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Missions and tasks of the network in Hungary:

The whole City-Region-Network in Hungary seems to be rather abstract. Of course it is just funded in 2009 without any resources, only awoken by the creative motivation of some actors who are influenced by other European initiatives in that respect.

This is reflected by the mission-chapter. It comprehens all criteria which are anyway anyhow to be respected in a faculty of a university (e.g. *quality Development of Education, Training and of Cultural Institutions, Civic Organisations*).

Perhaps there is more emphasis given to coordination, creating a systemic partnership etc.

Planned concrete tasks and duties:

The planned activities bring to the fore that only general activities which maybe might happen anyway are summed up here, e.g. organising consultation, lectures, fora also to be aware and discuss learning cities and regions which can be found internationally. Only organising learning festivals mark a „renaissance“ of adult learners weeks which had their big hub 10/20 years ago.

Role and functioning of network:

This chapter manifests the real mission of the network:

„The main role of the Pécs Learning City-Region Forum is helping the realisation of development in local and regional (South-Transdanubian Region) contexts by promoting learning and sharing knowledge, experience through co-operation amongst stakeholders, actors in all fields and places where significant organised learning is taking place!“

This means that this network is perceived as planning initiative to enhance the regional focus of the South-Transdanubian government.

The contracts given by the Ministry for Education are therefore directly linked to practical outputs of the Bologna-process for Higher Education. *„It means that there is a concrete pressure from the side of the Ministry of Education and Culture that HEIs have interest in measuring of quality and outcomes of their roles in regional development and innovation, by considering actual OECD-measures and engagement in scrutinizing the same field.“*

But the chapter on **concrete projects and further collaboration** brings to the fore that the main issues are focussed on agriculture in any aspect. This reminds me very strongly on LEADER – and therefore it is not remarkable that we find later in the document the hint to the European structural programme of LEADER:

„We also consider the LEADER programme in the EU as a more sophisticated initiative for local development, which has a lot to learn from in local and regional aspect. This is an example that is worth researching as an alternative of learning city-region format in our region too! Naturally the European Capitals of Culture (2010: Pécs) programme involves a lot of networking in training programs and promoting social learning as well.“

And this marks the main misunderstanding of Learning Regions and Cities in my mind. If we reduce this idea on universities as interesting building bodies then we underestimate other group-interests. Learning Regions work in an ideal way if the partnership consists of all relevant representatives of the given organisations and institutions in a given region. But here in the Hungarian example the only focus is given on two universities which of course are working alongside the criteria of a university. Practical impacts on the labour-market are completely missing.

And here we come to the crux of learning regions and cities in general. If there is no direct interest of the policy learning regions can only be inspired by a facilitator like the university but not really animated and carried through.

It is inevitable to add to the horizontal cooperation the vertical collaboration of all relevant partners in a given region. They have to find a common agreement for all kinds of measures enriched by the different professional aspects and foci on target-groups' interests.

Most important is additionally that not only general education can be tackled. It has just as well embedded all kinds of vocational learning and educational aspects. Sharing best practice, flexibility reshaping and quality assurance have then to follow these aspects.

But here we cannot proceed without real resources which is also indicated in the document:

„Main challenge for Learning Regions are time and money and certain political issues as election is coming in the country and the political affiliations do have an impact on partnership building. We need time and more financial support to stabilise the Forum, therefore, the Consortium of the Forum must apply for funds supporting networking and partnership building to strengthen either employability or citizenship-development in local or regional dimensions!“

So we do hope that the mediating role of the City-Region-Network in Pécs will be successful to convince the government or ministerial structures to give some financial support to it – e.g. as a laboratory-region to prove the possibilities and quality which can be gained out of this network. But the other pre-condition will be that the network itself gets into direct contact to all other remarkable institutions, organisations (inclusively those of vocational learning and labour-market) which are relevant for the region there and not only to focus on LEADER-groups.