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ACT4PPP starts European Cooperation on Public Private Partnership

Ostrava / Berlin - Against the huge challenges of the worldwide financial and economic crisis an active and intelligent teamplay of public and private partners becomes more and more crucial for ensuring further prosperity, attractiveness and competitiveness of our cities and regions. This was one of the main messages of the European forum „**Possibilities and Challenges of Financing Public Private Partnership by EU Structural Funds**” at 18 of March 2009 in Ostrava, Czech Republic. The forum was the kick-off event of the project “**ACT4PPP – Transnational Action for Public Private Partnership**” co-funded by the European Territorial Cooperation Programme **CENTRAL Europe**. The three-year cooperation project is aiming at promoting the targeted application of public private partnerships (PPP) as a modern tool for delivering public infrastructures and services as well as urban and regional development measures more efficiently. At the occasion of the PPP forum a broad range of PPP experts from the European Commission, national and regional authorities, development agencies, finance institutions as well as universities and consultancies discussed together basic PPP principles and models, legal and organisational challenges and solutions as well as new ways of joint public and private financing recurring to EU means.

Christos Gogos, Deputy Head of the Unit for the Czech Republic of the DG Regio of the European Commission highlighted the importance PPP is playing for delivering effective European Regional and Structural Policy. Due to this the Commission is actively promoting the use of PPPs and therefore European cooperation projects like ACT4PPP are very interesting and valuable sources of expertise and practice for the EU institutions. In his presentation Mr. Gogos especially pointed out the importance of developing a new culture of cooperation between public and private actors in which the balance of interests, benefits and risks is crucial. When it comes to constructing contractual and legal frameworks he considered to keep it simple and not making complicated arrangements or even specific PPP legislation.

The mayor of the host city, Petr Kajnar, explained in his opening speech that for a city like Ostrava ACT4PPP provides the opportunity to prepare a pilot PPP project for the first time and to benefit from experiences and know-how of other cities and regions and dedicated experts forming the transnational network. For Ostrava PPP also means to break existing barriers in terms of legal and organisational difficulties – but also between the public and private sector in general – as well as to find a new and effective development instrument which were not yet explored so far.

Roman Petrussek, director of the Federal Association of the State and Urban Development Companies, in his function as Lead Partner of the partnership stressed in his introductory statement, that ACT4PPP will illustrate how PPP can contribute to cope with the economic, structural, demographic or social development pressure and difficult financial situations of cities and regions. Through intensive and targeted exchange, learning and capitalisation the partnership will explore which might be the right PPP-model for different development issues – ranging from culture, economic infrastructure, housing to brownfield redevelopment – within specific and diverse national contexts and location-dependant situations for example in Graz, Rostock, Bratislava or Poznan. Being a transnational network, ACT4PPP will in particular showcase and promote the given opportunities of public private cooperation towards the national and international level and thus also plead for improving the existing framework conditions in order to ease the realisation of PPPs.

The first lively and concentrated discussion and exchange with partners, experts and professionals during the kick-off conference created a good starting point for gathering and capitalising the broad, dense and specific expertise and practice on PPP. Moreover, the diversity of the practical PPP approaches the ACT4PPP partners will test during the lifetime of the project illustrates the various challenges and

difficulties of developing PPPs on the ground. But at the same time it exposes the opportunities and benefits of this development instrument and the already existing innovative ideas. One of the main detected issues ACT4PPP will help to overcome is the still existing contradiction between 'public' and 'private' based on their different planning culture. The transnational cooperation will thus help to reduce the lack of understanding as well as the lack of suitable PPP-models by gathering expertise and communicating how to adjust and implement them to local circumstances.

Background:

The **ACT4PPP** project, gathering 17 partners from seven different countries in Central Europe, explores different fields of PPP in the upcoming years. The transnational cooperation project is elaborating complementary results and tools for PPP realisation, containing practical work, theoretical background, information and good practice examples with training and expertise elements. Beside, **pilot projects** on local and regional level will have a high impact on the local PPP development, but will also be fruitful sources of experiences and know-how for the transnational work. **PPP framework know-how** on legal and planning issues will serve as a theoretical guide for the pilot activities on PPP within this network and external actors. The results of these pilot activities will be brought together in the **PPP compendium** a general guidebook, helpful for external interested actors wanting to get hints how to structure a successful and sustainable public private partnership. As a practical long-lasting tool the ACT4PPP network will elaborate a **PPP training module**, giving detailed experience on crucial elements for PPP implementation. This training module will be elaborated and tested during the ACT4PPP lifetime but will be available later on for the broad public. ACT4PPP will hold **public forums** like the one in Ostrava regularly during the project lifetime. These broad discussions are open to all interested bodies and will emphasise crucial PPP topics. To share the results and experiences with actors interested in PPP, the project will set up a **PPP competence network**, gathering PPP experts from various public and private levels, backgrounds and regions. With this tool, starting during the ACT4PPP project lifetime, experiences and know-how will remain accessible also after the project end and further regions and cities can benefit from the expertise being concentrated in PPP.

ACT4PPP is co-funded by the European transnational cooperation programme CENTRAL Europe an INTERREG IVB project which will generate an additional benefit by generating knowledge through exchange. The results are not only limited to participating partners, in contrary, the outcomes and solution of this transnational collaboration will be as well a great value for other cities in Central Europe.

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