



innovating for your city

Introducing the goals of Innocité to Lower Austrian Cites

On the 12th of November 2008 a network-meeting took place in the city of Hollabrunn. The network is organised by the Association for Village Renewal and Urban Regeneration under supervision of the Department for Spatial Planning and Regional Policy in Lower Austria. Any town with a town charter or any other municipality over 5000 inhabitants can take part.

Forty-one representatives of thirteen Lower Austrian cities and several public institutions came together to collect information about Innocité and to learn about some examples of best practise projects in Lower Austria.

The network is informal to make it as easy as possible to take part. The network provides a platform to learn from each other and to get to know each other. Therefore every network-meeting also gives the opportunity of interaction between participants.

In this respect, the network follows the findings of several studies, carried out to find the important success factors of living networks. One very important point is personal trust and getting to know people face to face.

The participants very much embraced the idea of an European Cooperation. Especially the chance of exchange of experience would be very interesting for every town. The representatives of the towns are all well aware that the situation of the economic development in the city centers is difficult all over Europe. For example, the change of consumer behaviour is a global phenomenon. But also other factors like housing and quality of life are influencing the city centers.

Innocité will be the focal point of the network activities in the coming years.

Before the European situation will be explored, the situation of the development of the city center in Hollabrunn was presented and discussed. During a walk through town, the local city manager, Mr. Authried presented the current activities.

For example, weekly open air food markets are encouraged and reintroduced again into the small city centers, after they had largely disappeared during the last two decades.

Also Hollabrunn has such a market, which draws a lot of people into town.

The shop owners in Hollabrunn not only invested into hardware+like folders and advertising activities, but also into soft skills+like taking lessons in Czech to improve the communication with their customers from neighbouring Czech Republic.

The city centers create the identity of a town, nevertheless they are constantly changing. Every century left its mark and also our time is influencing the city. One very interesting project was presented which will change the face of the inner city of Pöchlarn, one of the oldest towns in Lower Austria, radically.

A whole block of buildings will be torn down to create a little square, a new apartment building and a new town hall will be built. The project required a long and wide discussion process, but in the end, the people of Pöchlarn agreed on the project, which was chosen from a competition process of architects.



Partners: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lyon (FR) / Franche-Comté Regional Council (FR) / Lombardy Region - Trade Fairs and Markets Department (IT) / Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology (DE) / Salzburg Institute for Regional Planning and Housing (AT) / Office of the provincial government of Lower-Austria (AT) / Regional Development Centre Koper (SI) / Town of Lure (FR)

Observatory partner: Regional Delegation for Trade and Crafts Rhone Alpes (FR)

Currently, there are excavations going on, after the old buildings were torn down, because under the houses of today lies a Roman settlement.

The project manager, who presented the plans, pointed out the fact that projects like that are improving the housing and infrastructure situation in the city center, but they are much harder and more expensive to realize than projects on the green pastures.

It is important to adapt the old city centers without giving up valuable old buildings and structures, but also to modernise and improve the living conditions in the old town cores. If that does not happen, more and more buildings lose their functions and cannot be held alive. The city center is a mirror of the past, but is not a living museum.

More meetings will be organised in the future to deepen the relationship between the participating towns.