The strategic mission of the RECREATE project is to improve the capacity and capability of regional transport SMEs to further develop and grow by providing support for research and development, rapid development and implementation of products and services, access to finance schemes and internationalisation opportunities.

The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and by National Resources and implemented under the INTERREG EUROPE Programme.

Second RECREATE Study Visit & Thematic Workshop in Craiova, Romania

The Second RECREATE Study Visit and Thematic Workshop took place on 16th and 17th October 2019 and was hosted by the Romanian Partner RDA SW Oltenia in Craiova.

The Workshop was about IP and commercialisation. After a general overview about the transport sector in South West Oltenia, the participants were shown the first results from the five RECREATE regions involved in the Transport SME Competitiveness report. This is currently being finalised and will be uploaded on the project website. Afterwards, the focus moved on valorization, intellectual property and commercialisation where the participants had also the opportunity to discuss more in depth about barriers and opportunities and training skills development for SMEs in the Transport sector.

On 17th April, we went out for the Study Visit to assess best practices in the local area. We started with Softronic, a company established in Craiova Romania in 1999 with the main purpose of modernising locomotives. They consist of two companies: Softronic, manufacturer of Electric Multiple Unit Trains and Locomotives; and Softrans, railway freight and passenger operator and also a leader in the locomotive rental business. Another interesting visit was at Nextrom Industries, a company specialised in production of electric vehicles, which are differentiated by revolutionary technical characteristics. The visit concluded at the University of Craiova, Faculty of Mechanics and Transport Engineering that has had for over 40 years the role of shaping specialists in the field of mechanical engineering and automotive engineering for local, national and multinational companies as well as a strong cooperation with the business and economic environment. Both Project Partners and local stakeholders from UK, Italy, Greece, Lithuania and Romania participated in the event. Part of the event was also dedicated to the Partners meeting to discuss the current implementation status of the project and the activities due in Semester 3.

RECREATE Transport SME Competitiveness Report

The 'Transport SME Competitiveness' report is currently in the process of being finalised and will be available online on the project website (www.interregeurope.eu/recreate/library/).

The report has the overall objective of describing the status quo of the SMEs in the transport sector in 5 European Regions: West Midlands (UK), Campania Region (Italy), South Aegean Region (Greece), Lithuania and South West Oltenia (Romania). The analysis is conducted using desk-based research of relevant literature on Transport SMEs and transport sector innovation systems as well as interviews and/or questionnaires with selected Transport SMEs and Business support organisations.

A 'slim version' of the report is also currently being developed and will be available online in English, Italian, Greek, Lithuanian and Romanian languages.

Stakeholder Meeting in Kaunas, Lithuania

The Stakeholder Meeting organised by Lithuanian Innovation Centre (LIC) took place on the 26th September 2019 in Kaunas, Lithuania.

LIC specialists and other experts participated in the international exhibition "Inno Panorama" held at the Agriculture Academy of Vytautas Magnus University. During the event, LIC experts held two presentations dedicated to innovations in the transport sector. One of them emphasised the added value of the RECREATE project, the possibilities for growth of regional transport SMEs and the current policy and support mechanisms in the transport sector. The second one shared valuable insight on the innovation trends and possible directions of action and recommendations for increasing competitiveness of the transport sector in Lithuania.

Stakeholder Meeting in Coventry, UK

The 3rd Stakeholder Meeting in UK was held in Coventry on 26th November 2019, in conjunction with the e-smartec project. The event was organised by the Lead Partner Coventry University Enterprises Ltd and involved the participation of several local stakeholders from industry and university sectors.
The meeting started with a presentation about the project objectives, the main expected results and outputs, the current status of the project and the role of the stakeholders.

It followed a presentation about findings from the RECREATE 'Transport SME Competitiveness' report. The current status of the Transport SMEs in the West Midlands region was shown and the results were discussed by the participants.
Afterwards there was a discussion about the next RECREATE event that will be organised in Coventry in March 2020 and will host all partners and their local stakeholders. The event will include a Thematic Workshop focused on Financing Innovation that will try to cover all forms of funding for SMEs; and a Study Visit to several Good Practices in the local area.

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to a new recently started Interreg Europe funded project, e-smartec (www.interregeurope.eu/e-smartec/). Its purpose is to support the implementation of SUMPs and enhance its impact by identifying marketing techniques that can help engage key actors and travellers. The project objectives, expected outputs and role of the stakeholders were presented.

The final session focused on the identification of Best Practices on engagement. These are initiatives for boosting participatory planning and can be awareness raising campaigns, enabling tools (e.g. social media influencing exploitation), participatory planning meetings, task forces, round tables, events, interactive learning environments (e.g. serious games). Some Best Practices in the region were presented and discussed by the participants.

Company Mission of Romanian Companies in Vratsa, Romania

Invited by the University of Craiova, one of the RECREATE project partners, RDA SW Oltenia, participated to the event "COMPANY MISSION of Romanian companies".

The event was co-organised by the University of Craiova within the European Enterprise Network on 4th and 5th November 2019 in Vratsa, Bulgaria. On 4th November 2019, Mr. Sorin Cosmulescu from RDA SW Oltenia presented the objectives and activities of the RECREATE project as well as the indicators and results pursued. Other interesting presentations were delivered about the Dolj County and its business environment and the North-West Region of Bulgaria. Romanian and Bulgarian companies participated to the event.

At the end of the presentations, the host of the meeting, Mrs. Iliana Philipova, Executive Director of Vratsa Chamber of Commerce and Industry and CEO of the Agency for Regional and Economic Development of Vratsa, appreciated, among other things, the interest of all participants about the RECREATE project, with perspective of cooperation between the Region of Vratsa and the Southwest Region of Oltenia in the transport sector.

NOESIS project Conference "Evaluating Strategic Big Data investments in Transport" in Belgrade, Serbia

A representative of the RECREATE project team attended the NOESIS H2020 project Conference "Evaluating Strategic Big Data investments in Transport" on 23rd October 2019 in Belgrade at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia.

The NOESIS project – Novel Decision Support tool for Evaluating Strategic Big Data investments in Transport and Intelligent Mobility Services – aimed to provide a robust methodological framework (Decision Support tool) and data-driven evidence to enable the deployment of a Big Data in Transport ecosystem in Europe. The project has now come to an end and all the findings have been shared with the community in the final event in Belgrade:

- NOESIS Big Data in Transport Library, the first collection of Big Data use cases in transport;
- NOESIS Decision Support Tool that predicts the value generated (i.e., socioeconomic impact) from Big Data technologies;
- NOESIS Impact Assessment Methodology and Data Benefit Analysis;
- NOESIS Policy Recommendations;
- Guidance on legal, business and technical requirements relevant for a Big Data project to succeed.

Participants to this event were Public Transport Operators, Public Transport Authorities, Transportation Professionals, Transport Providers, Academics, SMEs / Start-ups, Associations and Policy Makers.

It was an interesting opportunity for the RECREATE Team to explore Big Data in transport tools and discuss policies in the transport sector.

News from the transport sector in the South Aegean Region, Greece

1. South Aegean Region's project for Seaplane bases

The most ambitious project of the South Aegean Regional Authority, the creation of the largest network of seaplane bases internationally, is finally becoming a reality after five years of constant effort and delays, due to the outdated institutional framework and obstacles. Following an international call for tenders, the South Aegean Regional Authority has signed a contract with the representatives of the three companies forming the new consortium named "South Aegean Seaplane Bases", for the licensing of 20 seaplane bases on 19 South Aegean islands.
The project has a total budget of 480.200 Euros and a timetable of 18 months for completion, during which 11 seaplane bases will be created on islands of the Dodecanese and 9 on islands of the Cyclades.

2. South Aegean Regional Authority meets with the Hellenic Institute of Transport on transport and tourism issues

On 5th September 2019, the South Aegean Regional Governor, Mr. George Hatzimarkos, met the Director of the Hellenic Institute of Transport (IMET), National Center for Research and Technological Development (CERTH), Mr. Evangelos Bekiaris.

The topic of the meeting, which was also attended by IMET's local representative in Rhodes, engineer Mrs. Mary Papandreou, was the conclusions of the workshop entitled "Transport and Tourism", organised by the Hellenic Association of Transport Professionals in collaboration with IMET, under the auspices of the South Aegean Region.

The workshop's main objective was to enhance dialogue between relevant stakeholders in order to present the current situation and to highlight the existing problems as well as the implemented good practices. More specifically, the need to establish how the transport sector can be promoted in relation and interaction with tourism was stressed, in order for Greek tourist destinations to provide modern, secure and high standard transport services and infrastructures, taking advantage of technological developments in the sector.

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