



Political-Strategic Working Group Clusters of Excellence EUSDR Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness”

30 April 2014, 9:15-18:00; Vienna, Austria
ecoplus / Palais Niederösterreich, Herrengasse 13, 1010 Vienna

Workshop: Smart Furniture Manufacturing

Workshop leader: Genoveva Christova (Bulgarian Furniture Cluster, BG, g.christova@ligna-group.com)

New Impetus to Furniture Manufacturing through Cross-Clusters Cooperation

Rationale: Fostering cooperation between traditional industries (such as furniture) and more futuristic industries (such as healthcare and green/ environmental industries) in Danube Region.

Wood and furniture manufacturing is one of the most common industries in the Danube Region with high socio-economic impact for all 14 participating countries. However, nowadays the industry suffers from a severe recession and declining competitiveness due to the increased competition from Turkey and the Far East. All this shows a strong need for urgent industry revitalization and a focus on innovation, in order to strengthen its competitiveness for a long-term future.

In the Danube strategy a motor for innovation should therefore be a pilot project in cross-clusters cooperation between the furniture industries and healthcare and green technology „new wave“ clusters. Higher productivity growth in manufacturing can spill over to other sectors and can develop mutual benefits in cross-sector cooperation.

Potential pilot action:

- Remanufacturing for offices as well as for the hotel / hospitality industry
- Design development for healthcare industry: beds, functional furniture, sofas, tables and chairs, etc



- Green design and new product development

Potential partners for such pilot action could be:

- wood/furniture clusters
- „new wave“ clusters (esp. health care / healthy & active ageing / green technology)
- innovation organizations
- technology institutions

After a presentation on the role Furniture Companies might play in the re-use and conservation of resources, Genoveva Christova introduced some potential ideas for Projects.

The Group was very well representative of the Danube Region **with 14 people representing 9 different Countries: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Rumania, Serbia, and Slovakia.** John Murray facilitated the discussion.

Key Points:

- Fits into EU's Re-Industrialisation agenda.
- Can we create new products and services. A cross-cluster opportunity.
- Need to use less wood world-wide.
- Can we produce or re-use furniture more cost-efficiently?

Practical Results:

1. The "Passport" for furniture needs technology to embed information. Where are we up to? Potential EU Project.
2. ID Cards - what are ICT labs doing at the moment?
3. Active Ageing - why can't you take your own furniture to a new place or sheltered care?
4. Use of containers to transfer used furniture - a logistics project preferably exploring Danube river potential
5. Leasing of furniture and then updating after the lease period. Research on potential markets - who are / where are the most active lease partners in Europe?
6. Design technology has to improve or be re-aligned to give better use of materials.



7. A market via eco-friendly restaurants - in line with philosophy/life-style.
8. DG Enterprise currently has a "Competitive Public Procurement Practice" series of funding opportunities - to use it as a pilot project for promotion of reused furniture in public buildings
9. Need for "applied" experts in order to customize used furniture.
10. Competence mapping needed across Danube Clusters, and then a series of Pilot Actions.
11. Horizon 2020: a concept note required, using a number of these technology/competence based ideas.
12. Liaison with EU thematic organizations like: CEI-Bois in Brussels, Competence Centre in Austria, Baltic Sea Region similar projects: comfortable living, etc

Actions:

1. John Murray to circulate notes to attendees for further comments.
2. Small group, led by John Murray, to prepare a Horizon 2020 Concept Note and start the process. Needs various clusters to support (not just furniture).
3. Formation of LinkedIn group to stay in touch
4. Next meeting - end of September in Croatia? TBC

Funding possibilities:

1. Danube Region O.P. (Priority 1 & Priority 6) - 22/9/14
 - 3/15 or 6/15 - Expect calls for projects
 - 1/16 - Start
 - End of 2017 - 1st payment
2. Horizon 2020: already open => continuous process
3. Public Procurement (DG Enterprise and Industry)
4. EU Re-industrialisation strategy (Industrial policy "For a European Industrial Renaissance")
5. INTERREG EUROPE (Continuing INTERREG 4C)
 - Mid-February 2015 - First Call
6. Eurostars