

## SHARING EXPERIENCE EUROPE POLICY INNOVATION DESIGN



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### EDITORIAL

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### RESEARCH

Design Policy Monitor 2014

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### INTERVIEWS

Design Policy and Promotion Map: Ireland, Latvia & Thailand

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### POLICY IN PRACTICE

Integrating Design into Regional Strategy in Slovenia  
Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation in Europe: The Journey

## EDITORIAL

SEE is a network of 11 European partners contributing to the European Commission's ambition to integrate design into innovation policies and programmes across Europe. Since 2012, the consortium has engaged over 600 public officials in hands-on workshops on the themes of Design Policy, Design Support, Service Design, Social Design and Design Management.

As a result of policy-makers participating in SEE workshops, engagement by SEE partners and drawing on SEE research, design now features in national level policies in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece and Poland as well as at regional level in Wales (UK), South Bohemia (Czech Republic), Greater Copenhagen (Denmark), Central Finland, Central Macedonia (Greece), Malopolskie (Poland), Silesia (Poland) and Ljubljana Urban Region (Slovenia). In addition to influencing 15 policies, SEE has resulted in the implementation of 37 new design-related programmes amounting to new investment in design programmes of over €5.7 million.

Through new research, workshops for policy-makers and programme managers, case studies, policy recommendations and the Design Policy Monitor, SEE aims to build a bank of evidence to support public authorities to integrate design into their mainstream practice.

In this edition of the SEE bulletin, we provide insight into how SEE supported the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (RRA LUR) to include design in their Regional Development Programme 2014–2020. We also present the findings of the Design Policy Monitor 2014, which provides a snapshot of the state of explicit and tacit design policy across Europe. The European Commission shares reflections on developing the 'Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation'. And we continue to build a profile of design policy around the globe with 'Design Policy Map' entries from Latvia, Ireland and Thailand.

To find out more about SEE workshops, email [info@seeplatform.eu](mailto:info@seeplatform.eu)

*Anna Whicher and Gavin Cawood*

## SEE PLATFORM PARTNERSHIP

The SEE bulletins are produced by PDR (Design Wales) at Cardiff Metropolitan University, as part of the activities of the SEE Platform. From 2012 to 2015, SEE is operating as part of the European Commission's European Design Innovation Initiative.

SEE is a network of eleven partners engaging with national and regional governments to integrate design into innovation policies and programmes.

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# Design Policy Monitor 2014

## Reviewing Innovation and Design Policies across Europe

The SEE Design Policy Monitor presents a snapshot of the provision of design support, promotion, centres and policy in the 28 European Union Member States (EU MS). Through a survey with national design representatives, this article provides an overview of the state of explicit and tacit design policies and contrasts the findings for 2012 and 2014. In 2014, 15 EU MS had design explicitly included in national policy either as part of innovation policy or as a dedicated design action plan. The findings also revealed that design promotion activities exist in all 28 EU MS, design support programmes exist in 12 EU MS and 18 countries have a design centre.

*Anna Whicher, PDR (Design Wales), Cardiff Metropolitan University*

### CONTEXT

In the 'Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation', the European Commission proposes 14 action lines to 'accelerate the take-up of design in innovation policies at European, national and regional levels and to create the capacity and competencies needed to implement these policies'<sup>1</sup>. For more information about the action plan take a look at pages 13 to 16 of this SEE bulletin. To support the European Commission in this endeavour, SEE aims to monitor how the 28 EU MS progress towards integrating design into policy. In the Design Policy Monitor, the SEE partners examine the state of explicit and tacit design policies across Europe. Explicit policies for design refer to countries where design is officially integrated into national policy (this could be innovation policy, economic development policy, smart specialisation strategies or any other policy domain); while tacit design policies refer to countries with design policy mechanisms – such as design support programme, design promotion activities or design centres. For example, a country could have a number of design support programmes and promotion schemes but no explicit policy for design so this country could be said to have a tacit design policy. Alternatively, a country could have design integrated into policy but that policy is not implemented. The SEE partners observe 'say-do gap' between visions articulated in policy documents and concrete implementation of actions.

### METHOD

The data for the Design Policy Monitor has been collected through a survey with representatives of design centres, design associations, universities or innovation agencies as well as by conducting content analysis of the national innovation policy document. In particular, we would like to thank members of the Bureau of European Design Associations ([www.beda.org](http://www.beda.org)) for their input. The findings are based on 31 survey responses including a minimum of one for each EU Member State. The data for Cyprus was provided by the Greek respondents and data for Lithuania was provided by the Latvian respondents. The surveys included the following questions:

1. What is the current innovation policy for your country?
2. When was the policy launched and when will it be revised?
3. Is design explicitly included in the innovation policy document? If so, please specify.
4. Is design explicitly included in any regional innovation policies in your country? If so, please specify.
5. Is there a national or regional design centre in your country? If so, please specify.
6. Is there a design support programme in your country? If so, please specify.
7. Are there design promotion activities in your country (awards, exhibitions, campaigns)? If so, please provide a minimum of two examples.
8. Is there anything you would like to add about design policy in your country?

The questions have been constructed to gain an insight into the explicit and tacit policies for design in the 28 EU MS. An explicit design policy is gauged by whether design is formally included in the innovation policy through content analysis of the document. The tacit policy provision for design are determined by whether there is design infrastructure such as a design centre, design promotion activities or design support programmes. The national respondents were provided with the following clarification information:

- Design support refers to programmes aimed at supporting companies or the public sector to use design (demand) or supporting the development of professional design capabilities (supply).

- Design promotion refers to activities aimed at raising awareness and understanding of design including but not limited to design awards, exhibitions, press campaigns and media.
- A design centre is an organisation delivering design support and/or promotion programmes on behalf of national or regional government. For the purpose of this research, design associations (membership organisations) have not been included.
- Design policy, for the purposes of the Design Policy Monitor, refers to design explicitly forming part of national policy. Here, tacit design policies (design policy instruments that may be operating in countries and regions but which do not formally feature in umbrella policy documents) have not been included.

Where a respondent identified that design forms part of national policy, content analysis of the policy document was performed to understand how design is positioned within policy. This exercise informed the Design Policy Ladder assessing how well integrated design is into policy – not at all (level 1), only narrowly in terms of industrial or product design (level 2), more thoroughly in terms of private and public services (level 3) or horizontally across multiple policy domains (level 4).

## KEY FINDINGS

In anticipation of the new programming period 2014-2020, a number of national governments have reviewed and reformulated their innovation policies. Since the mid-2000s, innovation policy across Europe has been undergoing a paradigm shift away from the narrow, purely technological definitions towards a broader set of innovation drivers including design. In 2014, design formed part of 15 of the 28 EU MS national policies; this is the same as 2012 when we last performed this exercise. Nevertheless, there has been some developments as design has been integrated into national policy in Greece and Spain but design-related policies in Portugal and Romania have expired. A number of countries are still preparing national innovation policies for the new programming period and hopefully over the next few years we will see more and more examples of design forming part of national policy. In addition, design action plans have been adopted by the Danish (2013), Estonian (2012), Finnish (2013), French (2013) and Latvian (2014) governments as well as the European Commission (2013). Design support programmes exist in 12 countries, design promotion activities exist in all 28 EU MS and design centres exist in 18 EU MS. This study provides an overview of explicit and tacit policies for design in the 28 EU countries. An explicit policy for design refers to a policy where design is formally cited in policy. A tacit design policy refers to design infrastructure in a country such as a design centre, design promotion activities and/or design support programmes.

## DESIGN CENTRES

Design centres are a key actor connecting the design sector to the private, public and third sectors. Where design centres exist they are often the agent delivering design promotion and support activities on behalf of government. As of 2014, 18 countries have at least one design centre. Some countries such as Belgium and the UK have multiple design centres. With Croatia joining the EU in 2013, the Centre for Design, part of the Croatian Chamber of Economy has been included. The Romanian Design Council was also started

Table 1: Provision of design support, promotion, centres and policy

Country Code	Design Support	Design Promotion	Design Centre	Design Policy
AT	■	■	■	
BE	■	■	■	■
BG		■		
CR		■	■	
CY		■		
CZ	■	■		■
DE		■	■	
DK	■	■	■	■
EE	■	■	■	■
EL	■	■		■
ES		■	■	■
FI	■	■	■	■
FR	■	■	■	■
HU	■	■	■	
IE		■	■	■
IT		■		■
LT		■		
LU		■		
LV		■	■	■
MT		■		
NL	■	■	■	
PL	■	■	■	■
PT		■		
RO		■		
SE		■	■	■
SI		■	■	■
SK		■	■	
UK	■	■	■	■
TOTAL	12	28	18	15

as an initiative in early 2014 but has not yet obtained legal status and therefore has not been included but it is reflective of increasing interest in design in Romania. Furthermore, only recently has design been added to the remit of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland. We are also seeing a trend towards design being integrated as a key competence in innovation centres; for example, the Regional Development Agency of Ljubljana Urban Region has set up the Regional Creative Economy Centre within their organisation and this has a central focus on design as an enabler of economic development. Design centres are increasingly focusing on raising demand for design in both the private and public sectors and appear to be moving away from their traditional domain of up-skilling designers.

## DESIGN PROMOTION

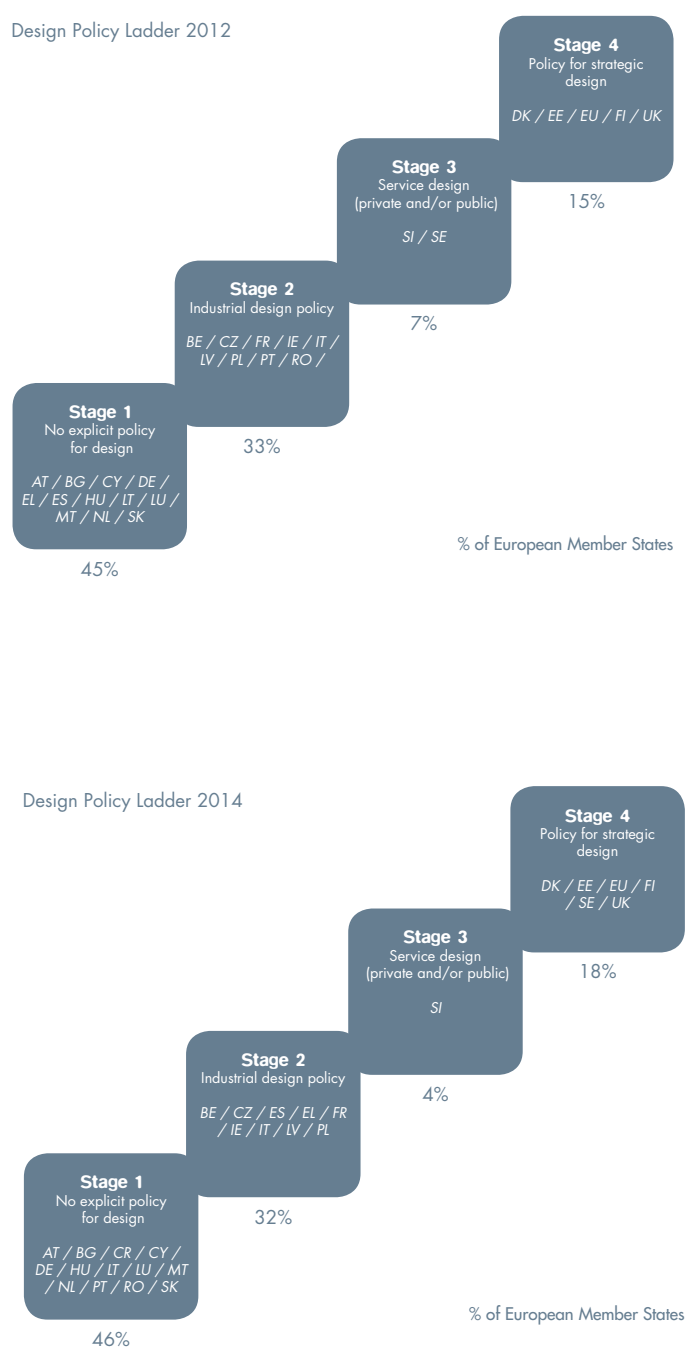
The survey results reveal that design promotion activities exist in every country in Europe. Even countries without design centres and design support programmes tend to have design promotion activities such as, for example, design awards, design festivals, exhibitions and museums. However, it should also be acknowledged that traditional design promotion activities presuppose awareness and understanding of design by companies and individuals. For example, a company would have to be design aware to participate in a design award and an individual would have to be design aware to attend a design exhibition. Design stakeholders therefore need to be more innovative in reaching new audiences particularly SMEs and the public sector. The success of the Helsinki World Design Capital in 2012 has led other countries to explore this type of initiative as a design promotion mechanism. For example, an opportunity exists with the 'Year of Irish Design 2015' and the creation of the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland to focus upon the wider role of design in the innovation and government environment. This will be advocated through a number of events including the launch of the report 'The Role of Design in Bringing Innovative Ideas to Market: An All-Island Study' by the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly (SEE partner) driven by a steering committee of key stakeholders. The challenge for design champions is to use design thinking in connecting to new target audiences.

## DESIGN SUPPORT

Design support programmes are a more interventionist approach to introducing design to companies and public authorities. Since 2005, SEE has collected over 20 case studies on design support programmes from around the world available in the SEE library. In 2014, 12 European countries had active design support programmes (no change from 2012). For more information on the aims, policy context, target audience, type of intervention, operating costs and impact of design support programmes read the SEE Policy Booklet 6: Reviewing Design Support Programmes in Europe. The success of the Design for Export programme in the Czech Republic operating from 2008-2012 has led to a new subsidy programme called 'Design for Competitiveness'. Unfortunately, design remains largely excluded from

broader innovation support programmes such as subsidies programmes, tax credit schemes, innovation voucher schemes and export promotion programmes. Some exceptions include Belgium, Finland, France and Greece. The Flemish programme the SME Wallet enables companies to obtain subsidies of between €100 and €25,000 for training, advice, export, coaching and strategic advice. In 2013, design management became an eligible cost under strategic advice meaning companies can access up to €25,000 for design management expertise. In 2014, the French Ministry for Economy, Industrial Renewal and Digital Sector adopted

Figure 2: Changes in policies for design between 2012 and 2014



a number of support mechanism including an innovation credit scheme enabling SMEs to purchase design expertise as well as a loans initiative where design is an eligible cost within an innovation loan programme to a total value of €90m. In the coming years, there could be a move away from dedicated design support programmes towards design being more holistically integrated into a range of innovation support programmes.

## DESIGN POLICY

Design policies can be explicit (design is included in policy or strategy documents as a priority for innovation, the creative industries or other policy domain) or tacit (design policy instruments exist such as design support programmes but design is not explicitly included as a priority in government strategy). Here we refer to explicit design policies, where design is formally part of innovation or economic development strategies. There is an increasing trend across Europe for governments to adopt explicit design policies in the form of action plans – in 2014, design action plans were in operation in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France and Latvia as well as the European Commission. We can observe a trend in the way that design action plans have been developed. In Denmark, Finland, France, Latvia and the European Commission, the government appointed expert panels to make recommendations, held stakeholder consultation sessions and conducted interviews to inform the policy development. For example, the Danish Ministry of Business appointed the ‘Growth Team for Creative Industries and Design’, held two workshops and consulted broadly by interview; the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy appointed the ‘Design Finland Steering Group’ of 20 members and hosted five workshops; the French Ministry for Economy, Industrial Renewal and Digital Sector and the Ministry for Culture and Communication have adopted three actions from the industry-led action plan developed by 24 members of the ‘Collège des Designers’; in Latvia, the Ministry of Culture appointed the ‘Latvian Design Council’ of 17 experts and the European Commission established the European Design Leadership Board of 15 advisors and held a co-development workshop. With design rising up the innovation policy agenda, it is anticipated that over the next few years more governments will conduct surveys of design performance in their countries and appoint advisory panels to consult with stakeholders to make recommendations for design policies and action plans.

The action plans are in the early phases of implementation. For example, the French Ministry for Economy, Industrial Renewal and Digital Sector have so far adopted three actions: integrating designers into competitive clusters, design is now an eligible cost within the innovation tax credit scheme for SMEs and SMEs can also access Bpifrance loans for design-driven innovation projects<sup>2</sup>. The main objectives of the French action plan are to 1) increase corporate sector use of design especially in SMEs; 2) ensure the excellence of French training and higher education in design and industrial creation; 3) support designers to be entrepreneurial, self-

employed or to form a company; 4) develop a culture of design among French citizens and leaders; and 5) promote the image and quality of French design abroad and use design as a vector for French products<sup>3</sup>. In Denmark, the 27 initiatives of the growth plan cover four focus areas: improving business skills and access to finance in the creative industries; ensuring more creative products and design solutions to reach the market; strengthening education and research for the creative industries and promoting Denmark as an international ‘business growth hub’ in architecture, fashion and design. As one of the initiatives, the state investment fund is expected to support financing of the creative industries with €26,8M in the next three years<sup>4</sup>. The Finnish design policy also makes four strategic objectives: ‘1. Understanding of design and participatory civil society are at a solid level. Competence, research and education are at a high level internationally and contribute to well-being and the competitiveness. 2. Multidisciplinary design competence has strengthened competitiveness. 3. Design is effectively utilised in important growth sectors. 4. In the public sector, design is used in the development of society and as a tool to promote well-being’<sup>5</sup>. In Latvia, ‘The long term vision of the Design Strategy of Latvia 2020 is for Latvia to utilise the innovation potential of design as a strategic asset for economic growth, social well-being and national cultural identity. There are three main action areas: 1) fostering Latvian design quality and awareness raising; 2) integrating design into entrepreneurship and 3) improving the framework conditions of the Latvian Design System’<sup>6</sup>. For the action plans to be successful they need to be linked to finance mechanisms and a robust monitoring system.

In 2014, 15 countries have design included in national policy. However, some survey respondents note an increasing gap between government statements on design and design policy implementation. For example, a government may have the ambition to enhance national design capabilities in companies but if the vision is not linked to concrete actions, financing mechanisms and a robust monitoring system then the vision will remain unfulfilled. We are also witnessing an increasing proliferation of design policies at the level of regions and cities; for example, the City of Lahti in Finland have formulated the ‘Lahti Industrial Design Strategy to Benefit Business’ and Rovaniemi have the ‘Lapland Design Programme 2011-2015’. This trend is not limited to innovation leaders; for example, design has been recognised as a capability in the Smart Specialization Strategy of the Region of Central Macedonia in Greece. Through advocacy since 2012, the SEE network has influenced six national level policies (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece and two in Poland ) as well as nine regional level policies Wales (UK), South Bohemia (Czech Republic), Greater Copenhagen (Denmark), Central Finland, Central Macedonia (Greece), Malopolskie (Poland), two in Silesia (Poland) and the Ljubljana Urban Region (Slovenia). SEE will continue to support governments to develop design policies and to monitor design policy across Europe over the next few years.



## CONCLUSIONS

A pertinent question is do European countries need design policies or rather do they need policies by design? European countries with strong design sectors do need design policies to ensure that the private sector is developing products, services and systems that are user-centred and desirable and that the public sector are developing public services that are user-friendly and fit for purpose. More than that, the public sector should also be using design to engage more with the public and develop policies that better correspond to public expectation. For more information about design for public sector innovation refer to the SEE publication 'Design for Public Good'. For example, in April 2014, the UK Cabinet Office set up a Policy Lab testing design methods to improve policy in the Civil Service. Over the coming years, from the lessons from MindLab in Denmark, Helsinki Design Lab and the Cabinet Office Policy Lab, design methods could be adopted more broadly across Europe as an approach to policy development.

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1 European Commission (2013) 'Commission Staff Working Document. Implementing an Action Plan for Design-Driven Innovation', SWD(2013)380, Brussels, 23.09.13, p.6.

2 Survey response from the French Ministry for Economy, Industrial Renewal and Digital Sector (May 2014).

3 Alan Cadix & Concours de Collège des Designers (2013) 'Pour une Politique Nationale de Design', Mémoire Remis au Ministre de Redressement Productif et la Ministre de la Culture et de la Communication le 13 octobre 2013.

4 Interview response with the Ministry of Business (June 2013).

5 Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy and Ministry of Education and Culture (2013) 'Design Finland Programme. Proposals for Strategy and Actions', p.22.

6 Latvian Design Council (2014) 'Design Strategy of Latvia 2020' Presented to the Ministry of Culture on 14 May 2014 in Riga, p.1.

# Design Policy and Promotion Map

To get a global perspective on the growing number and increasing maturity of design policies and promotion programmes, this feature presents testimonials from design practitioners from three countries. Each interviewee provides an overview of developments in their country and outlines how design fits into various government strategies, in order to build a profile map of the state of affairs around the world.



## IRELAND

Ireland does not currently have a national or regional design policy, but rather is integrated as complementary elements of the Irish Government's approach to science, technology and innovation policy. There is however going to be a renewed emphasis on design during 2015 with the rollout of a programme for the Year of Irish Design (YOID) 2015. The YOID will be devised and managed by the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Enterprise Ireland with the objective to 'conduct a number of activities at home and abroad to encourage more investment in design and design skills and to promote Ireland's reputation internationally' (Action Plan for Jobs 2014 Report). The YOID will be a year-long programme with a wide array of signature events, promotional and celebration activities to propel the development of Ireland as a design hub and creative country. The YOID programme is currently being developed and will be published later in the year and should have positive implications for design policy for Ireland in the future. [www.dccoi.ie/year-of-irish-design-2015](http://www.dccoi.ie/year-of-irish-design-2015)

PIVOT Dublin is a Dublin City Council initiative, devised and co-ordinated by Dublin City Architects as a focus for Irish design initiatives and has created a resurgence of international interest in Irish design. Born out of Dublin's bid to be designated World Design Capital in 2014, PIVOT Dublin advocates that 'Design is about more than aesthetics, design can help us to adapt, innovate and grow. Design is a way of working; it's an approach, a way of solving puzzles, problems and challenges. Design starts from the user's perspective and products, services and systems that meet our needs are more beautiful, useful and long lasting'. [www.pivotdublin.com](http://www.pivotdublin.com)

The Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly, a partner in the SEE project is involved in an important research project which aims to influence design policy in Ireland. The project provisionally titled 'The Role of Design in Bringing Innovative Ideas to Market: An Island of Ireland Study' is focusing upon the highlighting how design can and has contributed to a more effective return of private and public investment in the innovation process. The report is driven by the Regional Assembly along with a Steering Group comprised of the Centre for Design Innovation at the Institute of Technology Sligo, Dublin City Council/PIVOT Dublin, Dublin Institute of Technology, InterTradeIreland, Invest Northern Ireland, Cardiff Metropolitan University and supported by the CIRCA Group Europe and RedandGrey Design. The report, when published in Autumn 2014 will target both SMEs and public policy-makers. [www.bmwassembly.ie](http://www.bmwassembly.ie)

**Adrian O'Donoghue,**  
Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly



## LATVIA

In 2013, the Latvian Ministry of Culture appointed a consultative group of 17 experts, called the Latvian Design Council, tasked with developing a design strategy for Latvia. The experts were from diverse backgrounds including representatives of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy, Investment and Development Agency, Chamber of Commerce, Art Academy of Latvia, Riga Technical University, Latvian Designers Association, National Design Museum and secondary level education. The long term vision of the Design Strategy of Latvia 2020 is for Latvia to utilise the innovation potential of design as a strategic asset for economic growth, social well-being and national cultural identity. There are three main action areas: 1) fostering Latvian design quality and awareness raising; 2) integrating design into entrepreneurship and 3) improving the framework conditions of the Latvian Design System. The design strategy was presented to the Ministry of Culture on 14 May 2014 and the implementation mechanisms are awaiting approval. The main implementation mechanisms will be through joint projects and leveraging EU funding including developing a programme to connect designers and entrepreneurs, collating examples of successful Latvian companies using design, integrating design education into primary and secondary schools and training civil servants to use design thinking. Furthermore, in 2015, Latvia will hold the Presidency of the EU and as part of that the Ministry of Culture has committed to hosting an exhibition to showcase Latvian design as well as a design conference in cooperation with the European Commission. The Design Council is currently developing indicators to evaluate the impact of the design strategy. Design is also included in the policy Creative Latvia 2014-2020 and the National Industrial Policy 2014-2020.

**Barbara Abele**, Art Academy of Latvia

**Daina Vitolina**, Design Information Centre (DIC)

**Dita Danosa**, Banku Augstskola School of Business and Finance

## THAILAND

Thailand's economic crisis in 1997 had raised issues regarding our economic strength; that an effective economic driving force was needed to handle the challenges we faced, and that building a new economic system based on knowledge and creativity was the key to create our opportunity and advantage in the international arena. The Thailand Creative & Design Center (TCDC) was established in 2004 under the government by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to connect and promote interaction among creativity, skill, cultural asset and business conducive to creating quality products and services that meet the global market demand. TCDC pushed forward the development of creative economy in 2008 to promote creative entrepreneurs as the key element of Thai economic driving force. Also, TCDC has built a knowledge management network through 14 mini TCDCs nationwide and opened TCDC Chiang Mai in 2013 as a center for exchanging creative ideas and readying regional entrepreneurs to keep up with ever-changing global demand. TCDC constantly develops ways to manage knowledge as well as to share and connect creativity with business practices, making it possible that imagination can change your life. TCDC is currently examining how a design policy for Thailand might help the government to realise innovation policy priorities.

**Apisit Laistrooglai**

Managing Director, Thailand Creative & Design Center

[www.tcdc.or.th](http://www.tcdc.or.th)

*Details of design  
policy and promotion  
programmes in more  
countries are available at  
[www.seeplatform.eu](http://www.seeplatform.eu).*

# Integrating Design into Regional Strategy in Slovenia

HOW THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE LJUBLJANA URBAN REGION (RRA LUR) INCLUDED DESIGN IN THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2014–2020

In 2014, 13 design actions were adopted into the Ljubljana Urban Region's Regional Development Programme 2014–2020. From an economic analysis of the creative industries in Slovenia, design was recognised as a sub-sector of the creative industries with the most potential to generate added value for the economy. Then in November 2013, the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (RRA LUR) invited SEE to facilitate a Design and Innovation Policy Workshop to co-develop design policy proposals with stakeholders including RRA LUR, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Ministry of Culture, academics, design promoters, designers and SMEs. The outcome of the workshop was a concrete set of policy actions that have been integrated into the Regional Development Programme 2014–2020 to enhance regional competitiveness.

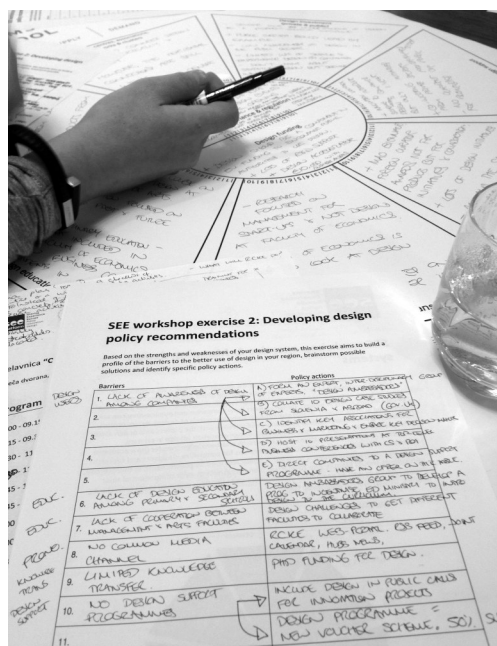
*Tina Pezdirc Nograšek, Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (RRA LUR) and the team at the Regional Creative Economy Center (RCKE)*

The Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (RRA LUR) is responsible for planning, preparing, and implementing regional development programmes in the Ljubljana Urban Region (LUR). Together with municipalities and other stakeholders in the region, RRA LUR provides the developmental, educational, financial, entrepreneurial, environmental and social infrastructure needed for the development of the Ljubljana Urban Region. With a territory spanning over 2,555 square kilometres and a population of over 500,000 inhabitants LUR is the largest region in Slovenia. In addition, LUR is the most economically developed Slovenian region, which generates over one third of Slovenia's GDP. It is a national economic 'melting pot' of enterprises, government, non-governmental institutions, research and educational institutions. With Ljubljana being the capital and the biggest city in Slovenia, it is no surprise that creative industries (CI) are mainly concentrated there. The share of creative professionals in Ljubljana Urban Region reaches almost 20% of the population and thereby exceeds the national average (12.9%) by 7%. With such a share of creative professionals LUR is comparable with the regions of Northern and Western Europe (Kozina et al., 2014).<sup>1</sup>

RRA LUR recognizes the importance of design and creative economies in achieving regional development goals and co-creating innovative, internationally competitive, user-friendly living and working environment. Therefore, the agency included the creative industries and design in the latest regional development programme for the period 2014–2020 – giving CI an important role, especially in promoting innovative entrepreneurship and it generating products and services with high added value. This approach is based on empirical research findings as well as constant and continuous talks with relevant stakeholders, which enable the agency to detect and address the challenges in the region promptly, effectively, and efficiently.

The first step on the journey to integrating design into policy was for RRA LUR to commission several empirical studies of the creative industries. The first attempts to analyse the CI from an economic perspective in Slovenia have only been made in the last couple of years and RRA LUR was actively involved in these empirical research projects. The very first analysis in the field was a 'SWOT analysis on the status of the creative industries in Ljubljana' (Murovec and Kavaš, 2010)<sup>2</sup>, carried out within the EU Creative Cities project in which RRA LUR was one of two Slovenian project partners. The findings of the SWOT analysis indicated that further efforts in promotion of the creative industries were needed (published in SEE bulletin 8 – An Economic Analysis of Design in Slovenia). Moreover some creative industries' sub-branches stood out: architecture with its strong tradition was one of the most developed, while design proved to have the biggest but also the most overlooked potential – as a creative industries' sub-branch and a tool for restructuring the wider business sector (Murovec and Kavaš, 2010).

One of the outcomes of this process in spring 2012 was for RRA LUR to establish its Regional Creative Economy Centre (RCKE) to better promote the benefits that the creative sector and creative thinking bring. The centre was established within an EU project as a local contact point for creative industries; however, RRA LUR saw its potential in becoming a continuous and long lasting entity – an institution supporting the creative economy at a regional level. RCKE remains the first establishment in Slovenia focused on the creative economy. Since design has been recognised as one of the sub-branches of the creative industries with the most potential to generate added value also for the economic sector, RRA LUR has been mainly supporting the development of design – creating conditions for achieving business successes based on interdisciplinary development processes.



Policy-makers and stakeholders at the SEE workshop, November 2013

The next step was to explore how design could concretely contribute to regional development priorities. In November 2013, the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (RRA LUR) invited SEE to facilitate a Design and Innovation Policy Workshop to co-develop design policy proposals. The workshop, facilitated by Anna Whicher at PDR (Cardiff Metropolitan University), used hands-on, design methods to engage different stakeholders including RRA LUR, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Ministry of Culture, academics, design promoters, designers and SMEs to share their experiences and co-develop policy actions. The workshop guided participants through a number of exercises developed to explore design assets in Slovenia. The first exercise involved an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the 'Design Ecosystem' of the Ljubljana Urban Region. The Design Ecosystem refers to the interplay between the factors and actors that affect the supply of and demand for design in a region or country. Policy-makers need to have an understanding of all components of the ecosystem in order to develop effective policies. From the analysis of the Design Ecosystem in Slovenia, the workshop delegates were able to co-develop a set of policy proposals to tackle the weaknesses in the ecosystem. The outcome of the workshop was a concrete set of policy actions that have been integrated into the Regional Development Programme 2014–2020 to enhance regional competitiveness:

- Promoting understanding design as a discipline and way of thinking, which may significantly contribute to the development of both technological as well as non-technological innovation.
- Knowledge transfer and restructuring of wider systems, organizations, and public institutions with the help of design concepts.
- Integrating design into the companies' development structures and raising the level of awareness regarding the importance of design in these structures.
- Increasing opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to integrate design into their production or service processes.
- Increasing opportunities for collaboration and networking between relevant hubs and institutions in the field of design at various levels.
- Establishing a professional, interdisciplinary expert group for the promotion and development of design (i.e. 'design ambassadors').
- Systematic approach to introducing new content in the field of design in the educational process (design management, strategic design, etc.).
- Promoting knowledge transfer between educational institutions.
- Highlighting the strategic role of design at all levels of formal education.
- Strengthening programmes for continuous training and education of professional designers.




Policy-makers and stakeholders at the SEE workshop,  
November 2013

- Promoting research and development in the field of design, especially research aiming to demonstrate the return on investment in design.
- Promoting measures that specifically direct funds to design.
- Promoting the implementation of design at different levels across the private and public sectors.

From the SEE workshop, the delegates identified several activities for implementation that can be incorporated horizontally across policies or vertically within a specific project. The discussion showed a necessity for comprehensive support to design through both systematic actions and a favourable environment, in which design can play an essential role as a problem-solving discipline. RRA LUR is responsible for implementing the actions of the Regional Development Programme 2014–2020.

Design is increasingly recognized as an important discipline and activity not only on a local but also on a European level: it is described as a potential key contributor to the European innovation effectiveness in some key European Commission policies. Innovation arising from design is identified as a key factor in meeting the challenges of the third industrial revolution. In the commission staff working document 'Implementing an Action Plan for Design-Driven Innovation' fields of action are focused on EU policy programs (e.g. Horizon 2020, COSME, etc.), however, it is also pointed out that: "at both national and regional level the activities have to be complemented with the measures to promote the integration of design in innovation policy."

Taking the developments on the European and local level as well as substantial research findings indicating the value of design and creative industries into account, the Regional Development Agency of Ljubljana Urban Region will strive to further integrate design into policies at all levels (not only in its regional development plans). Design will be included in regional projects as one of their crucial parts while independent design-based projects will also be developed. The aim of RRA LUR's activities will remain triggering innovation of business models and solving complex system challenges, particularly in the transformation of public institutions and strategic decision making as well as the private sector – by integrating design and design thinking in their processes. 

1 Kozina J., Bole D., Nared J., Lapuh L., Tiran J. 2014: "Spatial distribution of CI in selected municipalities of the Ljubljana Urban Region", Geographical Institute Anton Melik ZRC SAZU, RRA LUR, Ljubljana.

2 The SWOT analysis is based on quantitative (industrial and occupational analysis) and qualitative (interviews with experts) analysis, and includes private as well as public sector. The full report is available here: [http://www.central2013.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Downloads/outputlib/SWOT\\_Ljubljana\\_EN.pdf](http://www.central2013.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Downloads/outputlib/SWOT_Ljubljana_EN.pdf).



# Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation in Europe: The Journey

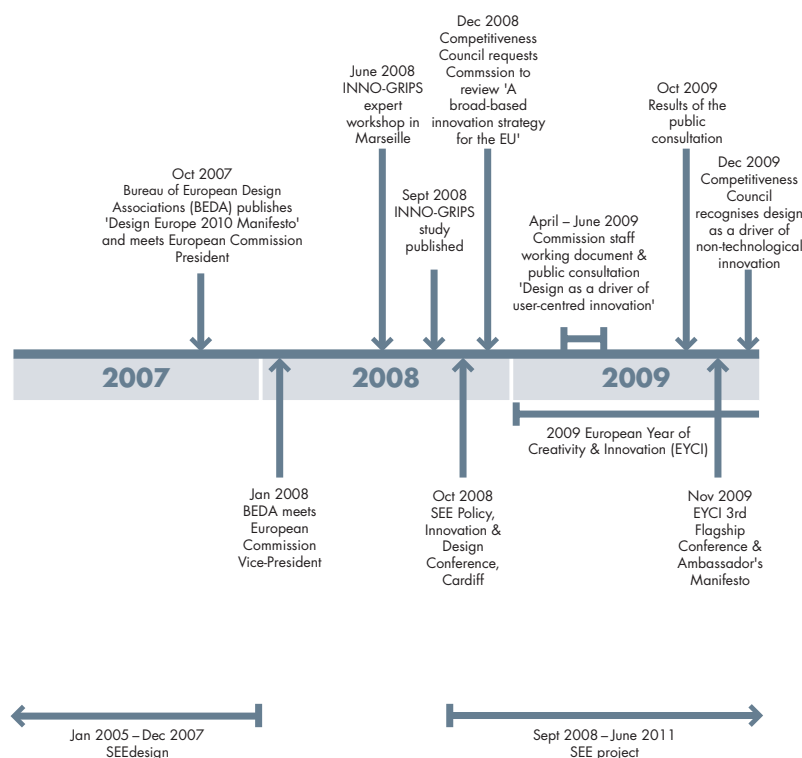


In September 2013, the European Commission launched its Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation and in January 2014, the Design Council launched the European Design Innovation Platform (EDIP) – a key implementation mechanism of the action plan. This article charts the milestones on the road to developing the Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation in Europe and shares reflections on the process from Antti Valle, Policy Officer, in the Innovation Policy Unit in the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry at the European Commission.

Over the last few years, there has been enormous change in the design policy landscape across Europe – not only at the European level but also at national, regional and local levels. In 2009, the European Commission held a public consultation on design as a driver of user-centred innovation, in 2009 the Competitiveness Council recognised design as a competitive advantage for Europe, in 2010 design was included in EU policy for the first time in 'Innovation Union' and since then the European Commission has set up the European Design Leadership Board in 2011, the European Design Innovation Initiative in 2012, the Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation in 2013 and most recently the European Design Innovation Platform in January 2014. A growing number of EU Member States have developed design policies including Estonia in 2012, Denmark in 2013 and Finland in 2013. Since 2012, through SEE research, workshops and knowledge exchange, we have engaged with government and integrated design into 15 policies

and 37 programmes. There is also a growing number of design managers within local public authorities such as Shropshire (UK), Lahti (Finland), St Etienne (France) and Katowice (Poland) among others. In short, over the coming years, design will become more important as a driver of innovation and competitiveness and we will see design being integrated across different policy domains and being used as an approach to developing policy. This article charts the developments on the journey to developing the Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation in Europe and shares reflections from Antti Valle, Policy Officer, in the Innovation Policy Unit in the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry at the European Commission.

In September 2013, the European Commission published its Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation in Europe stating that:



'A more systematic use of design as a tool for user-centred and market-driven innovation in all sectors of the economy, complementary to R&D, would improve European competitiveness.'

A design action plan for Europe is the culmination of a long chain of events and engagement by design stakeholders across Europe that is charted in the 'EU Design Policy Timeline' below. As part of the policy 'Innovation Union', the European Commission seeks to pursue a broad concept of innovation and design has been recognised as a factor for this wider approach to innovation. The Action Plan for Design-Driven Innovation aims to accelerate the take-up of design in innovation policies at European, national and regional levels and to create the capacity and competencies needed to implement these policies through three main objectives:

1. Promoting understanding of design's impact on innovation;
2. Promoting design-driven innovation in industries to strengthen Europe's competitiveness;
3. Promoting the adoption of design to drive renewal in the public sector.

The action plan proposes 14 action lines and as an example, the first action line is 'advocating design's role in innovation to policy makers across Europe' and the SEE Platform is highlighted as an initiative that is already achieving this objective. Crucially, the European Commission stresses that although the action plan 'focuses on measures supported by EU policies, matching actions promoting adoption of design in innovation policy are required at national and

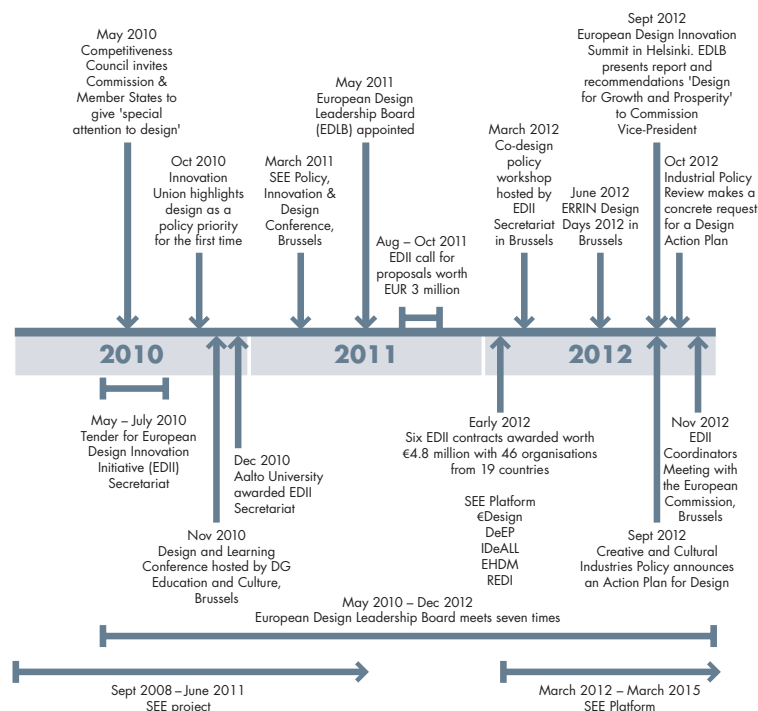
regional levels'. With a design action plan at EU level, design stakeholders across Europe can encourage their national, regional and local governments to adopt design-led innovation policies and programmes. Nevertheless, there is still further to go on the journey to holistically integrating design into policy across Europe and the Commission stresses that the action plan is one 'step in the longer term effort to highlight the role of design in innovation policy'. Here, Antti Valle, the progenitor of the action plan, presents his reflections on design and innovation policy in Europe.

**Anna Whicher (AW):** So, the easy question first, what is design?

**Antti Valle (AV):** That is not an easy question! The Commission are reluctant to provide a new definition of design because there are already many definitions. The Action Plan adopts the definition proposed by the European Design Leadership Board as an activity of people-centred innovation by which desirable and usable products and services are defined and delivered. We have intentionally adopted the idea of a broad-based design definition – design as a strategic approach to innovation that provides solutions and new value for users.

**AW:** Why is design important for Europe?

**AV:** As encapsulated in the definition, design is about creating new value for end-users. This is the distinctive thing about design compared with other drivers of innovation – it is always focused on the end-users. Even though it can be indirect, end-users should gain new value from the design activity. There is real need in Europe for this kind of approach to developing solutions.





### AW: What is design's role in the European Innovation System?

AV: There is a strong need for industrial renewal in Europe. It's imperative to find new operating models in European industries to gain competitiveness and to sustain competitiveness and this is exactly design's role as one key driver of innovation. Of course, it is more than just money-making and competitiveness, it's a means to address societal challenges and public sector innovation as well. So design's role is instrumental in the innovation system; it's one of the key drivers to tap into new sources of growth.

### AW: Can you provide some background context to the Design-driven Innovation Action Plan?

AV: The potential of design was recognised at the EU level five years ago in the 2009 Commission staff working document and in 2010, it was included as a commitment in the 'Innovation Union' initiative, one of the pillars in the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs. This political statement is really significant because it's been endorsed by the EU Council, meaning by the Governments of all EU Member States. So design has officially been included on the EU agenda since 2010. Ever since then, there have been actions related to design. In 2011, the European Design Leadership Board was appointed with 15 experts and invited to provide the Commission with policy recommendations. The Board presented its recommendations to the European Commission Vice-President in 2012. Also in 2012, the Commission launched six projects under the European Design Innovation Initiative, including SEE, that are currently underway. So, the background context has been a re-thinking of innovation policy, trying to find new drivers

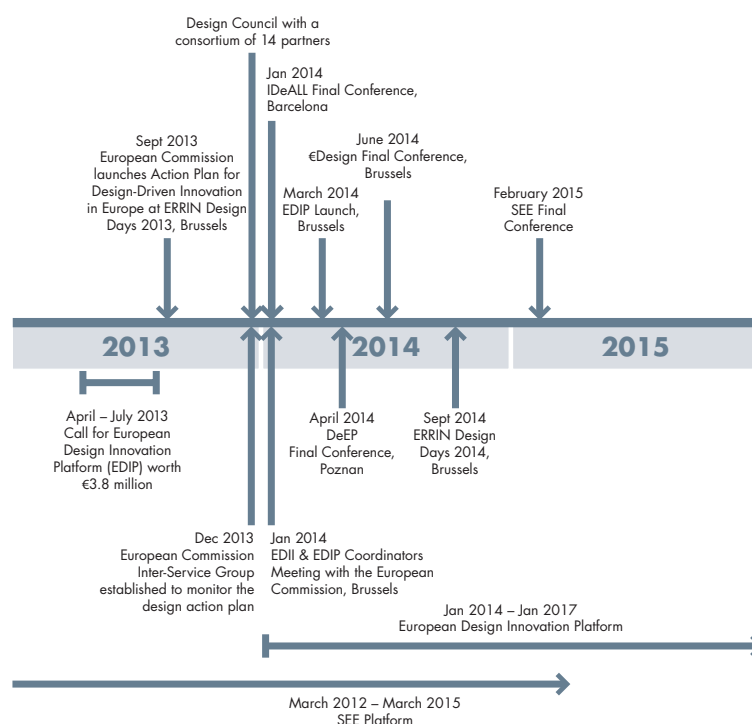
that have not been tested and validated enough thus far and design is among these.

### AW: Could you provide some insight into how the action plan was developed?

AV: The idea of the action plan was announced in the 2012 industrial policy communication update, and also in the communication related to creative sectors. While drafting the action plan, we've been leaning on the recommendations from the Leadership Board and we started by inviting the stakeholders to comment on the Board's recommendations. We did this through a workshop using design methods to explore which recommendations were the most valued.

### AW: Were there any surprises, anything that you thought would be popular that wasn't?

AV: Let's say the most contested recommendation was the EU design label, there were many stakeholders who didn't find this idea that important. After this round of consultations with stakeholders, we started to draft the documents in DG Enterprise and Industry and with the idea that it would be a Commission staff working document – so not politically endorsed. This means that in this action plan we are not making new political initiatives but it reflects the actions and initiatives already endorsed by the Commission College. So it is important, to understand that it is a stock-taking of the mechanisms that we have available to implement the Leadership Board's recommendations and the other priorities of this agenda. So of the 21 recommendations from the Leadership Board, we ended up with 14 action lines and 3 priorities.



AW: Could you give an example of some of the action lines?

AV: Relating to actions targeted at industry, we think that there is a bottleneck in enabling companies, especially SMEs, to use design and that is to do with the intermediary structures in place. In many EU countries, the innovation promotion organisation or business development organisations who have the capabilities to help SMEs do not encourage design as an approach to innovation. We have been able to include a call for this objective in the Horizon2020 in 2015.

AW: What are the main implementation mechanisms of the action plan?

AV: There are a number of different implementation mechanisms. In early January, we launched the European Design Innovation Platform (EDIP) which will deliver a programme of engagement over three years. The EDIP is led by the Design Council with a consortium of 14 partners aiming to raise awareness of and build capacity for design-driven innovation for industry, the public sector and policy-makers ([www.designplatform.eu](http://www.designplatform.eu)). This is our main instrument to keep the action plan alive and rolling. We also have other direct actions, the six European Design Innovation Initiative projects co-financed by the Commission (SEE, €Design, IDeALL, DeEP, EHDM and RED). These are well under way and all relate to design-driven innovation policies. The greater objective is to promote the recognition of design for innovation within the various EU support schemes and programmes. This is a longer journey. There is great interest for this but we need to ensure that design is included in the various EU calls and initiatives. For this purpose, we have established a Commission Inter-Service Group with colleagues from key DGs and this way we can maintain a close eye on developments in different DGs. The Commission Inter-Service Group for Design-driven Innovation will meet three or four times a year. The first meeting was really open and constructive; all members were actively trying to find links between the policy agendas of their own DG and ours.

AW: For you, what would be a successful result of the action plan in three years?

AV: The ultimate objective of the action plan is for other Member States and regions to adopt design-driven innovation in national and regional innovation strategies and that they are really being implemented as well as the take-up of design within industry as a whole. That is the true indicator for measuring success. Of course, it is also very important that design-driven innovation is recognised in EU support schemes but we shouldn't be satisfied with only having this included in the EU level instruments. We really wish to advocate these ideas to national and regional governments as well. The best recognition is when companies start actions without seeking public funding and we are seeing some companies establishing their own collaboration and investing in design-driven innovation.

AW: How does the action plan forms part of the Commission's broader strategy?

AV: The action plan is directly linked with Commission's industrial policies, creative industries strategy as well as with the Commission's innovation policy. The Commission is promoting smart growth and it's been stated, for example, in the 2012 Industrial Policy Communication that the wider use of design as well as other non-technological innovation is one of the key drivers for developing high value products, increasing productivity and improving resource efficiency. We want to reinforce recognition of design in future policy development.

AW: Brilliant, thank you, is there anything else you wanted to add?

AV: We are really enthusiastic about how much appetite there is amongst stakeholders in the Member States for what we are doing and we are looking to reach out to new audiences and really serve beneficiaries across Europe.

AW: Excellent, thank you so much.

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