

INNOVATION CIRCLE NETWORK  
ACTIVITY REPORT  
2020



Still in the circle...still in the game!

## Introduction

“Annus horribilis” 2020 was, for international cooperation and for Innovation Circle networking in the old fashion way. No meeting up, no round tables, no mingle, no innovation camps for youth. Sad story. But we are still in the game.

After 12 years of extensive, fun and interesting networking came the terrible year(!) Since we founded the Innovation Circle Network on a smooth September day in Warsaw 2007, there were hundreds of participant involved in the networking. We have been involved in projects and initiated projects for more than 10 million Euro during these years.

We have organized projects and events from Murmansk to Edinburg, from Suwalki to Robertsfors, from Kedainiai to Oslo, from Riga to Berlin. We have visited and informed about the network in St. Petersburg, Beijing, Brussels, Priekuli, Aluksne and Valga. We have met experts, politicians and youths in Jelgava, Rauna, Alytus, Cesis, Spydeberg, Ørje and Aremark. Not this year. It didn't happen.

During these 13 years we have brought on bold actions and great visions about how the Northern Europe could be better connected to the Trans-European Transport Network and how regions can be more prosper and green, how communities could become more attractive and inclusive, and how towns can be more vibrant and interesting. We introduced smart growth, green growth, green mobility, high speed railways, biking tourism, new ruralism and new governance. We focused on the heritage interpretation and how place identity can be perceived differently by individuals and observed by the storytelling. We dived into the diversity and how stereotypes can be broken. We tried to enhance awareness about the Baltic Sea Region and teach young people about European history as well as local history and peculiarities.

The Innovation Circle Network was built upon the vision of a vibrant network by public and private actors working for the sustainable and prosperous life at smaller and medium sized places in Europe with a special focus on the Baltic Sea Region. And we still have the same vision.

The networking shall include activities for the young generation, for decision makers, specialists and business people. The civic society and non-government organizations are welcome to the network along with schools and institutions.

About 40 participants from seven different countries gathered at the end of November 2019 in Kedainiai. The conference was organized in cooperation with Kedainiai Vocational Educational Training Center and we visited the Kedainiai town hall as well.

The year 2020 went on. We had a few actions, some video meetings, some planning and some application writing. However, we can honestly say, that this year was rock bottom for networking. Now it can only improve!

## ACTIVITIES 2019-2020

### Board members 2019-2020:

Board chairwoman:	Ms. Rita Merca, (Latvia) - until 2021
Board deputy chairwoman:	Ms. Ewelina Suchocka (Poland) – until 2021
New Board member:	Ms. Christina Svensson (Sweden) - until 2020
New Board member:	Ms. Rima Puzauskaite (Lithuania) until 2020
Board member:	Mr. Cliff Hague (UK) – until 2021
Board member:	Mr. Einar Stefanussen (Norway) – until 2021
1. Board member substitute:	Ms. Grete Skjelbred (Norway)
2. New Board member substitute:	Mr. Sulo Särkinen (Estonia)

### Decision:

- The new Board was elected according to the nomination committee suggestions.
- Furthermore for the nomination committee were re-elected Gvido Sabulis and Anita Skutane. Bjørn Ring Opjordsmoen will replace Else-Marit Svendsen. The annual meeting supported the proposal.
- Auditor Yngve Braend was re-elected.

### Nomination Committee:

Gvido Sabulis, Anita Skutane and Bjørn Ring Opjordsmoen

### Auditor:

Yngve Brænd NO

### Secretary general:

Alf S. Johansen NO

During 2020 there was 3 online board meetings in November/December

### Projects:

There have been several project initiatives during 2020. However, the ICN itself didn't manage to achieve any significant grants on the project proposals. This has to do with capacity for elaboration of projects and partly because the EU programs are coming close to the end of this period. The focus is therefore now to think about new initiatives for the upcoming program period 2021-2027.

However, ICN is currently partner in some project applications related to EU and Nordic Funds. 2 with Lithuanian partners and we are involved in one with Zemgale Planning Region. In addition we have looked into possible new project applications with other partners from Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, as well as Norway, Sweden and Scotland. These are all still in the process.



*4 participants from Kedainiai visited Spydeberg, Askim, Mysen, Sarpsborg and Oslo in March.*

During March there was implementation of the Erasmus+ project **KA1 Vocational Education and Training – learner and staff mobility project No. 2019 LT01KA116-060163 „International experience – vocational training quality assurance“-VETstaff job shadowing.**

A group of staff from Kedainiai Vocational Educational Training Center visited Norway and Educational Institutions in Oslo and Østfold, in cooperation with Norwegian partners. New contacts established and project ideas were raised. However, due to the COVID-19 situation the further process has not moved so quickly forward.

#### Cooperation between ICN partners:

Suwalki hosted a delegation from Jelgava in January 2020, about 30 people within social care institutions.

There have been some online contacts and meetings between leaders of Alytus-Suwalki-and Vidzeme municipalities.

#### Other issues

We received a gift from Fossil Free Dalsland at 30 000 SEK. This sum has been put aside on an account for environmental friendly actions.

The ICN webpage [www.innovationcircle.net](http://www.innovationcircle.net) was maintained by Custom Publish and edited by Ms. Christin Schmidt, located in Brandenburg, Germany.

#### ECONOMY REPORTS 2020

Not ready