

RAPIDE NEWS

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RAPIDE

'MANAGING RISK' WORKING SUMMIT IN BATH

On 22-23 April, the third and last RAPIDE working summit will take place at the Hilton Bath City Hotel. The summit will focus on 'Managing Risk', one of the barriers to innovation identified by the RAPIDE network.

How can the public sector help the private sector to manage its exposure to risk?

The RAPIDE partners will meet to analyse SW England case studies from Grant for R&D, a Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) business support initiative which provides funding to help individuals and small and medium-sized businesses research and develop technologically innovative products and processes. Richard Adams from Adams Racing Ltd will introduce participants to Gecko Tyres, his project kick started by Grant for R&D.

Guest speakers will include Prof. Gordon Murray from the University of Exeter Business School who will talk about cultural attitudes towards failure and bankruptcy and Inigo Urresti from DG Enterprise who will give a presentation on the Commission's Second Chance Initiative. Jenny Tooth from the British Business Angels Network will talk about the investors' perspective on failure.

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RAPIDE IS CHANGING GEAR – ROADMAP AS FIRST STEP TO ACTION PLAN

The RAPIDE network has only been established 6 months ago. This first quarter of the project's life cycle was committed to strengthen the partnership, to identify good practices and to foster inter-regional cooperation. The network's achievements since the project launch in Torun include two successful working summits and a multitude of projects and initiatives identified for exchange of best practice and peer review.

Within the next 3 months partners will identify the key themes to be included in the 12 Regional Action Plans, final outcome of the 2-year RAPIDE project.

Individual road maps are being devised by all partners, outlining the following:

- Current obstacles, difficulties in the region to bring innovation to the market
- How to achieve the involvement of all relevant stakeholders
- Current initiatives, policies or operational programmes that could be improved by RAPIDE
- A timeline for the Development of the Regional Action Plans

Dear RAPIDE Partners
and Friends,

**"Anyone who has never made
a mistake has never tried
anything new"**

(Albert Einstein)

Up to 18% of all entrepreneurs who go on to be successful fail in their first venture. Many well-established companies only exist because their founders did not give up after failing at their first hurdle. It is a fact that companies founded by re-starters have higher turnover and employment growth than companies run by entrepreneurs who have never failed. Having already faced extreme challenges many entrepreneurs who fail are willing and able to learn from their mistakes. They may also have developed greater determination and a highly sensitive radar for dangers that will help them to assess risks and opportunities more effectively.

Only 4% of all bankruptcies are fraudulent. Yet a lot of stigma is attached to bankruptcy and many national regulations do not distinguish between fraudulent and non-fraudulent bankruptcies. This is not only unfair but a tremendous loss of entrepreneurship potential. In addition, the knock-on effect is a culture where fewer people are willing to take such risks in the future.

To tap the full potential of business to create wealth and jobs in Europe, European regions need to ensure that talented entrepreneurs are not discriminated against and have every opportunity to give it another try.

The Second Chance Initiative of the European Commission is there to uncover the unused opportunities which European regions are missing out on by not supporting once failed entrepreneurs.

Inigo Urresti
Policy Co-ordinator
Unit "Entrepreneurship"
Industry and Enterprise
Directorate General
European Commission





RAPIDE IS SPREADING THE WORD

The RAPIDE Project Secretariat has strongly intensified its efforts to disseminate the ideas and recommendations of the Network.

Experience shows that dissemination of ideas and recommendations often happens via informal contacts and discussions. However, representation at key conferences and meetings is a crucial part of the network's activity and enables us to participate in the ongoing political debate about innovation and regional development.

In the context of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission are jointly organising a two-day forum, on 20-22 April, to showcase the creativity of Europe's regions and cities and to demonstrate the importance of creativity and innovation for economic development.

RAPIDE Project Manager **Benjamin Kuscher** will participate in a top level discussion about the need of creativity for regional development.

Research Connection 2009

The RAPIDE Network has been invited to participate in a high level discussion at the Research Connection Conference 2009, which is jointly organised by DG RTD, DG REGIO and DG ENTR.

Research and innovation can offer solutions to overcome the great challenges that face the regions of Europe today.

The conference will take place in Prague on 7-8 May 2009 in the context of the Czech Presidency of the European Union. **Radek Novotny** from the Management Authority in South Bohemia, Czech Republic will participate on behalf of RAPIDE.

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



Creativity
and Innovation
European Year 2009

REGIONS FOR ECONOMIC CHANGE – NETWORKING FOR RESULTS

RAPIDE was there

Thanks to our intensified co-operation with the European Commission and especially with the Fast Track Committee, the RAPIDE project got the opportunity to be present at the Regions for Economic Change conference in Brussels on 17 February.

Juliet Williams, Chairman of the South West of England Regional Development Agency strongly highlighted that only regions with strong innovation support structures will be strengthened and more competitive after the current crisis.

Eila Linna, Director of the Lapland Institute for Tourism Research, and **Christos Tzomakas**, Head of Scientific-Technical Support & Programmes Implementation Department of Western Greece, showed in their discussion how participation in the RAPIDE Network supports their efforts to promote knowledge exchange about innovation support structures.

This new way of presenting the content of a project through a staged debate rather than a standard presentation was welcomed by the Participants and the European Commission. The positive feedback guarantees ongoing interest in the RAPIDE Network and its outcomes.



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