

CeSPI

Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale

**BACKGROUND FICHE ON THE
EUROPEAN INITIATIVES AND NETWORKS
ON INNOVATION AND RESEARCH¹**

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¹ These fiches are mainly based on the information provided by the websites of the EU initiatives and networks on innovation and research

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The aim of this fiche is that of mapping all the main EU initiatives and networks on innovation; understanding their main objectives and activities.

PRO INNO Europe

Launched in 2005, **PRO INNO Europe**² (“Promoting Innovation in Europe”) is an initiative of Directorate General Enterprise and Industry, aiming at becoming “**focal point for innovation policy analysis, learning and development in Europe**, with the view to learning from the best and contributing to the development of new and better innovation policies in Europe”.

PRO INNO Europe will concentrate on the overall analysis of innovation performance and innovation policies through the analysis of the benchmarking of innovation performance (ex. Preparation of the European Innovation scoreboard), major innovation trends (ex. Preparation of the TrendChart on Innovation in Europe). Among its activities, also the innovation programme evaluations and impact assessments (INNO Appraisal).

Moreover, it provides a learning platform for trans-national co-operation; facilitating dialogue between public authorities, industry and academia on innovation policy (through the INNO-Views building block) and preparing authorities for trans-national cooperation through the INNO Learning Platform. Concerning the INNO Learning Platform, its mission consists mainly in animating and promoting trans-national cooperation activities. At this regard, on the basis of selected innovation policy fields, the INNO Learning Platform aims at exploring the scope for the creation of partnerships for trans-national policy cooperation. Moreover, the INNO Learning Platform facilitates the exchange of experiences and trans-national policy learning activities through:

- the identification of examples of good practice in innovation policy making at national and sub-national level, linked with an assessment of the transferability and adaptability of these practices;
- drawing conclusions from the lessons of on-going INNO-Net and INNO-Action projects to facilitate learning across projects and to become a catalyser for trans-national policy cooperation.

Under the INNO-Actions, joint actions will be developed and implemented in the areas of early stage investment, technology transfer in clusters, promotion of an innovative society, IPR, opening international markets for SMEs, and an award for design management.

As far as INNO-Net projects are concerned they aim to stimulate trans-national co-operation among different national or sub-national innovation programmes. In particular, they focus on cluster policy cooperation, support to knowledge-based SMEs and start-ups, transnational knowledge valorisation, the links of industry and research as well as innovation in services. The four INNO-Nets focusing on cluster policy cooperation form the European Cluster Alliance, bringing together 55 cluster regions.

Last but not least, PRO INNO Europe is part of the overall policy coordination with the Member States in the field of innovation, which is also facilitated by the Group of Senior Officials on innovation policy.

² <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/>

EUROPAINNOVA

Europe INNOVA³ is an initiative of Enterprise and Industry DG dedicated to innovation professionals; and supported under for the 6th Framework Programme within priority of "Structuring the European Research Area".

Europe INNOVA brings together more than 300 partners from 23 Member States, and is currently composed of the elements depicted in the diagram.

It aspires to be the focal point for innovation networking in Europe, through informing, assisting, mobilising and networking the key stakeholders in the field of entrepreneurial innovation, including firm managers, policy makers, cluster managers, investors and relevant associations.

At this aim, it has adopted a sector-based approach that is strategically designed to identify and analyse the leverages and barriers to innovation within specific sectors.

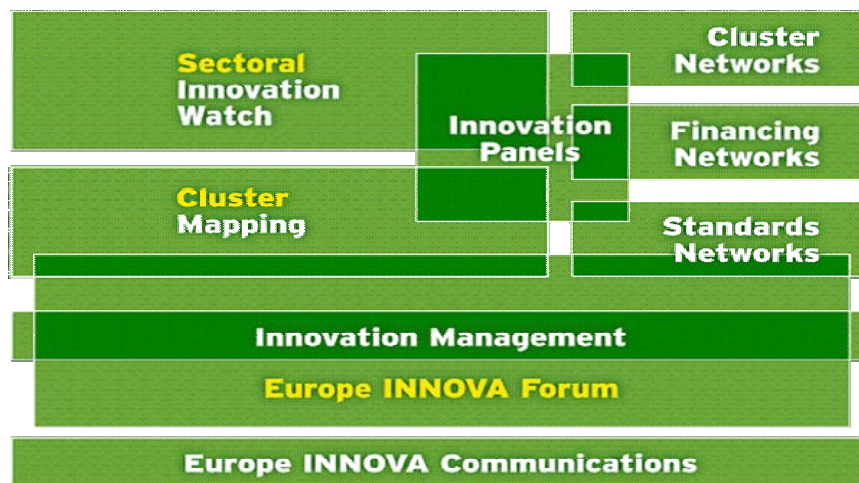
On one hand this approach will lead to sound and targeted policy measures; and on the other, it will activate cooperation between business clusters in Europe through the establishment of networks between clusters that operate in the same or different domains. Through such cooperation it is envisaged that existing clusters will adopt "outward looking" approaches by establishing learning platforms for exchanging experiences, information, good practice and knowledge.

Europe Innova is currently composed of the following elements:

- **Sectoral Innovation Watch** analyses innovation performance in 9 industry sectors (biotechnology, ICT, energy, automotive, food/drink, aerospace, textile, chemicals, machinery/equipment) and 2 horizontal areas (eco-industries, gazelles). Companies in different industry sectors follow different innovation patterns, for instance, non-technological innovation is more important in service sectors than in manufacturing. Sectoral Innovation Watch will seek to understand this kind of sector specificity in innovation behaviour with the aim of providing analytical information to shape future innovation policy.
- **Sector Innovation Panels** aim to provide important feedback from innovating businesses on innovation drivers of and barriers to innovation. These panels will be composed of senior experts on innovation and will serve to complement the analytical findings of Sectoral Innovation Watch and other European innovation policy issues. To this extent, they will engage in the formulation of policy recommendations.
- **10 Innovation Financing Networks** will aim to strengthen the current poor access to finance for innovative companies, which is a frequent obstacle to innovation in many sectors. The Networks will bring together entrepreneurs, incubators and the financial community in different sectors to analyse innovation finance needs, develop new tools for innovation finance and draw policy recommendations.
- Clusters are regarded as hotspots for innovation. **11 Cluster Networks** will provide platforms for existing industrial clusters in Europe to share experience and work on the better understanding and transfer of good practice in cluster management.
- The **Innovation Management** project intends to provide new tools for SMEs aimed at launching innovative start-ups.
- **Standards** should be considered a catalyst for innovation. They play a crucial role in the definition of market conditions within many industrial sectors and they effectively accelerate technological and organisational change. To improve innovation performance through the use of standards a series of Networks has been created.

³ <http://www.europe-innova.org/index.jsp>

- In preparation for policy initiatives designed to foster competitiveness and innovation, the **Innovation Mapping** scheme provides a specific study to map and analyse the evolution of existing and emerging clusters in Europe. The proposed study will create a consistent set of data and apply the same methodology throughout the EU-25. The study will enhance understanding of the role of clusters in strengthening innovation performance.
- All Europe INNOVA discussions will be facilitated by **Europe INNOVA Communications**, a horizontal project responsible for enabling networking among the partners involved and distributing the results of their work. The main Europe INNOVA outcomes and policy recommendations will be promoted through annual reports and Europe INNOVA conferences.
- The **Europe INNOVA Forum** is an interactive web-based platform for initiatives and projects in support of entrepreneurial innovation that will benefit and contribute to Europe INNOVA. With the Europe INNOVA projects at its core, the online Forum will offer policy makers, innovation intermediaries and enterprises a platform for exchanging good practice, ideas and policy recommendations.



PAXIS

Since 2007, Pro Inno Europe unites also the previously separate PAXIS initiative.

Launched in 1999, the PAXIS promotes the setting-up and development of innovative companies across Europe. At this aim, PAXIS have set up “Thematic Networks” consisting of 22 European cities and regions which have an outstanding track record in supporting the creation and growth of innovative start-ups. In this framework, an ‘Award of Excellence for Innovative Regions’ was awarded for the first time in 2002.

Within PAXIS initiative, projects have also been implemented aiming at developing, validating and disseminating concepts to encourage innovative start-up creation (ex The organization of successful incubators; Financing schemes; Entrepreneurship training, etc.).

Gate2Growth

The Gate2Growth⁴ is an online portal aiming at supporting innovative entrepreneurs in Europe as well as at assisting Innovation Professionals to improve their capacity to assist entrepreneurs by fostering networking and the exchange of experience and good practice at European level. Among others, these include early stage technology venture capital investors, managers of technology incubators, managers of industrial liaison and technology transfer.

Gate2Growth.com thus provides tools, infrastructure and support services directed to innovative entrepreneurs as well as to their supporters.

From 2001 to 2006 the Initiative was supported by the European Commission under its Innovation/SMEs programme.

European Cluster Alliance: Developing an open platform for cooperation in the area of cluster policy

The European Cluster Alliance is an umbrella initiative that brings together a number of cluster initiatives supported under the PRO INNO Europe and Europe INNOVA initiatives with the objective to facilitate the emergence of world leading clusters in Europe.

The main constitutive elements of this initiative are:

- Four INNO-Nets projects (BSR Network, CEE-ClusterNetwork, CLUNET, INNET) that are funded under the PRO-INNO initiative bringing together more than 50 partners, involving ministries, regional development agencies and innovation agencies, and deal with the development of joint activities between partner organisations;
- A cluster mapping project under Europe INNOVA that will provide a European cluster database as well as further analytical input to the four cluster INNO-Nets on identifying and benchmarking clusters and cluster initiatives in Europe;
- The High Level Advisory Group on clusters, chaired by the French Senator Pierre Laffitte, which will steer the preparation of a European Cluster Memorandum setting out the strategic objectives and measures for cluster policy development in Europe.

The members of the European Cluster Alliance are committed to develop an open platform for cooperation in the area of cluster policy and a number of joint actions will be identified and developed, such as exchanges of good practices, the organisation of thematic workshops, and the development of new policy instruments.

This work will be facilitated and further complemented by the preparation of a European Cluster Memorandum that will set the priorities and identify areas for action. The Memorandum will be politically endorsed at a European Cluster Conference that will be organised in cooperation with Europe INNOVA stakeholders. This conference will be hosted by the Swedish government in January 2008.

⁴ <http://www.gate2growth.com/>

Initiative	Duration From/to	Aims	Activities
ProInno Europe	2005/ ongoing	To become the “focal point for innovation policy analysis, learning and development in Europe”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To Analyse of innovation performance and innovation policies (ex. European Innovation scoreboard; TrendChart on Innovation); - Innovation programme evaluations and impact assessments - To provide a learning platform for trans-national co-operation; facilitating dialogue between public authorities, industry and academia on innovation policy (through the INNO-Views building block) and preparing authorities for trans-national cooperation through the INNO Learning Platform; - To develop and implement joint actions (INNO-Actions) in the areas of early stage investment, technology transfer in clusters, promotion of an innovative society, IPR, opening international markets for SMEs, and an award for design management. - To Stimulate trans-national co-operation among different national or sub-national innovation programmes (INNO-Net projects)
PAXIS	1999/Ongoing (since 2007, in the framework of InnoEurope Initiative)	To promote the setting-up and development of innovative companies across Europe	PAXIS have set up “Thematic Networks” consisting of 22 European cities and regions which have an outstanding track record in supporting the creation and growth of innovative start-ups
Europa Innova		To be the focal point for <u>innovation networking</u> in Europe, through informing, assisting, mobilising and networking the key stakeholders in the field of entrepreneurial innovation, including firm managers, policy makers, cluster managers, investors and relevant associations.	It has adopted a sector-based approach that is strategically designed to identify and analyse the leverages and barriers to innovation within specific sectors. On one hand this approach will lead to sound and targeted policy measures; and on the other, it will activate cooperation between business clusters in Europe through the establishment of networks between clusters that operate in the same or different domains.
European Cluster Alliance		The members of the European Cluster Alliance are committed to develop an open platform for cooperation in the area of cluster policy and a number of joint actions will be identified and developed, such as exchanges of good practices, the organisation of thematic workshops, and the development of new policy instruments.	The European Cluster Alliance is an umbrella initiative that brings together a number of cluster initiatives supported under the PRO INNO Europe and Europe INNOVA initiatives with the objective to facilitate the emergence of world leading clusters in Europe.

NETWORKS

Euroinfo centres (IEC)

One of EICs core activities consists in informing enterprises about EU matters, such as business co-operation, Commission programmes and funding and general EU matters. EICs have a direct access to the European Commission and are supported by a team of experts in Brussels, assisting them in answering the most complex questions.

Information is also provided to companies through awareness-raising activities (participation in fairs, organisation of seminars, lectures, workshops...) and a range of publications offered in local languages (guides, newsletters, websites...).

EICs perform an advisory role in a wide range of business sectors. They have expertise in areas of specific interest to companies such as: public procurement, business co-operation, financing, market research and European legislation. Working with in-house specialists, EICs help companies to apply for Commission projects and fulfil administrative formalities.

EICs also advise companies on opportunities provided by Commission programmes, as well as on current and proposed Community legislation.

Moreover, EICs:

- **Encourage business relationships and co-operation between companies:** It assists companies to take advantage of business opportunities and can expose them to markets and possible partners in 46 countries with just one call. The result for SMEs of having a well co-ordinated network at its fingertips is that it can be assured of efficient and effective strategic help. They also organise trade missions and provide information on programmes which relate to both EU and non EU countries and *internationalisation*.
- **Provide feedback:** SMEs can directly influence European Community legislation and programmes through their local EIC. The network confidentially feeds back company concerns to the Commission by gathering information through a variety of means such as: direct discussion, regional surveys or participation in consultation panels. EICs are also an integral part of the Commission's SME Feedback initiative. SME Feedback is aimed at improving governance by collecting and analysing reactions in the marketplace for use in the EU's policy-making process.
- **Offer services related to International Trade Fairs and matchmaking, and in particular:**
 - o A company-driven programme of Business to Business events: Businesses have the possibility to take part in 'matchmaking' events, events that gather businesses searching for partners, and sectorial international trade fairs. These events enable companies to find the potential partner they are looking for and to enlarge the scope of their searches in considering other types of partnerships.
 - o A coaching programme: EICs also coach SMEs in their process of internationalisation. They notably offer them preparatory trainings to matchmaking events and also ensure a steady and professional follow up.
- Participate in the EU pilot project supporting European Business Co-operation events and clustering activities for SMEs in border regions between new and old Member States of the European Union. It was initiated by the European Parliament and is managed by the Commission. Running from 2006 to 2008, the project co-finances business co-operation and

clustering support services to SMEs, in particular face-to-face meetings between entrepreneurs in international sector trade fairs located in the border regions between new and old Member States of EU 25. It covers various sectors such as tourism, environmental technologies, wood, food, engineering, metal and the automotive industry.

Innovation Relay Centres (IRC)

The mission of the IRCs is to support innovation and transnational technological co-operation in Europe with a range of specialised business support services. IRC services are primarily targeted at technology-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), but are also available to large companies, research institutes, universities, technology centres and innovation agencies.

The first Innovation Relay Centres were established in 1995 with the support of the European Commission. The aim was to create a pan-European platform to stimulate transnational technology transfer and promote innovation services.

Over the past five years the IRCs - working together in close co-operation - have been of assistance in over 12,500 technology transfer negotiations, and have helped more than 55,000 client companies to meet their technology needs and to exploit their research results.

Today, 71 regional IRCs span 33 countries - 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Israel, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and Chile.

Most IRCs are operated by consortia of qualified regional organisations such as Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Agencies and university Technology Centres. Altogether, almost 220 partner organisations are involved, ensuring wide geographic coverage.

Business and Innovation Centres (BICs)

BICs⁵ are a regional innovation tool for economic development aiming at : ensuring that all required activities and services to favour the creation of new innovative businesses and help existing ones to innovate in a context of internationalisation are implemented with maximum efficiency.

Priority is given to a minimal set of services to be implemented, which are:

- promotion of entrepreneurship
- detection of innovative projects
- strategic guidance (incubation and follow-up)
- sign-posting towards business support organisations

To achieve this broad mission, BICs offer a custom-made integrated system of services:

Core-business services

- Pro-active detection of innovative projects (individual, collective, entrepreneurs, SMEs)
- Strategic guidance during incubation: risk analysis, business planning support, mentoring, access to premises and to financing
- follow-up after creation: financial engineering, internationalisation and sign-posting towards existing service providers and other support organisations;

Services and activities to be implemented if not otherwise supplied in the area

- To offer physical incubation and related services for innovative projects
- Internationalisation of innovative projects
- Technological assistance of innovative projects
- Spin-off and spin-out engineering

⁵ <http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PageID=57&MenuGroup=1&MenuNum=9>

- Training of innovative entrepreneurs
- Co-operation (including clustering) between innovative businesses

European BIC networks (EBN)

EBN⁶ is the leading European network gathering 160 Business and Innovation centres (B.I.C.s) and similar organisations such as incubators, innovation centres and entrepreneurship centres. EBN was created about 20 years ago by the European Commission and European Industry leaders. EBN is a Brussels-based team of 10 people co-ordinating the activities of the members and providing services to them, including implementation of international projects/contracts with the EC.

B2 Europe

B2europe⁷ is the alliance of European business support networks, notably Business and Innovation Centres, Euro Info Centres and Innovation Relay Centres. Since its launch on November 2005, to foster co-operation and synergies between the various networks, the European Commission has developed a set of elements that define the framework of building alliances.

The alliances will develop ways of making Europe easier for SMEs, for example by setting up regional web site portals consolidating access to all European services and organising events to create greater awareness of the opportunities offered by the internal market and cross-border collaboration.

The first year after its official launch in November 2005, the b2europe initiative scored some major successes. The Euro Info Centre (EIC) Network has been leading the initiative which brings together business-support organisations to provide comprehensive support services to European SMEs across Europe. So far, over 70 EICs from almost 20 European countries have signed the b2europe charter with other EU-backed networks (especially the Innovation Relay Centres and Business Innovation Centres networks) and local or regional stakeholders.

In many cases, internet portals have been created by the b2europe partners to provide on-line access to their customers and implement the “no wrong door” principle. It means that companies can access any business support organisations and, if necessary, they will be signposted to ones with the most relevant specialisation.

Innovating Regions in Europe (IRE)⁸

The Innovating Regions in Europe (IRE) network was created by the European Commission in the mid-1990s, at the aim of *"Strengthening the global competitiveness of European regions by promoting innovation policies, and providing a unique platform for regions to cooperate and learn from each other."*

Nowadays the IRE gathers around 235 member regions are gathered in the IRE network. Its aim is to facilitate exchange of experience and good practice among European regions that are enhancing their capacity to support innovation and competitiveness among regional firms through the development and implementation of Regional innovation strategies and Regional innovation schemes (i.e. individual actions carried out to support innovation); aiming at supporting innovation

⁶ <http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PageID=16&MenuGroup=1&MenuNum=3>

⁷ <http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PageID=161>

⁸ http://www.innovating-regions.org/network/presentation/ire_regions.cfm

policy makers and other relevant regional stakeholders in identifying interesting ideas capable of helping them in launching new actions or improving existing ones in the field of regional innovation.

The majority of the IRE regions have undertaken Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) projects with support from the European Commission. They are funded by the DG Enterprise and Industry. The RIS projects help regions to optimise their innovation capacity and strengthen the regional innovation system.

Since 1994, more than 120 European regions have received support for carrying out Regional Innovation Strategy projects from the European Commission. These projects aim to support regions in developing regional innovation strategies that enhance regional innovation and competitiveness through optimising innovation policies and infrastructure. The methodology adopted is based on three main elements: consensus-building among key actors within the regional innovation system, analysis of the regional innovation system, and the development of widely endorsed policies and strategic frameworks on innovation support.

Moreover, in the framework of the IRE,

- Eight **Regional Innovation Policy Impact Assessment and Benchmarking projects** are being undertaken to help assess the impact of regional innovation policies and strategies, and to create instruments for inter-regional benchmarking.
- **Region of Knowledge Pilot Action**, was launched by the Research Directorate-General of the European Commission in August 2003 at the request of the European Parliament, the Regions of Knowledge Pilot Action promoted the active involvement of local players in designing and shaping regional knowledge development models. Fourteen pilot projects were selected to help build or improve regional research and innovation strategies; strengthen regional public-private partnerships; lay down links between researchers, companies and financial institutions; and promote networking between technological innovators in various European regions. Because of the success of the pilot action, it was decided to launch a similar activity, '**Regions of Knowledge 2**', under the Sixth Framework Programme. An additional 18 projects were launched in 2006 with the aim to promote increased and improved regional investment in research and development through mutual learning, coordination and collaboration between regional policies and initiatives. The projects focus on the following topics:
 - a. Analysis of regional R&D performance;
 - b. Integrating R&D investment into local and regional development strategies;
 - c. Application of foresight for the identification of R&D policy;
 - d. Mentoring in the field of implementing R&D policy.

In addition to this a range of services - such as conferences and workshops, identification of experts and partners, tailor-made information on relevant good practice, etc - delivered by the IRE Secretariat (based in Luxembourg) provides member regions with new tools, schemes and inter-regional learning opportunities on innovation promotion.

Finally, three IRE working groups of regions work together on the topics of regional innovation systems, knowledge transfer between universities and enterprises, and innovative clusters. The working groups offer IRE member regions the opportunity to study innovation-related themes over a period of two years, and produce policy recommendations that can be used by other regional innovation policy-makers and practitioners.

Two working groups operated during the period 2004-2006 with a focus on university-industry collaboration and cluster development. Following their success, three new groups have been created for the period 2006-2008. They focus on:

- effective regional innovation systems;
- knowledge transfer between universities and enterprises;
- innovative clusters.

The working groups members selected following a call for expressions of interest represent regions with relevant, demonstrable experience in the policy fields the respective group will focus on, and they play a key role in the development and implementation of innovation policy in their regions.

The groups meet three times per year to explore their topic from a specific perspective. Members are expected to contribute actively to the meetings by sharing their experiences and analysing ideas, suggestions and case studies. Dedicated coordinators from the IRE Secretariat organise the working groups activities and meetings in collaboration with the member regions.

Regions for economic change

Regions for economic change⁹ is an Initiative launched by the European Commission on November 2006¹⁰.

For the period 2007-2013 a total budget of € 375 million has been dedicated to “Region for economic change”, to be implemented in the framework of the “Interregional Co-operation” (Interreg IV C) and of the Urban development network programmes. In practise, these resources should be used to finance networks established in specific thematic areas identified by the European Commission itself, on the basis of the recommendations of the new regulatory framework for European Cohesion Policy 2007-2013. In particular, the themes identified are the following:

- improvement of the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving their environmental potential;
- encouragement of innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including eco-innovation, new information and communication technologies;
- creation of more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital;
- achievement of a high overall growth potential and an even regional development by paying attention to specific geographical circumstances”.¹¹

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm

¹⁰ European Commission, Communication “Regions for Economic Change”, Brussels 8.11.2006, COM (2006) 675 final (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/doc/comm_en_acte.pdf)

¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 8-9

ERIK (European Regions Knowledge based Innovation Network)

The new ERIK¹²⁺ Network (2006-2007) is composed of 51 official partner regions with Toscana and Emilia-Romagna as lead regions. Any European region may participate in its activities and contribute to the debate on innovation and knowledge-based regional strategies and policies.

In particular, ERIK Network's objectives include:

- Benchmarking and disseminating good practices of innovation and knowledge-based policies;
- Supporting inter-regional networking on technological innovation related topics;
- Co-operating with European regional networks with similar objectives to create synergies and make networking activities more efficient and better targeted.

The Network is co-funded by the European Commission's DG Regional Policy in the framework of ERDF's Innovative Actions. The Network also includes a large number of associate partners from all over Europe. Associate regions are those with an approved ERDF financed Regional Programme of Innovative Actions mostly (but not exclusively) under strategic theme one: "Regional economies based on Knowledge and Technological Innovation. Furthermore, the ERIK+ network welcomes the participation of Observer regions - regions in new Member States, Accession Countries and any EU region with a significant interest towards the Network thematic areas.

EuroInfo Centres (IECs)	Ongoing		Inform enterprises about EU matters, such as business co-operation, Commission programmes and funding and general EU matters. Moreover, IECs encourage business relationships and co-operation between companies
Business and Innovation Centres (BICs)	Ongoing	To ensure that all required activities and services to favour the creation of new innovative businesses and help existing ones to innovate in a context of internationalisation are implemented with maximum efficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of entrepreneurship - Detection of innovative projects - Strategic guidance (incubation and follow-up) - Sign-posting towards business support organisations
Innovation Relay Centres (IRCs)	Until 2007	To support innovation and transnational technological co-operation in Europe with a range of specialised business support services.	IRC services are primarily targeted at technology-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), but are also available to large companies, research institutes, universities, technology centres and innovation agencies
B2 Europe Alliance of European business support networks, notably Business and Innovation Centres, Euro Info Centres and Innovation Relay Centres	2005/ ongoing	To develop ways of making Europe easier for SMEs, for example by setting up regional web site portals consolidating access to all European services and organising events to create greater awareness of the opportunities offered by the internal market and cross-border collaboration.	
Innovating Regions in	Mid-1990s/	To Strengthen "the global	To develop and implement <u>Regional</u>

¹² <http://www.eriknetwork.net/index.php>

Europe (IRE)	ongoing	competitiveness of European regions by promoting innovation policies, and providing a unique platform for regions to cooperate and learn from each other." Its aim is to facilitate exchange of experience and good practice among European regions that are enhancing their capacity to support innovation and competitiveness among regional firms.	<u>innovation strategies</u> and <u>Regional innovation schemes</u> (i.e. individual actions carried out to support innovation); aiming at supporting innovation policy makers and other relevant regional stakeholders in identifying interesting ideas capable of helping them in launching new actions or improving existing ones in the field of regional innovation.
Regions for economic change	2006/ ongoing	To maximise the convergence effect of their investments	Stimulate the creation of networks in the framework of the “Interregional Co-operation” (Interreg IV C) and of the Urban development network programmes, on 4 specific thematic areas (ex. Innovation)
ERIK	Ongoing	In particular, ERIK Network’s objectives include: - Benchmarking and disseminating good practices of innovation and knowledge-based policies; - Supporting inter-regional networking on technological innovation related topics; - Co-operating with European regional networks with similar objectives to create synergies and make networking activities more efficient and better targeted.	