



29/06/09/ RIGA

11 European metropolises work together to boost the creative economy

Eleven capital and metropolitan cities of Europe have joined their forces to further foster the development of their creative sectors in an effort to overcome the economic downturn and make their cities more attractive in the global hunt for talent.

“CREATIVE METROPOLES: Public Policies in Support of Creative Industries” has received 2.44 MEUR funding from the INTERREG IVC programme in an effort to make public support systems and instruments more focused, effective and better tailored to the actual needs of the creative industries. It will run until September 2011.

The project is spearheaded by the culture and business development professionals of local governments of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Birmingham, Helsinki, Oslo, Riga, Stockholm, Tallinn, Vilnius and Warsaw – cities that play a central role in the economies of their countries. The City of Riga is the project initiator and lead partner of the consortium. This is currently one of the widest pan-European projects addressing this field.

Definition of what creative industries are and which areas of activity they cover differs from country to country. According to a definition adopted by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sports, creative industries are “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (UK DCMS).

Creative industries play an important role in the urban ecosystem – their contribution to economic development is growing despite the global economic downturn (earlier figures show 12% margin over the overall economy), they stimulate innovation capacity in other sectors of economy as well as have a positive impact on a city as a place to live and work which is significant to attract and keep talents.

Despite their great potential for contributing towards the growth and jobs objectives of the European Union, in some countries creative industries still lack the necessary acknowledgement, organised support or networking opportunities that are required to unlock this potential.

The Mayor of Riga, Mr Jānis Birks, says that “Riga like many other European cities has a very active creative and cultural sector, yet its economic potential is still largely untapped. Cities like Berlin, Amsterdam or Barcelona show clearly that creative industries are very important for sustained growth. In times of economic recession initiatives like these are of very high importance for all the involved cities and Europe in general”.

The project will address this disparity by enabling decision-makers and specialists to interact, exchange experience and generate new knowledge. CREATIVE METROPOLES project is primarily targeted at the public sector to raise its understanding of the creative economy and increase its knowledge and capacity to organise support for the creative

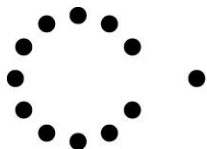
Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Norwegian funding through the INTERREG IVC programme

Developed in the framework of



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund





sector, yet these efforts will only be effective if coupled with an ongoing dialogue and cooperation with other actors of the support system (national institutions, private sector) and also the creative industries themselves.

The project was initiated in 2007 by the Baltic Metropoles Network representing 11 Baltic Sea Region metropolitan cities and also strongly supports the direction taken by the newly launched EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region that puts fostering of innovation support at its heart.

The launch of the CREATIVE METROPOLES project also links in with the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 that aims to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for personal, social and economic development. Project conference "Innovation @ Creative Industries" (<http://www.berlin.de/projektzukunft/startseite/innovation-creative-industries/>) that takes place today in Berlin is also one of the events organised in the framework of this initiative of the European Commission to raise the profile of the creative economy.

All latest information about project activities and partner profiles can be found on the project website: www.creativemetropoles.eu.

For further information do not hesitate to contact the PR Coordinator of the CREATIVE METROPOLES project Ms Zane Bojāre:

Tel: + 371 29706733

E-mail: zane@creativemetropoles.eu