

# YURA News

www.yura-project.eu

NEWSLETTER OF THE YURA PROJECT

AUGUST 2011

## 1 | The project is well on its way

After 18 months first results of Central Europe project YURA presented.



*Peter Tschernko, Member of the Styria Regional Parliament and Michael Schickhofer, Member of the Austrian National Council at YURA dissemination conference at castle Seggau (Austria) with young students and YURA representatives (Source: Regional Management South-West-Styria)*

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the YURA newsletter. Over the first 1 ½ years, a lot of work and efforts have already been taken by the project partnership. In this newsletter you can find abstracts of our YURA activities – some already realized, some still in planning stages.

Currently we are in the middle of one of the most important steps of the project YURA – the implementation of the pilot actions in all participating regions.

However, there are still major problems to work on since the labour market situation for young people in the EU - although it has improved overall - remains depressed, and youth unemployment continues to show upward trends in eleven Member States.

With this project, we feel confident to make one or maybe two steps in the right direction to create better conditions for young people in the EU.

In the name of the YURA project partners a nice remaining summer for all of you!

Yours sincerely,

Birgit Haring, local coordinator  
Regional Management South-West-Styria

### Case Studies finalized

The "YURA Case Studies" are the second joint transnational output of the YURA project. Coordinated by Ms Sylvia Lietz and Mr Bernhard Nieher from the isw Halle. This study provides information on how the six partner regions handle their common problems of demographic change and shortage of skilled labor forces. The study points out 9 best practice examples from all YURA partner regions with the aims to counteract demographic change and how to compensate associated developments in the particular regions.

**isw**

### Upcoming events

#### 15 September 2011

Katowice (PL)  
13 Programmes - 1 Goal: to Improve Quality of Life in European Regions!  
*International Project and Programme Conference*

#### 06 – 10 November 2011

Magdeburg (DE)  
Youth Stakeholder Seminar:  
Youngsters of all YURA project regions meet in Magdeburg, Germany for a joint workshop "Your Region – Your Future"  
*Topic: Demographic change*

#### December 2011

Styria (AT)  
Joint project workshop with all PP

#### January 2012

Usti Region (CZ)  
Meetings of Steering Committee, Transnational Management and Working Group



## 2<sup>nd</sup> YURA Dissemination Conference, Leibnitz (Austria)

Discussions on demographic change and new approaches to counteract migration of well-educated youngsters in Austria continued.



More than 100 international participants, regional experts and youngsters followed the invitation of YURA project to the 2<sup>nd</sup> dissemination conference in Leibnitz, Austria (Source: Regional Management South-West-Styria)



**“A challenge for the Regions”** was the topic of the one-day event in Austria. About 100 participants from interested organizations as well as politicians, students, pupils and international guests listened to the high-level lectures of the keynote speakers.

After 15 months of the Central Europe project YURA, the Styrian project partners invited to the 2<sup>nd</sup> dissemination conference in the castle Seggau, Leibnitz (Austria) on 31<sup>st</sup> of Mai 2011 for a midterm evaluation of the project and further discussions on the still explosive topic of demographic change and migration of youngsters.

After the opening words and the following press conference, the dissemination conference “YURA – Your Region – Your Future” started with the keynote speeches:

- Challenges for regions in Styria
- Stay or go? The motives of migration and remain behaviour of young women in rural areas and the resulting policy options
- Demographic Trends in Styria - Employment and aging
- Youth Strategy Burgenlandkreis, Germany

### BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES SPEECHES



In the afternoon seven best practice case study speeches from Austrian, German and Czech experts presented a wide spectrum of possibilities to

assist young people in rural areas.

### Discussion of keynote speeches and conclusion

Finally, an open discussion between the participants and reporting experts was held.

The participating politicians Peter Tschernko, Member of the Styria Regional Parliament (Austria) and Michael Schickhofer, Member of the National Council (Austria) stressed the significance of the expansion of public transportation and the preservation of the educational provision in the regions as well the importance of active education and employment policy. Another discussed major issue was how to make the region attractive to young people as a living space.

### News from Styria

#### Project YURA at the Exhibition “High Tech im Schilcherland”

“High Tech im Schilcherland” is an annual exhibition for regional enterprises to present their field of work and raise the awareness of the employment possibilities in the region SW-Styria.

The exhibition consists of various stands as well as keynote speeches on regional topics (such as “Successful women in the economic system” and “Economic relevance of rural regions in Styria”).

Moreover, it is a great possibility for schools, youngsters, but also for interested people from all over the region to get information about local enterprises.

In June 2011 YURA was represented by the Regional Management South-West-Styria.



▲ YURA Exhibition stand in Deutschlandsberg



▲ Presentation of a Youth Engineering Project (Source: Regional Management SW-Styria)

# Presentation of the YURA Strategy in Brussels

International conference «Your Region – Your Future» on demographic change and skill shortages, Brussels, 11th July 2011.



*YURA strategy presentation in Brussel. Presentation of Polish EU Presidency (Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt)*



▲ Lead Partner: Ministry for Regional Development and Transport of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt, Mr Wilfried Köhler (Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt)



▲ Round Table: Thomas Wobben, Sonja Hutter, Horst Schnellhardt, Bartłomiej Ostrowski, Marcus Lahn, Ulrike Wisser, Richard Deiss (Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Transport Saxony-Anhalt)

In the framework of the Central Europe project YURA, international representatives of Polish EU Presidency, four EU COM Departments, business and industry as well as youth organizations jointly discussed recent demographic trends and subsequent challenges for future development of rural areas in the European Union.

The conference, arranged by the Ministry for Regional Development and Transport of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt (Germany) and the Lower Silesian Voivodeship (Poland), took place in Brussels, 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 on the premises of the State Representation of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt 10.30h a.m. to 3.15h p.m.

Following recent demographic trends, a growing number of European regions will face future competition on inhabitants, vocational opportunities and attractive living conditions. Companies, especially those in regions of emigration will face additional challenges in recruiting qualified staff. It

should be the overall aim of all European regions to qualify youngsters in order to keep them in their home region.

Only those business companies will be long-term competitive and realise sustainable profits, which already start today with implementing new and innovative solutions.

Hence, counteracting future short skills should especially focus on youngsters, as they are the driving force for future regional development and innovation. Mr Bartłomiej Ostrowski (Lower Silesian Voivodeship) introduced new and innovative approaches and strategies to support local economic development by improving local and regional living and working conditions for youngsters in their home regions developed through the project YURA.

In the afternoon a round table with experts from all over Europe enhanced a discussion between the participants of the conference.

## **Your region – Your future!**

*The international EU-project YURA has the aim to support innovative solutions to handle effects of social and demographic change, here especially tackling skill shortages for local and regional economy.*

*YURA does support a closer cooperation between educational institutions such as schools and regional industry and will foster training partnerships.*

*This will not only lead to better vocational perspectives of these youngster in their home region but also to secure and tie young and skilled staff for the local and regional industry.*

# Kick-off workshops pilot actions

The pilot actions are a central part of the project YURA. By involving regional companies and public administrations, particularly possibilities of vocational training or working in the region should be pointed out to counteract migration. The pilots should show ways to actively facilitate demographic change. The results from the pilots will be analysed jointly, transformed as general transferable tools in the joint action plan and inserted in the regional, transnational and European mainstreaming. All pilot actions will be realised in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> half year of the project. In course of the 3<sup>rd</sup> half year of the project all pilot actions started with a kick-off workshop organized by the coordinating partner in their respective countries.

## 1

### Learning Partnerships

Venue: Leibnitz (AT)

Date: WS 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 and a field trip 01<sup>st</sup> of June 2011

Coordinator: Claudia Krobath, IR STYRIA (PP5)

#### Abstract:

The kick-off workshop "Learning Partnerships" was split into two events: The first part was a workshop to define the methodology of the pilot action to all participating partners. The second part was a field trip to look at an already existing best practice Learning Partnership on 1<sup>st</sup> of June.

#### Implementation of the cooperation

**Projects:** Common projects will depend on the branch of the participating companies; this can be technical projects with for example technical schools in the field of energy, building etc., or economic schools (e.g. marketing actions).

- In the 6 Project Regions there should be at least one "Learning Partnership" installed
- Transnational network and cooperation of the schools

#### Outputs:

- Case studies and other inquiries indicated a limited knowledge of young pupils on leading companies and other SME's in their own Region
- The specific demand will be important for each Region– beside of inquiries in companies it could be useful to get data of the regional job centers
- Very important is the motivation of the teachers



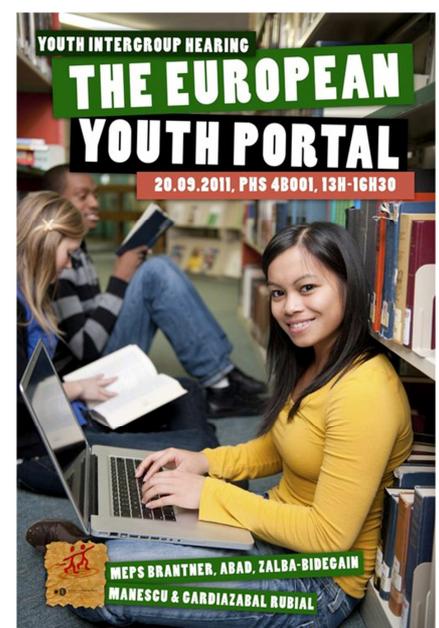
Cooperation of the company Krenhof AG and Polytechnic School Köflach - Presentation of the joint project "hub storage model" (Source: Regional Management Agency SW-Styria)

## The European Youth Portal

Social networks play a major role in the daily life of young people today. Their content goes beyond simple interactions, or personal matters as these past years have shown that their impact on social and political life can be determining.

The European Youth Portal ([www.europa.eu/youth](http://www.europa.eu/youth)) is an online information database for young people living and working in Europe; giving advice on studying, travelling, youth rights, and active citizenship. As the European Commission is reviewing the existing portal, we, the Youth Intergroup in the European Parliament would like to take this opportunity to involve different actors in the revision.

Our hope is that the improvements will lead to an interactive platform that will enhance communication between young Europeans. In the likes of a social network, the new European Youth Portal would enable direct exchange in a safe environment. Panellists will cover all steps of the review, the legal framework guaranteeing respect of personal information, best practices of social networking, the opportunities of e-participation, as well as a user perspective from youth activists.



## 2

**Business Academy**

Venue: Wroclaw (PL)

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011

Coordinator: Olga Chrebor, Foundation of International Education (PP10)

Abstract: PA Business Academy consists of:

- holistic approach to specially gifted pupils (focusing on exact and natural science)
- involving school and university teachers, parents and pupils into educational process
- involving educational centers, Universities, schools; public, nongovernmental and business stakeholders into networking on labor market

Aims of PA 2:

- to raise awareness among higher grades pupils on labor market possibilities connected with education in exact and natural science
- to raise pupils' motivation for education on exact and natural science faculties



*Kick-off workshop in Wroclaw (Source: Foundation of International Education)*

## 3

**Future Laboratory**

Venue: Usti nad Labem (CZ)

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011

Coordinator: Lucie Kuželová, Usti Region (PP6)

Abstract: The aims of Future Laboratory are:

- to provide and verify methods and tools for defining schemes and strategies to improve living condition in rural areas and regions affected by migration
- to provide a platform that will by initiation and verification of these methods contribute to improve the quality of working and family life and will thus lead to a decrease in migration from the given region

This pilot action is focused on involvement of young people into decision making processes. The main aim is to find out why they would or would not stay in their region. As a result the local and regional politicians could use this information from youngsters.

The idea of Future Laboratory is to involve important and successful people from the region to tell the youngsters their life story and the reasons why they have stayed in the region. There will be held workshops with discussions and the possibility for youngsters to work in groups and specify their claims and needs.

On the kick-off workshop a delegate of the secondary school from Podbořany, which will take part in Future Laboratory in Ústí region, introduced the school and their activities.

**News from Styria****“Professional engineering experience day”**

The "professional engineering experience day" was organized as part of the pilot action "Learning Partnerships" in western Styria. The main objective of this pilot action was to arouse the curiosity of pupils for scientific-technical work and working possibilities in their home region. In seminars with teachers and trainers, the cross activities between school and companies were developed. In workshops with the students and in parents' evenings the chances of this cooperation project became visible. For the pupils, the main focus was an "experimental try out". The pupils had the chance to explore their skills in practical activities, get information and for the first time meet and socialize with local and regional companies.

**Participants:**

- 8 new secondary schools ("Neue Mittelschule") (district Voitsberg: 19 classes, 387 pupils - 189 girls/198 boys)
- 150 parents
- 8 Metal working companies as members of regional Education network

**Cooperation partners:**

- Rural Training Institute („Ländliche Fortbildungsinstitut“ LFI),
- Employment Pact Styria - central area



▲ Pupils with organizer Mag. Sonja Hutter (Source: IR STYRIA)

▲ Contact:  
**Claudia Krobath,**  
**IR STYRIA**

Future Laboratory should reveal the information “**How Your Region can be Your Future**”.



*WP 4 coordinator B.Haring and LP A. Schweitzer at the kick-off workshop in Ust nad Labem (CZ) (Source: Usti Region)*

4

#### Pupils research center

Venue: Wroclaw (PL)

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011

Coordinator: Jörg Perrmann, Burgenlandkreis (PP2)

Abstract: Development of vocational field oriented curricula and learning modules

Our aim: counteract social and spatial segregation

Our target group: special talented pupils (classes 7-10)

Our methodology:

- Develop and test vocational field oriented curricula and learning modules
- Bring young people together with regional companies



*Experts and project partners at the kick off workshop in Naumburg (DE) (Source: Burgenlandkreis)*

#### YURA – Photo book

Has this ever happened to you? Meeting someone on a conference: You are warmly welcomed; you know this face but..., however, in this moment you cannot quite remember his or her name.

Probably everyone faced this embarrassing situation already once or twice.

YURA partners thought about how to avoid these situations and introduced a new YURA photo book, illustrating all project actors by photographs. It seems to be a negligible minor project output, but it has large transnational effects.

It directly supports collaboration among European Partners. It makes cooperation visible. It is worth sometimes to hold for a moment, appreciating those small steps and achievements in our projects.

Transnational cooperation in Central Europe is not only administration and the achievement of planned outputs and results. It is the common spirit and companionship developed between numbers of European individuals and institutions.

Especially under such difficult and challenging circumstances in Europe, in these times of “European Spirit under pressure” those signals of cooperation and partnership are small, but notable steps promoting our common European vision.

# YURA Partner Regions South-West-Styria (Austria)

The history of South-West-Styria goes back to the Celts and ancient romans. For long times the region was affected by agriculture. Nowadays South-West-Styria is mainly known for their landscape and wine but also as a rising location for innovative industry.



The region South-West-Styria is known for viticulture and beautiful landscapes (Source: Naturpark Südsteirisches Weinland)

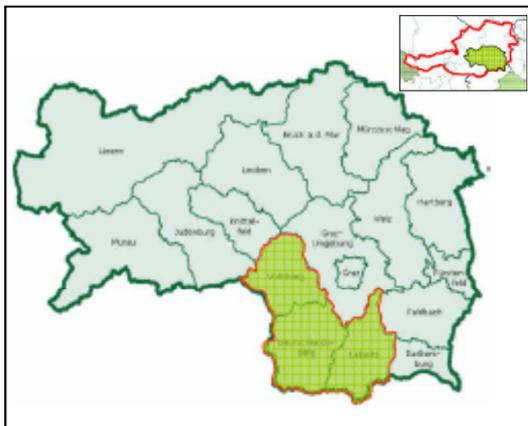


Burg Deutschlandsberg (Source: Tourismuskompetenzzentrum SW-Stmk)



Horse Breed Lippizaner (Source: Tourismuskompetenzzentrum SW-Stmk)

South-West-Styria consists of three administrative units (districts): Deutschlandsberg (DL), Leibnitz (LB) and Voitsberg (VO) representing 13,56% of the area of Styria.



Localisation of the region in Austria and Styria (Source: Regional Management SW-Styria)

The area is confined by the province of Carinthia in the West, by the neighbouring country Slovenia in the South and by the city region of Graz. The hill country borders the mountains "Koralpe" (top 2140m) in the west.

The whole region is known for tourism due to its natural landscapes.

Particularly famous for wine growing are the two districts Leibnitz ("Südsteirisches Weinland" - Southern Styria Wine Country) and Deutschlandsberg ("Schilcher-Region" - Region of Schilcher, which is a local grape variety). Although the tourism sector in the district of Voitsberg is in comparison with other districts in Styria - slightly less developed, it is well known as homeland of the horse breed "Lippizaner".

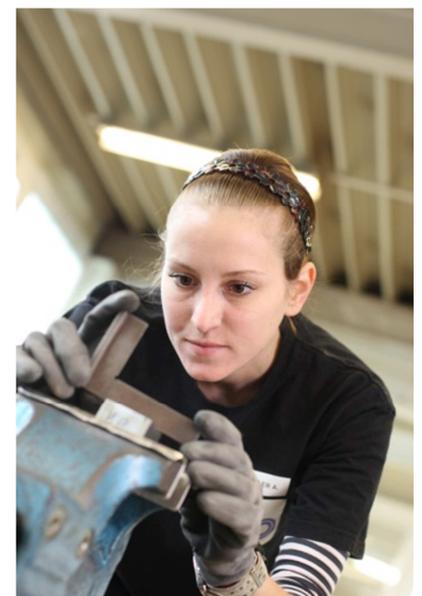
South-West-Styria is quite fragmented. The population of South-West-Styria amounts 190.698 inhabitants distributed to 113 municipalities in an area of 2.223,6 km<sup>2</sup>.

The closed border to Slovenia, part of former Yugoslavia until 1990, weakened the region and constrained economic growth.

The traffic infrastructure is rather advantageous for the region. A possible advantage for the region is the ongoing construction of the "Koralmtunnel", a new 33 km long railway tunnel to improve the connection Vienna-Graz to Carinthia and Italy (estimated completion date: 2020).

Agriculture and industry play an above-average role in the economy of the region South-West-Styria.

However, the economic structure changed considerably during the last years towards a more service-oriented economy. Some parts of the region focus on the development of tourism. The economic structure of the district of Voitsberg is still being dominated by its industrial and mining tradition.



In all three districts, building sector and automotive industry (Auto-Cluster Styria, ACStyria) play a decisive role in local and regional economy. (Source: EU- Regionalbüro Voitsberg)

# YURA - Case Study Report

## Introduction



Demographic change is relevant to all European countries. In many European regions, especially in the partner regions of the project YURA, the natural population decline will be reinforced by migration processes.

The impact of demographic change is particularly evident in less developed rural areas and in regions which are currently undergoing an economic transformation process as well as being particularly characterized by migration of young, well-qualified labor forces. Already today, but in any case in the midterm, those regions are facing a shortage of qualified labor forces. The consequences for the social and territorial cohesion are immense, not only because of the connected weakening of the regional economic capacity and competitiveness of the companies.

In competition for qualified employees with the economic centers, the regions with migration problems have to develop strategies and a favorable framework to offer incentives which convince young people to stay in their region. Accordingly, these regions developed numerous proposals for solutions to counteract demographic trends at regional level in recent years.

### Regional Best Practice Examples and Case Studies

From the wide range of different regional approaches the partner regions independently chose a total of 9 different projects as best practice examples. During the selection of these best practice examples by the partner regions, it was highly important that the model approaches could be characterized as particularly effective and sustainable in terms of their basic approach and project implementation.

In the form of regional case studies the regions exposed in different ways innovative approaches on how

to deal with the processes of demographic change and how to compensate associated developments in the respective regions.

The model approaches range from career information fairs over scholarship programmes for gifted pupils and students to company visits and also to complex integrated programmes to offer young people the chance to be actively involved into the regional society.

In the framework of the transnational exchange of experiences, sustainability and transferability were superficially analysed and discussed.

### "YURA Case Studies" – the basis for the pilot actions

The obtained results and knowledge from the transnational exchange of experiences were compiled in the full study "YURA Case Studies". This complete study provides information on how the particular partner regions handle the common problem of demographic change and a shortage of skilled labor forces.

But above all, the complete study "YURA Case Studies" is a comprehensive definition of model approaches for the successful implementation and realization of the pilot actions in work package 4 and the development of the transnational youth strategy in work package 5.

### Contact information:

isw – Institute for Structural Policy and Economic Development

**Bernhard Nieher, M.A.**

Am Alten Theater 4

D – 39104 Magdeburg

Tel.: +49 391 53 14 306

Fax: +49 391 40 02 830

E-Mail: [nieher@isw-institut.de](mailto:nieher@isw-institut.de)

### regional Best-Practice-Examples

#### Burgenlandkreis – Germany

- Berufsinformationsmesse – BIM (Career Information Fair)
- Praktikumsbörse – BLK (Internship Exchange Platform)

#### South-West-Styria – Austria

- Take Tech
- Junior Company Programme

#### Usti Region – Czech Republic

- Backbone School Network – BSN
- Stipends for secondary school pupils and university students

#### Novara – Italy

- Foundation for Upper Technical Institute for Sustainable Mobility Aerospace/ Mechatronic – ITS (ITS Foundation)

#### North Great Plain – Hungary

- KID Program – Komplex (complex) Integrated Differentiated Program

#### Lower Silesia – Poland

- DSWU – Lower Silesian Talent Support System

## Pilot Actions

### Learning Partnerships

- Berufsinformationsmesse – BIM (Career Information Fair)
- Praktikumsbörse – BLK (Internship Exchange Platform)
- Take Tech
- Backbone School Network – BSN
- KID Program – Komplex (complex) Integrated Differentiated Program

### Future Laboratory

- Backbone School Network – BSN
- Stipends for secondary school pupils and university students
- Foundation for Upper Technical Institute for Sustainable Mobility Aerospace/ Mechatronic – ITS (ITS Foundation)
- Berufsinformationsmesse – BIM (Career Information Fair)
- Praktikumsbörse – BLK (Internship Exchange Platform)
- Take Tech
- KID Program – Komplex (complex) Integrated Differentiated Program

### Business Academy

- Junior Company Programme
- Stipends for secondary school pupils and university students
- DSWU – Lower Silesian Talent Support System
- Foundation for Upper Technical Institute for Sustainable Mobility Aerospace/ Mechatronic – ITS (ITS Foundation)

### Research Center for Pupils

- Praktikumsbörse – BLK (Internship Exchange Platform)
- Take Tech
- KID Program – Komplex (complex) Integrated Differentiated Program
- Stipends for secondary school pupils and university students
- Foundation for Upper Technical Institute for Sustainable Mobility Aerospace/ Mechatronic – ITS (ITS Foundation)

**Editor:** Regional Development Agency South-West-Styria, Grottenhof 1, 8430 Kaindorf a. d. Sulm, Austria

**Lead Partner:** Ministry of Regional Development and Transport, Unit for Demographic Change and Forecasting, Mr Wilfried Köhler, Turmschanzenstrasse 30, 39114 Magdeburg, Germany

The YURA project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF