

## RUNNING PROJECTS

### POSEIDON: Meeting in unusual places



The riots in late 2005 in suburbs of Paris and across France have brought

the debate about how to deal with deprived urban areas blighted by high unemployment, decrepit housing and poor schools straight onto our television screens. It has also brought a new topicality to the INTERREG IIIC East operation POSEIDON.

This interregional “Partnership On Socio-Economic and Integrated Development Of deprived Neighbourhoods” is about tackling the multitude of problems and tensions that tend to be concentrate in specific parts of urban conglomerations. The project is lead by the City of Vienna and has Amsterdam, Genova, London, North Kent and Stockholm as partners. Apart from a strategic exchange that will improve the know-how on area management in the partner cities and improve the quality of related policy actions, local pilot projects are carried out addressing specific needs, seeking new ways and helping to test knowledge acquired.

“Our pilot projects are embedded into the local background but are further developed through the interregional exchange of the partnership,” says Susanne Peutl, POSEIDON project coordinator. “This means that against its specific background and tradition, every urban region



“Eating out” at the interregional meeting – POSEIDON coordinator Susanne Peutl tests the local lunch.



“Infobazaar” in a backyard of Vienna’s 7th district – target area for the POSEIDON pilot “Wolke7”

uses specific strategies and planning tools to fight negative trends in their neighbourhood. Interestingly, the partners not only learn from what is similar in each individual case but what seems to induce interregional learning are the things that surprise us, that make us see things differently, new approaches we may try ourselves.”

Peutl highlights that the pilot projects were also important from a communication standpoint because they “help us to go to unusual places and meet the people where they are”. To get the Press and general public interested, POSEIDON project meetings are organized at the very heart of the target areas,

where the pilot projects are being implemented. One recent meeting in Vienna’s Kaiserstrasse, site of a pilot project that experiments with participative urban district management, was, thus, combined with an “Infobazaar”, a sort of small exhibition, where media representatives had the opportunity to obtain information about the various project activities and engage in dialogue with participants.

Peutl believes that the most important thing about communicating effectively is a good and informative website. The Poseidon website does not only have good and clear description of the project’s goals and activities but also a press access point, where info-packs, newsletters and event-folders are posted for download. The site also features a lot of photos of the actual target-areas as well as of the people involved. “This helps people to identify with the project and strengthens the ownership and it means that we stay true to the philosophy of the project, which is really about people, communication and bottom-up processes”.

POSEIDON starts with assessment missions to all its pilot projects this year. Following the spirit of the POSEIDON project philosophy pilot projects will be encouraged carrying out self-evaluations. This year will also see POSEIDON showcasing their activities at a final project event in Brussels, where, among others, a practical experience guide for neighbourhood management will be presented.

For more information about the project and to explore a well-developed website: [www.poseidon-partnership.net](http://www.poseidon-partnership.net). □

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