

Accommodating creative knowledge

First results from the ACRE project

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Introducing the ACRE project

- EU 6th Framework, Priority 7 'Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society'
- 4 years, started October 2006
- Central themes: creative knowledge economy, city-regional competitiveness
- 13 partners in 13 European city-regions
- Methods: literature review, secondary data analysis, surveys, interviews, analysis policy discourse
- More details on <http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/acre>

The 13 ACRE case studies



Amsterdam

Barcelona

Birmingham

Budapest

Dublin

Helsinki

Leipzig

Milan

Munich

Poznan

Riga

Sofia

Toulouse

What is 'creative knowledge'?

- Creative industries: definition UK-
Department Culture, Media, Sports
- ICT manufacturing and services (OECD)
- Finance, insurance, pension funding
- Law and other business services
- R&D and higher education

WP2: Development path and current state of case study regions

- Historic roots of current economic, social, political profile (path dependence)
- Recent economic, social, political trends
- Current state of the creative knowledge economy
- Recent policies to improve competitiveness (especially as creative knowledge city/region)
- Challenges and opportunities

Typology: 6 main factors

- Role as a political and/or economic decision-making centre
- Size of city-region and central city
- Geopolitical position in Europe before and after fall of Iron Curtain
- Historical-cultural heritage
- Industrial profile / heritage
- Restructuring / competitiveness policy after 1990
- *In addition: region-specific benefits or constraints (real estate, costs of living, population dynamics etc)*

Role as a political and/or economic decision-making centre at national and international levels

- Early acquired and stable status as a political or economic decision-making centre (Amsterdam, Munich, Budapest)
- Late acquired and/or unstable status (Barcelona, Dublin, Helsinki, Sofia, Riga)
- Decision-making status not pronounced (Birmingham, Leipzig, Poznan, Toulouse)

Historical-cultural heritage

- A city has been historically known as a centre of culture and/or science (Amsterdam in 17th century, Munich in 19th century)
- Presence of an attractive old city centre
- Positive or negative image of a city ('fun city', artistic centre, tolerant city, city of crime, polarised city, industrial place, harbour city etc.)
- Influence of crucial persons, revolutionary events, and/or sheer coincidence

Industrial profile / heritage

- Dominance of (declining?) heavy industry and/or seaport activities, labour-intensive
(Barcelona, Leipzig, Poznan, Birmingham)
- Innovative 'lighter' industries: engineering, high-tech, R&D- and knowledge-intensive
(Munich)
- Weaker industrialisation
(Amsterdam)
- Multifunctional vs specialised industrial regions

Restructuring / competitiveness policies (1)

- General items: waterfront (re)development, landmarks, clusters, science parks, centres of excellence, networking, PPPs...
- Most wanted branches: creative industries, ICT, biotech, life sciences, finance
- Growing importance of rankings (justified?)
- Central/Eastern Europe: which city/region will truly become the gateway that all are after?
- Looking for 'best practices' (necessary? useful?)

Restructuring / competitiveness policies (2)

- **Barcelona:** assertive city government, comprehensive competitiveness programme (but: real story behind the glossy brochures and shiny facades?)
- **Helsinki:** focus on ICT, technological innovation and education (but: will it be able to attract international talent?)
- **Munich:** healthy economy, well maintained city (but: how can it lose its 'boring' image?)
- **Amsterdam:** late discovery of need for competitiveness policies; will regional co-operation make a decisive difference? And how to restore tolerant image?

Dilemmas of successful creative knowledge regions

- Difficult choice between economic diversity and specialisation
- 'Creative' or 'knowledge' is not special enough (how to be 'unique'?)
- Problematic housing markets
- How to avoid elitist economy? Can creative knowledge region be social as well?
- Is polarisation a problem and if so, how to tackle it?