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Living on the Edge – How to Attain and Keep People, Competence and Capital in a Region Next to a Metropolis?

On January 15th, 2020, [Next2Met](#) partners and stakeholders came together for their first Policy Learning Event in Lahti, Finland. This open event aimed at fostering interregional exchange in order to increase the attractiveness of the regions through soft digitalisation measures. Bringing together more than 40 participants, the event led to active discussions on potential paths for cooperation.

This event enabled our partners to present realistic analyses of the main assets and challenges of their region. As Next2Met focuses increasing regional attractiveness through digitalisation measures, partners also shared a set of good practices that are already put in place in their respective regions. From technology clusters to sustainable mobility initiatives, all these examples aim at using technology as a tool to reduce structural gaps between the metropolitan and peripheral areas.

The synergy between technology and the sense of belonging to a region was at the heart of this first Policy Learning Event. **Ms Laura Leppänen, Regional Mayor of Päijät Häme and host of the event**, opened the day emphasising the importance of this connection: *“We believe that development with soft values in our surroundings is the future. None of the measures matter if people don't enjoy living in their region.”*

This first Policy Learning Event brought together various stakeholders and partners who warmly welcomed this opportunity to exchange and share experiences through informal talks and panel discussions. More than a chance to discover other regions, this day encouraged the participants to get inspiration from other regions' initiatives presenting similar challenges and to possibly transfer them to their territories.

In May 2020, the Regional Government of Lower Austria will host the project's second Policy Learning Event, which will offer another chance for Next2Met partners and stakeholders to meet and leverage each other's strengths through soft digitalisation measures.

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Next2Met is an innovative European cooperation project co-founded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Europe Programme. For further information about Next2Met, visit the project's online media

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