulting companies dealing with EU funding possibilities. This network has existed since 2006 and was very helpful in keeping in touch with the European level. Furthermore, there was close cooperation with the **NBank**, which managed the financial monitoring as well as the funding of the initiative.

³⁸ <http://www.nbank.de/>.

The impression is that the EU is now perceived as being closer to cities, regions, and their citizens, especially from the general policy-making perspective, where good communication and cooperation with the **European level** was reported. It is suggested that actively participating in and contributing to processes at the European level is perceived as possible.

For the implementation of the initiative itself, there is little or no communication with the European level. Communication and cooperation with the **national level** was essential since some of the funding comes from the national funding programme “*Soziale Stadt*”.

Communication and coordination with other **sub-national levels** was perceived as very good and sufficient, also because the **project was developed together** with other departments at local (schools, work agencies, etc.) and regional level (e.g. Landkreis Verden, the rural district).

In order to **improve the coordination and integration of policies between the different levels of governance**, responsibility should be given to the local level, where there is much more knowledge about the specific situations and problems. It was suggested that the European level should make the regional and local levels more independent and give them more freedom to act. Furthermore, efforts should be made to improve coordination between Ministries and prevent conflicting policies.

It is suggested that regions and cities should be given greater opportunities to fully realise their potential for addressing the issues in their areas. Therefore, the administrative demands should be simplified so that more projects can be carried out on the ground.

It appears that Europe 2020 helps to **strengthen vertical cooperation**. However, there are plans for future improvements to change existing rigid structures among the different political levels.

4.2.7 The added value of Europe 2020

In terms of the general coordination and policymaking in the City of Achim, **Europe 2020 and the NRP have helped significantly** to shape ideas and to raise awareness of Europe 2020-related issues at the local level.

Europe 2020 is also seen very much as a **strategic planning tool for creating intelligent, sustainable and integrative regions**. It is regarded as the appropriate response to the difficulties cities and regions are experiencing on a daily basis.

The project “Educational success through designing diversity” was built upon the flagship initiative “Inclusive Growth”. Nevertheless, the interviewees stated that neither **Europe 2020** nor the **NRP** played any role in the project development since it was designed in 2007, three years before the European strategy was drawn up. Nevertheless, the project is related to the former European strategy, the **Lisbon Strategy**.

The project was designed as a response to local and regional problems and was built bottom-up. Therefore, a **similar initiative would have probably have been designed** in the absence of Europe 2020 since it was set up as a response to local difficulties.

4.2.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

The Europe 2020 strategy addresses the most pressing current issues in Achim and is perceived as a tool for creating intelligent, smart and sustainable regions. In Achim, the educational aspect has been addressed in order to increase the education level and educational success of young students, particularly students with migrant backgrounds. Having the Europe 2020 Strategy supporting this objective on a higher level has contributed to raising awareness for the need to improve the local, regional, and national educational system, although there was already a high level of awareness before the Europe 2020 strategy was set up.

It was suggested that cooperation and coordination at all levels of governance should be increased even further in order to jointly identify and address the specific situations on the ground. Besides increasing cooperation, more independence and freedom of action should be given to the local level.

The Europe 2020 strategy is seen as an **opportunity** which will help to support the local goals and targets and raise awareness for what is happening on the ground, creating a common platform to address difficulties shared on local, regional, and national levels.

The **main challenges** for the future as regards the strategy will be to adequately address and overcome the financial crisis and excessive indebtedness, demographic change and, interestingly, to avoid a return to national sentiments which advocate greater independence for the Member States and tend to address national issues without considering the European Union.

Finally, it can be noted that although Achim had already addressed its local educational and social difficulties, the Europe 2020 strategy has definitely helped to support the local ideas and to increase credibility.

4.3 Case 3 - Central Region Denmark (Region Midtjylland) (DK)

Name: **Central Region Denmark (Region Midtjylland)**

Typology: **Region**

Web-link:

<http://www.rm.dk/Om+regionen/English>

Country: **Denmark**

Population: **1.2 million inhabitants**

Initiative: **“A globally competitive region - Business development strategy 2010-2020”**



4.3.1 Summary of the findings

The case study is based on three interviews with experts from the Central Region Denmark: the general policy-making perspective and coordinator of activities related to the Growth Forum; a member of the Growth Forum; and a project manager at KOMPETENCEmidt, an EU social funding initiative. The latter two perspectives are both provided by representatives of regional initiatives aimed at implementing the objectives of the Business development strategy 2010-2020.

The case study has been complemented by desk research using mainly online resources and information provided by the Committee of the Regions.

The Business development strategy of the Central Region Denmark is very much in line with the objectives of Europe 2020 and sees the flagship initiatives as cooperation platforms for communicating with other countries within the EU 2020 region. The existence of Europe 2020 has helped to establish the regional policy and raise awareness for the regional strategy.

The activities of the **International Community** are financed through regional companies and through the European Social Fund (ESF). The initiative **KOMPETENCEmidt** was also mainly financed through the ESF, besides funding from companies, municipalities, and the regional and national levels.

Both initiatives are considered to be very successful and necessary for the region, and call for efficient coordination at regional and local levels. Communication with the national level is mainly taking place in relation to funding, as the Ministries are responsible for administering the ESF. For the representatives of initiatives, cooperation with and the communication coming from the European level leave room for improvement. Regarding the initiatives, it was suggested that there should be better cooperation with the national level, and that a network of initiatives should be established that might deliver examples of good practice.

The Europe 2020 strategy is perceived as a strategic planning tool for the creation of smart, sustainable and inclusive regions. The flagship initiatives in particular are seen as platforms for regional and local cooperation. However, the communication of Europe 2020 has still not reached all levels of governance. More effort currently needs to be focused on communicating Europe 2020 to regions and municipalities.

4.3.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

[Central Denmark Region](#) (Danish: *Region Midtjylland*) covers the central part of Jutland from coast to coast. With approximately 1.2 million inhabitants, it is Denmark's second-largest region after the Capital Region. The region consists of nineteen municipalities and several large cities, including Denmark's second-largest city, Aarhus, with around 300.000 inhabitants, as well as Randers, Horsens, Silkeborg, and Herning.

The **business development strategy 2010-2020** establishes a long-term outlook for business policy in the whole of Central Region Denmark. It is a strategic plan that aims to ensure that the region will be globally competitive and rank amongst the best performers in Europe by 2020.

In this context, the **Central Denmark Growth Forum** acts as a partnership between businesses, unions and employer organisations, education and research institutions, municipalities, and the region. The [Central Denmark Growth Forum](#) is responsible for framing the region's business development strategy and for monitoring regional business development. The role of the Growth Forum is to create growth and ensure business development in the region by 2020, targeting

sectors such as energy and the environment, foodstuffs, welfare innovation, and tourism, making the region globally competitive and placing it amongst the best performers in Europe. In Central Denmark, the role of the Growth Forum is to unite and coordinate regional partners around on-going joint actions. The Forum also plays a role in strategic decision-making on national schemes and activities and aims to secure the commitment and coordination of national and regional business development efforts.

The programme is funded by national and local authorities through national development grants and European Structural Funds. The Growth Forum aims to achieve sustainable growth in Central Region Denmark based on responsible use of resources and securing the opportunity for continued growth and well-being for future generations³⁹.

Source: Central Region Denmark (DK); Survey Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?

4.3.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

The Business development plan is in line with the Europe 2020 policies and aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Growth in added value: from a yearly average growth of 1.3 % to 2.0 %;
- Growth in productivity: from a yearly average growth of 0.05 % to 1.5 %;
- Growth in employment: from a yearly average growth of 1.3 % to 0.5 %;
- Growth in exports: maintaining a yearly average growth of 4.0 %.

The strategy aims at boosting the international market in the following **eight target areas**:

1. Energy and environment;
2. Foodstuffs;
3. Welfare innovation;
4. Tourism;
5. Innovation and business development;
6. Digitalisation;
7. Entrepreneurship;
8. Education and skills development.

³⁹ Further information about the strategy is available at:
<http://www.rm.dk/files/Regional%20udvikling/V%C3%A6kstforum/Erhvervsudviklingsstrategi%202010-2020/Growth%20Forum's%20Business%20Development%20Strategy%202010-2020.pdf>.

The objectives and target areas were defined using a participatory process: dialogue with stakeholders was arranged by the Growth Forum (an assembly of the regional stakeholders) where the participants agreed on the main target areas. Annual meetings between representatives of the government and the Growth Forum ensure that the strategy is always up to date (see Multilevel Governance).

4.3.4 Objectives of the initiative

In 2008, the “Regional Development Plan” was set up for the Central Region Denmark and paved the way for the development of the “Business development strategy 2010-2020”. This business development strategy establishes a long-term perspective for business policy in the whole of the Central Denmark Region. It is a strategic plan implemented by the Growth Forum and aims at increasing the region's competitiveness and performance.

For the case study, interviews with two representatives of two different initiatives in Central Region Denmark were conducted, yet in both cases their objectives were aligned with the regional business development plan. The first initiative, the “**International Community**”, aims at attracting international employees with skills important for companies and universities into the region. An established network that aims at improving the working and social life and the living conditions for international employees and their families helps to retain these skills that are often not found in Denmark, in the region. The initiative “**KOMPETENCEmidt**” is targeted on the improvement of skills and competences in SMEs and MEs as well as on creating better jobs and more jobs in the region. The initiative is aimed at creating jobs that will continue to exist beyond the project.

As a consequence, both initiatives face different kind of **challenges**. The International Community that aims at attracting skilled employees from abroad primarily faces challenges of a practical nature, for example overcoming language barriers in administrative authorities where documentation is sometimes only available in Danish.

For the KOMPETENCEmidt initiative, the economic crisis seems to be the biggest challenge since it put great pressure on SMEs that were “*afraid of letting good people go to school and taking in new workers*” and were generally unwilling to be risk-takers under these difficult circumstances. Also, with the rising unemployment rate, it was hard to find the right skills and to define what companies really needed.

4.3.5 Funding issues

Generally, the Business development strategy is funded through national and local authorities, national development grants and European Structural funds. It was reported that not enough funding was provided for implementing the two initiatives. In the case of the activities of the **International Community**, the funding comes from companies in the region that give financial support and through the European Social Fund (ESF), via regional funds. In the case of the other initiative **KOMPETENCEmidt**, half of the funding comes from the ESF, while the other half is financed by municipalities, the regional level, and a little by the state. Co-financing is also obtained from companies that have already taken on workers.

The allocation of funding was perceived differently at the different levels of governance. From the general policy-making perspective it was reported that although the “*administration of the Structural Funds is a challenge in itself*”, the application process was acceptable and successful. Both initiatives generated much criticism: According to those responsible for the International Community initiative, the application procedure was too bureaucratic and not well-organised and too much emphasis was placed on documentation. The project manager of KOMPETENCEmidt reported that an application for ESF funding takes “*time and money*”, but they finally managed everything with help from the regional level. Moreover, in this case, the delay in receiving funds was criticised.

The International Community carries out its monitoring using KPIs (key performance indicators). With respect to funding, KOMPETENCEmidt conducts mid-term evaluations through private companies. A large external evaluation for the up-coming projects is planned. An audit is ongoing: the Danish Ministry has an agreement with an audit company under which they provide half-yearly reports. As regards the initiative's objectives, private, external companies are currently submitting offers to conduct the evaluation.

4.3.6 Multilevel governance

Due to the network structure of the Growth Forum, there is close horizontal coordination between all the stakeholders involved. The partnership with the Growth Forum allows coordination of different policies (e.g. environmental and energy policies) through cooperation with the various stakeholders involved. Vertical cooperation is ensured through the **Partnership Agreement**. The Partnership Agreement is an agreement between the regional Growth Forum and the national government, and helps to facilitate communication between the regional and the national level, holding annual meetings of the ministers from the main ministries and 5 chairmen of the Growth Forum.

There is much less cooperation between the regional and the European level, which is perceived as quite remote. However, it was reported that the Growth Forum was “*trying to get as close to the European activities as we possibly can*”. The only channel for cooperation is the allocation of funding for the different initiatives. To increase cooperation between the regional and the European level, it was suggested that “*maybe the regional interests could be represented at the national level when framing Europe 2020*”.

Regarding the initiatives, it was reported that better cooperation with the national level, establishing a network of initiatives that might deliver examples of good practice, would be desirable.

4.3.7 The added value of Europe 2020

Europe 2020 is perceived as something that has brought the different levels of government closer together, especially through the flagship initiatives that are seen as platforms where the same interests can be shared.

From the general policy-making perspective, the Europe 2020 strategy was very well communicated from the European to the national and regional levels since the Central Region Denmark commented on the first plan for the Europe 2020 strategy through an organisation called “Danish Regions” that is also a member of the Committee of the Regions. Therefore, in Central Region Denmark, Europe 2020 was communicated before it was adopted.

Without Europe 2020, it appears that the Central Region Denmark “*would have worked with just more national coordination*”, but “*the financial crisis (...) put more emphasis on European collaboration*” and made the Europe 2020 Strategy very relevant for the regions.

Europe 2020 is thus perceived as a **strategic planning tool** since the flagship initiatives could be included in the regional strategy. The flagship initiatives are seen as cooperation platforms for communicating with other countries and addressing the same problems within the EU 2020 region. It also appears that the fact that all the Member States are now intent on moving in the same direction helps implement the regional business development strategy.

Regarding the initiatives, it was stated that their main objectives were very much in line with and overlapped the main objectives of Europe 2020, yet the European strategy had not been given very much consideration when designing the initiatives, in one case because the initiative was set up before Europe 2020 was adopted.

Both initiative representatives stated that a similar initiative would have been set up without Europe 2020, even though one of the interviewees remarked that maybe such an initiative would not have been as effective without the backup of a European Strategy and would have been implemented more on a local level. It was noted that Europe 2020 had definitely raised awareness for the objectives of the strategy, had made it easier to explain the initiative, and had a role in its expansion.

It was also reported that the communication to lower levels of governance did not work very well and that the people involved had to gather information on their own in order to remain up to date on European policies.

4.3.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

For the general policy-making perspective in particular, the implementation of Europe 2020 flagship initiatives at the regional and local levels is very important for establishing a platform for vertical and horizontal cooperation where similar problems can be discussed. It was suggested that if the strategy could be implemented at regional and local levels, taking into consideration the actual situation and requirements on the ground, it would represent a good opportunity for the region. It was also pointed out that Europe 2020 could be a good opportunity for Denmark to improve cooperation between the private and public sectors.

Implementing the strategy at regional and local levels and taking into consideration what is happening on the ground were regarded as very important.

A suggested challenge in the future might be to make sure that the regional and local levels do not get overruled by “partnership contracts” between the EU and national levels (as suggested in ongoing discussions for the next period of the Structural Funds). Partnerships between the European and national levels could make it difficult to maintain the relationship between the national and local levels.

The representatives of the initiative felt that the main challenge arose from the way Europe 2020 was and is being communicated to regional and local levels, which had been perceived as very insufficient and unclear. Its role and opportunities for the regional and local levels must be communicated in a clearer and more direct way.

On the whole, Europe 2020 is seen as an opportunity for the region since it particularly strengthens horizontal cooperation with all partners involved pulling in the same direction. More specifically, it is seen as an opportunity for the

region to develop better education, reduce the level of school leavers, develop skills and better competences, and to support SMEs and MEs during the financial crisis.

4.4 Case 4 - Government of Catalonia (Gobierno de Catalunya) (ES)

Name: **Government of Catalonia** (Gobierno de Catalunya)

Typology: **Region**

Web-link: http://www.gencat.cat/index_eng.htm

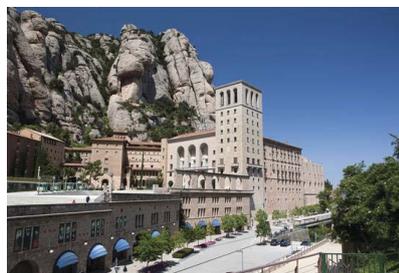
Country: **Spain**

Population: **7.535.251** (2011 figures)

Initiative: “**Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020)**”



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4.4.1 Summary of the findings

The case study is based on three interviews with experts from three different areas of Catalonia: the ECAT 2020 coordinator, the Director-General of Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Economy and Knowledge and the chairman of the biggest trade union in Catalonia, “*Comisiones obreras de Catalunya*”.

The case study has been complemented by desk research using mainly online resources and information provided by the Committee of the Regions.

The Catalan strategy ECAT 2020 is based on Europe 2020 and aims at medium and long-term improvement of competitiveness and employment with the aim of creating more and better employment in Catalonia. It is a roadmap for economic recovery, preserving the social cohesion model of Catalonia. The strategy is currently being developed and will be adopted in spring 2012. ECAT 2020 identifies **six key areas** in which action is necessary to promote **smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**. These areas are based on Europe 2020 flagship initiatives and include “Internationalisation” as an additional key area to the five Europe 2020 key areas. Moreover, ICT technologies are considered as essential for securing improvement in all key areas.

The strategy is currently **funded by the Catalan government** alone. In the future, several measures are scheduled to be financed through European Structural Funds and national funding.

The **common goals established for all levels of government** guarantee jointly agreed progress heading in the same direction. In implementing ECAT 2020, the Catalan Government will work with other levels of government (national and local) to guarantee the necessary coordination and to strengthen synergies and complementarities.

No **territorial pacts** are in force at the moment, but Catalonia does not exclude this possibility for the future.

Due to the **common objectives for all levels of government**, Europe 2020 seems to help strengthen vertical cooperation, but it was also stated that it “*it is more the alignment [between different levels of governance] than the cooperation*” that has improved, which suggests that a more clearly-defined role of the strategy will be needed in the future.

On the whole, **Europe 2020 is perceived as a useful strategy** that provides the answers to many of the challenges Catalonia is currently facing, such as the rising unemployment rate, the economic crisis, and fiscal deficit.

4.4.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

The Catalonia region (Catalan: *Catalunya*) is located in the north-western part of Spain, and Barcelona is its capital. The government of Catalonia is currently developing ECAT 2020 that represents the “Catalonia 2020 strategy”.

In recent years, the strategic framework for strengthening the competitiveness of the Catalan economy, and thus the objectives set by the Europe 2020 strategy, has been provided by strategic agreements to promote the internationalisation, job quality, and competitiveness of the Catalan economy. The first agreement covered the period from 2005-2007 and the second was in force from 2008-2011. The aims and implementing measures for these agreements, which were established jointly with socio-economic stakeholders, broadly correspond to the goals set first by the Lisbon agenda and subsequently by the Europe 2020 strategy. The agreement covers measures designed to: increase employment and improve job quality; increase R&D efforts; improve energy efficiency and put more emphasis on renewable energy; reduce school drop-out rates; and improve social cohesion.

The strategic agreement is currently undergoing renewal and is planned to be adopted in spring 2012. The renewed strategy will be fully in line with the Europe 2020 strategy, adapting the flagship initiatives to the needs and priorities of the Catalan economy: the Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020).

ECAT 2020 will fit in with the Europe 2020 strategy, will take the NRP as a reference, and will develop the flagship initiatives. In addition, ECAT 2020 will provide a systematic and well-ordered framework for all the measures undertaken in Catalonia by the various tiers of government in pursuit of the Europe 2020 objectives.

Source: Government of Catalonia; Survey: Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?

4.4.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

The EU guidelines have always been a reference for Catalan economic and competitiveness policies. In the period 2005-2011 in Catalonia, the Strategic Agreements for the Competitiveness of the Catalan Economy were in force and the objectives and priorities were very similar to those of the Lisbon Agenda.

The second Strategic Agreement for the Competitiveness of the Catalan economy expired in December 2011. The Catalan Government is now preparing the Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020), based on the Europe 2020 Strategy.

ECAT 2020 establishes the priorities and the guidelines for Catalan competitiveness policies up to 2020. It identifies **six key areas** in which it is necessary to act in order to promote **smart**, sustainable and inclusive growth. These areas are based on Europe 2020 flagship initiatives and also include “Internationalisation” as an additional key area to the five Europe 2020 key areas. As an overall cross-cutting instrument necessary to achieve improvement in all key areas, **ICT technologies** are considered to be essential.

The six key areas of the ECAT 2020 are:

- Employment and skills;
- Social cohesion;
- Innovation and knowledge;
- Internationalisation;
- Business dynamism;
- Green economy.

Moreover, ECAT 2020 establishes eight **strategic objectives for Government competitiveness policies**, which should have an impact on the six priority areas:

- Improving skills to strengthen the employability of workers;
- Improving the functioning of labour market;
- Facilitating access to finance for businesses;
- Promoting a strategic reorientation of businesses;
- Promoting entrepreneurship;
- Promoting a more resource-efficient economy;
- Simplifying company start-ups and reducing administrative burdens on businesses;
- Promoting strategic infrastructures for competitiveness.⁴⁰

The first government proposal has been submitted and discussions with the stakeholders are scheduled in the near future. The current proposal has not been discussed yet, which means that the priorities are decided but the **strategic objectives might still change**.

4.4.4 Objectives of the initiative

The Catalan strategy ECAT 2020 aims at medium and long-term improvement of competitiveness and employment with the aim of creating more and better employment in Catalonia. The objective for the strategy is to be ready in spring. **The government is currently working with the social and economic stakeholders** (trade unions, business representatives, etc.) to reach an **agreement** about the public policies needed to promote the Catalan economy and to induce smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. A participatory approach – in the form of an open dialogue with stakeholders – was chosen in order to find this agreement.

The importance of ECAT 2020 relies on its governance system that will work as follows:

- i. It provides strategic objectives and guidelines for the competitiveness policies up to 2020;*
- ii. It identifies those public measures with a positive impact on competitiveness and employment and which help to promote smart, inclusive and sustainable growth;*
- iii. It identifies synergies, complementarities and duplication in the measures of various ministries;*

⁴⁰ Provided by the ECAT 2020 coordinator via e-mail.

- iv. *It promotes a different, more cross-cutting way of working. ECAT 2020 promotes the definition of shared objectives and the pooling of efforts to achieve them;*
- v. *It gives priority to those measures with a higher impact on competitiveness;*
- vi. *It evaluates the impact of the selected measures on the 6 key areas (Employment and skills; Social cohesion; Innovation and knowledge; Internationalisation; Business dynamism; Green economy);*
- vii. *It is a very dynamic process, with an annual assessment and a mid-term review (2015);*
- viii. *It redefines the measures using efficacy and efficiency criteria;*
- ix. *The budget and the concrete measures will be defined every year;*
- x. *The process of assessment and redefinition of the measures to promote competitiveness is a very dynamic and open one. Stakeholders are involved in the whole process.*⁴¹

The fact that there are **common goals for all levels of government** guarantees overall progress heading in the same direction. In implementing ECAT 2020, the Catalan Government will work with other levels of government (national and local) to guarantee the necessary coordination and to strengthen synergies and complementarities.

One of the main **challenges** in this context is the **economic crisis**. The priority of the Spanish government is restricting public expenditure, with a view to reducing the fiscal deficit. The main challenge in Spain is the rising **unemployment** rate and the rigid **labour system** in force. The government tried to make the labour system more flexible in order to improve employment. This reform was implemented, but without the agreement of the trade unions, thereby creating difficulties with the social stakeholders.

Another challenge will be to find the necessary funds for implementing the strategy. A real problem is the “*weakness of the financial system of Catalonia which is jeopardising the recovery of this economy. The financial system is very unfair for Catalonia; there is an enormous difference between what Catalans pay and the services they receive in exchange*”. Catalonia is richer than the rest of Spain, and due to the solidarity system, it has to “*transfer a part of this wealth to the poorer regions*”.

⁴¹ Provided by the ECAT 2020 coordinator via e-mail.

4.4.5 Funding issues

Funding is one of the biggest challenges in Catalonia. The economic crisis has led to a sharp fall in public incomes. Catalonia has a very rigid spending structure, with education, health, social services, and security expenses accounting for more than 70% of public expenditure. The aggravated public debt situation restricts the Government's response capacity, while Catalonia's fiscal deficit vis-à-vis the rest of Spain hinders economic growth.

ECAT 2020 has no additional budget. Most of the funding for measures comes from the Catalan government at the moment, but individual measures will be financed by various funds (national funds, European Structural Funds).

The competitiveness of the EU and of Member States is based on the competitiveness of their regions. Regional governments should have the necessary means to make their regions more competitive. The Europe 2020 objectives will be only achieved if all levels of government work together towards the common goals.

4.4.6 Multilevel governance

The ECAT 2020 objectives and priorities are based on Europe 2020. ECAT 2020 is also closely coordinated with the programming of the Structural Funds.

The fact that there are **common goals for all levels of government** guarantees that all levels of government are heading in the same direction, despite the fact that **ECAT 2020 has not been approved yet**. Nevertheless, it is clear that much remains to be done in that area. Most cooperation will take place at the regional and European levels; Catalonia, as an autonomous community, does not cooperate very much with the Spanish government, but this could change in the future with the approval of the ECAT 2020.

The participation of regional governments in the definition of the NRP should be strengthened. There should be a national fund to promote the reorientation of regional economic policies towards the EU common goals: "*specific national funds should be available to reach regional goals and targets*". It was suggested that "*It is important that the EU and the national government recognise the role of regions in achieving common goals*".

All of Catalonia's governmental departments have been included in the development of ECAT 2020; each department is responsible for the measures it carries out.

Europe 2020 **sets common objectives for all levels of government** and helps to strengthen vertical cooperation.

There are currently no territorial pacts in force, but Catalonia does not exclude “*this possibility for the future*”.

4.4.7 The added value of Europe 2020

ECAT 2020 objectives are based on the Europe 2020 priorities and flagship initiatives. Progress in these strategic objectives means progress in reaching the common EU objectives, which are those set out in the Europe 2020 strategy and in the Spanish NRP.

The Europe 2020 objectives form the core of Catalonia’s economic policies. All the information related to the Europe 2020 strategy is available and easy to obtain. The same is true for the Spanish NRP. However, there was limited communication about Europe 2020 from the national level; the European level was more involved in the process. Nevertheless, there should be greater **participation** by the **regions** in drafting the NRP.

ECAT 2020 is an ambitious cross-cutting policy programme involving all the ministries of the Catalan Government. The Europe 2020 Strategy has without doubt **facilitated the design** of such a programme, **as did the Lisbon Agenda with the previous Strategic Agreements for the competitiveness of the Catalan economy**. To have European objectives agreed upon by all EU governments **facilitates** the agreement with stakeholders about the key priority areas for boosting competitiveness and growth in Catalonia.

The pressure from the European level to have a common strategy has helped to define the objectives and targets for ECAT 2020 in a very positive sense. **Without Europe 2020**, a different regional strategy would probably have been designed and it would have been more difficult to reach agreement on the contents of the Catalan strategy.

Europe 2020 is broadly seen as a strategic planning tool for creating smart, sustainable and inclusive regions. All governments have committed themselves to achieving progress in these three areas **simultaneously**, and to **measure progress** with **indicators**.

ECAT 2020, based on Europe 2020, works to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

4.4.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

One important **challenge** is **coordinating all levels of government** to achieve the best possible results in moving towards a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. This is not an easy task, particularly in areas where competences are shared between the different government levels.

Another important challenge is the **economic crisis** and the restrictions on public spending combined with growing social needs, strongly influenced by rising unemployment rates. It is suggested that it is a government's responsibility to find innovative new ways of governance and cut the use of resources.

A third challenge is **identifying the “right priorities for public policies”**. Public policies should provide not only for an adequate response to immediate **short-term needs, but also for the medium and long-term needs**: smart, inclusive and sustainable growth must go hand-in-hand.

In Catalonia, Europe 2020 is a “*widely accepted roadmap*” that is seen as an **opportunity** to address the structural weaknesses of the economy and to strengthen its potential. To address the challenges of globalisation, sustainability, and growing social needs, the public sector has to rethink its “*traditional way of doing things*”. The ECAT 2020 is an important step in this direction. Under the umbrella of Europe 2020, the Catalan strategy has earned credibility. An important issue still to address is the funding, also because Spain has decided to limit public expenditure.

The fact that the Europe 2020 strategy has enhanced the social dialogue and the cooperation between regions is also seen as an opportunity.

Improving **skills** to strengthen the employability of workers, especially of young people (the unemployment rate among young people is above 40%), facilitating access to finance for businesses, promoting entrepreneurship, simplifying **company start-ups**, and **reducing administrative burdens** on businesses are key priorities in the Catalan government agenda.

4.5 Case 5 - Greater Dunkirk Council (FR)

Name: **Greater Dunkirk Council
(Communauté urbaine de Dunkerque)**

Typology: **Inter-municipal structure**

Web-link:

<http://www.dunkerquegrandlittoral.org/>

Country: **France**

Population: **ca. 200.000 inhabitants**

Initiative: **“Creation of the Sustainable City
Learning Center in Dunkirk”**



4.5.1 Summary of the findings

The case study is based on three interviews with experts from the Greater Dunkirk Council: the EU-policy officer in the Cabinet of the Leader of the Council, the project manager of the Learning Center and the director of the “*Halles aux sucres*” project, of which the ‘Learning Center’ is a part.

The case study was complemented by desk research using mainly online resources and information provided by the Greater Dunkirk Council and the Committee of the Regions.

The local development strategy of the Greater Dunkirk Council is the so-called ‘Community Plan’, which came into force in 2008 and will run until 2014. Although it was related to the former **Lisbon strategy** when it was drafted, its objectives are still **in line with the Europe 2020 strategy**. The core of the community plan is to “*mainstream sustainable development in all objectives*”. The main objectives of the Community Plan are to increase employment, stimulate the local economy, and make Dunkirk a place where people want to live and work. All of these aspects are accompanied by the aim of protecting and preserving the local environment in a sustainable way.

The initiative of the ‘Sustainable City Learning Center’ was established under the local Community Plan with the aim of creating a new concept for a library of the 21st century, where not only books, but also a wide range of electronic resources and services (on-site and online) will be accessible for the public. The idea is that the Learning Center will be a place for communication, exchanging knowledge, creating new skills, and developing concepts and ideas for a sustainable city, and will boost the economy and enhance the well-being of the inhabitants.

The “*Halles aux sucres*” project, of which the Learning Center initiative is part, is **financed** by the European Regional Development Fund (20%), regional funds (35%), infra-regional funds (6%) and local funds provided by the Greater Dunkirk Council (39%). On the whole, there is close **cooperation** with the sub-regional and regional levels, while cooperation with national and European level relates only to funding activities.

Regarding the Europe 2020 strategy and framing the French NRP, it is felt that the local and regional aspects are not taken sufficiently into account, which makes coordination with the national level difficult. Local and regional authorities need to be much more involved in the preparation and implementation of the NRP, especially as the future cohesion policy will be focused on the Europe 2020 objectives. This should also help to ensure coherence when preparing the different strategic documents for both the Europe 2020 strategy and cohesion policy.

The Greater Dunkirk Council is not part of a **territorial pact** at the moment, but is thinking of testing this approach in the future.

The Europe 2020 strategy is so far perceived at the local level as a limited **strategic planning tool**. However, there are hopes that improvements will be made in the drafting of the future NRP and of the strategic documents for cohesion policy.

4.5.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

The **Greater Dunkirk Council** is located in northern France beside the North Sea in the Nord department in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region. It has a population of a little over 200.000 and is known as a centre for steel manufacturing and

shipbuilding. Other industries in the greater urban area include oil refining, food processing, and manufacturing of electrical equipment.⁴²

The initiative in question, “**Creation of the Sustainable City Learning Center in Dunkirk**”, aims to provide the public with an organisation, infrastructure, and tools dedicated to sustainable development in cities (bringing these together in one place for the first time), to optimise access to knowledge, promote the circulation of ideas, share knowledge, and stimulate exchange and encourage ideas for a sustainable city to boost the economy and enhance the well-being of the inhabitants. There is a new concept for a 21st century library, where not only books, but also a wide range of electronic resources and services (on-site and online) will be accessible to the public. The idea is that the Learning Center will be a place for communication and exchange of knowledge. The documentation centre will also be linked to other facilities and offer remote access to documents.

The creation of the Sustainable City Learning Centre supports the Europe 2020 strategy, as it promotes **growth** that is **smart** (learning about sustainable cities), **sustainable** (promotion of sustainable development) and **inclusive** (all audiences are welcome). However, this forum for sustainable cities relates particularly to the implementation of **three flagship initiatives**: a) the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs (lifelong learning for sustainable cities); b) Innovation Union (fostering innovation in the field of sustainable cities) and c) A Digital Agenda for Europe (the Learning Centre offers not only books but also sound recordings, photos and films in digital format).

This initiative is part of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais regional Council’s project to establish a network of **four Learning Centers** in the region: on sustainable cities (Greater Dunkirk Council), on innovation (University of Lille 1), on Egyptology (University of Lille 3) and on religious aspects (Abbey of Vaucelles). This regional Learning Centers project is in line with the aim of the former Lisbon strategy to create a knowledge-based economy and society. This project is also written into the contract of projects signed between the State and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region for 2007-2013. Consequently, the setting up of the Sustainable City Learning Center in Dunkirk has been the fruit of a joint consultation between the authorities of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region and of the Greater Dunkirk Council.

Moreover, these four Learning Centers bring into play several of the guidelines of the French National Reform Programme (NRP) for 2011-2014 (to support research and development and the knowledge triangle, promote education and

⁴² <http://www.aboutfrenchproperty.com/dunkerque>.

lifelong learning and foster a more efficient use of resources) and helps to achieve the objectives set by the French government with regard to the Europe 2020 strategy.

Sources: Dunkirk Urban Community, (FR); Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?; provision of information material on the initiative by the EU policy officer in the Cabinet of the Leader of the Council of Dunkirk

4.5.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

The local development strategy reflected by the Community Plan (2008-2014) was designed before the Europe 2020 strategy was adopted.

The core of the Community Plan is to “*mainstream sustainable development within its four axes*”, which means that the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic) must always be taken into consideration when setting up policies.

The **four axes** of the **Community Plan** that define the priorities for the Greater Dunkirk Council are:

1. **Looking towards the open sea:** a territory open to the sea and the world;
2. **Preserving and enhancing:** a quality environment;
3. **Attracting and radiating:** a dynamic and forward-looking economy;
4. **Blossoming:** an urban area showing solidarity, where it is good to live.

With the Community Plan, the objectives of the European policy documents, of the NRP and the regional strategy endorsed by the “**Regional scheme for territorial planning and development**” are taken into account and implemented at the local level.

Much work has been done in the recent years to re-design the Dunkirk area. The objective of the Community Plan is to have an integrated approach that “*encompasses all three dimensions of sustainable development and aims at developing the territory*”.

4.5.4 Objectives of the initiative

The local initiative of the “Sustainable City Learning Center” has been undertaken under the Community Plan (2008-2014) of the Greater Dunkirk Council which was set up in 2008 and will be in force until 2014. Under this plan, the core for local projects was defined to mainstream sustainable

development in all initiatives, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental, economic).

The first idea for the initiative dates back to 2005, but the project took some time to take shape. Currently, a “*small team*” is working on the design of the Learning Center, which is due to open in 2014.

The Greater Dunkirk Council decided, within the context of the Agenda 21, to create a project that would offer a wide range of possibilities, help to raise its profile, and show that many greening measures are being undertaken. The exchange of examples of good practice is also considered to be essential.

The objectives of the initiative are various and aim to:

- Make the area more attractive;
- Introduce a new approach for life-long learning;
- Allow everyone to access new knowledge about sustainability in cities;
- Create a resource centre that offers “*new technologies, research and development, training for students and professionals*”;
- Offer different sources of information, e.g. exhibitions, books, conferences;
- Stimulate creativity, innovation, and an economy based on sustainability;
- Find answers to the question of what a sustainable city looks like and make the answers clear to the public: to public employers, university, tourists, companies, etc.;
- Develop synergies and collaborative actions, new behaviours and to “*have a better life together in a city and its environment*”;
- Provide a dynamic concept that includes participation and contribution of the public (e.g. literature, exchange of information, raising new questions, etc.).

The “Halles aux sucres”, the building where the Sustainable City Learning Center will be located, will be shared with several other organisations that all work in the area of town planning, such as the Agency for urban planning and development of the Flanders-Dunkirk region (AGUR), the specialised national institute for territorial studies in Dunkirk (INET), and several others.

The overall policy of the Greater Dunkirk Council and the Sustainable City Learning Center in particular are part of the responses to the most important **challenges** Dunkirk is facing. Unemployment is one of the biggest challenges (over 10% in 2011), followed by the necessary improvement of working and living conditions, as well as developing and enhancing the areas' attractiveness. There is another challenge Dunkirk has to face, which is environmental pollution created by industrial activities connected to the port of Dunkirk and “*two nuclear centres*” located 20km away from the city.

4.5.5 Funding issues

The funding for the “*Halles aux sucres*” project, of which the Sustainable City Learning Center is part, comes from different sources:

- 20% ERDF;
- 35% regional funds from the Nord-Pas de Calais Region;
- 6% infra-regional funds from the Nord Department;
- 39% local funds provided by the Greater Dunkirk Council.

At the moment, the funding is sufficient for implementing the initiative. The financial monitoring is conducted by the services of the Greater Dunkirk Council. A scientific committee (composed of university researchers and other experts) will monitor and evaluate the initiative.

It was suggested that the **application processes** for the **allocation of funding** should be simplified and the schedule made more flexible in order to be able to change priorities once the project or initiative has started.

One of the main **policy tools** is the EGTC (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation). There are no legislative tools in use since the local authority does not have legislative power. All projects and initiatives under the community plan are monitored and evaluated in order to re-adapt along the way.

For Dunkirk, the Europe 2020 objectives are “*really ambitious*”. The need for financial support often interferes with the national level's desire to “*make savings*” in response to the economic crisis. It was explained that to succeed in implementing the Europe 2020 objectives with the support of Cohesion Policy, a “*proper budget for achieving such ambitious goals*” should first be available.

4.5.6 Multilevel governance

As far as the Greater Dunkirk Council is concerned, cooperation with other sub-national levels is close, as they share the same interests and issues on the whole. As for cooperation with the national level, there seems to be room for improvement. **Better inclusion and consultation of the regional and local authorities when framing the NRP** is needed. By and large, there is a desire to strengthen cooperation with all levels of government.

Cooperation with the EU level is perceived as a “*top-down process*”, with local and regional authorities not being given enough consideration in the policymaking process. However, Dunkirk Greater Council is “*ready to get*

involved” and participate. Nevertheless, Europe 2020 is deemed to **strengthen the vertical cooperation between different levels of governance**.

As regards the setting-up of the Sustainable City Learning Center, cooperation with the regional level is very strong, especially as the Learning Center in Dunkirk is one of the four Learning Centers that are part of the aforementioned regional project. **Other partners participating in the initiative** such as the scientific committee, the university (*Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale - ULCO*); the Agency for urban planning and development of the Flanders-Dunkirk region (AGUR) and the specialised national institute for regional studies in Dunkirk (*Institut national spécialisé d'études territoriales de Dunkerque - INET*) played a very important role in developing and implementing this initiative. However, there is a desire to collaborate with other levels of administration, “*not only locally*”, and to promote the Sustainable City Learning Center as an example of good practice. But, for now, cooperation with the national and European levels is primarily linked to funding.

The Greater Dunkirk Council is not part of a **territorial pact** at the moment, but feels “*ready to be part of this kind of pact*” in the future.

4.5.7 The added value of Europe 2020

Since the idea for the Sustainable City Learning Center was born in 2005 and adopted in 2008, it was influenced by the **Lisbon Strategy**, which was in force at that time.

From a general policy-making point of view, **communication** about the Europe 2020 strategy and the NRP has come directly from the Committee of the Regions⁴³ and the European Commission. This seems to have been quite successful since the Department in charge of European affairs (DSPEI) in the Greater Dunkirk Council has a proactive approach to obtaining information about European policies. In addition, there are channels of information between local and regional authorities. The national government made no efforts to directly communicate Europe 2020. Communication about the Europe 2020 strategy and the NRP seems to have been very weak in terms of implementing the initiative.

Nevertheless, **EU Cohesion Policy has a supportive role** in implementing the objectives of the Community Plan. For the next programming period 2014-2020, the Community Plan will certainly be more closely linked to the Europe 2020

⁴³ The Leader of the Greater Dunkirk Council, Michel Delebarre, is a member of the Committee of the Regions. The Greater Dunkirk Council is also a member of the CoR Subsidiarity Monitoring Network and Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform.

strategy, as the future Cohesion Policy will be heavily focused on implementing the Europe 2020 objectives.

At present, there is no strong feeling of being part of a large, overall European strategy: *“So far, we do not feel that we have been a part of the European 2020 Strategy project”*, but there are hopes of improvements for the future: local and regional levels want to be given more consideration and be involved in framing the NRP (due for renewal in 2013), which would make Europe 2020 and the NRP a **strategic planning tool for creating intelligent, sustainable and smart regions and cities**. To date, it has been perceived as such **to a limited extent**, but improvements are expected when the next NRP is drawn up.

4.5.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

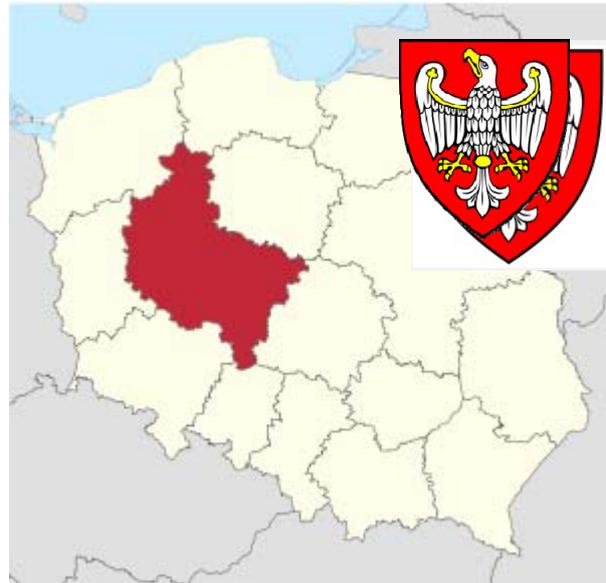
The objectives of the Community Plan (2008-2014) are in line with the Europe 2020 strategy, which is viewed as a support for implementing the local strategy. It is an adequate tool for responding to the economic crisis and the unemployment situation. The Europe 2020 Flagship Initiatives “Youth on the move”, “Innovation Union” and “A Digital Agenda for Europe” are given special consideration when designing and implementing the local strategy.

An opportunity for the Greater Dunkirk Council under the Europe 2020 strategy is to make the territory more attractive to encourage more people to live and work there. It is also hoped that the Learning Center will have an impact on employment (create jobs) and the local economy (create growth) and will help in the development of new companies or developing new areas and competences needed at the local level.

It is hoped that it will create growth and jobs, enhance the economic development and increase the attractiveness of the region. An important challenge for the Greater Dunkirk Council is to fully re-develop the industrial sector and to protect and preserve the environment.

4.6 Case 6 - Marshall's Office of the Wielkopolskie Region (PL)

Name: **Wielkopolska (Greater Poland Voivodeship)**
Typology: **Region**
Web-link: <http://en.umww.pl/>
Country: **Poland**
Capital City: **Poznań**
Region: **Wielkopolskie**
Population: **3.37 million** (2011 figures)
Initiative: “**Innowacyjna Wielkopolska (Innovative Wielkopolska)**”



4.6.1 Summary of the findings

Although the Europe 2020 strategy has not played a significant role in the regional EU-related policy-making or in establishing the “Innovative Wielkopolska” initiative, it is perceived as a vital document because:

- it focuses on and highlights the importance of innovativeness, sustainability, and inclusiveness in development policies and strategies;
- it encourages better cooperation between different levels of governance;
- it offers a development model matching regional specific characteristics rather than a “one-size-fits-all” model.

Communicating Europe 2020 adequately depends on the governance level. The lower the level, the less adequately it was communicated. Communication was sufficient at the regional level, and virtually non-existent at the stakeholder (beneficiary) level.

It is not possible to properly assess the coordination and cooperation between different levels of governance as both regional policy-making and implementing the initiative took place before Europe 2020 was launched and therefore it had almost no impact on regional policy-making and the initiative.

It is suggested that similar policy-making processes and initiatives would have been taken forward without the Europe 2020 strategy.

Similarly, the NRP did not affect either the policy-making processes in the region or the implementation of the initiative. Furthermore, the NRP was implemented at the national level and there was very little cooperation and coordination with the regional level. In general, the national level seems to be the weakest level in terms of communication and coordination of policy-making between the EU, member states, and regions.

The funding supporting the EU-related policies and the initiative will come from European, national, and regional sources. It is not yet clear how the funding will be structured or if it will be enough as the new EU budget has not been decided yet.

When it comes to funding, it appears that the most crucial issue is the fact that there is no long-term strategic planning. Moreover, the funding schemes are being modified or even cancelled while approved initiatives and projects are being implemented at the regional and local levels. Moreover, there are problems with the design of the funding schemes. For all these reasons, it appears difficult to secure funding.

The Region of Wielkopolska is not a member of the Territorial Pact yet, but it will be soon.

4.6.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

Wielkopolska Voivodeship (in Polish “województwo wielkopolskie”) is a province in west-central Poland with a population of almost 3.4 million.

The project in question was built on the flagship initiative “Innovation Union” and entitled “Innowacyjna Wielkopolska (Innovative Wielkopolska” (*project link*: <http://iw.org.pl/de/>) and is funded inter alia by the European Social Fund.

The “Innovative Wielkopolska” was launched by the Regional Marshall's Office (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Wielkopolskiego) to stimulate and

improve the innovativeness of the Wielkopolska Region. The initiative is an umbrella for a wide variety of projects and initiatives, both top-down and bottom-up. The project includes **many forms of cooperation and partnership with numerous organisations** in the region.

4.6.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

On the whole, both the EU-related policy-making at the regional level and the initiative are in line with the Europe 2020 strategy. However, there is no causal relationship between them, as the policy-making and the initiative were launched before Europe 2020. However, it is suggested that the Europe 2020 strategy is of great importance for highlighting the relevance of sustainability, innovativeness, and inclusiveness as development objectives.

A very important aspect is the fact that the Europe 2020 strategy encourages regionally-tailored development strategies. This is perceived as a potentially successful aspect of the strategy and it also guides the regional policy-making towards more sustainable development.

The governance issues as well as the coordination and cooperation issues vary between national, regional, and local levels. It seems that a high level of centralisation and a low level of political and regulatory stability are the main obstacles to better multilevel policy-making.

4.6.4 Objectives of the initiative

The “Innovative Wielkopolska” was launched by the Regional Marshall's Office (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Wielkopolskiego) to stimulate and improve the innovativeness of the Wielkopolska Region.

The initiative is an umbrella for a wide variety of projects and initiatives, both top-down and bottom-up, in areas such as:

- Public administration
 - Stimulating and strengthening the innovativeness of the public administration at all levels (local, regional), and thereby improving the quality of services provided to citizens;
 - Developing an attitude within the public authorities of actively supporting innovativeness and entrepreneurship among local and regional stakeholders;

- Companies (especially SMEs)
 - Giving awards to the most innovative companies in the region;
 - Promoting the ‘creative sectors’ of the economy;
 - Supporting an internationalisation of regional companies;
- Institutions supporting business development
- Universities and research centres
 - Promoting cooperation between companies and researchers;
 - Stimulating development of youth entrepreneurship;
- Education (through workshops and training supporting entrepreneurship and innovativeness among citizens);
- Promoting partnerships between different stakeholders playing an important role for creating a culture of innovativeness.

4.6.5 Funding issues

From the perspective of the regional authorities, the Europe 2020-related policies and their implementation will be funded from European, national and regional funds as was the case for previous European strategies. However, the precise structure of the funding is unknown at the moment, as the new EU budget has not been agreed on yet. Therefore achieving the EU 2020 and regional development objectives will depend to a certain extent on the new European budget.

The “Innovative Wielkopolska” initiative is financed from European, national and regional funds. Sufficient funding is available and is relatively easy to secure.

The most significant problem is the fact that the **funding schemes were redesigned or cancelled** shortly after many projects were implemented. It undermines the trust of the stakeholders in the initiative and calls into question any long-term strategic planning.

From the stakeholder perspective, securing EU (or other) **funding was very difficult**, if not virtually impossible, due to poor design of the financial support scheme at the national level.

More **funding should be decentralised** to the regional level. There is an opposite trend at the moment to centralise funding which makes it more difficult to secure.

4.6.6 Multilevel governance

As the regional development strategy was drawn up prior to the Europe 2020 strategy, it is not possible to properly assess the cooperation between different levels of governance. In general, however, from the perspective of the regional authorities, the cooperation and coordination between EU, national, and regional institutions is very good.

However, it is suggested that joint multilevel efforts during the development process of the Europe 2020 strategy would **strengthen the cooperation and coordination between various levels of governance.**

The EU-related policy-making in the region is conducted in cooperation with a broad level of institutions at different levels. At the European level it is coordinated for instance with the Committee of the Regions (CoR). At the national level different working groups and departments within the ministries are involved in the coordination process. Finally, at the regional level, there is an association of Marshalls' Offices that collaborates and prepares joint opinions concerning governmental documents as well as the strategic regional documents. However, the impression is that the National Reform Program (NRP) was drawn up and launched with almost **no cooperation and coordination between the national and regional levels.**

At the moment, the region is not part of a territorial pact. However, it is actively involved in preparing the Territorial Pact and will become a member.

From the stakeholder viewpoint, it is suggested that there is very **little coordination between national and regional levels.** This has certain consequences, such as inefficient design of the financial support at the national level, difficulties in applying for European funding, lack of a clear division of responsibilities between regional and national authorities, and low stability of regulations. The stakeholders underlined that the public authorities at the regional level are making real progress with their knowledge and willingness to support entrepreneurship and innovativeness, however in many cases these efforts are hampered at the national level.

4.6.7 The added value of Europe 2020

At the regional policy-making level, Europe 2020 is seen as a very important document, establishing **long-term development** objectives such as creating smart, sustainable and inclusive regions.

At this level, it appears that it was very **well communicated** both from the European and national (The Ministry of Regional Development) institutions.

However, in the case of the Wielkopolska region, the Europe 2020 strategy **did not play a significant role** in the whole policy-making process, as the regional development strategy was drawn up and launched much earlier. However, its objectives are very similar to those of Europe 2020.

Furthermore, it is suggested that a similar regional policy-making process and strategy would have been taken forward without the Europe 2020 strategy.

The “Innovative Wielkopolska” initiative was developed and launched before the Europe 2020 strategy came into play. The latter therefore did not play a significant role in establishing the initiative. Furthermore, a similar initiative would have been developed without the Europe 2020 strategy, as the Wielkopolska region has been launching similar strategies and objectives for a decade.

On the initiative level, it appears that the Europe 2020 strategy was not well communicated from the European and national levels.

4.6.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

The main challenges at the regional level are: **climate change mitigation** and **increasing the employment rate among young people**. At the same time, however, some challenges (e.g. climate change mitigation) are perceived as opportunities for the regions to stimulate their development.

The Europe 2020 strategy appears to be an important document bringing certain opportunities for the initiative and the whole region. First, it focuses on creating regional or sub-regional development and innovation strategies. It is no longer a strategy offering abstract ideas on innovativeness and sustainable development, but instead recommends **designing and implementing development strategies and initiatives matching regional and local strengths**. Moreover, Europe 2020 offers a much **more systemic and holistic approach to development**.

At the stakeholder (beneficiary) level, the Europe 2020 strategy is seen as an opportunity as it will draw **more attention to smart growth, innovative society, and new technologies**. Based on previous experiences with the Lisbon Strategy, it is suggested that whilst it is not enough to have a well-designed strategy, it is **crucial to implement the strategy and stimulate institutional changes at the regional and local level**.

4.7 Case 7 - Porto Municipality (PT)

Name: **Porto**

Typology: **City**

Web-link: <http://www.cm-porto.pt/>

Country: **Portugal**

Population: **237.559** (2011 figures)

Initiative: “**Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)**”



4.7.1 Summary of the findings

The case study is based on three interviews with three different experts from Porto: the **energy authority** that had recently extended the initiative to 7 other municipalities in the northern Portugal region; the **deputy mayor**, responsible for the areas of urbanism, mobility and infrastructure in the city; the **transportation authority** that organises and regulates the transport sector and deals with transport sector operators.

The case study was complemented by desk research using mainly online resources and information provided by the Committee of the Regions.

First and foremost, it is important to note that the general economic situation in Portugal is having consequences at the local level, and this is impacting the initiatives and activities related to the Sustainable Energy Action Plan in Porto.

The first major conclusion emerging from the interviews is worth noting: the Sustainable Energy Action Plan in Porto seems to have been very successful since it has recently been decided to upgrade it to a kind of inter-municipal action plan that now embraces 8 municipalities in the northern Portugal region.

In terms of funding, 15% of the total appears to come directly from European funding for the initiative, through the ‘structural funds’ and, hence, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) seems to be very prominent in this regard.

On the whole, we can say that the initiative is very well-coordinated, especially at the local level, with a number of departments collaborating. From a vertical point of view, Europe seems to be closer than the national level that is now paying great attention to the on-going financial and macro-economic situation. Better integration of policies, a more modern up-to-date energy policy from the national government, and a better use of the European Subsidiarity principle at the local level are suggested.

Although European strategies are seen as an opportunity, they are not perceived as a strategic planning tool for the creation of ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive’ regions (or local authorities) because they are still too broad and not specific enough.

4.7.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

Porto is the capital and second largest city (237.559 inhabitants) of Portugal. It is located on the Douro river estuary in northern Portugal.

The project in question is related to the flagship initiative “Resource efficient Europe” entitled “**Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)**” and was approved by the city council in October 2010.

The Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP-P)⁴⁴ is a **strategic plan** rather than an implementing programme that expresses the views and intentions of the city council, on behalf of the city of Porto, on how to conduct local energy policy up to 2020 in line with the Commission’s energy and environment policy. Through the SEAP-P, Porto aims to become an energy-efficient city, reducing dependence on fossil fuels, increasing the use of renewable energies, and promoting energy efficiency. The SEAP-P is an example of how political, technically viable solutions can make it possible to achieve greater results in terms of energy use and corresponding equivalent CO₂ emissions.

The SEAP-P includes a range of actions and initiatives that are already being implemented, such as the following projects:

⁴⁴http://www.cm-porto.pt/users/0/58/PlanodeAcoSumrioemings_ba7447abfe733eb151643e91cd4ee15b.pdf.

- Porto observatory for energy and the environmental sustainability of buildings;
- Reference guidelines for the Energy-Efficient Rehabilitation of Porto's Historical Centre;
- Urban thermal energy network (RUTE);
- Other projects relating to existing infrastructures include solar heating systems in social housing, energy-efficient measures in swimming-pools, adaptation of street lightning, etc.

(Source: Porto (PT), survey Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?, Europe 2020 – what's happening on the ground?)

4.7.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

A strong relationship with the European level seems to have existed for a long time, mostly through the Covenant of Mayors. However, the reference to the Europe 2020 strategy is unclear, and there is no real understanding of it at the local level. Even though this reference is unclear the European '20-20-20 targets' are greatly appreciated and very much a part of the initiative. In this respect, visibility and credibility are positive points most frequently used to describe this European effort. Moreover, a sense of helping to bring people together all over Europe in common goals is also considered to be very positive.

4.7.4 Objectives of the initiative

The goal of the Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan is essentially to make Porto more sustainable, especially from an energy consumption point of view. Its main objective involves a cut in CO₂ emissions of more than 20% by 2020. The objectives of cutting CO₂ emissions and energy consumption, promoting renewable energies and increasing energy efficiency are in line with the European 'climate and energy package' that endorses the so-called "20-20-20 targets", mainly:

- a reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions of at least 20% below 1990 levels;
- 20% of EU energy consumption to come from renewable resources;
- a 20% reduction in primary energy use compared with projected levels, to be achieved by improving energy efficiency.

The Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan is also closely linked to the National Plan for Climate Change that is known in Portugal as the 'Programa Nacional para as Alterações Climáticas' (PNAC).

Two main challenges have been identified: on the one hand, the implementation phase of an action plan is recognised as being more difficult than the planning and strategic stage. On the other hand, a second major challenge seems to be the general economic situation that is affecting Portugal at the moment. In fact, the crisis is having a major impact on all the initiatives that started out with certain expectations, especially being able to counting on bank credit and favourable financial and macro-economic conditions.

4.7.5 Funding issues

The most important point to be stressed in this regard is that this initiative uses funding from a range of different sources, mostly because the majority of the actions are not exclusively ‘energy-specific’ but closely related to different areas and sectors (such as housing and transportation). This is the reason why much of the funding comes from sources linked to other sectors. Around 50% of the funds are not actually ‘energy-specific’. The remaining 50% is attributed directly to energy and is financed as follows:

- 15% comes from the European Structural Funds and, especially from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), since this region is able to access them;
- 35% is diversely co-financed among other national funds and private funding (i.e. donors, stakeholders, owners).

The Porto Sustainable Energy Action Plan is therefore considered to be a kind of ‘enabler’ for facilitating the funding of projects under its umbrella.

However, although there are no funds coming directly from Europe 2020, the Porto initiative is using European funds, but these are coming via the Structural Funds.

The structural funds are managed in Portugal through regional programmes, and are a major development opportunity. Although well-planned and structured, these funds do not seem to be easy to obtain, especially because, as pointed out by an interviewee, very large amounts of them have already been committed to projects in Portugal. Furthermore, the process of finding the right line of funding seems to be proving difficult.

From the comments made during the interviews, it appears that there are no real evaluation/monitoring arrangements directly related to the funding issues, they are not monitored in a continuous way and there is not enough funding to ensure that they are carried out. It also appears that a kind of monitoring is applied more to the results/outcomes rather than to the funding. Improvement could be

made by implementing the **subsidiarity principle**⁴⁵ that should be strongly considered, also with respect to structural funds. Therefore, Local and Regional Authorities should decide how to use them to address specific problems in the region.

4.7.6 Multilevel governance

As noted previously, the Porto initiative established **very good contacts with the European level**, especially through the Energy Agency. Although this is an independent body, its main role appears to be coordinating the overall plan. However, it is also true that the deputy mayor is responsible, inter alia, for coordinating the agency. Furthermore, the contacts with the European level have been created **thanks to the Covenant of Mayors**, which seems to be the main link to Europe. The European level is the ‘closest’ to this initiative, especially in terms of objectives.

However, the national level seems to be far removed from the initiative. This is mainly due to the difficult situation in Portugal at present. However, as one interviewee explained, the initiative seems to have certain links to the national climate change plan, but there are still some issues when it comes to energy management at national level. At the same time, it seems that **a similar loose coordination exists with the regional level**, especially because Portuguese regions are technical rather than political entities, in the sense that they are not elected bodies.

The initiative is very **well coordinated at the local level and especially horizontally across departments**. Different departments of the municipality are working together on the initiative, and the coordination among them also seems to be very effective.

In this regard, it is felt that **better integration** of policies between the different levels of government and a more **modern up-to-date energy policy from the national government** are needed, and then the European **Subsidiarity principle** should be implemented, also at the local level. Another important improvement suggested concerns the possibility of having stable reference contacts points in Europe with a certain number of people working in the same place over a period of time, so that links can be developed in time and trust can then be built.

⁴⁵ The *principle of subsidiarity* regulates “the exercise of powers in the European Union. It is intended to determine whether, in an area where there is joint competence, the Union can take action or should leave the matter to the Member States. The subsidiarity principle is based on the idea that decisions must be taken as closely as possible to the citizen”

(from: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/subsidiarity.htm>)

4.7.7 The added value of Europe 2020

Although the initiative was launched in 2007 in the context of the **Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE) programme**⁴⁶, the Porto Sustainable Energy Action plan aimed to meet the commitments entered into under the ‘Covenant of mayors’, which was launched by the European Commission after the adoption, in 2008, of the [EU Climate and Energy Package](#)⁴⁷. The [Covenant of Mayors](#)⁴⁸ is the mainstream European movement involving local and regional authorities, voluntarily committing to increasing energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources in their areas. Through their commitment, Covenant signatories aim to meet and exceed the European Union 20% CO₂ reduction objective by 2020.

The interviews give the impression of confusion between the Europe 2020 strategy and the ‘EU Climate and Energy Package’. Both documents refer to the 20-20-20 targets with the Europe 2020 strategy incorporating them into the so-called ‘headline targets’⁴⁹:

- greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30%, if the conditions are right) lower than 1990;
- 20% of energy from renewables;
- 20% increase in energy efficiency.

Therefore, it is important to note that not all the answers that were gleaned from the interviews take account of Europe 2020 as such, but rather the ‘20-20-20 targets’ that are currently included in the overall strategy.

With this in mind and taking account of the earlier starting date of the initiative, its different remit and context (e.g. the covenant of mayors' context), **there is no actual added value attributable to the Europe 2020 strategy**, simply because there was no Europe 2020 strategy at that time. However, as the interviewees very much identified with the ‘20-20-20 targets’, it is suggested that they greatly appreciate this European effort on climate change and energy consumption. Also, it is interesting to note that an effort of this kind resulted in greater credibility and visibility for their initiative than there was before, and that it actually ‘*helped bring people together*’ working towards common goals. This is also underlined by the fact that they have recently enlarged the initiative to include 7 more municipalities in the northern region of Portugal.

⁴⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/about/index_en.htm.

⁴⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/brief/eu/index_en.htm.

⁴⁸ http://www.eumayors.eu/about/covenant-of-mayors_en.html.

⁴⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/targets/eu-targets/index_en.htm.

In terms of top-down communication, the European level seems to be very efficient and somehow more involved than the National level, especially in this period of crisis; in the words of one interviewee, “*Brussels is closer to Lisbon*” and this might be perceived as a cultural challenge to be overcome in this respect. However, the communication between the local and European levels is very much dependent, in this case, on the very good relationships with Europe that are built through the Covenant of mayors, and especially on the great experience and effective channels built over time by the Energy Agency.

In any event, the European strategy is not perceived as a strategic planning tool for creating ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive’ regions (or local authorities) because it is still too broad and not specific enough, although it is certainly important for increasing visibility and credibility, as noted above.

4.7.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

Although the Europe 2020 strategy as such was not recognised by the interviewees, it is important to highlight how important they feel it is to have a reference to European policies. Therefore, in this case, the existence of the 20-20-20 targets and of the Covenant of Mayors clearly had a positive impact on the initiative. Visibility, credibility, and help towards achieving shared goals are seen as especially encouraging for the local initiative.

4.8 Case 8 - Harghita County Council (Hargita Megye Tanácsa) (RO)

Name: **Harghita County**

Typology: **County**

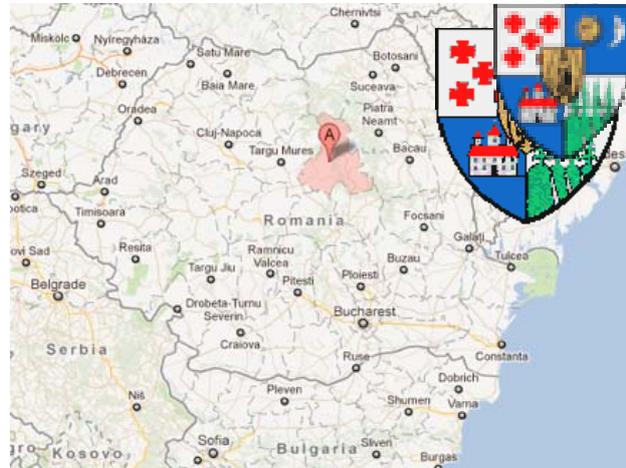
Web-link:

<http://www.hargitamegye.ro/index.php?lang=en>

Country: **Romania**

Population: **326.222** (2002 figures)

Initiative: **“Developing the business environment in Harghita County”**



4.8.1 Summary of the findings

The case study is based on three interviews with three different areas of expertise from Harghita County: the **development directorate** that mainly deals with drawing up European projects; the **implementation** side that tries to ‘put policies into practice’; the stakeholder viewpoint, which was provided by the **Micro-Entrepreneurs Association**.

The case study was complemented by desk research using mainly online resources and information provided by the Committee of the Regions.

Although the initiative’s objectives are a response to local needs, they seem to fit extremely well into the Europe 2020 strategy and especially into the flagship initiative ‘**An industrial policy for the globalization era**’: fostering innovation in local SMEs and creating a favourable business environment for local enterprises are in fact an example of a ‘smart’ Europe.

These objectives are also very closely related to the short-term priorities set by the European council held on 30 January. In fact, they are perfectly suited to stimulating employment, especially for young people (i.e. the initiative planned

support for starting new enterprises), and boosting the financing of the economy, particularly for SMEs (i.e. the initiative tries to facilitate financing possibilities for SMEs). This last point in particular is greatly appreciated by the association of SMEs in the county, which expressed its sincere appreciation of the initiative.

Although the **initiative started in 2009**, Europe 2020 now represents an example and a guide for the initiative. It serves to provide ideas, especially on the most important areas for the future such as innovation, sustainability, and industrial policy. Furthermore, it **gives a sense of support and self-confidence while somehow giving reassurance that it is backed by such a high-level strategy**. Moreover, it is suggested that the initiative itself would **not have been as successful** without Europe 2020.

The initiative was essentially developed at the local level, among different local governments and involving local enterprises as well. No regional, national, or European levels were involved in its planning. Moreover, the process was characterised by very effective horizontal cooperation. However, the initiative was communicated to the national ministries and it fits in well with the national strategies for innovation and industrial development.

Harghita County has no territorial pacts.

Funding does not appear to be sufficient at the moment. The general impression is that more funds would be allocated in the future, especially if rural areas were given greater consideration. Financial streams usually come from both the county budget and also from European funds. In this case, the funds are not related to Europe 2020. Where funding applications are successful, the money generally comes from the structural funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and more specifically from the Regional Operational Programme.

4.8.2 Presentation of the case

Brief description

Harghita is a county in the centre of Romania, in eastern Transylvania, with the county seat at Miercurea Ciuc. The three main population groups in Harghita are Hungarians: 85% (or 276,038), Romanians: 14% (or 45,870), and Roma and others: 1% (or 3,835).

The project in question is related to the flagship initiative “**An industrial policy for the globalization era**” and entitled “Developing the business environment in Harghita County”.

The County's business environment development policy includes the design and implementation of measures, programmes and projects; all of these help to improve the local entrepreneurial environment and broaden the range of services provided to businesses.

Specific activities supported by the policy include the following:

- participating in international cooperation projects on exchanging experiences relating to establishing business and innovation parks (FIDIBE SEE project);
- running a dialogue programme to identify the needs of the County's entrepreneurs;
- supporting County entrepreneurs in forming associations, clusters, and networks;
- managing a project to establish a business incubator;
- supporting the development of a network industry infrastructure and industrial parks.

(Source: survey Europe 2020: what's happening on the ground?)

4.8.3 General coordination and policy-making perspective

It is mainly driven by the administration and the development of the socio-economic perspective of the county. The strategy planning is mostly based on local resources and possibilities. On the other hand, implementation is mostly linked to Europe 2020 and to the national Romanian government. In this respect, much funding comes from the European Union, especially through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and specifically through the Regional Operational Programme⁵⁰.

The main objectives for the overall policy-making process with respect to European-related policies in Harghita County are to foster innovation in local SMEs and create a favourable business environment for enterprises.

Other priorities are also defined and taken in consideration: i) to increase accessibility and develop infrastructures, ii) to bridge the digital divide, iii) to work towards energy independence by increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy use, and iv) to increase employment.

⁵⁰http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=RO&gv_reg=ALL&gv_PGM=1041&gv_defL=4&LAN=7.

4.8.4 Objectives of the initiative

The main objectives of the initiatives are to:

- develop the county business environment;
- develop business services;
- foster innovation;
- support local small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Although the initiative's objectives are a response to local needs, they seem to fit very well into the Europe 2020 strategy and especially the flagship initiative '**An industrial policy for the globalization era**': fostering innovation of local SMEs and creating a favourable business environment for local enterprises are in fact an example of a 'smart' Europe.

These objectives are also closely linked to the short-term priorities set by the European council held on 30 January. In fact, they are well-suited to stimulating employment, especially for young people (i.e. the initiative planned support for starting new enterprises), and boosting the financing of the economy, particularly for SMEs (i.e. the initiative tries to facilitate financing possibilities for SMEs). This last point in particular is greatly valued by the association of SMEs in the county, which expressed its sincere appreciation of the initiative.

A major challenge is the implementation phase of the initiative, when all the actions have to be '*put into practice*'. Another challenge has been reported and concerns the relationship between companies and the initiative: in this respect, what is really challenging is '*to make companies interested in participating*' in the initiative. Finally, another challenge relates to the economic situation in the country, which is rather restricting business opportunities, especially in rural areas.

4.8.5 Funding issues

There does not appear to be enough funding at the moment. The general impression is that more funds would be allocated in the future, especially if rural areas were given greater consideration. It was suggested that funds tended to be directed more towards regions and cities, and less to rural areas.

Financial streams usually come from both the county budget but also from European funds. In this case, funds are not related to Europe 2020. Where funding applications are successful, the money generally comes from the structural funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and more

specifically from the Regional Operational Programme. In some cases, the national level also provides some funds.

It is suggested that the European funds are generally accessible. However, what seems to be an issue is the timing. Unfortunately, acquisition '*processes for the structural funds are very long (1 or 2 years)*', which is naturally a significant impediment for starting and carrying out projects.

To overcome some of the issues, it was suggested that it would be very important to have '*more targeted programmes and streams of funding for innovation at the rural level*'.

In terms of evaluation and monitoring, it would appear that there is no well-defined and effective monitoring system in place for the initiative. However, a certain number of targets were suggested, namely:

- to increase the numbers of start-ups in the county (around 10%);
- to increase the added value of local products;
- to increase the number of innovative enterprises,
- to increase the productivity of the industrial sector.

It was also mentioned that this initiative is intended to contribute to the targets defined by Europe 2020.

4.8.6 Multilevel governance

The initiative "Developing the business environment in Harghita County" was essentially implemented at the local level, among different local governments and involving local enterprises as well. No regional, national, or European levels were involved in its planning. Moreover, the process was characterised by very effective horizontal cooperation. However, the initiative was communicated to the national ministries and it fits in well with the national strategies for innovation and industrial development.

In order to achieve better coordination and integration of policies, it was suggested, that the national level in particular could place more emphasis on a bottom-up approach when policies were being framed. In this respect, local problems and shortcomings should be better and more comprehensively integrated into national and European policies, although this second possibility might prove difficult because European policies have to be sufficiently broad and inclusive. In addition, partnerships and more cooperation in the context of Europe 2020 are envisaged to strengthen vertical cooperation. In any event, Harghita County has no territorial pacts.

A second interesting comment suggested setting up a sort of coordination system or platform that could then be officialised on all levels. Furthermore, an institution appears to be needed to increase dialogue and participation from the local level up to the national level. The national level would need to be more in line with the European Union and at the same time pay closer attention to the local level, including its requirements and proposals. Finally, it was felt that it would be very helpful to include consultation with stakeholders in the planning processes.

4.8.7 The added value of Europe 2020

Although the **initiative started in 2009**, Europe 2020 now sets an example and acts as a guide for the initiative and also provides ideas, especially on the most important areas for the future such as innovation, sustainability, and industrial policy. Furthermore, it is expected that support and funds may be forthcoming in this regard.

The general impression is that although the initiative would have been set up in any event **without Europe 2020**, which is actually the case, the strategy has helped the initiative to encourage the local level, to disseminate it more and, most importantly, **to give a sense of support and self-confidence while somehow giving reassurance that it is backed by such a high-level strategy**. Moreover, it is suggested that the initiative itself would **not have been as successful** without Europe 2020.

Europe 2020 is considered to be a very good strategy as well as a useful tool. It provides clear targets and clear methodology. The monitoring is also felt to be very useful, and not just for the national level.

However it was felt that the top-down communication of the Europe 2020 strategy did not work particularly well: *“there was no targeted communication either from the national or from the EU level”*. More promotion and dissemination would be needed both from the national and the EU level, especially with respect to those people working at the local level.

4.8.8 Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

On the whole, Europe 2020 is seen as an opportunity and not as a challenge.

Opportunities essentially come from the flagship initiatives and in this particular case from industrial policy, which defines the main tasks for the national level which also happen to be those that are crucial for the Harghita County initiative examined here. This means that since these targets are important for the

European Union and, hence, for the national level, they should then be reflected at the local level.

It was also suggested that the main expectation from the Europe 2020 strategy was the chance of receiving more support, especially in funding terms.

5. Annexes

5.1 ANNEX I - Questionnaire for the general policy-making perspective

Intro question: What is your role and your responsibilities?

Objectives of policy coordination

1. What form does the overall *Europe 2020-related policy-making process* in your *city/region* take?
2. What are the **main objectives** of the Europe 2020-related policy coordination in your region/city?
 - a. and **how were they set?**
3. How are these objectives **linked to the Europe 2020 strategy and the National Reform Programme (NRP)?**

The added value of Europe 2020

4. In terms of top-down communication, how well were the Europe 2020 objectives communicated to you from the European and National level as regards designing/implementing your regional/local Europe 2020-related policy? (Very well, Adequately, Not clearly enough, Can't say)
5. Would a similar, *Europe 2020-related policy-making process* have been designed *without* Europe 2020? (If not, explain why and how)
6. Do you see the Europe 2020 Strategy as a strategic planning tool for creating smart, sustainable and inclusive regions? (*Totally, Substantially, To a limited extent, Not at all*)
 - a. *Please explain why you see it this way?*

Multilevel governance

7. Did you develop this *EU-related policy-making process* in coordination with:
 - a. Other departments? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - b. The regional level? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - c. The national government? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - d. The European level? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - e. Other partners
8. How do you perceive the coordination with:
 - a. Other sub-national levels? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - b. The national government? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - c. The European level? (Please specify their role and tasks)
9. What would be needed to increase coordination/integration of policies between the different levels of government?

10. Does Europe 2020 help strengthen vertical cooperation between different levels of governance?
11. Is your region or organization part of a **Territorial Pact**? If so, how does it work?

Planning and funding issues

12. Which policy instruments are or have been used to implement the programme?
13. Is there sufficient funding available for implementing the programme?
14. Where does the funding come from? In addition to your local/regional budget, did you also receive contributions from the EU or 2020-related national funding?
15. *If funding also came from the EU or national level:*
 - a. How easily was the funding **accessible**?
 - b. Is there a substantial **difference** between **funding approval dates** among different **levels** of administration (e.g. European, National, Sub-national)
16. In terms of funding, what should be improved?
17. What kinds of monitoring/evaluation arrangements do you apply in your coordination activities? (Please give us an example)

Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

18. What would you identify as the main opportunities and challenges arising from implementing Europe 2020 strategy at the local/regional level?
19. How are your policies linked to the short-term priorities set by the European Council on 30 January 2012:
 - a. Stimulating employment, especially for young people (adding National Job Plans in the NRPs)
 - b. Completing the Single Market
 - c. Boosting the financing of the economy, particularly for SMEs

5.2 ANNEX II - Questionnaire for the initiative perspective

Introductory question: What are your role and responsibilities?

Objectives of the initiative

1. What are the main objectives and challenges of your initiative?
2. When developing the initiative, what was the role of Europe 2020 and the NRP?

The added value of Europe 2020

3. Would a similar initiative have been designed without Europe 2020? (If not, explain why and how)
4. How well was Europe 2020 communicated to you from the European and national level? (Very well, Adequately, Not clearly enough, Can't say)

Funding issues

5. Is sufficient funding available for implementing your initiative?
6. Where does the funding come from? (Please specify the different channels and their percentage/weight)
7. Was EU funding for your initiative easy to secure?
8. How well organised was the coordination of the funding agents? (i.e. timing and availability of the funding)
9. What kinds of monitoring/evaluation arrangements are included in the initiative with respect to funding and objectives? (Please give us an example)

Multilevel governance

10. Did you develop this initiative in coordination with:
 - a. Other departments? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - b. The regional level? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - c. The national government? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - d. The European level? (Please specify their role and tasks)
 - e. Other partners
11. Do you get the support you need from other levels of government?
12. Would it help the initiative if there were better collaboration/integration with other levels of administration (e.g. the EU commission, the National government, etc.)?
 - a. If so, how?
13. Does Europe 2020 strengthen vertical cooperation at different levels of governance?

14. Is your region or organisation part of a **Territorial Pact**? If so, how does it work?

Europe 2020: opportunities and challenges

15. What would you identify as opportunities and challenges arising from the Europe 2020 strategy from your initiative's perspective?

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