

Newsletter 05
Cultural and Creative Industries in CENTROPE

Editorial

Throughout Europe, the demand for creative workers is picking up speed. They symbolise dynamism, modern appeal and diversity. But creativity also means growth and hence greater attractiveness of cities and regions. Numerous studies have singled out the creative industries as a “driving force of growth” for Europe – and increasingly for CENTROPE as well. The lively festival and trade fair scene focusing on design, film and music is moreover the tangible aspect of the dynamic and multifaceted creative industry location CENTROPE. In this issue, we present selected autumn events, introduce creative industry institutions and enterprises in the Central European Region and explore the potential of this region to establish itself as a strong creative hub in the Europe of the future.

The quarterly newsletter centrope.news offers information about selected topics of interest to CENTROPE. The focus of this fifth edition is on “cultural and creative industries”.

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We wish you a pleasant read!
Your CENTROPE Working Group

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Creative CENTROPE: creative industries as a driving force of growth

The creative industries, which include such fields as multimedia, software, advertising, graphic art, design, music and architecture, are increasingly gaining importance in CENTROPE. Some of these industries can look back on a long history, while others have only recently begun to take root in the Central European Region. A common aspect is that they all could become a key element of the CENTROPE success story.

A creative boom

The term “creative industries” stands for the very heterogeneous sector of the economy that produces goods and services of an artistic-creative nature for a large public. Which industries are actually counted as “creative” is ultimately highly dependent on the specific regional and local context. One thing is clear, though: the creative industries are a driving force of post-industrial society. Thus a study commissioned by the European Commission identified the annual turnover of the European cultural and creative industries in 2003 as exceeding Euro 654 billion, which is significantly above that of the automotive industry. In 2004, 5.8 million persons in Europe were working in the creative industries.

Creative is attractive

The German trend analyst and futurist Matthias Horx likewise considers the creative industries to be highly important for regional development, maintaining that “regions and cities that boast a high number of creative workers” are living “a great variety of transformation processes”. In his opinion, the presence of creative workers increases innovative clout and flexibility, which also boosts the number of self-employed persons and results in overall positive effects for economic development in general, Horx continues. The decisive role of the creative industries with respect to competitiveness, the labour market and the attractiveness of cities and regions is in fact confirmed by international studies. Already in 2001, Richard Florida argued in his bestselling book “The Rise of the Creative Class” that places that signal and actually live liberal values, openness and diversity are places preferred by creative workers as their home and workplace, which in its turn increases the attractiveness and appeal of such locations.

Discovering the creative industries

While countries like Great Britain discovered creativity as an economic factor as early as in the 1980s, it took somewhat longer for Central Europe to recognise the creative industries as

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a vital element of any national economy. Today CENTROPE is busy developing creative industry strategies and providing support to companies active in the field.

Thus the “Cultural Contact Point” of Hungary, originally set up to implement the EU Programme “Culture 2000”, today functions very much as a networking forum for artists and creative workers. Inter alia, a “Behind the Scenes Conference” on cross-border co-operation was held in Győr parallel to the renowned Mediawave Film Festival. It was the twofold objective of this event to offer a forum for the creative scene on the one hand and to familiarise an international audience with the Hungarian creative industries to facilitate the implementation of cross-border projects on the other hand.

The efforts undertaken by Pécs might serve as a model for CENTROPE: recently, an incubator for cultural activities was set up in the South Hungarian city, which e.g. provides studios for creative workers, runs its own sound and movie studios, organises workshops for creative industry entrepreneurs and offers subsidiary services for SMEs.

Support for the creative class

Since 2003/4, Burgenland and Vienna have been operating special promotion agencies exclusively concerned with the creative industries, both providing financial support to entrepreneurs setting up their own businesses and assisting them in operative management. Vienna in particular was characterised by a dynamic development in the creative industries over recent years. Today roughly 16% of Austria’s workers in the cultural and creative industries are active in Vienna. Between 1995 and 2003, the number of these increased by 17%, while overall economic growth (i.e. all sectors) in the same period attained merely 1.7%. “Departure”, the Viennese promotion agency for creative industries, and the “Center for Innovation and Technology” (ZIT) support the dynamism of the creative industries by means of competition-oriented calls.

The fact that the creative industries are not solely an urban phenomenon is borne out by the “Zentrum für Kreativwirtschaft” of Burgenland. As a contact point for creative workers in this federal province, it has made it its task to strengthen the networks linking art, culture and economy. Since 2007, quarterly discussion forums are to boost co-operation between the creative industries and “traditional” sectors of the economy. The topics discussed – e.g. “giving a new creative lease of life to vineyards” – show that rural areas, too, can benefit from inputs by the creative industries.

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Creativity through knowledge

The cultural and scientific sectors of CENTROPE are particularly highly developed. High-quality education and training options in the arts inter alia prepare the ground for a strong and successful creative sector. By the same token, the universities of applied sciences – located as they are at the interface between education and enterprises – have become a key factor of the system of innovation. The New Design University in St. Pölten likewise launches initiatives for the co-operation with innovative regional and international enterprises. Numerous festivals and events in the fields of design, music and film are additional typical facets of the region.

The mix of science, art and a highly evolved festival culture acts as an excellent stimulus for the creative industries. Cities such as Brno are particularly active in promoting this successful mix. In addition to the time-honoured Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, the international trade fair city Brno also organises the fashion trade show STYL and the International Biennale of Graphic Design – both creative events of international magnitude. The Czech Design Centre, which is likewise domiciled in Brno, is another key regional know-how hub. For Slovakia, a similar role is played by the Slovak Centre of Design in Bratislava. This government agency was established by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in the early 1990s with the objective of initiating and promoting design in Slovakia and furthering new developments.

Potential for cluster development

In many ways, creative industry co-operation in CENTROPE is still in its infancy, as cross-border actors, such as the multimedia enterprise ZONE, so far constitute an exception. Yet the potential for a strong focus on the creative industries in CENTROPE certainly exists. Already in 2005, a study by the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO) concluded that the structure of the creative industries in the Central European Region offers excellent preconditions for cross-border cluster formation. Thus the strong points of CENTROPE in the more production-oriented areas of the creative industries and those in the more content-oriented ones, i.e. those more strongly focused on the artistic-creative elements of the value creation chain, optimally complement each other.

The production-related assets of West Hungary and West Slovakia thus offer major opportunities for creative workers. For example, Norbert Kettner, the former Managing Director of “Departure” and current Managing Director of the Vienna Tourist Board, identifies great potentials for increased co-operation between “traditional” economy and creative industries in the automotive sector. But in the fields of life sciences and multimedia, too,

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CENTROPE is the home of internationally active, research-intensive enterprises that might develop into co-operation partners of the creative industries.

A study by Österreichische Kulturdokumentation concludes that CENTROPE harbours excellent frame conditions for cluster formation in the areas of music, film and design. The development of supraregional promotion and qualification programmes as well as the setting-up and support of cross-border networks are prerequisites for the successful realisation of these potentials, as this approach will not only permit a focusing of competences and resources but help to further improve the marketability of cultural services from CENTROPE through joint export promotion.

Thus the perspectives for creative workers in CENTROPE are excellent. The coming years will show whether the existing opportunities will be made use of and whether CENTROPE can be established as a creative hub at the European level.

Links:

Cultural Contact Point for Hungary: www.kulturpont.hu

Zentrum für Kreativwirtschaft Burgenland: www.kreativwirtschaft.net

Departure, promotion agency for creative industries in Vienna: www.departure.at

New Design University (private university of creative industries), St. Pölten:

<http://www.ndu.ac.at>

Czech Design Centre: www.designcentrum.cz

Slovak Design Centre: www.sdc.sk

Record players as a “CENTROPEAN” market niche

The idea and design come from Austria, the electronics are “made in Slovakia”, and the final product is assembled in the Czech Republic – audio producer Pro-Ject Audio Systems specialises in record players. The company exports its products all over the world and has won a number of international awards over recent years, such as the ECONET Award 2007 for the most innovative cross-border company co-operation.

Real music lovers prefer good old vinyl even in the era of DVDs, MP3 and all the other newfangled gadgets. Heinz Lichtenegger, too, took note of this retro trend. His company Pro-Ject Audio Systems manufactures record players for a worldwide market. The special thing about this venture is that the nifty devices are a co-production by companies from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria, which makes them quintessential CENTROPE products.

It all began in 1990, when Lichtenegger soon after the demise of the Iron Curtain found a partner – the Czech production company Litovel – to make his idea of launching high-quality yet affordable record players reality. At the time, the Czech enterprise, one of the most highly-qualified precision engineering companies in the country, had noticed that demand for analog hi-fi devices was gradually decreasing in favour of CDs and actually planned to go out of business. But the co-operation with the Austrian company created a novel perspective. Lichtenegger above all treasures the “shake-hands” honesty and reliability of his Czech and Slovak partners. “Ultimately, despite a number of differences, we are basically very similar, and this facilitates co-operation”, the Managing Director of Pro-Ject adds. Moreover, the Czech partners often provide input concerning design optimisation and quality assurance, as Lichtenegger comments. For manufacturing electronic components, the Austrian enterprise has found a partner in Slovakia.

320 persons in three countries are engaged in development, production and distribution of the record players, with the Viennese premises being by far the smallest. The devices are exported to 78 countries all over the world, and interest in the product range continues unabated even after 17 years. This cross-border co-operation becomes palpable for consumers above all in pricing. As the production plant is situated in the Czech Republic, these high-quality devices are available for as little as Euro 100.- for the lowest-priced items. Pro-Ject has evolved into one of the leading turntable manufacturers worldwide. Every year, 40,000 record players are delivered to dealers all over the world. “It is chiefly the high technical quality that distinguishes our products from cheap mass-produced goods made in China. Each of our items is checked by hand before shipping”, as Lichtenegger defines specific strong points that elevate European products over the Asian competition.

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The jury of this year's ECONET Award classified the corporate co-operation behind this venture as particularly innovative. Audio Tuning Vertriebs GmbH in Vienna – the “parent” of Pro-Ject – as well as SEV Litovel and AGB Elektro in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm (Czech Republic) were awarded first prize in the category “Austria-Czech Republic”. The ECONET Platform for economic co-operation wants to strengthen the economic structure in the CENTROPE Region and to stimulate co-operative ventures of innovative enterprises, start-ups, exporters and their network partners.

Links:

Pro-Ject Audio Systems: <http://www.project-audio.com>

ECONET Platform, Czech Republic: <http://econet-platform.rhkbrno.cz>

ECONET Platform, Austria: <http://www.econet-platform.at>

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Between luxury and modesty: design in CENTROPE

Autumn 2007 is a hot season for design in CENTROPE. And since design is a primarily urban phenomenon, we will take a look at the different design scenes in the capitals of two CENTROPE partner countries: Prague and Budapest. With Designblok in Prague, the Vienna Design Weeks, Design7 and Luxus Brand in Budapest and Design +3D in Bratislava, the Central European design scene is showing signs of vibrant life.

Czech consumers view design products as “simple” and “useful”, while their counterparts in Austria and Germany still tend to associate design with prestige and exclusiveness, as Jana Zielinsky, design consultant in Prague, pinpoints key cultural differences in the public perception of design. It may be safe to say that Czech functionalism has lastingly influenced this image. In the 1920s and 1930s, it acquired worldwide fame, evolving into an influential trend in architecture and design. Functionality is one of the elements that make up good design – after all, it’s not just a matter of style or styling, as good design must embody user-friendliness, safety and sustainability as well as identity and branding. Finally, design is an economic factor of growing importance – also in CENTROPE.

A dynamic design market

The economic significance of the design sector can also be quantified: approx. 410,000 designers are working in Europe (EU 27), generating an annual turnover of roughly Euro 35 billion. In Austria, about 9,550 designers are active, more than half of them on a freelance basis. Approx. 3,200 designers are registered in the Czech Republic, although it is estimated that 15% are not officially registered. 10 university institutes and around 30 vocational schools train young hopefuls in the Czech Republic. Hungarian statistics indicate approx. 2,500 professional designers; roughly 400 students are trained in 4 design academies and universities. The Slovak design scene is (still) smaller: approx. 2,300 persons work in the sector, most of them aged under 40. Numerous young Slovak designers work in neighbouring countries, e.g. in Prague or Vienna, where markets are bigger and career prospects brighter.

Lively meeting-points of the design scene

The 2005 “autumn of design” in CENTROPE and in the area surrounding the Central European Region opened in early October with “Designblok”. This Prague-based large-scale event – now in its ninth year – was originally organised to interest the public at large in design. Steadily rising visitor volumes show that the mission was definitely accomplished. In 2007, a total of 177 events in 60 spots again made Prague one of the most coveted locations for design buffs from all of Europe. “Designblok” Director Jana Zielinsky was not given much

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of a breather, either. Directly after “her” event, she was invited to the Austrian capital to participate in the “Vienna Design Weeks” and discuss contemporary developments of the Central European design scene in the context of the expert conference “Design 07 – The Middle”. Maxim Velčovský, whose star has risen with particular brightness on the Czech design firmament, likewise took part in this Viennese event series.

Both experts say that the design markets in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Austria are very similar, with differences only regarding industrial traditions. For example, a strong point of the Czech Republic lies in the production of glassware, for which the country is internationally famous. More and more big enterprises, such as a well-known mineral water company, choose young Czech designers to create e.g. bottles or labels, generating an enormous design boom over the past three years, Zielinsky adds. The main problems of Slovakia are that the local market for design products is generally small and that local consumers simply cannot afford to buy them.

Zielinsky emphasises that designers and creative workers in Central Europe should try harder to find co-operation partners but believes that there exists no specific potential for Central European or even “CENTROPEAN” design as a sort of “trademark”, as it were. In her opinion, the task of the future lies more in positioning European design vis-à-vis competitors. “And this will mainly be possible because of our high quality”, the Prague-based design expert affirms.

Discussing and consuming design

Almost concomitantly with the “Vienna Design Weeks”, the Cumulus Conference, which is organised annually by the European Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media, took place in Bratislava, this time with the motto “Design +3D”. Designers, architects, artists and students from all over Europe met to discuss the manifold interactions between design, art, society and politics.

And finally, “Design7”, the Budapest design festival, was held for the fourth time. The absolute highpoint of this festival was the Hungarian Design Award ceremony at the Museum of Applied Art in Budapest. The design festival was for the first time accompanied by “Graphifest”, a festival of graphic design and typography.

Those who still cannot get enough of design might check out “Luxus Brand”, a high-class fair in Budapest, where luxury rules from 16 to 18 November. The premises of the former royal wine cellars in the capital today host the “VAM Design Center”, one of the biggest exhibition venues in Central and Eastern Europe. Since its inauguration in 2007, VAM has established its reputation as a successful conference and exhibition venue – the ideal, royal backdrop for

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a fair devoted to all-out luxury. And in February, Czech and international designers will present their latest collections at the international fashion trade fair STYL KABO in Brno.

Teaching and promoting design

But the fact that design is an important issue for CENTROPE even outside the lively festival and trade fair circuit in the big capitals is clearly demonstrated by institutions such as the New Design University (NDU) in St. Pölten. Initiated and promoted by the Lower Austrian Chamber of Commerce, it is the first private university of the creative industries in Austria. Approx. 170 students have enrolled in a range of curricula that include interior design, graphic design and illustration as well as innovation and design processes. A design college, too, is organised. So far, the courses have mainly attracted Austrian designers-to-be, but NDU is busily establishing international contacts, also with the neighbouring countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Czech Design Centre in Brno is likewise concerned with training newcomers. Competitions such as “Excellent Product of the Year” or “Young Package” are to ease young designers into their careers and increase the competitiveness of Czech design. The “DESIGN Programme” supports small and medium-sized enterprises. Young designers also created the current Internet portal of the Czech Republic (www.czech.cz). This year, the logo with the multicoloured speech balloons was voted “Excellent Product of the Year” in the graphic design category.

Exhibiting design

Whether and how the designers of CENTROPE will co-operate, compete or even develop a common “CENTROPE Design” label is still in the stars. However, possibilities for exchange already exist today: in the context of “Design Match 2008”, designers from the CENTROPE partner countries are invited to draw inspiration from selected turn-of-the-century design objects and present their own concepts. The results will be shown in the form of a travelling exhibition in all four participating countries.

Links:

Designblok, Prague: www.designblok.cz

Fashion trade show STYL, Brno: [http://www.bvv.cz/i2000/Akce/b-](http://www.bvv.cz/i2000/Akce/b-styl.nsf/WWWAllPDocsID/VVEA-72RBZU?OpenDocument&LANG=DE&NAV=1&ID=0)

[styl.nsf/WWWAllPDocsID/VVEA-72RBZU?OpenDocument&LANG=DE&NAV=1&ID=0](http://www.bvv.cz/i2000/Akce/b-styl.nsf/WWWAllPDocsID/VVEA-72RBZU?OpenDocument&LANG=DE&NAV=1&ID=0)

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International Biennale of Graphic Design, Brno: <http://www.moravska-galerie.cz/cs/bienale/23-mezinarodni-bienale-grafickeho-designu-brno-2008/>
Czech Design: <http://www.czechdesign.cz/index.php?lang=2>
Czech Design Centre: http://www.designcentrum.cz/index_e.asp
Cumulus Conference Bratislava: <http://www.vsvu.sk/cumulus>
Slovak Centre of Design, Bratislava: <http://www.sdc.sk/index.php?lang=en>
VAM Design Center Budapest: <http://www.vamdesign.hu/>
Vienna Design Weeks: <http://www.viennadesignweek.at/>
New Design University, St. Pölten: <http://www.ndu.ac.at/ndu>
Design Austria: <http://www.designaustria.at/aktuelles/a/tschechisches-design>
Design Match 2008: <http://2008.designmatch.cz/#nemecky>

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Aaand action, in CENTROPE

A cinematic culture that extends back in time, a varied film festival scene and internationally successful productions – up-and-coming Central European cinema finds the CENTROPE Region a good arena to spread its wings. By now, the film industry has also become an important economic factor for the Central European Region.

At first glance, CENTROPE does not appear to be a Mecca of the movie industry. For example, the European Audiovisual Observatory recorded a drop of roughly 25% in the number of cinemagoers in Czech and Austrian movie theatres for 2005. In Slovakia, the decrease attained 20%, while the drop in Hungarian cinemas was negligible. This caused box-office income to sag – yet these figures throw light only on one specific aspect of the film industry and are massively influenced by the performance of big blockbusters, mainly from the U.S.

High-quality Central European films

In addition to the box-office turnout, production and reprography costs contribute essentially to the economic importance of the film industry. The fact that the European movie industry is an economic factor of substance is easily borne out by its volume – roughly 800 productions annually are shot in the EU Member States. In Austria, the film industry achieved a turnover of Euro 193.5 million in 2005, employing a total of approx. 4,500 persons.

However, it is not so much plain figures that reflect the significance of film production in CENTROPE. Above all, it is the quality of a cinematic culture of long standing which is again meeting with increased international interest and recognition. Thus Czech cinema was represented at this year's Berlinale festival programme with fully five movies. Jiří Menzel's "I Served the King of England" was the first Czech production in 17 years to run for the main award, the "Golden Bear". In 2006, a movie with clear reference to CENTROPE, the Austrian-Bosnian-German co-production "Grbavica" by Jasmila Žbanić, even managed to win this prestigious competition.

In general, it may be said that more and more Central European films were invited to participate in international festivals of recent years. In 2006, György Pálfi's grotesque family drama "Taxidermia" not only created a stir when it was premiered in Cannes but continued to wow audiences at over 30 film festivals throughout Europe. Moreover, the movie was proposed for a nomination in the Academy Award category "Best Foreign Language Film" in 2008. This makes it not only a paragon of the quality and success of young Central European directors, but also an example of successful Central European co-operation, as the film was made possible by the joint

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efforts of the Austrian production company Amour Fou and the Hungarian Eurofilm in co-operation with Studio Memento Film from France. “Taxidermia” received financial support both from the Film Fund Vienna and the Hungarian Film Commission.

Co-operation is also a key strategy to popularise Central European films for larger audiences. Thus the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland launched their 2007 presentation at the European Film Market, which is organised in connection with the Berlinale Festival, for the second time with the common slogan “Central European Cinema”.

Film festivals in the cultural hub CENTROPE

Up-and-coming Central European film and its protagonists find ample opportunities in CENTROPE to showcase their talents, as film, after music, is the second most important festival focus in the Central European Region. Year after year, more than a dozen festivals make CENTROPE a paradise and an epicentre of movie buffs by showing both “CENTROPEAN” and international productions, with the range of festivals encompassing such focuses as animation, children’s movies or opera films.

However, there is one thing these festivals, despite their different thematic focuses, have in common: they try to familiarise larger audiences with non-mainstream productions and to create a stage for (Central) European cinema. Thus the festival “EU XXL Film” founded in 2003 by Mercedes Echerer joins forces with partners in Lower Austria and Vienna to present quality European films that are only available on DVD outside the traditional cinema circuit. Yet the film shows of this festival are only part of the overall concept; parallel dialogue forums, which offer European cinema artists an arena for exchanging ideas and networking, are equally important.

The Czech festival “Der Film“, which is shown in Prague and Brno, is characterised by a special co-operative approach: it is organised jointly by the Goethe Institute of Prague, the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Swiss Embassy in Prague and enables audiences to have a look at German-language films that normally are not shown in Czech theatres.

Intense networking is underway

These numerous festivals not only showcase high-quality pictures but also function as an efficient platform to facilitate the co-operation of filmmakers and producers. Co-operation through co-production is highly developed above all in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, although the other regions of CENTROPE are beginning to pick up speed as well. For example, successful joint ventures – apart from “Taxidermia” – have already been handled by

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Hungarian and Austrian producers. The physical proximity of the twin cities Vienna and Bratislava likewise creates excellent preconditions for close co-operation. Thus many Viennese performers frequently travel to Bratislava to benefit from the outstanding quality of the local dubbing studios.

In recent years, Hungary has enjoyed a number of international successes, largely due to György Pálfi, who had already attracted much attention in 2002 with his pre-“Taxidermia” film “Hukkle”. To reinforce this upward trend, efforts are underway to set up regional institutions in addition to national film promotion authorities in order to employ an even more focused and specific approach. With the Southern Transdanubia Film Fund, Pécs has taken the first step; Győr, Debrecen and Budapest are likely to follow suit.

Close co-operative ventures have in particular evolved in recent years between the two CENTROPE cities Vienna and Győr. At present, an INTERREG project in the context of the Central Europe Programme is being set up; for this purpose, the two cities together with Pécs and, if possible, also Bratislava want to prepare the basis for an audiovisual cluster. Prospects are good, as the region offers complementary structures in the fields of training and production and hence all preconditions for artistically and economically successful co-operation. With the recently adopted MEDIA Programme 2007 of the European Union, which aims at promoting the European film industry and disposes of a total budget of Euro 755 million, filmmakers and producers in CENTROPE may moreover tap substantial funds for the preparation and implementation of their projects.

Links:

Hungarian Film Commission: <http://www.mmka.hu>

Magyar Filmunió: <http://www.filmunio.hu>

Southern Transdanubia Film Fund: www.filmlocationpecs.com

Slovak Film Institute: www.sfu.sk

Audiovisual Information Centre, Slovakia: <http://www.aic.sk>

Czech Film Chamber: <http://www.filmovakomora.cz>

Czech Film Center: <http://www.filmcenter.cz>

Association of Audiovisual and Film Industry, Austria: <http://www.fafu.at>

Austrian Film Institute: <http://www.filminstitut.at>

Film Fund Vienna: <http://www.filmfonds-wien.at/>

Film and Cinema Culture Lower Austria: <http://www.noel.gv.at/Kultur-Freizeit/Kunst-Kultur/Film-und-Kinokultur.html>



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International Film Festival Bratislava <http://www.iffbratislava.sk/2007/index.html>

EU XXL Film – Forum and Festival of the European Film: www.eu-xxl.at

Der Film – Festival of German-Language Films in Prague and Brno: www.derfilm.cz

International Documentary Film Festival Jihlava (Czech Republic): <http://www.dokument-festival.cz>

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CENTROPE Project News: Ready for Take Off

The first CENTROPE Business & Labour Report confirms that the Central European Region not only boasts an above-average economic performance but above all harbours an enormous potential for growth. At the upcoming CENTROPE Conference in Bratislava, top-flight politicians of the CENTROPE partner cities and regions will enter into a dialogue with successful entrepreneurs and economic analysts.

CENTROPE is ready for take-off

A mere utopia just a few years ago, CENTROPE is gradually becoming matter-of-fact reality. The upcoming elimination of the Schengen borders between Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary is another symbolic step towards the coalescence of the Central European Region.

Fasten seatbelts

In March 2006, the CENTROPE partners formulated "Vision 2015", a common concept for the future development of the Central European Region. Roughly eighteen months later, a detailed business plan has been drawn up as a roadmap for concrete co-operation activities implemented by equal partners in order to gradually attain the objectives laid down in "Vision 2015".

CENTROPE takes flight

Experts view the economic development of the Central European Region as above-average with regard to intensity and dynamism. However, the existing opportunities can only be tapped in a productive manner if a focused and increasingly fine-tuned policy is adopted by all CENTROPE partners. In the context of the political conference to be held in Bratislava, politicians will enter into a dialogue with successful entrepreneurs and economic analysts from CENTROPE.

Political Conference CENTROPE 2007

"... READY FOR TAKE-OFF ..."

26 November 2007, 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., Župný Dom, Bratislava