

Demola Workshop – Introducing the award-winning open innovation platform concept to Észak-Alföld stakeholders

In October 2012 a Peer Review was conducted in the Észak-Alföld region in the field of innovation-based job creation with the involvement of local and external practitioners and experts. As a result of this Peer Review an In-depth Assessment Report with a set of recommendations was elaborated, which was presented to the regional practitioners and the political bodies.

Based on several discussions with Észak-Alföld stakeholders it became clear that some of the recommendations concluded from the Peer Review should be further investigated. One of these important suggestions was to check the Finnish good practice “Demola” that might be utilised with success in Észak-Alföld too.

Demola is a collaborative open innovation platform, where talented university students co-create new solutions to real-life problems with companies and other project partners. It provides an inspiring atmosphere of creative co-creation and new learning opportunities for students and professionals of different universities and organisations.

On 21-22 October 2014 – after long and careful planning – a two-day workshop was organised in Debrecen (Észak-Alföld Region, Hungary) in order to introduce this special concept to Észak-Alföld stakeholders, and further discuss about the possibilities of developing a similar innovation eco-system in the Eastern part of Hungary.

Ville KAIRAMO (Demola New Factory, Finland) and László BACSA (Demola Budapest, Hungary) introduced the main concept behind Demola as well as facilitated discussions with the Észak-Alföld experts coming from the University of Debrecen, the Municipality of Debrecen, the County Council of Hajdú-Bihar County, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hajdú-Bihar County, representing companies, regional development and regional innovation and enterprise development agencies.

During the workshop on the 21 October it became clear that there is a huge potential in Észak-Alföld Region to further improve the innovation eco-system and better exploit the opportunities offered by the University (having more than 30 000 students, in almost all kind of disciplines) and the companies and public sphere collaboration.

On the 22 October a smaller team of experts discussed the next steps to be done in order to set up a Demola in East Hungary / Észak-Alföld Region as well.

“Thanks to the SMART Europe project a common thinking has started among the most important regional stakeholders about shaping the regional innovation eco-system. As we had the chance to examine a carefully developed and well-performing initiative that can serve as an example for us in the future in the frame of the project, we consider this project highly successful and hope that we will have the chance and the necessary funding soon for setting up a similar initiative in order to further support our regional stakeholders with a sustainable solution for speeding-up innovation.” – said Ms. Judit BERKI, vice-director of Észak-Alföld Regional Development Agency.