

## **Gather around! DIFASS supports creativity and crowdfunding**

**March 2014**

Bratislava, Slovakia was the place to link up for the 7<sup>th</sup> DIFASS workshop in succession on yet another hot topic in SME support measures: the creative sector and crowdfunding.

The DIFASS project facilitates access to finance for enterprises by exchanging innovative business support measures across Europe. The focus is on the development and implementation of non-grant based financial support instruments.

Hosted by the Municipality of Bratislava on March 25-26, five new successful regional initiatives were shared by project partners. These five so-called Good Practices originate from several European partner regions. They are innovative business support measures implemented or funded by (semi-) public bodies.

On behalf of the DIFASS scientific group, Laurentiu Fratila reviewed the Good Practices of the last meeting in Gijón, highlighting the winner Acceleracelife.com. Simeon Karafolas explained the varieties of crowdfunding and their social, material and/or financial return on investment.

The workshop programme kicked-off with local Lubica Jean-Jean of the Municipality of Bratislava on self-sustainability of incubators, followed by Lennard Drogendijk from the Netherlands on CrowdAboutnow.com. Then Cristina Fanjul Alonso of CEEI Asturias showed how they bring together multiple online crowdfunding platforms and organise face-to-face sessions in addition. Mike Roysten of Crowdcube.com explained their success with equity based crowdfunding and Benjamin Techen of TZ Vorpommern closed the sharing session with the Co-work initiative from Germany.

The audience voted the cooperation by Business Development Friesland (BDF) with the CrowdAboutNow.com platform as the best Good Practice. Key was their approach to combine the strengths of their local and personal incubator with the force of this large national online crowdfunding platform. The voters also appreciated the plans BDF has with the Municipality of Leeuwarden on setting up a regional online platform for start-ups and signposting them to the most suitable sources of investment for their specific start-up case.

On the second day the group visited Connect, a former textile factory and now a place for creative young companies. Nada Stranska explained the concept and showcased several tenant companies. One of them is OWL illustration agency, representing top professional illustrators and animators in Central Europe.

DIFASS has an interactive [www.difass.eu](http://www.difass.eu) website with videos of all Good Practice presentations from all workshops and Twitter news feeds.

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