

# RAPIDE NEWS

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# RAPIDE



## MID-TERM REVIEW IN ÖREBRO

On 17-18 June, the partnership will officially end the first phase of the RAPIDE project and launch themselves into the development of Regional Action Plans.

### Phase 2 of RAPIDE about to start – Formation of Action Groups

The event in Örebro falls together with Sweden holding the EU presidency and so the conference is expected to attract wide interest.

**Christian Leffler**, Head of cabinet at the EU Commission and **Karin Pilsäter**, Chair of the Committee of Industry and Trade and member of the EU board at the Swedish Parliament are among the speakers together with **Jens Schollin**, Vice Chancellor of Örebro University and **Pontus Braunerhjelm** from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

While the Network will reflect on the first year of its existence and analyse its achievements in the context of Innovation policy and development, the way forward will be set out. Action Groups will be formed among partner regions in order to work together on specific innovation topics that can later be implemented in the partner regions.

These topics include

- Innovative public procurement
- Cooperation between academia and businesses
- Innovation Vouchers
- Effective funding (Revolving funds, business angel networks)

For more information on this event, please contact [ulrike.kraemer@southwestrda.org.uk](mailto:ulrike.kraemer@southwestrda.org.uk)



## FIRST RAPIDE ACTION IDENTIFIED

The first series of RAPIDE working summits was dedicated to identify good practise and new ideas on how to improve the innovation support structure of our regions.

Right after the RAPIDE Mid-term Review in Örebro the partner regions will face the challenge of transforming these ideas into action.

The Region of South Bohemia is already one step ahead and has identified the assessment process of start-up companies applying for innovation fund as an area for improvement. The regional Management Authority will implement the online assessment tool 'BLUES' - introduced and tested at the RAPIDE working summit in Bath, UK in April.

BLUES promises more transparency, coherence and comparability within the assessment of public funding applications.

Congratulations from the RAPIDE secretariat!



**BLUES**  
**Brain Logistics Start Up**  
**Evaluator ®**



For more information on BLUES please contact Petra Raskova, [raskova@jaip.cz](mailto:raskova@jaip.cz)

## The pros and cons of “fearing failure”

Research has shown that fear of failure is more pronounced among social disadvantaged (and poorly educated) groups. The impact of negative attitudes to new firm formation is also likely to be greater in a recession. A strong fear of failure has a number of direct and negative outcomes in a modern economy where entrepreneurial action is increasingly seen as a major economic 'catalyst'. There is evidence that fearful attitudes about the failure of a new enterprise and its personal and professional consequences reduce firm formation, reduce investment committed and reduce innovation activity. Each of these constraints has a direct and negative impact on economic growth. In summary, the fear of failure frustrates both opportunity recognition and execution, and thus has a material economic cost.

On the other hand the great majority of start-up firms in an economy fail quickly within their first few years. Such firms rarely grow, usually under invest and do not innovate. The harsh reality for most entrepreneurs is that they would work less hours and be economically better off if they could find or remain in full-time employment. So the truth is that most entrepreneurs have every right to be fearful of failure which is ever present for the start-up and young firm. While a recessionary environment clearly has an effect on commercial activity and is particularly damaging for small businesses with negligible reserves in the event of a downturn in trading, the two most common reasons for small firm and entrepreneurial failure have little to do with such exceptional external shocks. Rather, the real terminators of entrepreneurs and their young businesses remain the obvious problems of the poor quality of the product or service traded, and a lack of a real market for the product or service.

These lessons should be well recognised by policy makers responsible for encouraging new firm entry and the promotion of entrepreneurial activity. All too often, SME public support is uncritically distributed to all comers regardless of merit or probability of success.

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## RAPIDE – DISCUSSION FORUM

### Impact of the financial crisis on regional innovation policies

On 20 April the RAPIDE project secretariat organized an informal meeting between all RAPIDE partner region Brussels representatives and European Commission delegates.

The purpose of the first RAPIDE – Discussion Forum was to make use of and further build on the strong linkages between the Fast Trek network and the European Commission.

As envisaged this forum was used by both sides to gain more information about regional and EC initiatives in support of innovation as a tool against the current economic downturn.

Zoltan Balogh, the regional representative of Eszak-Alfold, Hungary and Eleni Marianou, Director of the South West UK Brussels Office, introduced the topic.

In the following discussion all regional representatives outlined the different actions taken to cope with the crisis and the Commission openly discussed new support mechanisms arising from the EC's recovery plan and beyond.

The meeting was regarded very useful and a huge success by all participants. The RAPIDE project secretariat will organize similar events in the near future.

## Forum on Europe's Creative Regions and Cities

The Committee of Regions and the European

Commission hosted a forum in Brussels to demonstrate the importance of creativity and innovation for economic development. Juliet Williams, Chair of the South West of England Regional Development Agency, and RAPIDE Project Manager Benjamin Kuscher participated in a top level discussion about the need of creativity for regional development.

## Research Connection 2009

The RAPIDE network was also invited to the Research Connection Conference 2009 in Prague which was jointly organised by DG RTD, DG REGIO and DG ENTR under the Czech presidency. Radek Novotny, from the Management Authority in South Bohemia presented RAPIDE very successfully as a case study of synergetic funding.

## INNO-Partnering FORUM

RAPIDE Project Manager Benjamin Kuscher presented RAPIDE's latest developments and the potential synergies with the INNO-Partnering Forum at the 6<sup>th</sup> INNO-Learning Steering Group Meeting on 13 May in Rotterdam.

## RAPIDE Leaflet now available

The first RAPIDE leaflet is available now from the website [www.rapidenetwork.eu](http://www.rapidenetwork.eu) or from the RAPIDE project secretariat.



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It can appear that policy makers subscribe to the uncritical premise that encouraging more start-ups is 'good for everyone'. The reality is that encouraging and supporting unviable young businesses has important economic, social and personal costs. It is a bad idea. Instead, research findings clear tell us that scarce public support should go to existing growth companies, educated and experienced entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial teams. Resources should be focused on new, growth oriented markets and on knowledge based industries.

However, accelerating the number of start-ups in an economy cannot be undertaken in isolation of major entrepreneurial infrastructure support including, for example, the provision of advice, support, networks, risk capital and effective exit markets. Effective supportive environments help to reduce fear. An efficient market should eject uncompetitive firms – but at the same time encourage learning and (better informed and prepared) second starts. Entrepreneurial exits should not be traumatic or irreversible. In short, policy should be both compassionate and evidence backed. The two are not contradictory.

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School of Business and  
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## NEW OUTFIT FOR RAPIDE WEBSITE

The RAPIDE website has finally got its long awaited overhaul and is now life under [www.rapidenetwork.eu](http://www.rapidenetwork.eu).

The New website features a brand new design, downloads and information on events, news, and partners.



For more information on RAPIDE or this Newsletter please contact

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