

NEW TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER COMMUNITY: CENTROPE_TT FOUR COUNTRIES CLOSE RANKS TO ENSURE SWIFT KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Vienna: The international community centrope_tt was presenting its activities to the public at a press conference in Palais Niederösterreich. More than 100 experts from the Centrope region (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria) have been working together since summer 2009 to develop a platform that will facilitate the exchange of information between research institutions and industrial companies. The target group consists of small- and medium-sized businesses who are unable to afford their own research department.

"With over 2.200 research establishments, the Centrope region is a treasure trove of know-how that we can use to make our businesses even stronger in future," explains Provincial Government Minister for Economic Affairs Petra Bohuslav alongside Vice-Mayor Renate Brauner and international guests at the launch of the new centrope_tt project.

Centrope_tt is an international network of experts in the Centrope area that deals with innovation and technology transfer in the border regions of Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. The 2-million-euro project is part of the CENTRAL EUROPE programme and has 15 project partners, who, under the coordination of ecoplus. Niederösterreichs Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH, aim to develop measures to improve the cross-border technology transfer between universities and businesses in the four countries (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria).

Centrope_tt map, centrope_tt voucher and centrope_tt academy belong to the three most important centrope_tt tools within the Centrope community, as explained by Project Leader Vera Vyskovsky. She says that "the main goal is for industries to become more transparent and to facilitate quicker access to research opportunities."

The centrope_tt map offers online access to a database on the www.centrope-tt.info website containing information on 2,200 different research and development institutes and businesses in the Centrope region. Searches by region and discipline allow company managers and scientists from different research institutions to find out more about research providers in the neighbouring regions in a quick and targeted manner. The University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna and Seibersdorf Labor GmbH, for instance, use the site as a tool to draw attention to their disciplines.

A centrope_tt network analysis of the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research shows that one in three projects involves at least one research establishment from the Centrope countries. Although orientation towards the West is strong, many institutions within the Centrope countries are networked.

The centrope_tt voucher serves as an incentive tool for 50 cross-border research

cooperation projects. Companies receive financial aid amounting to 5,000 euros maximum and ongoing support in their cooperation efforts. Over the next 1.5 years, the centrope_tt initiative will be testing the implementation of this cross-border funding tool.

The entrope_tt academy is an institution set up to provide technology experts a compact overview of the various subsidy and funding structures in Centrope countries through its training programme.

Centrope_tt also makes use of modern media. The centrope_tt community obtains information through the internet platform XING and gets to write its own articles or search for people, countries and expert reports. Here, anyone interested in technology transfer can engage in an exchange on the internet. "It is only when you get to know each other personally and work together on common solutions that you build the trust needed for you to start drawing from each other's know-how in everyday business," says Project Leader Vera Vyskovsky.

These activities have been made possible by the substantial funding provided by the European Union. Within the framework of the CENTRAL EUROPE programme, the founding institutions receive funding for an average of 79%. "In our day and age, a project of this magnitude would not be doable without the help of the EU. The EU is therefore establishing crucial framework conditions for European integration through hands-on measures", explains Vera Vyskovsky with conviction. So as to ensure a stronger and sustainable system, the centrope_tt initiative attaches great importance to close cooperation with other cross-border initiatives of the European Union, including CoReTech and Incuba-Train.

PRESS CONTACT:

Věra Vyškovsky
ecoplus. The Business Agency of Lower Austria Ltd.
Austria, 1010 Vienna, Herrengasse 13
T : +43 664 383 57 25



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