

## COPIE POLICY FORUM

### 'Entrepreneurship for All: Promoting inclusive growth in Europe through the European Structural Funds'

April 16 – 17, 2012

#### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The COPIE Policy Forum on "**Entrepreneurship for All: Promoting inclusive growth in Europe through the European Structural Funds**" took place on April 16-17, 2012 in Berlin.

With a total number of 70 delegates from twelve EU countries and thirteen different European regions, this interactive and lively event proved to be an excellent forum for discussing the results of COPIE's work.

In **six thematic workshops** participants got a comprehensive overview on the policy development tools that COPIE has developed over the course of the last three years.

The **introductory and final plenary sessions** served as a platform for showcasing and exploring future ways on how the COPIE Toolkit on Inclusive Entrepreneurship can be used by ESF and the ERDF Managing Authorities from across Europe when programming for the new round of Structural Funds for 2014-2020.



The discussions and presentations over the course of the two days confirmed that...

**...inclusive entrepreneurship plays a significant role in achieving Europe2020's employment targets and can be supported via national or regional action plans through the EU Structural Funds.**

A significant share of new jobs in the EU is created by newly established firms; almost 85% by micro firms. These firms generate on average nearly two jobs, in some Member States up to three (G. Bräunling). The Commission proposal for the new round of EU Structural Funds therefore offers an opportunity to finance support measures for inclusive entrepreneurship under the **investment priority 'self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation'** as part of the thematic objective of **promoting employment and support labour mobility**.



Case studies of action plans for inclusive entrepreneurship from the current Structural Funds period in the **Principality of Asturias in Spain**, the **Czech Republic** and in **Wallonia in Belgium** successfully demonstrate that both ESF and ERDF can play a crucial role in strengthening regional and national entrepreneurial support infrastructures. By systematically aligning regional or national economic development and employment goals with ERDF and ESF priorities for entrepreneurship, regional and national decision-makers can make a significant contribution to this crucial policy area through the EU Structural Funds.



## ...the COPIE Toolkit offers a comprehensive set of instruments and solutions on how to foster inclusive entrepreneurship on the EU, the Member State and the regional level.

Based on an integrated approach to policy development, COPIE members have developed a **Toolkit on Inclusive Entrepreneurship** which can be applied by ESF/ERDF Managing Authorities from across Europe.

The **COPIE Toolkit** offers a methodology for programming and for funding specific measures on inclusive entrepreneurship through the European Structural Funds. Its tools have been applied and tested by the ten COPIE members and additional group of almost ten regional or city-based partners from across Europe (S. Koenen).



Following the policy cycle, the COPIE Toolkit starts with suggesting a tool to collect information and data on an existing entrepreneurial infrastructure in a given geographic territory (**COPIE Diagnosis Tool**). Building upon the information gathered it then offers a methodology for joint action planning and for an active engagement of all stakeholders to design a coherent strategy. In the third stage, the Toolkit then proposes a suite of tools for four strategic priority areas that COPIE has identified as being key for promoting inclusive entrepreneurship, namely **entrepreneurs hip education; quality management; integrated business support; and access to finance**.

The presented tools were highly appreciated by the audience...

*The most important thing that I have learned was that there are useful tools available for both diagnosing current situations of inclusive entrepreneurship in a country or region, and for making a change happen.*

*I have learned that promoting inclusive growth through the support of entrepreneurship measures such as education and microcredit programmes actually works.*

*The most important thing that I have learned is that it is possible to develop an EU policy in an evidence-based way by involving Member states and regions directly in the process.*

## ...there is significant scope for further dissemination of the COPIE Toolkit on Inclusive Entrepreneurship.



Transnational learning networks provide an excellent opportunity to achieve sustainable results as experts and partners work together in an institutionalised and systematic framework for several years (S. Strehle). Sharing and discussing one's own approaches with counterparts in other regions and Member States in Europe allows for self-reflection and enriches policy debates with new ideas and practices from other countries (J. Charlier).

With the COPIE Toolkit, COPIE has a lot to offer to Managing Authorities programming ESF and ERDF actions for self employment, entrepreneurship and business support. In their final recommendations, delegates repeatedly pointed towards the need for incorporating inclusive entrepreneurship in Structural Funds programmes and endorsed a broad dissemination of COPIE's results so that other regions and countries interested can also benefit from this experience.

For further information on COPIE please visit [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu) .