

Innovative Economic Strategies for The Medium Size Cities
Smart Growth to Challenge Economic Crisis
Medium Size Cities in the Economic Crisis (MESICEC)
MEDICIS
Medium Cities in Economic Changes (MEDICIEC)

Context

The medium size cities have to face big challenges due to the financial and economic crisis.

The polarisation of economic activities in large metropolitan areas

The economic crisis leads to big private companies to rationalize their geographical localisations. Firms are seeking financial economies in their strategic services (R&D, marketing, assurance...). Private headquarters located in medium size cities are closed and decentralized in the big metropolitan areas. Then the qualified and the high value employment are declining in the medium size cities.

This departure of high value activities has indirect consequences.

The presence of households with high average is very important for local retail. Their departure can lead to the crisis of some shopping centres. The intensity of technologic transfers between private firms and the university will also decrease if the private R&D centres are moving.

All the efforts developed by local authorities to develop a local knowledge economy can be destroyed with the departure of high qualified private jobs to big metropolitan countries.

The decisional dependence of the medium size cities will also increase. The departure of the Bank headquarters means that local firms will lose their local and personal contacts to obtain funding.

The polarisation of strategic public infrastructures in large metropolitan areas

The financial crisis has consequences for the medium size cities in the presence of public services. The development of university and public hospital in this size of cities was due to the voluntarism of public authorities. To prevent from an unbalanced development, the States have funded the public services in the medium size cities.

But all the European States are revisiting their public services policies. The limitation of public deficit at national scale has huge operational consequences for the local scale. Some universities and public hospitals are closing or are losing some specialities becoming sort of annex from the strong universities and health regional platforms.

Inhabitants must go to big regional centres to study or for medical treatment.

The economic crisis in the European medium size cities is a challenge for the Göteborg agenda

The two processes are converging to decrease the economic attractiveness of the medium size cities in the knowledge economy. But this situation is not a problem only for the medium size cities but for all the European cities. The Göteborg strategy is articulated on the development of the knowledge economy but also on the promotion of a sustainable urban development. The polarization logic leads to have a concentration of private and public

strategic jobs in the largest metropolitan cities increasing their environmental and social difficulties. The arrival of high qualified people will accentuate the housing crisis for poor households and the risk of social segregation.

The objective of the network

The objective of the network is to design innovative economic strategies for the medium size cities in the global perspectives of the Göteborg agenda (sustainable development, knowledge economy). Innovative because of these cities can't transfer the tools used in the economic strategies set up in the metropolitan areas. The concentration of high value private and public jobs, the presence of big cultural events, the development of universities and private R&D centres are metropolitan assets but less and less the medium size cities assets.

The objective of the thematic network is to help local authorities working in medium size cities to establish economic strategies mobilizing local assets to deliver the Goteborg strategy objectives. The local support group involved in the project will propose actions, tools and methodological frameworks adapted at the assets of their city to challenge the economic crisis and to deliver the Goteborg agendas.

The project is based on the voluntary to work in rupture with the existing strategies for urban economics. The mainstream strategy is adapted for the economics system of the biggest metropolitan areas. But local authorities and private stakeholders which are working in a medium size city need to set up new strategies to achieve the Goteborg objectives.

The main topics of project

The project will be focused on the valorisation of assets existing in the medium size cities in a perspective of sustainable development.

The social relations have a very strong quality and intensity in the medium size cities. Social segregation processes are less important than in large metropolitan areas. People know easier themselves because of the limited size of the city. The network will propose actions and tools to valorise this social capital in economic development.

The quality of life is better in the medium size cities than in large metropolitan areas. The mobility is simpler. The quality of air is better. The nature is nearest. The housing costs are lower (prices and rents). The network will propose actions to transform this asset in economic advantages. The exchanges will help to define more precisely the stakeholders attracted by this asset (families, workers, tourists) and the marketing actions that could be addressed to them.

The making decision process is speedier in medium size cities compared with large metropolitan cities. The network will propose actions to valorise this asset in the management of the local economic strategy. Economic boarding committee, capital risk fund helped by local authorities, project calls for economic development are tools that will be discussed and tested in the project.

The cooperation between the medium cities of a same region can help to develop a metropolitan level offer in culture, health, research inside a network of medium size cities...The network will integrate this topic in its work. Financial aspects (funding but also gains) will be analysed in more details because they represent often the main hidden difficulty in the institutionalization of cooperation between cities.

The method proposed

The method will be based on two main principles:

- A dynamic articulation between the local support group and the thematic network
- A mobilization of the managing authorities, the commission services and The European Bank of Investment at different steps of the project to increase the operational implementation of the proposals.

Contact

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