



# VIDZEME

THE ONLY WAY IS UP!

# VIDZEME PLANNING

# REGION

## INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER #3

2014/2015



continue working towards developing a stronger region because we believe that strong regions make strong Europe.

Year 2015 begins with Latvia taking over the Presidency of the Council of the EU where one of the regional development interests of Latvia is ensuring that no radical changes are made to the EU cohesion policy principles. Latvia and other EU countries with big territories and low population areas consider it important to emphasize the impact of small and medium urban areas (SMUA) to the economic development. We stand for inclusive development of urban areas by encouraging cooperation between SMUAs and metropolitan areas, between urban areas, between urban and rural areas.

We believe in the success of the future cooperation!

**Hardijs Vents**

Head of Vidzeme Planning Region Development Council

Dear partners,

Welcome to the third issue of the Vidzeme Planning Region's International newsletter! International cooperation is a significant part of everyday work of Vidzeme Planning Region (VPR).

As some of you may know, Vidzeme Region is a part of a beautiful Northern European country Latvia. As a regional planning and development institution, we provide services at national, regional and municipal level and represent regional development interests of 25 municipalities and Valmiera city. Our mission is to act as a development platform for the region. We foster long-term balanced growth of Vidzeme and implement development projects. We have experience in implementing both: large scale EU funded cross border projects and also national and local level cooperation projects.

We work hard on sharing our experience and knowledge and we learn a lot from our partners across Europe. A significant number of our projects have been finalized in 2014 and we have learned a lot of good practices in fields like public transport, cultural heritage and landscape management, geomatics, media, tourism and health care. Inspired by our partners' experiences, we will

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<http://www.vidzeme.lv/en/>

## VPR DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

2014/2015

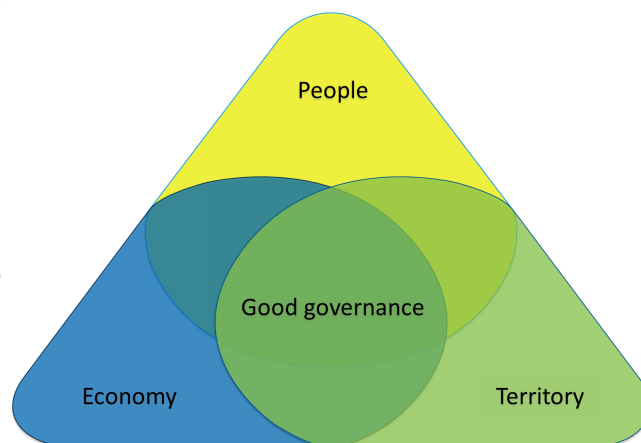
Year 2014 has been an intensive year of planning the future development of the Vidzeme Region. VPR joined the *Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014* programme project *Increasing territorial development planning capacities of planning regions and local governments of Latvia and elaboration of development planning documents* that supports regional development planning document elaboration.

VPR has been actively working on its *Long-term sustainable development strategy 2014-2030* and its *Development programme 2014-2020*.

A high level of public engagement has been kept throughout the whole document elaboration process to involve the public and to acquire social validation for the documents. Several thematic work groups were organised with high representation of field experts, local municipalities and other stakeholders.

Regional administration provides supporting competence for efficient and innovative public administration solutions mobilizing different stakeholders and institutions for joint actions, encouraging effective coordination, creating integrated solutions, as well as stimulating systematic accumulation and transfer of knowledge necessary for regional development.

The defined strategic objectives for the next period are categorized in 3 domains— **People, Economy** and **Territory**.



	Long term priorities	Medium term priorities
PEOPLE	<p>IAS1: High quality, accessible and multi-faceted education</p> <p>IAS2: Social security and health</p>	<p>AP1.1 Development of employability (skills) and entrepreneur-ability</p> <p>AP2.1: Health</p> <p>AP2.2: Social security</p>
ECONOMY	<p>IAS3: Sustainable business and innovation environment</p> <p>IAS4: Sustainable economy</p>	<p>AP3.1: Thematic networks and knowledge transfer</p> <p>AP3.2: Business and innovation support instruments</p> <p>AP3.3: Strategic partnerships and external markets</p> <p>AP4.1: Energoplanning and access to energy</p> <p>AP4.2. Low carbon economy</p>
TERRITORY	<p>IAS5: Accessible region</p> <p>IAS6: Place attractiveness</p>	<p>AP5.1. Transport and communication infrastructure</p> <p>AP5.2. Convenient and accessible public transport</p> <p>AP6.1: Sustainable and attractive living environment</p>

## VPR SMART SPECIALIZATION AREAS

2014/2015

VPR has been working to identify the areas in which the Vidzeme region has a smart specialization potential. Smart specialization is a strategic approach to the economic development of developing research and innovation in the needs of local business in order to foster innovation and productivity growth in areas where the region has a competitive advantage and innovation potential.

VPR conducted a research *Smart specialization possibilities of Vidzeme Planning Region*. Based on expert evaluation specific smart specialization areas were determined and an action plan was elaborated.

Perspective niche products were determined for each area of smart specialization. These areas, in which VPR has a smart specialization potential, will also be the fields in which we are looking for partners to develop new EU projects.

To promote **high added value production** in traditional branches of the region economy, the following areas will be developed

- ◇ **High added value wood products** - production of wooden houses, playgrounds for children, solid wood furniture and wood-based panels folding furniture;
- ◇ **Production of healthy food and drinks** - organic processed products, functional food, niche production of small-scale producers, production for private labels;
- ◇ **Recreation and sustainable tourism** - nature, landscape and historical tourism, rivers, art and culture, manor and churches, gourmet, experience, hunting and military heritage tourism.

To **diversify economy** of the region by developing entrepreneurship in the existing specialization areas, the following fields will be developed

- ◇ **Biomass for chemical conversion and production of energy** - processing of biologically degradable waste, production of biogas, waste management and consultations, fast-growing energy cultures;
- ◇ **Rehabilitation and health care** - modern rehabilitation and health care center on the basis of Līgatne rehabilitation center, social and health care services for elderly people, including old peoples' home for foreign citizens, yoga, meditation and health improvement camps, development of e-health solutions;
- ◇ **Smart materials** - production of technical and textured glass fiber fabric, glass fiber fabric with high SiO<sub>2</sub> content, as well as glass fiber felt and glass fiber yarn.

To develop **new forms of entrepreneurship** in knowledge economy branches, the following areas will be developed

- ◇ **Information and communications technologies** - development of adjusted individual programs, data processing and maintenance, development of mobile applications and games, development of IT infrastructure for local government institutions in the domestic market, computer programming and consultation;
- ◇ **Creative industries** - crafts and design, film, theatre, music, advertisement, as well as entertainment and recreation area, Cēsis art festival, IT and audiovisual sector companies that provide different communication and media solutions;
- ◇ **Distance professional services** - out-sourcing, telemarketing, "back-office" functions.



Discussion with Vidzeme high added value and healthy food cluster members on production of ecological juices and ciders in Vidzeme

## VIDZEME HIGH ADDED VALUE AND HEALTHY FOOD CLUSTER

2014/2015

2014 has been a fruitful year for *Vidzeme high added value and healthy food cluster*. It has welcomed 3 new members and now constitutes of 31 organisations – companies in the food industry and educational and research institutions and associations.

End of the year 2014 was particularly important in the cluster development since it changed its legal form. A membership association was established on the basis of existing Vidzeme food cluster network – *Latvian high added value and healthy food cluster*, now extending the reach of the cluster outside of the region borders, including companies from other regions of Latvia as well. The membership association will allow a more direct members' involvement in the cluster management processes and will open up new possibilities to attract resources for its development, so it is a significant step in strengthening the cluster.

In 2014 Vidzeme food cluster continued its collaboration with international partners. For the second year cluster companies had a possibility to participate in the trade fair *EUROPA MARKT 2014* in Germany, thanks to the *Magdeburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry*. In September the cluster was represented in *BSR Cluster to cluster conference and matchmaking* where over 150 clusters from Baltic Sea Region and other European countries took part in the conference. During the match-making session new partnerships were formed and new joint cross-industry project ideas discussed. A few days before

that a meeting of *Baltfood* network, led by the *LÜBECK Business Development Corp.* which represents *Foodregio* cluster, was organised in the City of Lübeck to prepare the project *BSR Food Innovation Lab* to be submitted for the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) Programme. The project focuses on encouraging and supporting the food industry in the BSR to become more competitive by incorporating sustainability concepts in their production.

In October 2014 another conference *BSR Food Cluster Network: Best practices, international contacts for export and future plans* was held in Helsinki, Finland where the partners of the project in development *BSR Inno Food* met to discuss the advancement of the project to be submitted for the BSR Programme. The project, led by a Finnish competence centre *Foodwest Ltd.*, focuses on developing network of experts around BSR who can assist food SMEs in their internationalization process by providing services in different fields.

A good ending to the year 2014 was the nomination of two Vidzeme food cluster companies for the Swedish Business Awards. *Felici* was nominated for *Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award*, but *Valmiermuižas alus* for *Sustainable Growth Award* and both of them got in the finals, which was a great success to the Vidzeme food cluster because both these companies are Board members in the newly formed membership association *Latvian high added value and healthy food cluster*.



Photo: LÜBECK Business Development Corp.

Meeting of *Baltfood* network members in the City of Lübeck



From left: H.E. Henrik Landerholm, Ambassador of Sweden to Latvia, Aigars Ruņģis, owner of *Valmiermuižas alus*, Alise Bālgalve, owner of *Felici* and Kristaps Ročāns, coordinator of *Latvian high added value and healthy food cluster*.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE VISITS TO VIDZEME

### NORWEGIAN PARTNERS LEARN ABOUT THE TERRITORIAL PLANNING SYSTEM IN LATVIA

2014/2015

In February 2014 representatives from Norway municipalities visited Vidzeme region to explore the regional and national territorial development planning system in Latvia. Norway was represented by Oppland Regional County, Østfold Regional County and Aust-Agder Regional County.

Their visit in Vidzeme began by a meeting with VPR and Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. The Norwegian partners were introduced to the Latvian territory planning system and the regional politics until 2020. They were interested in the way that coordination is done between the local planning documents and the regional and national planning documents. They also shared their experience in Norway where the planning documents are linked to the 4 year election cycle and must be updated within a year after the next election, thus ensuring a more serious political involvement in territory development planning and responsibility for the plan implementation.

Later on Norwegian partners had a chance to visit Cēsis castle and its museum after which they continued their Vidzeme visit and went to Valmiera to meet the City mayor. Partners were interested in the ways that Valmiera develops business activities

in its territory and attracts investors. Afterwards they visited Strenči municipality where the Norwegian partners learned how Strenči have managed to highlight their specialization areas (tourism that is based on rafting and intangible cultural heritage around it, and mental health services) in their development planning documents.

The visit was organised in *Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014* programme project *Increasing territorial development planning capacities of planning regions and local governments of Latvia and elaboration of development planning documents*.



### UKRAINIAN DELEGATION INTRODUCED TO VIDZEME DEVELOPMENT

2014/2015

In August 2014 a delegation from Chernigov region, Ukraine, visited VPR to discuss the regional development policy and Vidzeme's experience in implementing EU co-financed projects. Guests from Ukraine visited several municipalities and expressed admiration for the development progress in Latvia, emphasizing that the experience of former Soviet countries is particularly important to them, since Ukraine's desired direction is joining EU.

The delegation visited the *North Vidzeme Waste Management organization ZAAO* and was pleasantly surprised that the company is



Photo: Newspaper "Druva"

promoting environmental thinking by teaching how to sort waste, by inviting people to live environmentally friendly and by making educational programs.

Later the delegation went to the *Dairy Farmers Cooperative Straupe* where they had the possibility to see the whole production process. Ukrainian delegation was interested to see that the company invests its profits in the future development and has formed its own chain of stores, successfully competing with the big supermarkets.

During the visit, Ukrainian delegation also visited Ungurmuiža manor, Amata municipality tourism center and Ieriķi nature trail since they were very interested in the *Gauja National Park's* status and activities.

This visit took part within the framework of Latvian development cooperation policy, providing help to Ukraine. The visit was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia.

## COOPERATION WITH THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF LOWER RHINE

VIDZEME DANCERS PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL IN FRANCE

2014/2015

In the summer of 2014 the traditional dance group *Piebaldzēni* from Jaunpiebalga municipality in Vidzeme region participated in the International Folklore festival *Le Kochersberg en fête* in Berstett, France. The festival is organised every second year and this was the fourth time that it took place. Each time the participants come from all over the world – from Portugal, Hungary, Ukraine, Columbia, Canada, Croatia and other countries. This year, besides Vidzeme dance group, there were dancers from France, Bolivia and Dominican Republic, demonstrating their traditional dances.

A festival of this kind was a good possibility to present Vidzeme region, its traditions and customs to the French public. Latvian dancers had a chance to perform every day of the festival, which was a true challenge to the physical strength and the artistic diversity of the group. *Piebaldzēni* performed a different programme every night showing traditional costumes from Vidzeme and other Latvian regions and introducing Latvian customs and traditions. Dancers were hosted in French families which ensured a wonderful multicultural experience, letting the Latvian dancers fully experience the French culture.

The International Folklore festival was organised by the Dance group of Berstett, who, thanks to the long term cooperation between VPR and the General Council of Lower Rhine in France, visited Vidzeme region the year before to show the people from Vidzeme traditional dances and costumes of Alsace region in France.



## DEVELOPING NEW SERVICE *TRANSPORT ON DEMAND*

2014/2015

In 2014 VPR started to work actively to develop a new idea of a pilot project in the public transport sector. *Transport on demand* is an unprecedented service in public transport system of Latvia and provokes interest not only among municipalities in Vidzeme and public transport operators, but support for the idea is expressed also by the *Latvian Road Transport Administration* and representatives from the *Latvian Ministry of Transport*.

The service would solve problems of public transport accessibility in remote rural areas, where carriers find it difficult to provide a



regular service because of the low population and long distances, which makes trips less cost-effective and creates losses for carriers. Other planning regions in Latvia are also interested in this project idea and look forward to the possible solution to the problem.

The service *Transport on demand* is an addition to public transport. In the areas where public transport runs irregularly or does not run at all, people are given the opportunity to apply for an individual journey suitable for their personal timetable to go to

the nearest regional center, where the main services are available, e.g. doctor, school, shop etc. The service is provided by small capacity vehicles to save resources. To apply for a trip, customers are asked to do a phone call to the call service or apply electronically via internet – this is how the service is managed in Europe. ITS systems could be applied for providing the service.

So far European Union funding has been successfully allocated to develop the idea. While implementing several projects related to development of transport system, a survey amongst Vidzeme inhabitants was carried out and a research was done to find out a suitable service implementation model for Vidzeme and to



calculate possible implementation and maintenance costs. Researchers believe that successful implementation of this project is strongly related to the public's support. The results of the survey show that 67% of Vidzeme inhabitants, who participated in the survey, are ready to use the service *Transport on demand* and ¾ of all municipalities of VPR are ready to implement this kind of service in their territories.

The concept of *Transport on demand* was developed by learning good practices of other partner regions of *Interreg IVC* projects *RITS-Net* and *MOG*.

**VPR IS LOOKING FOR PROJECT PARTNERS  
FACING SIMILAR CHALLENGES TO ENSURE  
EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT SERVICES IN THEIR  
TERRITORY**



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## PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2007-2013 IN RETROSPECT

2014/2015

In the programming period 2007-2013 VPR has implemented and coordinated **more than 30 projects** in the field of strategic and spatial planning, entrepreneurship and vocational training, culture, tourism, youth, media and ICT, landscape protection and management, geomatics, environment and energy, transport and health services. Half of them were large scale cross border projects.

### We have been operating in the following programmes:

- ◇ The Baltic Sea Region Programme
- ◇ The Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme
- ◇ The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme
- ◇ The Estonia-Latvia Cross Border Cooperation Programme
- ◇ The Estonia-Latvia-Russia Cross Border Cooperation Programme
- ◇ ERDF
- ◇ ESF
- ◇ Intelligent Energy—Europe Programme
- ◇ The INTERREG IV C Programme
- ◇ The Lifelong Learning Programme
- ◇ Youth in Action Programme

We have collaborated with more than

**150 partners**

in **27 countries**

In the new programming period 2014-2020 VPR is represented in the steering and management committees of the **Estonia-Latvia** Programme, the **Estonia-Latvia-Russia** Programme, the **Central Baltic** Programme and the **Baltic Sea Region** Programme.



# 10 COMPLETED PROJECTS — HUNDREDS OF VALUABLE IDEAS

2014/2015

Year 2014 for VPR, as for most project developers in Europe, has been the year when many projects come to an end and new project ideas are developed.

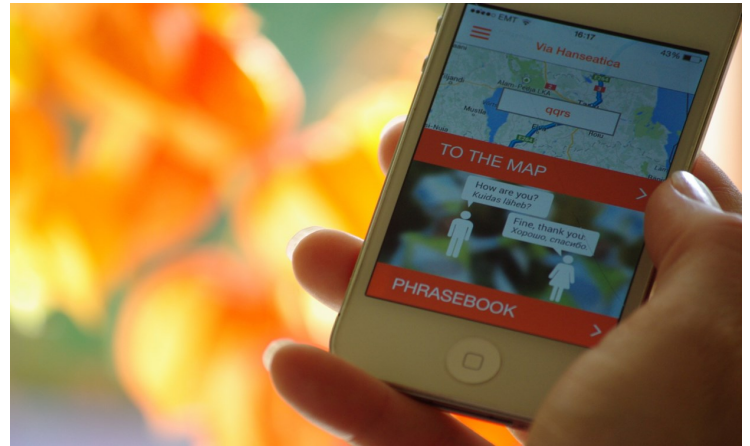
Looking back at the 10 projects that finished in 2014, we have analysed their contribution to their respective field at regional, national and international level.

## TOURISM



Remote regions have an obviously high and still untapped potential, including in tourism. Furthermore, there is a change in tourist behavior – big cities are attractive, but culture cognition and a desire to experience something more authentic, tempt tourists to go outside the urban areas. VPR was a lead partner and successfully implemented a cross-border project *Advancing remote areas by development of cross-border VH tourism route on basis of local resources (VIA HANSEATICA)*, introducing a new 580 kilometers long international tourism route, connecting Latvia, Estonia and Russia. The project was aimed to strengthen the development of the remote regions, to promote economic growth and guide the flow of tourists through less-known areas. Within few years, the European Union funded project *Via Hanseatica* has created a recognizable tourism route, which is based on a powerful co-operative network of international importance. *Via Hanseatica* team followed the win-win approach, since tourists, tourism service providers and local authorities benefit from the project implementation. Tourism businesses and service providers located about 30-40 kilometers on either side of the *Via Hanseatica* road are involved in the project. The route offers variety of leisure activities and tourism infrastructure to satisfy tourists with any kind of wishes. Interaction and collaboration stimulated the international tourism entrepreneurs to understand the importance of common approach and common goals. Strong emphasis is placed on local culture, tradition and product development and promotion.

During the project, a **trip planning tool** <http://travel.viahanseatica.info> and **mobile application** for iOS and Android phones was created to plan an individual trip along the route or choose already predefined thematic routes based on tourist interests. Both planning tools are available free of charge in 5 languages.



*Via Hanseatica* has its own **tourism guide book**, the content differs from the ordinary travel guides. The thrilling story gives an insight in a real family life, traveling along the route, experiencing daily life issues, having full set of emotions – it is both educative and diverting. You can find the electronic version of the travel guide book [here](#).

To attract tourists, 8 **video clips** were produced, presenting *Via Hanseatica* route and the tourism pearls you can find there. We invite you to explore *Via Hanseatica!*

[Tourism route Via Hanseatica -"Feel it, taste it, smell it!"](#)

[Thematic route „Culture to greet and people to meet!"](#)

[Thematic route „Family Fun!"](#)

[Thematic route "Adventure in nature!"](#)

[Thematic route "Winter joy!"](#)

[Via Hanseatica in Latvia](#)

[Via Hanseatica in Estonia](#)

[Via Hanseatica in Russia](#)



## 10 COMPLETED PROJECTS — HUNDREDS OF VALUABLE IDEAS

### TOURISM

2014/2015

#### **TOUR**age *Every age is tour age* Project *Developing Senior Tourism in Remote Regions (TOURAGE)*

has made significant changes in the attitude of tourism companies and tourism policy makers towards senior travelers – their interests and requirements have been identified in Latvia as well as in other parts of Europe.

One of the most important benefits is that new senior friendly tourism products have been developed. VPR successfully transferred experience from colleagues in Granada, Spain by training 14 seniors to become volunteer guides. The *Amata parish* story tellers training started a volunteer senior guide movement in



Latvia, thus benefiting the local economy as well as improving both the quality of life of seniors and the collaboration of different generations. Seniors are now seen as an important resource for regional development.

Senior tourism issues and seniors` role in the economic development was covered in the project`s Final conference. The event was successfully organized in the Committee of the Regions, in Brussels, by VPR who was the leader of the project`s communication package. Final conference brought together more than 100 international participants from all over the Europe, representing different senior policy development and implementation organizations. Amongst the attendants were representatives from the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the Calypso platform, European Travel Commission, general secretary of EuroGites, International Social Tourist Organization and other relevant organizations from Europe. Senior tourism policy development was vastly discussed in the event and the results of the project TOURAGE were disseminated, including presentations of the best good practices in the project.

We invite you to check out the [Good Practice brochure](#) and [Joint Policy Recommendations](#) created by the TOURAGE partnership.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project **Regional Council of North Karelia, Finland!**

### GEOMATICS



#### During the *Geomatics Rural Information Society Initiative PLUS (GRISI PLUS)*

project VPR, Latvian Association of local and regional governments and 8 municipalities from Vidzeme region (and Baldone municipality from Riga Planning Region) signed a letter of intent for the transfer of SOHO SOLO good practice from Gers province (France) to facilitate remote working opportunities for the development of rural areas, thus attracting people and providing them with work. Vidzeme region is the ideal environment for the self-employed and one-man companies to develop their business while enjoying an exceptional quality of life for the whole family.

Project has also promoted the development possibilities of rural regions by using geomatics. It has showed that promoting the attractiveness of remote areas can be a way to advance economic and social growth.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project **Gers Chamber of Commerce and Industry, France!**



## 10 COMPLETED PROJECTS — HUNDREDS OF VALUABLE IDEAS

### TRANSPORT



Project **Move on Green (MOG)** brought forward the mobility problems in rural regions of the European Union, including the VPR. If until now mobility problems of urban areas have been more topical, the project drew attention to the interactions between rural and urban mobility: poor city accessibility by public transport creates influx of private cars and traffic jams in the cities. Knowledge and good experience was acquired from the best experts in the field of transport. Stakeholders on local, regional and national level were brought together to find sustainable solutions in the field of public transport that could be suitable for Vidzeme region case.

Project final event in Vidzeme brought together regional transport specialists, public transport providers and representatives from Planning Regions and Ministries. In his speech, Roberts Zile, a member of the European Parliament, emphasized that so far EU has concentrated more on the urban mobility, paying less attention to the rural mobility. Transportation in rural territories should be taken more seriously, evaluating the most suitable solution for each individual region. EU should pay more attention to a sustainable rural mobility development.

The work has begun to implement the project partner's good practice *Transport on demand* in Vidzeme.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project **Provincial Government Teruel, Spain!**



Roberts Zile, member of the European Parliament speaks in MOG final event in Vidzeme region.

### TRANSPORT

2014/2015



Project **Regions for ITS solutions Network (RITS-Net)** demonstrated that intelligent transport systems (innovative transport solutions and effective traffic management implemented through information technologies) are attributed not only to the cities, but also to rural regions. Through the project activities, project team was successful to affect positively the view of many professionals towards transport systems and IT technologies. The project designed technological and financial model for the service *Transport on demand*, that will serve as a basis for further improvement of the public transport system in the region.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project **Marche Region, Italy!**



### HEALTH CARE



Project **Developing Regional Actions to Promote SMEs in Health Sector and Stimulate Economic Growth (Health4Growth)** has re-positioned the field of health care as a growing business sector and changed the perception of it as a consuming sector. A research of business environment for potential home health care service providers has been carried out, knowledge and experience has been acquired from the best experts working in the health business field. A dialogue was developed amongst stakeholders of all levels in the field of health care and a public health care strategy for VPR was created. As a result, health care has become one of the development priorities in VPR until 2020.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project **Municipality of Debrecen, Hungary!**

# 10 COMPLETED PROJECTS — HUNDREDS OF VALUABLE IDEAS

## MEDIA & ICT

2014/2015



Project *Regional Policies for Information Society & ICT development in the audiovisual sector (Medi@TIC)* has promoted the importance of international cooperation and exchange of experiences between the project partners in regional businesses and universities to find solutions to a more rapid development of the audiovisual sector in Europe. The project has introduced the audiovisual sector as one of the smart specialization areas of Vidzeme region by highlighting the growth potential of this sector. Regional experience of project partners, and the best media and marketing experts has been explored, region's stakeholders have been brought together to define policy recommendations for the development of the sector. Recommendations are already being implemented by including the digital audiovisual sector in the VPR Development Programme for 2014-2020, by changing the Communication and Media Studies programme in *Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences*, and by introducing a new course to general secondary education schools *Communication and Media*.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project  
**San Sebastian Development Agency, Spain!**



Photo: Artūrs Lūkins

## LANDSCAPE



The results of *Historical assets and related landscape (Histcape)* project - good practice

transfer plan and political recommendations have laid the groundwork for the landscape management section of the VPR development documents. In the European level the project has promoted a unified understanding of the term "landscape", and the necessity for the protection and management of landscape and historical and cultural objects in rural areas. A pilot activity was carried out in Burtnieki municipality where an inquiry stand was put up to encourage the locals and municipality visitors to recognize the importance of understanding the landscape around you. Quite often the landscape is evaluated from an expert point of view, rarely from the point of view of the local inhabitants. This pilot activity demonstrated that locals and visitors are important and responsible advisers when it comes to landscape planning.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project  
**Rural Development Styria, Austria!**



## 10 COMPLETED PROJECTS — HUNDREDS OF VALUABLE IDEAS

### YOUTH



In the summer of 2014 VPR implemented the project *Italian youth internship in Vidzeme region* by ensuring 14 Italian youngsters with internship opportunities in different Vidzeme social care institutions, companies and public administrations. This project allowed using international internship method as a good opportunity to attract educated and motivated employees in the fields that lack work force or knowledge. Both the Italian youngsters and Vidzeme companies acquired new experience of collaboration in an international environment.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project **CIOFS/FP Piemonte, Italy!**



Photo: Grasi Children's Home

### YOUTH

2014/2015



Project *Young people and democracy* allowed 49 young people from Sweden and from Latvia to meet and develop their understanding of the democratic process. They were encouraged to get involved in the community on a local, regional, national and international level. They exchanged experiences on how to influence their local governments. With the help of this project the young people of Vidzeme took an active part in the development of VPR planning documents where the interests of young people are reflected.

We would like to thank the Lead Partner of the project **The Norden Association in Gothenburg, Sweden!**



Looking forward to the new planning period, we are excited to embark on development of new projects. We are always looking forward to working with our partners to continue to strengthen Europe and its development.

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