

11.02.2010 - Driving Europe out of economic crisis: CoR rewards six European Entrepreneurial Regions blazing a trail for the Europe 2020 strategy Title

As EU leaders discuss the Europe 2020 proposals to revamp the European economy at a summit in Brussels, six European regions that are already working to create jobs and boost their local economies through their entrepreneurial vision have become the first winners of the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) label at a ceremony in the Committee of the Regions headquarters in Brussels.

The first EER labels will cover the years 2011 and 2012, with three winning regions per year. They are: **Brandenburg** (DE), **County Kerry** (IE) and **Murcia** (ES) for 2011 and **Catalonia** (ES), **Trnava** (SK) and **Uusimaa/Helsinki** (FI) for 2012.

The EER label, [launched](#) in October 2009 by the then CoR President, **Luc Van den Brande**, and former European Commission vice-president **Günther Verheugen**, will help underline the belief that Europe's economic programmes to create jobs and growth will only work if they take existing regional and local visions and strategies on board. The annual award also aims to further stimulate the establishment of innovative and creative regional economic development plans all over Europe.


Presenting the awards, **Mercedes Bresso** (PES/IT), newly elected president of the Committee of the Regions, said: "As the tribulations of the EU economy, and the eurozone in particular, are being discussed today by Europe's heads of state and government, it is vital to acknowledge that encouraging entrepreneurship at local and regional level is a key ingredient for the success of any plan to exit the current crisis. Deploying the right policies to foster not just high-growth but also sustainable growth entrepreneurship is a major challenge that the winners of the European Entrepreneurial Region awards have obviously taken up successfully. I warmly congratulate them and invite them all to share with us their strategies, in pursuit of our common goal of territorial cohesion across the EU."


Maroš Šefčovič, European Commission vice president for inter-institutional relations and administration, who also took part in the award ceremony, added: "The EER label encourages people to put the Small Business Act for Europe into practice at regional level. The winning regions are excellent examples of how this EU initiative is being rolled out on the ground to create a more dynamic and competitive Europe. They clearly show that all of Europe's regions can take the initiative to improve their entrepreneurial and innovative potential. They've achieved this through improved cooperation with the business sector, especially SMEs, and targeted spending of EU and other public funding."

Unlike other regional enterprise awards, the EER label focuses not on past achievements but on regions' vision plans – their ability to think ahead and envisage new ways of using their resources to help entrepreneurs, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to develop successfully. The winning regions all focused on key issues such as a strong focus on working with other EU regions, developing public-private partnerships, encouraging a sustainable, low-carbon economy and promoting social inclusion.

Each of the applicants was required to include a letter detailing the political commitment behind the bid, in order to show the sustainability of the plan and ensure that it is put effectively into practice. With this in mind, the winning regions will all be visited by members of the EER jury over the next two years to assess the success or otherwise of their respective vision plans.

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