



Press release

Better policies for cultural and creative industries in Europe through interregional cooperation

- **Regional Creative Industries Alliance (RCIA) – From European recommendations to better regional CCI policies for a more competitive economy: a new project in the Interreg Europe programme**

Vienna, 6th of March 2017.- RCIA aims to improve the Structural Funds policy instruments related to the SME competitiveness through interregional policy learning by:

- focusing on supporting creative SMEs to set impulses for higher growth
- positioning CCI as “the missing link” throughout sectors and disciplines regarding innovation and competitiveness
- increasing the attractiveness and innovative image of a city/region/country (attract talent, create & retain jobs in the territory)
- positioning CCI as a pillar of the competitiveness policy.

Under the coordination of aws (Austria Wirtschaftsservice GmbH) 9 partners from 9 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain) are looking forward to discuss, analyse, exchange and learn about various regional policy approaches during a period of 3 years (2017-2019). This shall lead to concrete measures to be implemented with ERDF funding between 2020 – 2021 on how to

1. strengthen the creative SMEs competitiveness by improving their skills (development/execution of business plans, interaction with investors, mentoring programmes) and to support their growth on global markets
2. adapt various funding mechanisms to the particularities of CCI (including the possibility of capacity building measures for banks)
3. increase the awareness of the companies from the wider economy on the transformative power (added-value) of creative SMEs for their own competitiveness
4. develop/adapt/improve the eco-system from classic spatial cross-collaboration into a holistic approach.

The project was successfully kicked-off in Vienna on 1-3 March 2017. Besides laying a solid foundation for an efficient management and agreeing on the strategy of how to communicate to the targeted stakeholders, but also to the wider public, the partners focused on starting the real work on policies. The first step was to gather a first insight on what policy good practices are there in their regions to be shared and the second step to cluster them in a structure that shall make the exchange on these practices efficient from a transferability perspective.

The project coordinator aws presented first its main policies and policy measures related to cultural and creative industries such as: the Creative Industries Strategy for Austria, the Impulse programme – the subsidy programme for creative industry based innovation projects, the FISA programme – the Film Industry Support Austria, the aws Industry-Startup.net – a new initiative connecting startups with corporates, as well as an overview on how the ERDF funds are being implemented in Austria.

On the last day of the meeting, a study visit to sektor5 (<http://www.sektor5.at/>) enabled hands-on discussions with Austria's elected best co-working space and learning about the upstriving 5starts programme – the Austrian Best Incubator programme 2016. The presentation of the Forward Festival (<http://forwardcreatives.com/>) bringing together European designers, policy makers and creatives wrapped up the intense learning programme.

At www.interregeurope.eu/rcia you can learn more about the project, its partners, the funding and the policy instruments addressed as well as get the latest news updates.