



PARTNERS is a EUROCHAMBRES initiative, supported by the European Commission under the 2003 Regional CARDS Programme. It is a capacity building programme for Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other business organisations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, in the area of intra-regional trade and international trade services

Introduction

Co-operation with the Western Balkans continues to rank high in the EU post-2004 Enlargement agenda. The prospect of EU membership represents an incentive for growth of the Western Balkan economies. In this favourable environment, Chambers of Commerce, especially at the regional and local level, should be empowered to drive forward the economic recovery and assist enterprises in carrying out their local or international ambitions.

The PARTNERS project, launched by EUROCHAMBRES with the support of the European Commission, therefore focused on the enhancement of Chambers' capacity in the areas of internationalisation and local development. Amongst other activities, PARTNERS included the establishment of 15 partnerships between selected Chambers from the Western Balkans and the EU-25 countries.

The idea behind these partnerships is that a new service or management change be implemented in Western Balkan Chambers, thanks to the transfer of know-how from their EU counterparts. After the selection and match-making phase, 15 detailed action plans were drawn on the basis of the information gathered and ideas exchanged during the inception visits carried out by each EU Chamber to their partner. The partnership projects were launched at the joint kick-off meeting which was held in Zagreb (Croatia) on 16-17 December 2004. This provided the floor for lively discussions and identification of synergies among different action plans, while the participants also benefited from the networking opportunities. Throughout the whole implementation of the activities, the partnerships were closely monitored by EUROCHAMBRES and were able to present an interim assessment of their results at the mid-term meeting that took place in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) on 26-27 May 2005.

As the 15 twinning projects have now reached an end, the overall assessment is extremely positive, both in terms of the level of cooperation and the effectiveness of the activities implemented. The description of each partnership's results is presented in the following pages. It is noteworthy also that all the actors involved have developed excellent professional as well as human contacts and working with them during the past year has proved to be a pleasant and enriching experience.

Brussels, November 2005



LIST OF PARTNERSHIPS

Assembly of French CCI (FR) & Economic Chamber of FYR of Macedonia (MK)	5
Austrian Federal Economic Chamber-WIFI (AT) & Chamber of Economy of Montenegro (CS)	6
Cork Chamber of Commerce (IE) & Hungarian CCI (HU) & Republika Srpska CCI (BA)	7
Danish Chamber of Commerce (DK) & Tirana CCI (AL)	8
Firenze CCIAA - Promofirenze (IT) & Zagreb Chamber of Economy (HR)	9
Gipuzkoa CCI (ES) & Chamber of Economy of Vojvodina (CS)	10
IHK-Gesellschaft Berlin (DE) & Regional CCI Kragujevac (CS)	11
Isernia CCIAA - Special Agency S.E.I. (IT) & County Chamber Varazdin (HR)	12
Milan CCIAA - Formaper (IT) & Regional Chamber of Economy Nis (CS)	13
Oviedo CCI (ES) & County Chamber Karlovac (HR)	14
Slovenia CCI (SI) & Paris CCI (FR) & Belgrade Chamber of Economy (CS)	15
The Hague Chamber of Commerce (NL) & Serbian Chamber of Commerce (CS)	16
Treviso CCIAA (IT) & Chamber of Economy of Sarajevo Canton (BA)	17
Valencia CCI (ES) & County Chamber Rijeka (HR)	18
West Flanders CCI (BE) & Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA)	19

ECMEUR – Economic Chamber Effective, Updated, Respond

At the time when the project action plan was designed, critical input came to be the new legal environment facing Chambers in the FYR of Macedonia. In fact, the membership of companies to these Chambers stopped to be compulsory and competition rose with other initiatives, whether private or public, linked to economic development services. This meant that the Economic Chamber of FYR of Macedonia (ECM) had to take on the challenge of repositioning itself vis à vis Macedonian companies.

As such, the partnership project developed between ACFCI and ECM aimed to provide assistance to this later relating to strategy on the one hand and client relations management on the other.

Strictly on the basis of ECM' s own conditions and needs, the project was formulated so as to focus on the following activities:

- ▶ Strategy and organisation
- ▶ Transfer of Chamber methodology
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Coaching in marketing of business support services

For the implementation to be utmost effective, an in-depth overview of the currently provided services, companies' requirements and the ECM' s internal organisation was carried out at an initial stage.

On account of the information so gathered, a match-making with best practices of a few EU Chambers being in a comparable situation (transfer of marketing strategy and methodology) was completed, while ACFCI maintained the co-ordinating role. The training that followed then concentrated on communication, client relations management and services with the aim to help ECM win the confidence of Macedonian enterprises.

In the end, the main achievements of this partnership project can be summarized as follows:

- Modernisation of the ECM' s communication (website, new weekly newspaper format);
- Improvement of the ECM' s client relation management;
- Assessment of the ECM' s business model and creation of new products;
- Enhancement of the skills of the ECM staff on new issues (CE Marking, internationalisation);
- Provision of strategic recommendations to the ECM;
- Satisfactory performance of the ECM with regard to its membership in spite of the new law;
- Creation of sustainable partnerships between the ECM and the participating European Chambers, in particular the ones having welcomed within their premises representatives from ECM (i.e. Paris CCI and Brussels CCI).



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Project to Facilitate the Implementation of a Master Craftsman's Certificate Exam System for Crna Gora

In 2001 Montenegro carried out an encompassing reform of the educational system as a consequence of which the so-called "dual system" was implemented: a vocational education system, where the two learning places are the training enterprise and the part-time vocational school. The apprenticeship training - modelled on the German and Austrian archetype - is currently in the pilot phase and carried out in a handful of classes all over Montenegro.

Specific provisions of the Law on Vocational Education stipulate that a Master Craftsman's Certificate Exam (MCCE) system (similar to Austria's, where the dual system is also supplemented by a MCCE system) shall be realised and that the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro shall proactively take part in the realisation of the MCCE having particular responsibilities in the following fields:

- ▶ Drafting the rules of procedures
- ▶ Determining the standards of skills
- ▶ Managing the exams
- ▶ Appointing Commission members

Since Austrian law also widely delegates power to the Austrian Economic Chambers regarding the MCCE, the aim of this partnership project was therefore to facilitate the implementation of a state-of-the-art MCCE system in Montenegro by transfer of experience and best practice examples.

The following key activities in particular contributed to the success of the project:

- ▶ Workshop for stakeholders in Montenegro on the Austrian MCCE system and the legal basis of Montenegrin system;
- ▶ Study visit to Austria to get acquainted with the work of a MCCE Executive Office, the relevant training centres and to attend Austrian exams 'live';
- ▶ Pilot Exam (practical and oral) in Montenegro in a selected craft (i.e. hairdresser);
- ▶ Concluding round table with stakeholders in Montenegro.



The project objectives were achieved as planned:

- ▶ Montenegro Chamber staff and partners were trained on the MCCE system (i.e. Austrian 'best practice example');
- ▶ Know-how transfer for MCCE was accomplished in three pre-selected crafts (joinery, car-mechanic, hairdresser);
- ▶ 'Standards of Skills' for Montenegro were drafted for the 'pilot craft' (hairdressers) and submitted to the Council for Vocational Education for adoption;
- ▶ The Regulation ('Rules of Procedure') applicable for all crafts was drafted and submitted to the Ministry of Economy and Labour for endorsement;
- ▶ Examiners for the MCCE Commission for hairdressers were chosen and trained in the framework of a pilot exam;
- ▶ The Chamber of Economy of Montenegro learned how to manage and run an Executive Office of the Commission of Examiners of the MCCE.

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HIRS Development Project (HIRS – Hungarian Irish Republika Srpska Chambers)

The objectives of the HIRS partnership, formulated following intensive meetings and needs analysis with the partner Chambers, were to enable the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republika Srpska to:

- Prepare for eventual membership of the EU and avail of interim trade opportunities;
- Undertake a smooth transition from mandatory to voluntary membership;
- Address issues that would result in enhanced range of member services being offered to business members;
- Transfer experiences between the partners.

Upon the conclusion of its 10 months implementation, the HIRS project has gone extremely well, and the synergies of the three partners has really contributed to its overall success.

The project involved a variety of components aimed to ensure the maximum transfer of experiences from the Irish and Hungarian partners, including workshops and seminars for Chamber management and members, provision of documentation and training 'on the job' as well as reciprocal visits and individual consultation on the following topics:

- ▶ Trade Development
- ▶ Experience of Change from Public to Private Law Status
- ▶ Membership Retention & Recruitment
- ▶ Education & Training
- ▶ Chamber services

As a result of the HIRS project, the Republika Srpska CCI has developed its services over the last number of months, to reflect the training and consultation provided by the partner Chambers. There have been immediate results of the project which can be identified and qualified, however the results of this program as a whole which is deemed to have far reaching and long term results to the Regional Republika Srpska CCI, and it seems undeniable that the project has yielded the maximum possible results in the narrow time frame.



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Internationalisation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana

The Government of Albania placed the private sector in the focus of institutional and structural reforms which are contributing to the improvement of the climate for business development.

The development of export-oriented Albanian industry depends on the growth of institutional, technical and managerial capacities.

Out of the 64,000 enterprises registered in Albania, 27,000 are located in Tirana, where also the main part of the big businesses is found, as well as 35% of Albanian SMEs.

In the light of all the above, the Tirana Chamber of Commerce and Industry wished to strengthen its capacity and build up further expertise in the field of internationalisation in order to assist the SMEs with an export potential, specifically with a view to increase exports to the EU.

It was agreed between Tirana CCI and the Danish Chamber of Commerce to strengthen the foreign trade area of the Tirana CCI by running a number of training sessions on international issues and by assisting in the preparation for establishment of an EIC information office and an ATA carnet capacity.

The programme was carried out in Albania and Denmark. During its final stage an agreement for cooperation between the two Chambers was signed in Copenhagen. Furthermore, to assist the potential export companies in Tirana a guide-book "How to Export to the EU" was developed and it shall, together with internal training within the Tirana CCI, form the basis for a visit of an Albanian SMEs delegation to Denmark next year.



The partnership project was constituted of two elements: concept and objectives.

Concept:

- ▶ Developing a capacity for assisting SMEs exporting into EU
- ▶ Providing the basis for financing the Chamber
- ▶ Developing a capacity for legal services
- ▶ Identifying companies with an export potential

Objectives:

- ▶ Training in international trade rules
- ▶ Preparation for exports into the EU
- ▶ Training in international marketing techniques
- ▶ Strengthening of the legal advisory services
- ▶ Building up an EIC office
- ▶ Building up ATA carnet capacity

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EXCHANGE

On the basis of the specific needs and requests of the Zagreb Chamber of Economy, this partnership project with Promofirenze, special agency of the Firenze CCIAA, focused on the promotion of the quality of international services for SMEs, and especially for those exporting to the EU.

Detailed objectives of the project were:

- to enable the Zagreb Chamber to counsel SMEs on how to export to the EU, including EU legal matters (regulation, standards), and provide tailor-made assistance;
- to improve the quality of Zagreb Chamber's international trade promotion services for companies;
- to facilitate the exchange of expertise among Italian and Croatian enterprises, and promote the conclusion of agreements among them;
- to launch the new services provided by the Chamber, presenting the experience of the companies that took part in the project.

The training activities carried out within the partnership project concentrated on EU trade policy (legislation, regulations and standards) and the promotion of business cooperation. In particular, the Zagreb Chamber was able to strengthen its staff's skills in the provision of tailor-made advisory services to companies having specific needs and interests that cannot be satisfied by a first level service, normally offered to a general public.

Considering the interest in the Italian market expressed by the Zagreb Chamber, the project also allowed to enhance the knowledge of the Italian/Tuscan economic and political systems through a sort of twinning among Italian and Croatian enterprises and through missions of the Zagreb Chamber to Florence aimed at fostering the development and consolidation of relations among the region of Tuscany and the region of Zagreb.



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Vojvodina International Promotion Assistance Project

The main goal of the partnership between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Gipuzkoa and the Chamber of Economy of Vojvodina was to launch a work programme for the share of best practice in the field of internationalisation services.

The specific objectives were:

- ▶ To exchange experiences and know how between the two partner Chambers;
- ▶ To train the staff of Vojvodina Chamber.

Several activities were detected as most important and defined as follows:

➤ Catalogue of Best Vojvodina's Exporters

The Catalogue, a main product of this project, is conceived to be a permanent service on offer at the Vojvodina Chamber. This year's version will be updated regularly, and will serve as example for a new one to be implemented in the future: the Catalogue of Potential Vojvodina's Exporters.

Gipuzkoa CCI shared its expertise on this topic during all working visits to San Sebastian, from the Chamber's own experience in the field of internationalisation and export to several examples of industrial sectors catalogues by different associations in Gipuzkoa region.

The Vojvodina catalogue is to be printed in four languages (English, German, Russian and Serbian), there will be CD version, and it will also be published on the Chamber's website.

➤ Communication form

Gipuzkoa CCI has a long experience in practical communication with its exporters. During the project implementation, a draft communication form was prepared and it is already being used by the Chamber of Economy of Vojvodina in its internationalisation services.

This newly tailored communication form will represent one of the main tools used in Chamber's analysis of exporters' needs so as to improve its role in supporting companies' exporting activities.

➤ Bulletin for exporters

The pilot number of the Exporters Bulletin was prepared and sent to top 200 exporters. All news related to the Chamber's international activities and joint actions carried out with provincial and republic authorities was included. The Bulletin also contributed to the promotion of the Catalogue of best exporters and the collection material from the companies.

The Chamber of Economy of Vojvodina plans to have three numbers of the Bulletin per year, and to cooperate with SIEPA (Serbian investment and Export Promotion Agency).

➤ Territorial marketing plan

A draft of the Territorial Marketing Plan for internal use of the Chamber of Economy of Vojvodina was made during the partnership project implementation. The Vojvodina Chamber used the experience of Gipuzkoa CCI to prepare the draft of the Plan. This draft will be used by the Chamber's Executive board in planning Chamber's activities for next year and Chamber's strategies in general.

➤ Market research service

Two training sessions were carried out in San Sebastián and Novi Sad. The Guide for Market Research was prepared and the related service implemented at the Chamber of Economy of Vojvodina to the benefit of its members – mainly exporters – and other companies.



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Agency for Investment Promotion and Business Support in Central Serbia

This project focus was on creating all the necessary pre-conditions for the establishment of the "Agency for Investment Promotion and Business Support in Central Serbia" and making it operational.

The official opening ceremony of the Agency took place on 4 October 2005 in Kragujevac and by all means it was an important event for the whole region. The founding of the Agency received great response from regional and local authorities throughout Serbia and was covered by national and regional TV and the press media.

Four products were developed as the basis of the information and consulting services of the Agency:

- "Investment Guide", containing all relevant arguments for investing in Central Serbia and information on how to establish a company, the latest tax policy, real estate deals, employment regulations, etc.
- "Cooperation Guide", with 80 selected and especially prepared cooperation offers from companies of Central Serbia, as well as updated contacts of relevant Ministries and governmental bodies, agencies of the Republic of Serbia and business institutions;
- "Training and Education Plan", including a detailed programme of upcoming workshops and seminars;
- Agency's internet page, with all activities, news, contacts, useful links, information on the region, project data base, information on loans, education, EU news information on fairs and new publications, etc.

The Agency offices were kindly offered by the Regional CCI Kragujevac.

At this initial stage, the Agency is comprised of four centres:

1. Information and Marketing Centre, for the promotion of foreign investment through PR and lobby activities, the provision of information on regional potential and export possibilities, and cooperation with the Regional Economic Development Agency for Sumadija and Pomoravlje, SIEPA, regional Chambers in Central Serbia and other CCIs, as well as local governmental bodies.
2. Investment, Export and Cooperation Consulting Centre, for the provision of consulting services to foreign partners as to access to the region, business opportunities, participation in national

and international fairs, credit advice, loan applications, etc.

3. Training Centre, for the organization of seminars and workshops, on the basis of the prepared "Training and Education Plan", and in the following fields: start-up business, staff management, financial issues.
4. Technological Centre, for update on technological trends and support for technological development. The Technological Centre will also create two working groups of technical experts, from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Medicine Technology of the University of Kragujevac and the research departments of local companies. Efforts also began to establish a "Technological Park".



An important achievement of the project was that all relevant decision makers of the region (Chambers of Commerce, city halls, municipalities, companies of Zastava group, trade unions) were brought together to sustain the activities' goals. The knowledge and experience of IHK-Gesellschaft and IHK Leipzig in the transformation process in East Germany and the development of economic policy in Leipzig-Region were very useful and helped develop new programmes and ideas for the Central Serbia Region. The involvement of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) facilitated the social dialogue, not only with trade union representatives but also companies and employees of the region. As spill-over effects of the project, a Governmental Programme for supporting the region and 500 Mio. dinars from the Republic budget for 0.5% rate loans to entrepreneurs who intend to start their business in Kragujevac were announced.

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Re.Na.TouR = Regional Natural Tourism Rural

The overall objective of the Re.Na.Tour initiative was to develop tools and techniques, via transfer of know how, to stimulate the development of the rural tourism sector in Varaždin and thereby generate new jobs opportunities.

The partnership project idea derived on the one hand from the experience of the Isernia CCIAA and its Special Agency SEI to support the tourism sector and on the other hand from the Varaždin County Chamber's economically founded reasoning that rural tourism could be one of the strongest attractions in the county. The development of rural tourism in Varaždin would create the necessary start-up conditions for new-found SMEs, thus contributing to reduce unemployment rate.

On the basis of the needs analysis carried out during the inception visit, two main goals were set:

- ▶ to create a new concept of tourism in the Varaždin area targeted towards rural tourism;
- ▶ to stimulate the tourism-related supply in the Varaždin area.

➤ The first component of creating a new tourism concept centred on rural tourism was the of a logo. Its colours and shape identify with the region and hints at the potential of the territory.



- Secondly, a website on rural tourism in the Varaždin County was developed. This is a dynamic website, with updated and powerful features. It is addressed to customers. Everything (from the colours to the pictures, to the texts and so on) reminds of the rural resources of the region. All rural entrepreneurs and places are promoted by this website on the basis of a destination management system. Designed as a promotional tool, it can be upgraded to a booking on line system in the coming future thanks to some special sections that were already implemented but not visible to the public at the moment (the access is allowed only to the system administrator).
- Thirdly, a booklet "Guidelines for rural entrepreneurs" was realised. This tool, available in English and Croatian, was designed to support potential and existing rural entrepreneurs in the Varaždin County in launching or developing a new business. Written in a user-friendly language, it indicates the necessary steps to be followed.
- Finally, this partnership fostered co-operation between the two Chambers involved, as a result of which they signed a "Memorandum of Understanding and Partnership".

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TEODORA – A New Initiative for Supporting Female Entrepreneurship

The TEODORA Project – a new initiative for supporting female entrepreneurship – was designed by FORMAPER Agency of Milan CCIAA and the Regional Chamber of Economy Niš as a partnership programme with the main aim of implementing a new service dedicated to support female entrepreneurship and strengthen the image of women in business.

The detailed objectives were: to monitor statistically female employment and female participation in management structures, to stimulate enterprise creation through self employment as a solution for unemployment and to improve, through networking, the survival opportunities of small enterprises run by women.

The project was implemented in accordance with the structure that follows.

Phase 0: Inception – Need analysis/Action Plan Design/Kick-off meeting

Phase 1: Research

Phase 2: Training of the staff of RCE Niš

Phase 3: Study visit to Italy – Milan

Phase 4: Promotion – Creation of a Network/ Virtual Desk on the web site/Conference

Phase 5: Final Evaluation

Significantly, the research conducted during this partnership project represented the first study on the phenomenon of female entrepreneurship in Serbia and was also an excellent promotional tool for networking activity. For the first time and in an innovative way, the motivations, concerns and requirements of women in business were assessed, and on the basis of these results a pioneer service was designed to provide women with need-oriented business support.

The Business Plan for the launch of a new service, designed during the “training of trainers” course, was realistic, feasible and proved that the RCE Niš would be able to realise and provide effective and innovative services to promote female entrepreneurship.



Through the activity of a working core group of experienced women entrepreneurs set up during the networking phase, a proposal was addressed to the Management of the Chamber to establish the Centre for Female Entrepreneurship, in which the priorities and tasks of this future service were highlighted.

On 20 September 2005 the proposal was accepted by the Board of Directors of the RCE Niš and the Centre was officially established. In this way, the Regional Chamber of Economy Niš became the first Serbian Chamber to integrate business supporting services aimed at women and the association of women entrepreneurs into its organization.

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CORBATA – TIE – KRAVATA. Transfer of Methodologies for New Services for Star-Ups

The purpose of CORBATA-TIE-KRAVATA was the establishment of a new service for star-ups at the Karlovac County Chamber in order to foster local development and create employment opportunities.

Karlovac County Chamber has been working with entrepreneurs, helping them to develop their business ideas, for a long time, but this work was not systematic and there was no record or evaluation of results.

During the last ten years the Oviedo Chamber of Commerce and Industry has developed a concrete and detailed methodology for advisory system to new entrepreneurs. Its working method with start-ups is composed of the following elements:

- ▶ promotion, identification and prospect
- ▶ analysis and diagnosis
- ▶ formal procedures to constitute the new enterprise (One Stop Shop)
- ▶ physical location of new companies (Business Incubator)
- ▶ consolidation programmes

The activities developed in the course of the project implementation were aimed at the transfer of methodology employed by the Oviedo CCI for the assessment and diagnosis of business plans. After the first visit to Oviedo to get familiar with the working system with start-ups (One Stop Shop, presentation of the assessment system, visit to several business incubator, and meeting with local authorities), a second visit was conceived as a training session where all procedures that had been translated and studied by Karlovac Chamber's staff were commented and put in practice with Asturian entrepreneurs.



After the methodology was adapted by the Karlovac Chamber's staff to their specific needs, it was tested, with the assistance of the Oviedo CCI, in five different real business ideas. As a result of this process, one company was already formally established and became operational in Karlovac.

Once the new service was successfully tested, it was presented to the business community in Karlovac and Croatia, and is now ready to be put in place in other County Chambers in Croatia.

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Camara
Oviedo



Business to Business – B2B

"Business to Business B2B" is a common project of the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and the Belgrade Chamber of Economy.

Its main objective was to set up a new range of services and improve the existing models of the Belgrade Chamber, taking advantage of the knowledge and tools already existing inside the Paris CCI and Slovenia CCI. Specifically, the aim was to transfer to the Belgrade Chamber best practices in the field of internationalisation of companies, especially B2B activities (trade missions, fairs, working in the field, technological cooperation supported by information tools, etc.).



Together, Paris CCI and Slovenia CCI transmitted the following service packages:

1. Acting in international trade advisory activities

The know-how transfer on how to market international trade advisory services, prepare business plans and increase efficiency:

- a) Meeting and exchange delegations - network with important economic players in foreign countries, with either developed or emerging economies.
- b) Trade fairs (international exhibitions, conventions...) as efficient tools for companies' international development, especially for small and medium sized firms. How to

select priority trade fairs, organise, finance and secure a grouped presence of Serbian companies at these fairs.

c) Development of advisory and follow-up services on the spot:

- increasing awareness for companies interested but not yet acting in international trade
- organising individual and group business development trips to:
 - ▶ discover a new market by meeting with local prospects and institutions
 - ▶ choose a business partner (agent, distributor, importer)
 - ▶ conclude partnership agreements (technology transfer, joint ventures)
 - ▶ found a subsidiary in a growing market

2. Implementing new tools using information technologies

- Business Opportunities Exchange – for promoting business opportunities of domestic and foreign companies as well as information exchange concerning business and investment opportunities;
- Chamber Trust Mark Program – exposure and increased impact on the world market;
- Chamber's (internal) membership management software: managing members, events, customer management (e-mail delivery), public and private (i.e. internal the Chamber), fully searchable in free text and automatic publishing of information on the web for all or selected members. The main target was to examine possibilities of collecting and publishing information about exporting/importing companies.

3. Training the trainers

Training of the Belgrade Chamber's staff to organise and run e-commerce/e-business related awareness seminars.

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CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE ET D'INDUSTRIE DE PARIS
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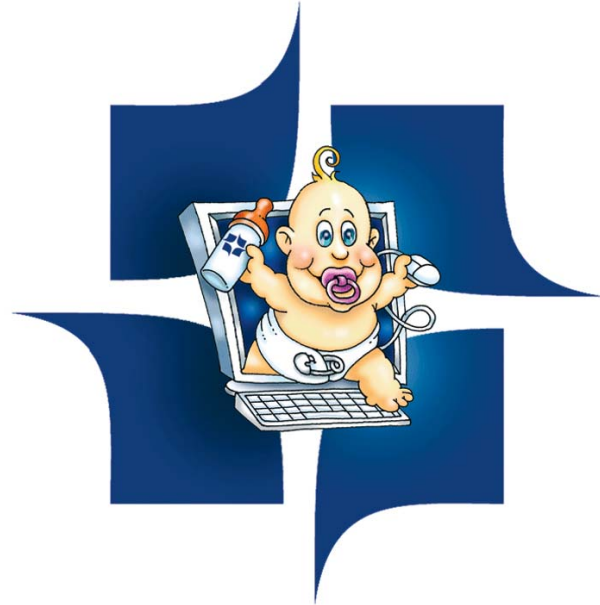
Setting up a Centre for Assisting Young Entrepreneur

Thanks to the twinning established within the framework of the PARTNERS project, assistance was provided to the Serbian Chamber of Commerce in setting up an infrastructure to give young entrepreneurs managerial information focussed on setting up their business.

A few main tools were used:

- a training course on "starting a business" was given to the benefit of 500 young entrepreneurs;
- a guidance for writing a business plan was prepared and published. It is now employed for seminars and individual advice to companies. Other booklets were also created: "How to start up a business", "How to register a shop (up to 10 workers)", "How to register an enterprise", "Internet for young entrepreneurs", "How to survive the first business year".
- a networking club. The first meeting took place on 19 October 2005 in Belgrade and 30 participants attended it. The topic was: "Credit lines in Serbia", with speakers from the National Bank of Serbia, EAR (European Agency for Reconstruction), the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and The Hague Chamber of Commerce.

Furthermore, the Baby Champion was launched, in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection. This is a competition for young entrepreneurs starting up their business. The prize will be awarded by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce on 15 December 2005. 300 plans were submitted. For the participants of the Baby Champion several meetings were organised by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce on "How to write a business plan". These seminars were then assessed on the basis of evaluation forms used by The Hague Chamber of Commerce.



Accordingly, the staff of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce received training on several topics, such as train the trainers, networking club, business plan, marketing plan, consultancy skills, presentation skills, organisation of Baby Champion, information booklets, seminars.

The transfer of know how between The Hague Chamber and the Serbian Chamber also lead to a different approach within this latter. In fact, a front and back office way of work was implemented.

Several opportunities outside the activities strictly envisaged in the partnership action plan were also exploited. For example: the Serbian Chamber participated in the Internationale Handelsdag at the The Hague Chamber (April 2005) and gave a presentation about doing business in Serbia for 50 members of the Central and Eastern European Trade Club in Amsterdam, whereas The Hague Chamber participated in the trade mission of the Ministry of Economic Affairs to Belgrade (June) and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs is organising a Western Balkan event in which The Hague Chamber of Commerce will take part (November).

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Enhancing Chamber of Economy of Sarajevo Canton Internationalisation and Certification Services

The partnership between the Treviso CCIAA and the Chamber of Economy of Sarajevo Canton centred around two points:

1. enhancing the Sarajevo Chamber's internationalisation services in order to provide local SMEs with a business-to-business service aimed at offering real cooperation opportunities;
2. implementing new services in the field of certification, which the Sarajevo Chamber would offer to its members and other companies located in the Sarajevo Canton, to foster better conditions for manufacturers in Bosnia and Herzegovina entering the EU market. The new services focus on CE marking requirements and environmental management in line with international standard ISO 14001:1996/2004.

On the whole, the project aspired to promote a more favourable business climate in the Sarajevo Canton, by means of facilitating partnerships and new investments from European companies.

The project allowed know-how transfer from the Treviso CCI to the Sarajevo Chamber. Moreover, direct cooperation was established between the two Chambers involved leading to the consolidation of durable contacts between the respective local productive systems.



The project achieved the following positive results and lasting effects:

- The Sarajevo Chamber's staff received specific and intensive training on certification issues, aimed at developing new skills in this field. The following training sessions were organised in Sarajevo: 1) CE Marking (February 2005); 2) Environmental Management ISO14000:2004 2-(March); 3) Environmental Management ISO14000:2004 – Training on the job (April); 4) Environmental Management ISO14000:2004 – Advanced training (September).
- The seminar "Business opportunities and industrial cooperation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Sarajevo Canton" was organised in Treviso in May, targeted to Venetian companies.

Furthermore, a workshop was organised with the local Chambers of Commerce, entrepreneurial associations, Unioncamere Veneto and Centro Estero Veneto, to present the services offered by the Chambers of Commerce regional network to the Sarajevo Chamber.

- An event took place in September to present the new services that the Sarajevo Chamber can offer to its members and other companies located in the Sarajevo Canton thanks to the know how acquired through the partnership project with Treviso CCI.
- All the activities carried out contributed to reach a better knowledge about business cooperation opportunities between the Treviso province and the Sarajevo Canton, and identify 29 companies interested in possible business partnerships.

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RIVA-CHESS – Rijeka – Valencia Chambers Export Support Services

On the strength of the experience of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Valencia in projects dealing with the transfer of know how in doing business in Europe, SMEs starting to export and export consortia, RIVA CHESS provided the County Chamber Rijeka with some useful tools and a group of services to improve the abilities of Croatian companies approaching international markets and the EU Internal Market.

The RIVA CHESS programme was developed along the following lines:

- Permanent exchange of on-line information between the two Chambers;
- Transfer of knowledge:
 - a) How to make business in Europe
 - b) Presentation of the export consortium as a new form of companies' organisation.
- Direct contacts and meetings between entrepreneurs, technicians and other institution representatives.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, a few transversal activities were carried out:

- Chamber staff training
- Creation of an exporters database
- Two seminars for Croatian exporting companies
- Issuing informative material on the EU framework and Spanish experience
- Local economy presentations
- Two B2B meetings
- Professional visits (port and transport activities, technological center and institutes)
- Participation at a local fair (wood sector)
- Chambers' general agreement on collaboration



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Cámara
 Valencia



Developing International Networks and Activities, Supported by an Electronic Network

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of West Flanders and the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina actively worked together within the twinning opportunity offered by the PARTNERS project to support the existing Foreign Trade Chamber's structure with a web-based electronic network in order to:

- Improve internationalisation services to businesses in the region through the creation and extension of companies database in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as links and information sources worldwide;
- Upgrade general management, transparency and dataflow within the Chamber

The software comprises the following modules:

1. Companies database
2. Individuals database
3. Branch Associations
4. Events (seminars, business missions, trade fairs)
5. Info & advice (database of knowledge)
6. Documents (certificates of origin, carnets, licences, etc.)
7. Projects (subscriptions to Chamber bulletin, working groups, etc.)
8. Advertising contracts
9. Sales module
10. Purchasing module



The implementation of this partnership project clearly followed a step-by-step approach:

- ▶ Gathering information on the needs of the Foreign Trade Chamber and analysing it
- ▶ Producing a detailed action plan
- ▶ Writing and publishing tender with requirements in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ▶ Selecting a software developing company among the ones that participated in the tender
- ▶ Follow-up of developing the software
- ▶ Testing phase
- ▶ Fine-tuning of the software
- ▶ Implementation of the software and working instructions for the users

Furthermore, to foster the co-operation established between the two Chambers, each of them hosted one seminar on doing business with Belgium and with Bosnia and Herzegovina respectively.

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