

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 internationalization opportunities.

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

Lithuania Study Visit & Thematic Workshop ONLINE

The Fourth Thematic Workshop & Study Visit was organised online on 2nd and 4th February 2021 by Lithuanian Innovation Centre.

The workshop focused on SME opportunities for Collaborations such as Joint Ventures, technology transfer, European programmes. The event started with a summary of the main aims and objectives of the RECREATE project, as well as the progress up to date. It followed an overview of the transport sector, innovation and cooperation in Lithuania, showing details about transport, mobility trends, the Lithuanian Smart Specialisation Strategy, the Lithuanian Operational Programme, business clusters and associations related to transport, education and research in the sector, the Start-ups ecosystem. The following presentation was dedicated to the work done by the Mobility Innovation Center, a platform to attract innovation to Lithuania's transport and communications sector with the aim to create the most agile Mobility ecosystem possible based on principles of innovation development. The last session focused on innovation funding, giving details about financial instruments, grants and subsidies, Fund's objectives and competences in the automotive industry.

On the second day of the event, some of the Best Practices of the Country were presented:

- carVertical that in 2018 introduced their first product, the vehicle history report and became the first company in the industry to receive data in real time directly from cars.
- Association of Transport Innovations (TIA), born from the need of technological progress in the transport sector, with the mission of ensuring efficiency in chain of transportation and improving road safety, environmental protection and future transport needs by digitalisation of logistics' documents.
- Lithuanian Automotive Export Association (LAUGE), a cross-sectorial business cluster, joining Lithuanian companies related to the automotive industry and science representatives, with the purpose of becoming the centre of research, development and export competences in the automotive industry.
- Vilnius Tech, Faculty of Transport Engineering, the leading higher education, as well as scientific and research institution in the field of transport engineering, traffic safety, transport management and logistics in Lithuania.

All RECREATE Project Partners and their local stakeholders from UK, Greece, Lithuania and Romania participated in the online event.

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The RECREATE Policy Recommendations Report has been published

Within the RECREATE project, a Policy Recommendations report has been developed and is available online on the project website.

A Policy Recommendation is written policy advice prepared for some group or person who has the authority to make a decision or to influence policy decisions; it also serves to inform people who are faced with policy choices or particular issues on how to make the best decisions.

The purpose of this report is to present the Policy Recommendations prepared as part of the RECREATE project and aiming at improving all the relevant schemes that could potentially deliver growth to transport SMEs. These include support for research and development, rapid development and implementation of products and services, access to finance schemes and internationalisation. It is specifically aimed at local authorities and policy makers of the RECREATE regions, but it can be useful for any region interested in improving the competitiveness of their transport SMEs.

Greece Study Visit & Thematic Workshop ONLINE

The Fifth Thematic Workshop & Study Visit was organised online on 28th and 29th June 2021 by the Development Agency of South Aegean Region – READ S.A. The event started with a summary of the main aims and objectives of the RECREATE project, as well as the progress up to date. It followed an overview of the best local practices linked to transport competitiveness in the region:

- the branch in Rhodes of the Hellenic Institute of Transport whose role is to upgrade the area competitiveness and increase interregional cooperation, in particular through support of innovation and research; exploitation of products, services, technologies, state of the art methodologies and policies; support of technology testing and development of regional transport ecosystem; promotion of new form of inter-regional cooperation, such as Smart Islands Agglomerations.
- DAFNI – Network of Sustainable Greek Islands that promotes sustainable development in Greek islands through the delivery of integrated actions in the fields of energy, water, waste, and transport / mobility enabling the transition to a circular and sector-coupled local economy boosted by touristic activities.
- "Astypalea: Smart and Sustainable Island" project where the Hellenic Republic and the Volkswagen Group joined forces to establish a ground-breaking mobility system on the island that will see the current transport system transitioning towards electric vehicles, by replacing all the internal combustion cars of the island with electric ones.
- Social Cooperative Enterprise "Aegean Sails" that uses the wind as a mean of propulsion in the sea to transport products. Everything is done in experimental scale, but there is the hope to establish the service (including thematic tourism) and then increasing it.

The second day of the event started with a presentation of the RECREATE Policy Recommendation Report. The main objectives of the report and the methodology used to formulate the recommendations, as well as the first draft of the document were showed. The event continued with presentations showing other local good practices:

- Cyclopolis Bike Sharing Systems that designs and produces systems, implements, installs, maintains, and operates them, improving the transport system and benefiting public health, especially during the pandemic.
- Greek Water Airports that specialises in consultation services from the water dome licensing process to water dome operation and management, for local and municipal port authorities, municipalities and in some cases private sector businesses.
- Dodekanisos Seaways that offers modern, high-quality, fast, and efficient transport services to the people and visitors of Dodecanese islands, also using high-speed Catamaran ships.
- International Centre for Maritime Technologies & Innovation & ONEX lot whose goal is to highlight Aegean Archipelago as the new Silicon Valley, pointing at digital transformation, being in the geopolitical transformation hub and contributing to the rebirth of the Greek ship industry.
- Integrated Intelligent Transport Systems applied to the Municipality of Rhodes that is helping optimising the use of existing infrastructure through a variety of technical means like an online platform, a mobile application, vehicle tablets, etc.

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Approval of all the RECREATE Action Plans

The exchange of experience process and the lessons learnt from the cooperation with the four participating European Regions of West Midlands (UK), South Aegean Region (Greece), Lithuania and South-West Oltenia (Romania) resulted, at the end of Phase 1 of the project, in four Action Plans, one per mentioned Region/Country. The Action Plans focus on improving the status quo of specific business support schemes, projects or initiatives within each Region/Country, with the objective of having a positive influence on growth and competitiveness among Innovative Transport SMEs.

Each Action Plan provides details on how the Policy Instrument tackled in each Region/Country will be improved. The documents specify the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the stakeholders involved, the costs and funding sources. During Phase 2 of the project, the actions will be implemented and monitored by each relevant Partner.

All RECREATE Action Plans have been approved and are available in the Library section of the website.

Dissemination of RECREATE findings in the International Congress on Transportation Research

The RECREATE Project attended the 10th International Congress on Transportation Research (ICTR 2021) co-organised by the Hellenic Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Hellenic Institute of Transport from 1st to 3rd September 2021 at the Mediterranean Hotel in Rhodes, Greece.

The Congress has been a major event in the field of transportation research for the past 19 years with participants coming from the research and academic community, as well as the public and private sector. This year the theme was 'Future Mobility and Resilient Transport: Transition to innovation'. The rapid development of technology and the need to achieve new energy and environmental goals for climate-neutral transport has transformed the whole transportation sector. Therefore, transport research is critical for achieving innovative solutions that will meet future challenges through synergies among the industry and the public sector.

On 1st September several workshops took place. One of those was organised by the Interreg Europe INNOTRANS project – Enhancing transport innovation capacity of regions – aiming at identifying transport innovation potential in the participating regions and developing guidelines for policy interventions and Actions Plans.

During the workshop, examples of actions and good practices have been presented to show how regions can build a culture of continuous innovation. Based on regions' strengths and innovation potential, suggestions on how to improve current measures or to introduce new ones to support transport innovation public funding schemes as a key element of transport innovation infrastructure have been presented. Within this session, some of the findings generated by the RECREATE project have also been disseminated.



The event, that took place in hybrid mode, was attended by 40 participants in person and 60 online. Key representatives from academia, industry and policy makers from more than 10 European countries were present. Therefore, it was an excellent opportunity for the RECREATE Team to explore future opportunities in transport and discuss policies in the sector.

The world's first airport for flying cars in UK

A pop-up airport for electric flying taxis will be in operation in November 2021 near the city of Coventry in UK. Urban Air Port Air-One was selected in January 2021 as a winner of the UK government's Future Flight Challenge to develop greener ways to fly by advancing electric and autonomous flight technologies.

Air-One is a world-first fully operational hub for future electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, like cargo drones and air taxis. The facility will be open just for one month, and is a collaboration between government agencies, private-sector businesses and the aviation industry. It has been developed by Urban Air Port, with the involvement of the Urban Air Mobility Division of Hyundai Motor Group and Coventry City Council.

The city of Coventry was chosen for the site due to its strategic location in the heart of the UK, providing easy access within four hours to most parts of the Country, and because it is a historic hub for the automobile and aerospace industry, with the right skilled people (including research partners at Coventry University) that can support the manufacturing industries of the future.

The pop-up airport is a fully autonomous innovative zero emission infrastructure, while eVTOL vehicles are being suggested as a low-carbon way to reduce congestion, cut air pollution and decarbonise transport while providing seamless passenger journeys and deliveries.

The physical footprint of an Urban Air Port is 60% smaller than a traditional heliport. Using innovative construction, the sites can be installed in a few days, emit net zero carbon emissions and can be operated completely off-grid. Moreover, the facility provides an integrated approach to the decarbonisation of cities: it is designed to support any eVTOL aircraft, but also complement other modes of sustainable transport as a hub for electric vehicles, buses or scooters. In addition, the design enables Urban Air Ports to be easily moved to alternative sites, if necessary, making them ideal for disaster emergency management: they can rapidly deploy drones and other eVTOL to transport emergency supplies, equipment and people where needed.

Urban Air Port has the potential to revolutionise cities across the world, making them more connected and cleaner. At the moment, there are no flying cars or passenger-carrying drones operating in the UK. However, the facility is attracting interest from logistics companies in particular. The use of airborne drones to deliver parcels has always been dismissed due to the challenges of their operation in densely populated areas, but the technology could prove useful as a way of transporting goods between transport hubs.

Air-One will be unveiled during Coventry's UK City of Culture celebrations in 2021 and continue to form part of the Commonwealth Games in 2022. It will showcase live demonstrations of remote aircraft command and control, charging / refuelling and cargo and passenger loading for manned and unmanned eVTOL aircraft operating in three key markets: passenger air taxi services, autonomous logistics and disaster emergency management.

The company plans to develop more than 200 sites in the next five years to meet global demand, while cities across the UK and many more globally have already expressed an interest in installing an Urban Air Port.

Source: Coventry City Council

New Research Centre for Aerospace Green Technologies "TGA Technologies for Green Aviation" in Craiova



Construction centre Masterbuild started in September 2021 the works at the new Aviation Research Centre in Green Aerospace Technologies – "TGA Technologies for Green Aviation" in Craiova, an investment of over €17 Million, co-funded by ERDF and based on the financing contract signed in 2020 with the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research.

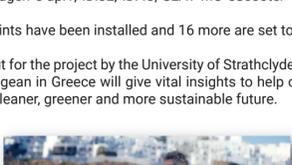
The project is implemented under the coordination of "Elie Carafoli" National Institute for Aerospace Research & Development, the main research centre in aerospace sciences in Romania, with an activity of over 60 years in aerospace engineering, flow physics and applied aerodynamics.

The new TGA Research Centre will be located near Craiova International Airport, on a plot with a total area of 14,000 sqm. It will have a total built area of almost 8,000 sqm, with 2 technological halls, office space, a laboratory area, as well as meeting and discussion spaces. It is unique in the region and will significantly increase Romania's research, development and innovation capacity in the aerospace industry, as well as collaboration in major European Union research projects.

The Aerospace Research Centre will be operational as of 2023, with a predicted positive impact on transport sector SMEs in the South-West Oltenia region.

Source: Ziarul Financiar

HELLA Technical Centre Craiova is creating new employment opportunities in the Region



HELLA is a global company based in Germany with more than 125 locations in 35 countries. One of the largest suppliers in the automotive industry, HELLA develops and manufactures lighting and electronic components and systems in the automotive industry, with service centres for spare parts and accessories for vehicles, diagnostic services and support services in Europe. It also produces complete modules for vehicles, air conditioning systems and dashboard networks.

HELLA Romania, one of the most important employers in the southwest part of the country, is expanding teams and activities in all of its locations. In this context, in the research and development centre in Craiova - recently moved to a new headquarters in Electroputere Parc - new jobs will be created within the IT team.

One of HELLA's most important features is the global dimension. They work in international virtual teams, on projects across all of its locations worldwide. The IT department of HELLA Romania is a major global centre for the company, as it serves customers from the entire HELLA network. Their activity represents a complex portfolio of services, from basic operations or central functions, to business applications and system architecture.

HELLA Technical Centre in Craiova represents also an attractive location for young professionals, specialists and enthusiasts with innovative ideas, due to their focus on skills development and their increased responsibilities during recent years.

HELLA Romania has 385 employees. They are supported by on-site IT specialists who have local and global responsibilities. In the next three years, the number of people working in the research and development centre will double to approximately 800 employees.

Source: Gazeta de Sud

Average annual growth rate of 4.7% over 2021-2024 in South-West Oltenia Region



According to the territorial forecast for the period 2021-2024, published by the National Commission for Strategy and Forecast (CNSP), the estimated average annual rate of economic growth at Romanian national level is 4.7% with a peak in 2023 of 5%, a year when it is expected to achieve a stronger absorption of European funds.

By regions, the best economic developments will be recorded in South-West Oltenia (and other two regions), where the projected GDP growth is more than 5%. For the South-West Oltenia region in particular, the GDP growth is more than 5%, projected over 2021-2024. The most dynamic sectors of the SWO region are the industry sector (mainly automotive industry and food industry) and the Construction sector.

Also the regional GDP growth performed over 2011-2019 was significant in the South-West Oltenia region: +30.0%. The analysis performed over 2011-2019 reveals that:

- Over the period 2011-2019 the export of South-West Oltenia region doubled, exclusively thanks to the evolution of Dolj County, with the fastest dynamics recorded in the transport and materials industry (Ford Motor Factory in Craiova).
- The evolution of COVID-19 affected less the economy of the South-West Oltenia region thanks to the solid performance of the automotive industry located in Dolj County (Ford + suppliers).

Of the total exports in the Dolj County, the highest increase is noted in the sector "Transport means and material" (+ 37.1%) and in the sector "Cars, tractors and other land vehicles" (+ 35.9%).

The trade balance recorded a surplus of 1161.5 million Euro in the South-West Oltenia region, due to the exported cars. In addition, the risks associated with the forecast are low (challenges to the energy sector from European environmental and climate change policies), while the ever-growing competitive advantages in the automotive industry are reported as very strong.

Source: HotNew.ro

The Astypalea E-mobility Project has kicked off

Greece took its first step toward a "greener future" in early June 2021, starting with the delivery by Volkswagen Group of eight electric vehicles to the South Aegean Island of Astypalea.

Greece joined forces with Volkswagen Group last year for the materialisation of a pioneering pilot project aimed at transforming the Dodecanese Island into the first smart energy and green island in the Mediterranean and ensuring, at the same time, energy autonomy.

The "Astypalea: Smart, sustainable island" project was launched in June and will run for five years with the aim of establishing Astypalea as a model for climate-neutral mobility.

With some 1,300 inhabitants, Astypalea hopes to cover a significant part of its energy needs through renewable energy sources by 2026 and go fully green after replacing its current transport system with electric vehicles and renewable power generation.

The police, the airport, the coast guard and the municipal authority will be the first to use the electric vehicles which can now be charged at 12 charging stations across the island. Among others, the plan also foresees:

- replacing the island's bus service with a ride-sharing scheme;
- the availability of 200 electric cars for rentals;
- government subsidies for islanders who replace their vehicles with electric alternatives
- replacing about 1,500 combustion-engine cars with electric alternatives and reducing vehicles on the island by a third. Locals will be able to purchase electric models (Volkswagen e-up11, ID.32, ID.43, SEAT MÓ eScooter 1254) by the end of June 2021;
- 12 charging points have been installed and 16 more are set to follow.

Research carried out for the project by the University of Strathclyde in Scotland and the University of the Aegean in Greece will give vital insights to help create incentives for change towards a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.
Photo source: @PrimeMinisterGR

Study results will be made public in hopes that these will help accelerate e-mobility transition in other regions across Greece.

Source: Green Travel Pages

Island Tours by solar-powered Boat in the South Aegean Island of Chalki

On 5th November 2021 the new national GR-eco Islands initiative aiming to kickstart the energy-saving transition of the country's islands starting from Chalki was launched.

The government hopes through the pilot project to establish sustainable and energy efficient island communities, address climate change and lead the way in sustainable development and innovation. The Dodecanese Island of Chalki will serve as model for other islands to follow.

The project is a joint collaboration between Greece's Environment Ministry, the French Embassy, the South Aegean Region, the Municipality of Chalki, Greece's Public Power Corporation, the Siggeidis/Citroen Group, AKIJO Energy, OMEXOM (Vinci) Energies, Vodafone Greece and ALD Automotive. The agreement was signed in July.

The Governor of South Aegean Region George Hatzimarkos

A key part of the project also includes the operation of a solar-power boat offered by the Papastratos company as part of its sustainability drive. The vessel, to be designed according to traditional Greek boat making techniques and constricted by a family business on Patmos, will offer tours around the island and cover transportation needs. As more islands get on board, authorities hope demand for such boats will pave the way for similar businesses to take off, contributing to local economies and creating new jobs.

Funded by Greek and French business interests, the Chalki project kicks off with a combined investment of approximately 1.5 million euros.

Source: Green Travel Pages