

Dear EREF Network members and partners,

There are some changes in the editorial structure of this issue of the Bulletin – reflecting views and requests of the EREF Brussels Steering Committee:

- We are not introducing relevant events (that will be accessible in the RIBN Bulletin);
- Select bibliographies on topics for the upcoming EREF Workshops are given in this and will be in future issues, in order to encourage your participation in these events.

I am glad to report to our members that 3 preparatory workshops for 2010 have already been agreed with traditional partners – members of EREF Network:

Early February with Regional Government of Lombardia, in Milano on the Issues of Values and Bologna Reforms;

On 23rd of April with Internationalisierung Center Styria in Graz on the issue of Foreign Direct Investment;

Early May with TUBITAK in Turkey on the issue of knowledge and technology transfer for development.

The workshop on the impact of women on decision making in business - discussions are being held with various associations, and it is quite likely, that the event will take place in Brussels.

In order to enhance the impact of these events relevant European associations will be invited to collaborate by contributing their expertise and disseminate the recommendations among their networks.

As it was agreed at the 22nd session of the Brussels Steering Committee on 2nd October, the activities of the Network are now shifting to dissemination of recommendations among policy-makers and stakeholders in the member regions. This is why Committee members received printed copies of EREF-2009 Recommendations and the Resolution.

Also in line with previous decisions, I am inviting Network members to identify good practice cases in their region/country to be posted at EREF portal, which is now placed at the www.eref.eu domain acquired from the previous owner (Solvay, Brussels).

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EREF Network Regions

EREF Network Member regions briefly introduced

Croatia

Croatia as of 2008 has an estimated population of 4,453,500 and covers an area of 56,542 km². As a Mediterranean and Central European country with an average annual GDP growth of 4% over the last ten years, Croatia is one of the most dynamic transitional countries in this part of Europe. By entering into negotiations for full membership of the EU, Croatia has turned a new page in its history, both in terms of politics and economy.

In statistics, Croatia boasts 114 higher education institutions attended by roughly 136,000 students. As for SMEs, they are an extremely important and certainly the most dynamic segment of Croatian economy. Their share of the total number of companies in Croatia is 99.4% and they account for some 64.3% of the total number of employed persons in Croatia. Additionally, SMEs generate 51.73% of the total assets in the Croatian economy, 40% of the exports and some 44% of Croatian GDP.

For more information please go to www.hgk.hr

Emilia Romagna

Emilia-Romagna is an administrative region of Northern Italy comprising the two historic regions of Emilia and Romagna. The capital is Bologna; it has an area of 20,124 km² and about 4.3 million inhabitants. Emilia Romagna today is considered as one of the richest European regions and the third Italian region by GDP per capita.

Industry in the region presents a varied and complex picture and is located along the Via Emilia. The food industry is particularly concentrated in Parma, Modena and Bologna as well as the mechanical and automotive. It has a good regional, social and economic structure; including five universities, 24 research infrastructures, 24 laboratories and 66 parks. One of the main features of the regional economy is the role and number of SMEs (420.000, one very ten inhabitants) and a model of polycentric development, which assures a strong territorial cohesion.

For more information please go to www.regione.emilia-romagna.it

Flanders

Flanders is the northern, Dutch-speaking region of Belgium. Flanders has a surface of 13,522 km² and accounts for some 60% of the total population. The Flemish Gross Regional Product provides 60% of the national GDP and is home to the majority of the country's industry and workforce, the region also generates the major part of national trade. Innovation and creativity is highly developed and new products and technologies place the region among the top performers of Lisbon Agenda in Europe.

Flanders offers businesses a uniquely central location at the hub of European trade and the heart of European decision-making. Moreover, transport and communication infrastructures are highly developed.

For more information please go to www.flandersdc.be

Friuli Venezia Giulia

Friuli Venezia Giulia is situated in the Northeast corner of Italy, covers an area of approximately 7,856 km² with some 1.2 million inhabitants. It is also one of five regions in Italy that holds a Special Statute of Autonomy which confers legislative powers in important areas for the government of the Region.

While abiding by the Italian constitution and national law as a whole, Friuli Venezia Giulia can promulgate its own laws in sectors such as the environment, health, industry, scientific research, culture and housing.

Statistically, the region has 8.8 researchers for every 1,000 inhabitants, compared with 2.8/1,000 nationally, 5.4/1,000 in the European Union, and 8.1/1,000 in the United States. These figures reflect a deep-rooted vocation throughout the entire region for study, research and innovation. Today the research and development system in the region is particularly rich and includes three universities: Trieste and Udine (which have decentralised their teaching activities to Pordenone, Gorizia and Monfalcone, with an overall teaching body of almost 2,000 teachers, 22 faculties, approximately 130 degree courses, about 100 specialist degree courses, 60 specialisation schools and more than 42,000 students enrolled) and SISSA – International School for Advanced Studies (for postgraduate training and leading-edge research in various areas of Physics, Mathematics and Neurosciences).

For more information please go to www.regione.fvg.it

Lapland-Oulu

The diversity of the natural resources in North Finland and the rich areas of natural beauty are the corner stones of the basic industry and tourism. The northern regions in Finland form a natural, logistical gateway to the vast energy resources in the Barents Region. Natural resources, such as gas, wood, minerals and large natural areas, give a unique added value to the whole of Europe. In addition, the northern forest belt – the “lungs” of Europe – is a significant capturer of carbon dioxide emissions.

North Finland stands out from the other European regions in many ways. People in the North are amongst the most highly educated in Europe. The share of GDP per capita spent on research and development is one of the highest in Europe and significantly higher than the average in Finland.

For more information please go to www.northfinland.fi

Lombardia

Lombardy is one of the 20 regions of Italy. The capital is Milan. One-sixth of Italy's population lives in Lombardy and about one fifth of Italy's GDP is produced in this region. The region is home to some world renowned fashion designers.

Lombardy's development has been marked by the growth of the services sector since the 1980s, and in particular by the growth of innovative activities in the sector of services to enterprises and in credit and financial services. At the same time, the strong industrial vocation of the region has not suffered from it. Lombardy remains, in fact, the main industrial area of the country. The presence, and development, of a very high number of enterprises belonging to the services sector represents a favourable situation for the improvement of the efficiency of the productive process, as well as for the growth of the regional economy.

For more information please go to www.regione.lombardia.it

Scotland

The European Union embraces a diverse collection of lands and peoples, few more distinctive than the Scots and the country they inhabit. Scotland's population of 5.1 million is similar in size to Denmark's or Finland's. It has a landmass of nearly 8,000 sq km, more than one-third the total landmass of Great Britain. Scotland is proud of its achievement in business – academia collaboration, resulting also in several highly performing science and technology parks.

Scotland has a tradition of excellence in education. It has 13 universities (plus the Open University), 6 specialist higher education institutions and 43 further education colleges. Scotland was named by the

Financial Times as the “UK Region of the Future”, it has also won separate awards, such as the “European Region with best FDI Strategy” as well as “European Region with Best Human Resources”.

It performs significantly better than many other countries in terms of higher education expenditure on R&D. In 2004, an equivalent of 0.65% of GDP was spent by HE, higher than the OECD (0.39%) and UK (0.40%) average, placing Scotland in the top quartile in OECD.

For more information please go to www.scotent.co.uk

Slovenia

Slovenia covers an area of 20,273 km² and has an estimated population of 2,040,788. Since gaining independence in 1991, Slovenia has become a member of the European Union, the Eurozone, the Schengen area, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe and NATO. Slovenia has a high-income developed economy which enjoys the second highest (after Cyprus) GDP per capita of the new EU countries, which is 93% of the EU average.

The institutional framework of innovation policy in Slovenia has gone through several changes since independence. Increasingly, the importance of R&D and innovation is being recognised in the official policy papers like the Slovenian Development Strategy 2006-2013 and the National Research and Development Programme 2006-2010. Current level of investment in R&D has been for several years around 1.5%, committing itself to achieving a Lisbon Barcelona 3% target. Technology parks and centres form top policy priority in creation of innovation friendly environment and in the improvement of knowledge transfer and technology diffusion.

For more information please go to www.sbra.be

Stockholm

The Stockholm Region is a "virtual" region that is based on voluntary cooperation between municipalities and county councils. The Stockholm Region consists of four Swedish administrative counties - Stockholm County, the County of Sörmland, the County of Västmanland and the County of Uppsala. Stockholm Region is by far the largest population center in Scandinavia and in the Nordic region as a whole, with some 2.9 million inhabitants. The cooperation is about the region's commitment to Europe and the Baltic Sea area, the region's own environment, culture and tourism, transport and social planning, as well as knowledge and competence development.

The economy in the Stockholm Region is based on knowledge and contact-intensive activities. During the last decades it became a leader in areas such as information technology, medical industry, biotechnology, banking and other financial institutions. Furthermore, the Stockholm Region has strong economic clusters in other sectors such as health care, art and culture, management, logistics and engineering.

For more information please go to www.stockholmregion.org

Styria

Styria is located in the southeast of Austria. In area, it is the second largest of the nine Austrian states, covering 16,388 km². It borders Slovenia as well as the other Austrian states of Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Salzburg, Burgenland, and Carinthia. The population estimate (as of 2006) was 1,203,986. The capital city is Graz.

Compared with the rest of Austria, Styria exhibits above-average innovative strength and has enormous potential for further development due to its excellent R&D infrastructure. The Styrian rate of R&D (i.e. the share of the total R&D expenditure in relation to gross regional product) is currently 3.55%. Styria thus occupies first place in the Austrian federal province ranking. In 2004 €1.011 million

was expended on R&D. Styrian companies account for almost 70%, i.e. approx. € 700 million of that. Styria has an excellent R&D and educational infrastructure in the higher education field. Over 40,000 students are currently being trained at 5 universities and 2 universities of applied science (with over 30 courses of study in applied sciences).

For more information please go to www.stmk.gv.at

Turkey

Turkey covers an area of 783,562 km² and has a population of 70,586,256 according to the 2007 census. The Anatolian peninsula, comprising most of modern Turkey, is one of the oldest continually inhabited regions in the world due to its location at the intersection of Asia and Europe.

The GDP growth rate from 2002 to 2007 averaged 7.4%, which made Turkey one of the fastest growing economies in the world during that period. Despite the economic turmoil, economic growth for 2008 is estimated at 1.1%. Turkey's economy is no longer dominated by traditional agricultural activities in the rural areas, but more so by a highly dynamic industrial complex in the major cities, mostly concentrated in the western provinces of the country, along with a developed services sector. In 2007, the agricultural sector accounted for 8.9% of the GDP, while the industrial sector accounted for 30.8% and the services sector accounted for 59.3%.

For more information please go to www.turboppp.org

Valencia

The Valencia Region has 518 km of Mediterranean coastline and covers 23,259 km² of land with 4.8 million inhabitants. It is one of the most attractive areas for new business projects. Over 260 multinationals have chosen the region to set up their factories and distribution centers. They have based their choice on the region's excellent land, sea and air transport links, its pleasant climate, a highly qualified workforce, modern industrial infrastructure and costs that are below the European average.

The region is currently one of the most attractive destinations in Southern Europe for foreign investment and has the third highest industrial GDP in Spain. Five science parks are in development, linked to each of the five public universities from the region of Valencia. The region ranks third in Spain by the number of R&D intensive companies, it also represents roughly 9% of all Spanish researchers. Total R&D expenditure in Valencia sums up to 631.9 million Euros (equivalent to 0.87% of the GDP).

For more information please go to www.uegva.info

West Pannon

The Region of West Pannonia includes the counties Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala. The extension of the region is lengthy in the direction North-South. The region borders four countries; Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Slovakia. The territory of the region is 11 183 km² that includes 12 % of the territory of Hungary.

International transit traffic through the four national frontiers of West Pannonia is significant: more than half of the frontier traffic of the country goes through the border stations of the region. The rate of foreign capital in the region is high, according to the GDP, it takes the second place among the regions after the Region of Central Hungary; the value of the GDP is by 33 % above the national average of the counties. Besides that however, the region has also recently put significant emphasis put on collaboration between innovative SME's and the science, research hubs in the region.

For more information please go to www.westpa.hu

EREF Network Regions Special

Members of the EREF Network, in each of the quarterly issues, four regions are complemented with longer presentations

Baden Württemberg

Baden-Württemberg is in the southwestern part of the country to the east of the Upper Rhine—but one which has some of its major cities straddling the banks of the Neckar River. It is third largest in both area and population among the country's sixteen states, with an area of 35,742 square kilometers and 10.7 million inhabitants.

According to the latest figures the GDP of the region stands at slightly over 354 billion Euros; which is 33,800 Euros per person. 2008 recorded 0.8% real economic growth.

The region is among the most prosperous regions in Germany and is one of the wealthiest regions in Europe with a traditionally low unemployment rates. A number of well-known enterprises are headquartered in the state, for example Daimler AG, Porsche, Robert Bosch GmbH, Carl Zeiss AG, SAP AG (largest software enterprise in Europe). In spite of this, Baden-Württemberg's economy is basically dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. Many enterprises are considered innovative.

In 2003, there were almost 8,800 manufacturing enterprises with more than 20 employees, but only 384 with more than 500. The latter category accounts for 43% of the 1.2 million persons employed in industry. Medium-sized businesses and a tradition of branching out into different industrial sectors have ensured specialization over a wide range.

Baden-Württemberg has traditionally been famous for its industrial products. Previously this meant clocks, cutlery, firearms and textiles. Now it is famous for high-tech products. Mechanical engineering heads the list with over 1 700 enterprises and 270 000 employees (in enterprises with more than 20 employees). This is followed by the automobile industry, including DaimlerChrysler, Porsche and Audi-NSU with 357 firms employing 240 000, then comes electronics, data processing, office equipment, precision engineering optics, including Bosch and ALCATEL, with 1 237 firms and almost 200 000 employees.

Swiss economic think-tank Prognos looked at all 413 cities and regions in Germany and determined that Hamburg, Berlin and Munich are the places most hospitable to business. However, when it came to grading the various regions of Germany, 11 of the top 25 were in Baden-Württemberg.

According to the report, the mechanical engineering and health-related businesses have flourished in the area. Many small and medium-sized businesses have been able to tap the global markets while being based in the state.

Adding to the prospects for success, Prognos pointed to the number of post-secondary institutions to train future generations in places such as Heilbronn and Esslingen.

High-quality education and excellent training opportunities are among Baden-Württemberg's greatest strengths. Besides the traditional universities, you'll find universities specializing in education, universities of applied sciences with a focus on practical training, universities of cooperative education, which work closely with industry, as well as outstanding art academies and universities of music.

About 20% of Germany's research and development capacity is concentrated here; Baden-Württemberg's laboratories and other research facilities are internationally acclaimed. There is fundamental research of a highly advanced nature, creative applied research, technology transfer and international communication with the business community – this has created a dynamic academic landscape constantly on the move.

SMEs which - with 60% of all jobs and 80% of all apprentice places – guarantee a good development of Baden-Württemberg's economy.

Distribution of employment in the region is; 1.9% in agriculture and forestry, 37.4% in industry (of that 31% in mining and manufacturing and 5.8% in construction), 20.1% in commerce, gastronomy and transport, other services made accounted for 40.5% (10.1% in real estate, services for companies and 21.4% in public and private services).

In 2008 the total school pupil population was slightly over 1.6 million, of which 1.2 million were in general education schools; 28,000 were in Rudolf Steiner schools, 435,000 were in vocational schools, 236,000 were college and university students. 34,000 were foreign students. 64,000 are law, economic and social science majors, 47,000 were in mathematics and natural sciences and 46,000 in engineering sciences.

State expenditures (incl. communities) in science and research was 3.3 million. There were 41,000 college and university personnel; of which 15,000 were in natural and engineering sciences.

Personnel in research and development work in the industrial sector numbered 82 thousand. Domestic application for a patent numbered some 15,081 in 2008.

The Netherlands is the largest foreign direct investor; in 2007 it was estimated at approximately 23.6 billion Euros – followed by Switzerland with 19 billion, USA with 14.2 billion and France with 6.4 billion Euros. Total sum of all incoming FDI is close to 85 billion Euros.

Baden-Württemberg on the other hand has invested broad 113 billion Euros (17 billion in the US, 13.8 billion in the Netherlands, 12.1 billion in Luxembourg, 7.3 billion in the United Kingdom).

For more information please go to www.stm.baden-wuerttemberg.de

Cataluña

Catalonia is situated in the northeast of Spain; it covers an area of 32,114km² and according to the 2008 estimate, has a population of 7,354,411. Official languages are Catalan, Spanish and Aranese. Catalonia is a cosmopolitan region, with large resident communities of many different nationalities. In 2005 there were 798,904 foreign residents in Catalonia, 25% of whom are European. Due to their commercial tradition, Catalans have always been multilingual. Barcelona has become the number one destination in Spain for young foreigners. In 2004, there were more than 8,000 foreign students in Catalonia, roughly a quarter of all the foreign students in Spain.

Economically, the region is one of the most vibrant in the country, in 2008 Catalonia registered a GDP in excess of 207.9 billion Euros, equating to approximately 28,000 Euros per person (its per-capita GDP is similar to Germany's and it is higher than those of Portugal and Greece.). GDP growth for 2008 was 0.8%. Exports surpassed 50 billion Euros (2008 figure); a similar level to that of Finland, and higher than that of Portugal.

Total research and development expenditure is 1.4% of the GDP. In fact Catalonia presents 21.8% of Spain's R&D spending, and 22.1% of hi-tech exports; in contrast Catalonia makes up 15.9% of Spain's population.

Barcelona comes top in terms of doing the most to improve itself as a business location. The 3,000 plus foreign companies operating in Catalonia (out of 5.550 in Spain) come from a variety of countries; FD inflows are higher than those of Austria and Estonia.

Catalonia is a leader in the chemical, pharmaceutical, packaging, food, automotive and consumer-electronics industries, among others. It is also home to a number of emerging industries with a strong potential for growth, illustrated by the fact that many foreign companies have invested in the biotechnology, aeronautics, renewable-energy and recycling industries. As well as being renowned for its production activities providing high added value, Catalonia has also made a name for itself

internationally in activities such as R&D, design and engineering, logistics and shared services centres. A keen interest in innovation has been vital for the development of these industries and activities.

In terms of business activity, more than 20% of the new businesses created each year in Spain are based in Catalonia, proof of the region's entrepreneurial spirit. The net creation of companies in Catalonia has increased more than 5% on average every year in the last 10 years reaching a growth of some 65% in the 1997-2007 period.

Catalonia's telecommunications and data infrastructure is highly advanced, extensive and reliable. Few countries invest such a large proportion of their GDP in IT as Catalonia does (estimated to be approximately 6% of GDP). It is a world leader in the development of high-bandwidth Internet technologies with 100% availability for companies, as well as in digital microwave transmission, satellite communication services, digital television, and mobile communications, including GPRS, wireless ASP and new mobile data services.

Speed, reliability, technical assistance and personalised treatment are just some of the characteristics of the Catalan business service companies. In Catalonia there are developed business services: nearly 250 Professional and Business Associations; more than 2,500 Consulting/Assessment companies; and more than 500 Financial and Insurance companies. More than 1,250 logistics companies operate in Catalonia (the most important international logistics operators are present in Catalonia),

As for research and development, Catalonia stands out in pharma, health and ICT's. The four largest Spanish pharmaceutical companies were founded and have their head offices in Catalonia and seven of the world's ten main pharmaceutical companies are established in the area. 30% of total Spanish biomedical research is done in Catalonia, where a large net of hospitals and Universities have leading clinical research groups at an international level. ICT companies in Catalonia (EDS, Hewlet Packard, IBM, Indra, Microsoft, Sony, Telefonica, T-Systems, Yahoo! Research) are considered the most innovative in Spain.

Catalonia has a wide range of educational programmes, comprising more than 725 high-quality public and private schools. In addition, it has a network of 12 universities and some of the most prestigious business schools in Europe (IESE, ESADE). All of them have established collaborative agreements with important universities throughout the world. More than 225,000 students are enrolled in the public universities in Catalonia.

The prestige of the Catalan Universities plays a vital part in supporting the R&D activities in the private sector. Catalonia can also boast eleven technology transfer centres linked to the universities which have been awarded for innovative initiatives by the Directorate General for Enterprise and the Information Society at the European Union.

For more information please go to www.copca.cat

Serbia

According to the World Bank's income classification, Serbia falls into the upper-middle income group; as of 2008, it had an estimated GDP of 53.9 billion Euros (€7,250 per capita PPP). Foreign direct investment, for 2006, was estimated at 4.5 billion euros. GDP growth rate rose from 5.8% (2006) to 7.5% (2007), reaching 8.7% in 2008 – one of the highest rates in the region. In 2008, the GDP of Serbia was 37% of the EU average.

Inflation in 2008 remains steadily in single digits standing at 6.8%, while further reductions are projected for the coming years. Export of goods has been steadily rising, reaching €7.4 billion in 2008, while in 2004 it was merely €2.8 billion.

In addition, foreign currency reserves in 2008 remain high at 6.112 billion Euros and public foreign debt has been cut down to merely 25% of GDP.

The population of Serbia (excluding Kosovo) is 7,498,001. According to the last official census taken in 2002, Serbs make up 82.9% of the population, followed by Hungarians (3.9%), Bosniaks (1.8%), Roma (1.4%), Yugoslavs (1.1%), Montenegrins (0.9%) and others (8%).

There are an estimated 200,000 refugees and internationally displaced persons in Serbia, or approximately 7.5% of the population – the largest share in Europe. Serbia also faces other challenges, such as brain drain – namely an estimated half a million people, many of which are highly skilled – have left the country.

Belgrade has made progress in trade liberalization and enterprise restructuring and privatization, including telecommunications and SMEs. It has made progress towards EU membership, signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Brussels in May 2008. Serbia is also pursuing membership in the World Trade Organization.

Serbia has begun to offer various financial incentives to foreign investors. Namely, in three sectors; Production – from €2,000 up to €5,000 of state grants per new job created; Services – from €2,000 up to €10,000 of state grants per new job created; and in R&D; from €5,000 up to €10,000 of state grants per new job created.

In addition, Serbia's tax system is highly conducive to investments featuring the following unique benefits: One of Europe's lowest corporate profit tax rates is set at 10%; Value Added Tax (VAT), salary tax and social insurance contributions are highly competitive compared to Central and Eastern Europe; A 10-year corporate profit tax holiday for investment over €7.5 million and 100 new employees.

Skilled and productive labor force has proven to be one of Serbia's major competitive advantages in the global investment market. With a unique combination of high-quality and low-cost skill-set, it is widely regarded as a strong business performance driver.

Unlike most transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Serbia fostered extensive relationships with Western economies for decades. A list of blue-chip companies maintaining strong ties with local partners is lead by Siemens, Alcatel, General Motors, FIAT, IKEA and many others. Throughout years of cooperation Serbian workers have received specific know-how and adopted advanced technology applications and rigorous quality control standards. Having vast experience in both manufacturing and management, local staff requires minimum training to adopt cutting-edge technologies and assembly processes. The skill level of local labor force is reflected in high industrial productivity increasing at 11.4% over the past five years.

The quality of Serbia's intellectual capital is based on its educational system generating well-educated, fast-learning, multilingual, and IT literate people. Technical education is particularly strong, thus high school students perform among the best in mathematics, physics and IT international competitions. In recent years the number of university graduates grew by almost 14% annually averaging 14,370, while 1/3 of all students graduate from technical universities.

The overall foreign trade in the Republic of Serbia, for the period of January - December 2008 amounted to 22.763 billion Euros, a 24.1% increase compared to the same period in 2007.

The value of export amounted to 7.352 billion Euros, a 24.3% increase when compared to the same period in 2007, while the value of imports amounted to 15.413 billion Euros, a 23.9% increase relative to the same period in 2007.

The deficit amounted to 8.065 billion Euros, which was an increase of 23.6% in relation to the same period in 2007. The export - import ratio equaled 47.7% and was lower if compared to the same period in 2007 when it was 47.6%.

The country is well placed and enjoys unique access to a variety of markets. Serbia is the only country outside of the Commonwealth of Independent States that enjoys a Free Trade Agreement with Russia. The Free Trade Agreement with Belarus envisages mutual abolishment of customs and non-customs duties in trade between the two countries. The Free Trade Agreement with Turkey will take effect as of

January 1, 2010, while the FTA with EFTA members (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, and Liechtenstein) is expected to be concluded by the end of 2009.

Added to this are duty-free exports to the European Union and the United States for most products and services.

For more information please go to <http://www.pks.rs/>

Wallonia

The Walloon Region, commonly called Wallonia, is one of the three Regions of Belgium. It represents 33% (approximately 3.4 million inhabitants) of the population and 55% of the territory of Belgium (surface area of 16,844 km²). The region is predominantly French-speaking but there are also German-speaking municipalities in the east (2% of the population). Its official languages are French and German. As other regions, the Walloon Region has its own parliament and government and exercises its functions within the limits defined by the Belgian constitution.

Wallonia's GDP is estimated at 73.8 billion Euros; or 88% of the EU-27 average. Innovation and entrepreneurship support is a major regional government priority. A study by the Federal Planning Bureau and regional statistical institutions indicates that in 2009 the economic recession will be marked by a drop in economic activity of 3.8% in Wallonia and Brussels and 3.9% in Flanders.

Next year, only Wallonia is expected to continue to experience growth in its economy with a rise of 0.2%; in Flanders, growth is expected to be at a standstill, and negative growth of -0.3% is forecast in Brussels, which, it must be said, has been badly affected by the strong presence of the financial sector.

Small and medium-sized businesses in the biotechnology sector in Wallonia are contributing more and more to the growth of the sector. In particular, advanced research in biogenetics and biomolecular science accounts for 77% of the biotechnology business in Wallonia. Bio-agriculture, which represents 10% of the turnover for the sector, is currently experiencing strong levels of growth. This growth has allowed the Wallonia region to contribute 70% of the turnover and 66% of the human resource requirements of the biotechnology sector in Belgium.

Through its wide network of universities and colleges of higher education, Wallonia offers an extensive range of training courses that respond to market demand. Indeed, 90% of university or higher education college graduates are today employed.

No fewer than 130 higher education colleges and 9 university centres provide training throughout the region.

In Belgium, the percentage of hours not worked because of industrial disputes does not exceed 0.9%, this compares very favourably with figures of 1.6% for Germany, 2.1% for France, 2.6% for the United Kingdom and 4% for the Netherlands

Most of the basic research and a substantial part of the applied research that takes place in Wallonia is carried out at its nine university centres.

Today, universities spend 25% of their operational budgets on research. Most of their research funding comes from contracts with the FNRS, the DGTRE, or the European Commission, in response to project tenders.

Science parks have also paved the way for successful spin-off companies in the biotechnology domain (Eurogentec, 4C, Henogen, Gamma). Some of the biggest names in the global biotech industry are based in the science parks, either on the actual site itself or in close proximity (SB Biological, SB Immunotherapeutic, UCB, Eli Lilly, Pfizer, Baxter, Janssen Pharma, GlaxoSmithKline, etc).

There are currently six biotechnology parks in the region: Louvain-la-Neuve, Liège-Sart Tilman, Gembloux-Namur, Enghien and Mons science parks, and the airport technology park at Charleroi.

Wallonia also has tax treaties with 80 countries, a tax rate of 26 to 27%. It has a dynamic and modern infrastructure. It's main port is the Porte of Liège (in fact, the third largest inland port in Europe). Other harbours include Charleroi and Namur. Inland waterways expand for some 451 kilometres, its rail network 1,605 km and has 866 km of roads.

Main airports that serve Wallonia are the Brussels South Charleroi Airport (number of passengers in 2007 exceeded 2.4 million) as well as Liege Airport (mainly used for freight – in 2007 some 489,870 tonnes).

In early 2006, the Wallonia government decided to define economic redevelopment areas, or tax incentive zones, with special tax incentives for existing economic activities in those areas and any activities such measures may attract. The investment grant can be increased by 25% or even 40% for these areas.

For more information please go to www.awex.be

EREF-2010 Proposed Forum Programme

Draft Forum programme as of 07/10/09

Competencies and Values for Sustainable, Knowledge-based Competitiveness - A New Agenda for European Regions - 8-9 June 2010, Nova Gorica, Slovenia

Time	Event/Presenter	Topic
DAY ONE		
08.00 – 09.00	Registration	
09.00 – 11.00	Opening Session	
09.00	CIZELJ Boris, Chair EREF	
09.05	BRULC Mirko, Mayor Nova Gorica	
09.10	PAHOR Borut, PM of Slovenia	
09.20	POTOČNIK Janez, Commissioner for Science and Research or Senior representative of AER or CoR	Report on Progress in Building Knowledge Society in European Regions
09.30	RODRIGUEZ Maria	Lisbon agenda II (2010-2020)
10.00	TOMASDOTTIR Halla, Exec.Chairman, AUDUR	Female values for sustainable knowledge-based competitive business development
10.30	TAMASZ Argentina, IMO	Brain Circulation
11.00-11.30	Break	
	Morning Session	
11.30-12.30	WORKSHOP RAPPORTEURS 4 x 15 minutes	Recommendations from Workshops
12.30 – 13.00	Q&A Period	
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch	
	Afternoon Session	

14.00 – 15.30	<p>Discussion at thematic tables – moderated by table leaders, and structured around questionnaires prepared in advance;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction by moderator (15') • 3-4 discussants (short presentations, each 5-10') • Open debate (following issues from the questionnaire) • - Adoption of recommendations (to be presented by the moderator at the plenary next morning). 	<p>Proposed topics for thematic tables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge Society Implications for Development Paradigm and European Socio-Economic Model(s) - Coordination and Integration of Policies for Sustainable Regional Development - Weaknesses and Opportunities in Implementation of Bologna reforms - Funding of Higher Education and Research - Challenges of ULLL and introduction of e-Learning - Business School Curricula: Role of Values for Sustainable, Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship - Business-Academia Cooperation as a tool of Knowledge Trasfer for Development - Private sector in higher education: impact in SE Europe - From Brain drain to Brain Circulation - Communication with talents in diaspora - FDI as a vehicle of internationalization of regional economies (investor and recipient's perspectives) - Regional incentives for FDIs - Benefits of full gender equality in company boards
16.00-17.30	PARALLEL EVENTS:	<p>(A) The 3rd Meeting of Regional/Local Lisbon Coordinators</p> <p>(B) Conclusions from EREF SE Europe Network Workshops</p>
20.00	Dinner at Perla Hotel	Hosted by Forum co-organizers and Workshop conveners
DAY TWO		
09.30	Presentations of 5 selected good practice cases (5 x 10 minutes)	Senior Representatives of respective organizations presenting their model and experience
10.30-11.00	Q&A Period	
11.00-11.15	Break	
11.15-12.45	Reports of conclusions from thematic tables (12 x 7')	Table Moderators reporting
12.45-13.00	Adoption of EREF-2010 Resolution	
13.00	Adoption of the topic and date for EREF-2011 and closing of the Forum	

Presentation of Success Stories

This Section presents good practice cases from Wallonia

Wallonia – Texas: A Unique Partnership between a top University in Sciences and Technology and an Economic Development Agency. Birth of a global network of innovation.

Because wider collaboration of regions is required today to respond to the challenge of innovation, the Wallonia Export and Investment Agency (AWEX) has signed an agreement with a prestigious American university Texas A&M with the primary objective of increasing the knowledge expertise in Wallonia and facilitating Walloon innovative enterprises access into the US market.

Both regions possess great capabilities to stimulate the creation of innovation: there are 9 universities in Wallonia, spending on average €480 millions annually, and about 300 R&D centres; meanwhile Texas A&M System is a renown university in the United States in the field of sciences and technologies. The entire system comprises 18 universities and state agencies, for a total of 105.000 students and 26.00 employees. Research expenditures at Texas A&M amounts to more than \$600 million per year; ranking the System among the three universities devoting the largest budget to research and development in the United States. Texas A&M and the Walloon Region also possess a number of common fields of excellence; namely, life sciences, engineering, aerospace and the agro-food sector.

Objectives and vision:

The existing cooperation between Wallonia and Texas A&M fulfils several objectives. Firstly, it aims at building global companies through the simultaneous commercialisation of new technologies in Europe and the United States, developed within the Texas A&M System and universities or enterprises in Wallonia. Secondly, it facilitates the penetration of Walloon start-ups in the US market by providing them the right to use services provided by Texas A&M Office of Technology Commercialisation, its research parks and incubator; together with a privileged access to the university network. The Walloon Export and Investment Agency provides in returns assistance to start-ups of its American partner willing to enter the European market via the Walloon Region. AWEX and Texas A&M also collaborate to link companies in Wallonia and the United States for the creation of technological or commercial partnerships. Finally, the agreement seeks to prospect multinationals in the field of R&D in order to present them their respective research capabilities.

AWEX and Texas A&M System have together the long term vision of building a global innovation network to help technologies developed in Wallonia or Texas access faster new markets. They are currently considering the possibilities of developing similar relationships with institutions in China, India, Qatar and South Africa.

Resources available:

Two employees are working for this initiative in Wallonia, together with a numbers of employees at the Office of Technology Commercialization of Texas A&M.

Main obstacles and problems

It required some time for the program to come to concrete results as it was necessary to build a strong and trustworthy relationship between the two partners. Today's challenge

consists of increasing the visibility of this opportunity among Walloon enterprises and research centres.

Performance and main achievements:

In March 2009, a joint venture agreement was signed between two spin-outs - one from Texas A&M and the other from the University of Namur in Wallonia - possessing complementary technologies in the field of bio-informatics. The joint venture allows them to improve their respective competences and target together much valuable contracts. It also aims at making their activities more efficient; each serving clients that are present in their continents.

From this year on, AWEX will organise every year a mission in Texas. Each mission will be preceded by the visit of a member of the Texas A&M Office of Technology Commercialization. The first edition was held in September- October 2009 and attracted 14 Walloon companies. All participants made very good contacts and several contracts were also concluded. A Walloon company active in the production of genetically modified mice signed a service agreement with the Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine, and two companies from Wallonia have created a company with Texas A&M developing techniques to optimise the exploitation of oilfields.

A large number of other potential collaborations have also been under discussion and could open the door to the development of new partnerships in the near future.

✚ EXPLORE, in-company training programmes in foreign trade, Wallonia

For the last ten years or so AWEX has been implementing training and in-company training programmes in foreign trade, intended for young people in particular.

If appropriate, these initiatives also receive contributions from partners such as universities or colleges or even FOREM (Walloon office for vocational training and employment).

In 2005, the Marshall Plan for the economic recovery of the Walloon Region (or "Priority actions for the future of Wallonia") provided for an intensification of these programmes with the objective of training an additional 800 young people between now and 2009 (equivalent to a target of 350 each year).

The different modules making up EXPLORE are aimed at apprenticeships in export-related trades, the improvement of language skills and making available to Walloon companies human resources capable of contributing to international development projects.

EXPLORE is mainly intended for students and young graduate job-seekers. Particular attention is paid to cross-enhancement of interculturality. Firstly, it is a question of a vital dimension for anyone aiming for an internationally oriented career. All beneficiaries of our programme are made aware of this aspect. Secondly, for Walloon society interculturality constitutes both a political value linked to cultural diversity and human dignity and an asset reinforcing the approach to foreign markets.

The main stages in EXPLORE are as follows:

Information and guidance; Skills assessment/validation of the professional plan; Modular training (basic module and specialisations); Linguistic immersion (if necessary); In-company training period; Training period abroad; Assistance in seeking employment.

Its modular nature allows applicants to be guided to those stages which they actually need.

Training is entirely free. The training periods abroad are fully financed by AWEX, with a contribution from the partner company in the case of job-seekers receiving in-company training.

In-company training periods

The aim is to enable trainees to familiarise themselves with the product/service and the commercial strategy and to prepare in a practical manner for the assignment entrusted to them by the company.

The length of the in-company training period will be adapted to the nature of the assignment to be accomplished abroad.

Training periods abroad

- Prospecting (students or job-seekers)

- Content: Assignments carried out on behalf of one or more companies (e.g.: market research, seeking out distributors, identification of an agent, analysis of installation possibilities, product registration procedure, etc.)

- Compulsory previous in-company training period

- Duration: 1 to 9 weeks

- Approach to markets in adjacent countries (students or job-seekers)

- Training periods with importers and consumer motivators or sectoral groups

- Content: After learning about the Walloon industrial fabric and a training period abroad with importers or wholesalers (identified through the AECs), with a view to showcasing Walloon companies and generally prompting a reaction, an awareness of Wallonia.

- Duration: 8 weeks

- Support at fairs and missions on markets in adjacent countries

- Content: Practical assistance for Walloon companies in preparations, participation and follow-up for fairs, trade shows or missions abroad

- Duration: 1 week

- Training periods as interpreters

- Content: To act as an interpreter for export managers in the context of international trade fairs, missions or negotiations, or made available to companies on an AWEX joint initiative

- Duration: 1 to 5 days

- Training period at the AWEX offices

- Content: Responsibility for dossiers on Walloon companies, assistance for the AEC in its day-to-day tasks or in particular actions. Sectoral studies linked to the poles of competitiveness.

- Duration: 4 to 12 weeks

EREF-2010 Topics Matrix

	Skills development/ Education	Brain circulation/ Diaspora Communication	Foreign direct investment (FDI)	Involvement of women
Key Problems	<p>Workforce is lacking skills and competencies needed for 21st century;</p> <p>Educational systems set predominantly within the closed national systems – undermining Europe-wide mobility and development of European Educational Area;</p> <p>Educational sector is heavily under-funded in most European countries, and the profession of educators lacks social status;</p> <p>Reforms of educational systems (including Bologna Process) are implemented too slowly and do not receive needed priority – neither from governments, nor from professors;</p> <p>Creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership are not treated as basic virtues of successful economies and societies.</p>	<p>Europe is suffering from brain drain, as well as from insufficient sectorial and geographical mobility (during 2008 16% of Danes changed jobs, in Slovenia only 5%. In EU 38% of people would consider taking a job in another country in Slovenia only 3%).</p> <p>Overall conditions for hiring/engaging foreign experts in most European countries are not attractive – in many environments they are not welcome;</p> <p>Many European countries have large diasporas, but generally fail to develop suitable systems of communication based on mutual interests, respect and political non-interference.</p>	<p>Most European countries are not receiving the level and quality of foreign direct investment which they could, had they developed adequate systems of incentives and created a foreign investor's friendly environment; in current crisis protectionist tendencies are rising;</p> <p>Often, inadequate views and interpretations prevail by various social groups and politicians on the benefits, challenges and potential damages to be expected from foreign direct investment;</p> <p>Many European countries and regions have poorly equipped agencies for foreign investment and modest information & promotion activities to attract and process requests from prospective investors;</p> <p>Specially in transition countries, there is lack of general economic and technological expertise, and of negotiating know-how for dealing with foreign investors;</p>	<p>Partly with exception of Nordic countries, the presence of women in corporate decision-making positions, and generally in public life, is still far from optimal.</p> <p>While in Nordic countries the share of women in company boards range between 44% in Norway, 27% in Sweden, and 26 in Finland, at the other side of the list there are Italy with 1.8% and Portugal with 0.8% shares.</p> <p>This is not just an issue of democratization and gender equality, but primarily of the quality of decisions; absence of unique female values and attitudes tends to lead to suboptimal business results and lack of sustainability (recent studies in Europe and US offer clear evidence for this claim)</p>

<p>Values & General Objectives</p>	<p>Development of life long learning culture;</p> <p>Educators' professionalism, including high ethical standards;</p> <p>Greater appreciation of creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and Leadership.</p>	<p>Free and balanced migration – based on recognition of qualifications</p> <p>Motives for diaspora to communicate with the old country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-interest - Patriotic sentiment 	<p>Capital mobility for wealth and employment creation;</p> <p>Accelerating economic growth, diversifying output, and easier access to new export markets;</p> <p>Sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR).</p>	<p>Gender equality as part of modern political culture and a symbol of advanced civilization;</p> <p>Decision-making processes to benefit from specific female qualities (such as):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -responsibility -long-term perspective -solidarity - emotional intelligence
<p>Policy Instruments & Implementation Tools</p>	<p>Accelerated reforms of education systems, following the guidelines and mechanisms of the Bologna Process;</p> <p>Modernisation of curricula;</p> <p>Stricter quality control and maintenance of criteria for awarding degrees and qualifications.</p>	<p>Well designed and implemented migration policies and regimes (quotas & point systems, resident status, etc.) at EU, national, and regional levels;</p> <p>Government sponsored diaspora agencies with adequate sets of activities;</p> <p>NGOs involvement;</p> <p>Support to knowledge networks.</p>	<p>FDI policies & incentives;</p> <p>Balanced agreements, and mutual guarantees between foreign investors and domestic partners;</p> <p>Securing human capital for expected FDIs:</p>	<p>Gender equality education at all stages and awareness campaigns;</p> <p>Measures to encourage stronger involvement of women in corporate decision making (e.g.: Board female quotas, etc.).</p>
<p>Results & Impact</p>	<p>Higher quality of human capital resulting in knowledge based competitiveness and higher productivity;</p> <p>Positive attitude to lifelong learning (LLL) and appreciation of informal learning.</p>	<p>Balanced international brain circulation, and virtual mobility supporting human capital development in European regions, and their easier access to international talents.</p>	<p>Knowledge spill-over, technology transfer and introduction & development of new products and services;</p> <p>Stronger internationalisation of investing/receiving economies;</p> <p>Increased international & inter-regional flows of capital;</p> <p>Penetration of new export markets;</p> <p>Enhanced wealth creation and reduction of world economic divide.</p>	<p>Better corporate decision making – more consistent with sustainability and CSR principles;</p> <p>Inclusive, highly democratic society with full gender equality.</p>

Major Pan-European Regions' and Cities' Associations and Networks

3ENet - The Network of Emerging European Economies

<http://www.balkannetwork.org/3enet.htm>

AEIDL - European Association for information on local development

<http://www.aeidl.be/>

AEBR - Association of European Border Regions

<http://www.aebr.net/>

AER - Assembly of European Regions

<http://www.aer.eu/>

BARAE - Baltic Region Association for Research in Adult Education

<http://barae.vdu.lt/>

BRHCA - Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association

<http://www.marebalticum.org/brehca/>

Banlieues d'Europe - Network of association officials, towns, experts and researchers, cultural workers and artists

<http://www.banlieues-europe.com/>

CEMR - Council of European Municipalities and Regions

<http://www.ccre.org/>

CPMR - Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions

<http://www.crpm.org/>

EACN – European Alliance for Community Networking

<http://people.ac.upc.edu/artur/eacn.html>

ECYF4HC - European Committee for Young Farmers

<http://www.ruralyoutheurope.com/>

Energies-Cities - Association of European local authorities promoting local sustainable energy policy

<http://www.energie-cites.eu/>

ENTP - European New Towns Platform

<http://www.newtowns.net/>

EPOMM - European Platform on Mobility Management

<http://www.epomm.org/>

ERRIN – European Regions Research and Innovation Network

<http://www.errin.eu/en/>

EURADA - European Association of Development Agencies

<http://www.eurada.org/site/>

Eurocities - Association for European Cities Development and Cooperation

<http://www.eurocities.eu/main.php>

EUROMETREX - Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas

<http://www.euometrex.org/>

Euromontana - European Association for Co-operation between Mountain Territories

<http://www.euromontana.org/>

Europa Nostra - Pan-European federation for heritage

<http://www.europanostra.org/>

FECTO - Federation of European Cities' Tourist Offices

<http://www.europeancitiestourism.com/>

IAD - The International Association for Danube Research

<http://www.iad.gs/>

IRE - The Innovating Regions in Europe

<http://www.innovating-regions.org/>

Megapoles - Network European Capital Cities facing similar Public Health Challenges

<http://www.megapoles.com/>

Metropolis - World Association of the Major Metropolises Municipalities Association of the Danube and Pilos

<http://www.dptkt.hu/>

NEEBOR - Network of Eastern External Border Regions

<http://www.neebor.eu/>

Pan Parks - Protected Area Network of Parks

<http://www.panparks.org/>

PENELOPE-BACCHUS - Promoting energy efficiency to local organisations through dissemination partnerships in Europe

<http://www.enr-network.org/>

POLIS - Cities and regions networking for innovative transport solutions

<http://www.polis-online.org/>

REVES - European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy

<http://www.revesnetwork.eu/>

List of Associations and Networks on South Eastern Europe

AII - Adriatic-Ionian Initiative

<http://www.uniadrion.net/initiative.php>

BSEC - Black Sea Economic Co-operation

<http://www.bsec-organization.org/Pages/homepage.aspx>

CEI - Central European Initiative / Secretariat in Trieste, Italy

<http://www.ceinet.org/home.php>

Danube co-operation process

www.danubecooperation.org

ECPD - European Center for Peace and Development

<http://www.ecpdorg.net/>

Economic reconstruction and development in the South East Europe European Commission / World Bank

<http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/seerecon/>

ESI - European stability initiative

<http://www.esiweb.org/>

ICEG European Center

<http://www.icegec.hu/>

NALAS - Network of associations of local authorities of South Eastern Europe

<http://www.nalas.eu/>

NEEBOR - Network of Eastern External Border Regions

<http://www.neebor.eu/>

PHILIA - Association of Multiethnic Cities of Southeast Europe

<http://www.amcsee.org/html/index1.htm>

RCC - Regional Cooperation Council / HQ in Sarajevo

<http://www.rcc.int/>

SECI - Southeast European Co-operative Initiative

<http://www.secicenter.org/>

SEECF - South-East European Cooperation Process

SEE-ECN - South East Europe Education Cooperation Network

<http://www.see-educoop.net/>

SEE-ERA.NET - The Southeast European Era-Net

<http://www.see-era.net/>

SEESA - Southeast European Studies Association

<http://www.seesa.info/>

SP - Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

<http://www.stabilitypact.org/>

The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe

<http://www.cdsee.org/>

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EREF-2009 Resolution

Adopted on the 9 June 2009, Nova Gorica

On development of human capital and migration management for more competitive European regions

*Having evaluated the problems of human capital and migrations, and their pivotal role in achieving stronger, knowledge-based competitiveness, **EREF-2009 and its preparatory workshops came to the following conclusions:***

1. *In line with their role in implementation of Lisbon Agenda, European regions and local communities should develop and implement a more proactive **human resource policies, including migration management**, and share their good practice with other regions and countries. In fact, as most of the Lisbon targets in education will not be achieved at EU level by 2010, we should invigorate our efforts to achieve better results, and be inspired by the good performance of Nordic countries.*
2. *The **Bologna Process** is advancing much too slowly. Education and training systems are not sufficiently student-centered, and do not involve students in all stages of the process. There should be much more emphasis on encouraging Life Long Learning. Also, there is an urgent need to increase public, as well as private funding of education activities, but at the same time curricula should be adjusted, teaching methods modernized, and much stronger links should be established between universities, business and research institutes, particularly in their regional environment. This process should be in line with the primary function of modern education which is to encourage and develop young peoples' creativity and drive for innovation.*
3. ***E-learning** in all forms and formats should be supported by policy-making bodies at all levels, as well as in companies - particularly in SMEs - and in other organisations, being an important instrument of formal and informal education.*
4. *In order to **stop the long lasting brain drain** and achieve **a more balanced brain circulation** European countries and regions should put in place policies allowing them to compete with countries and regions, benefitting from intensive brain gain, as for example US, Canada and Australia.*
5. *Due to its demographic deficit Europe will continue to need also an influx of less qualified migrants in order to keep its economic potential fully engaged. Therefore **immigration policies should be more effectively harmonized with development strategies and better coordinated among EU member states.***
6. *Thanks to the development of the efficient systems of **communications with diaspora**, based on mutual interest and respect, the countries and regions of emigration can at least partly reduce the damage, caused by losing their valuable, highly skilled people. For this purpose national and regional authorities should encourage and support various knowledge and business networks – respecting their full independence.*

7. *The EREF Process will continue strengthening its efforts to contribute to the **preparation of the countries and regions of South Eastern Europe for EU membership**. By fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria these countries enhance their own development, and will contribute to a more competitive Europe.*
8. *At the closure of EREF-2009 it was decided that EREF-2010 will address the topic of **Competencies and values for sustainable and knowledge based competitiveness: A New Agenda for European Regions** and will take place in Nova Gorica on 7 and 8 June, 2010.*
9. *EREF Network members, partners, and organizers are invited to start early the necessary preparations and involve all relevant institutions at regional, national, EU, and international level for a successful 6th Forum, and productive preparatory and associated activities.*