



OSS COVID MEETING ON LINE

Special edition – looking back on a year of COVID

WELCOME to our on line meeting



CRAFTS CODE

Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



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Partnership



1. Municipality of Florence, Italy
2. Design & Crafts Council Ireland (DCCI)
3. Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, Finland
4. Artesis Plantijn University College Antwerp, Belgium
5. EOI Foundation, Spain
6. Budapest Foundation for Enterprise Promotion, Hungary
7. RAM Central Stara Planina, Bulgaria
8. Ministry of Economy, European Funds for Competitiveness Directorate General, Bulgaria
9. Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, Finland

About



CRAFTS CODE aims to enhance the competitiveness of craft SMEs by developing a framework to stimulate policy learning and build capacity to improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes.



€1,558,177.00

from 1 Aug 2019
to 31 Jul 2023

TOPIC
SME competitiveness

Topics addressed

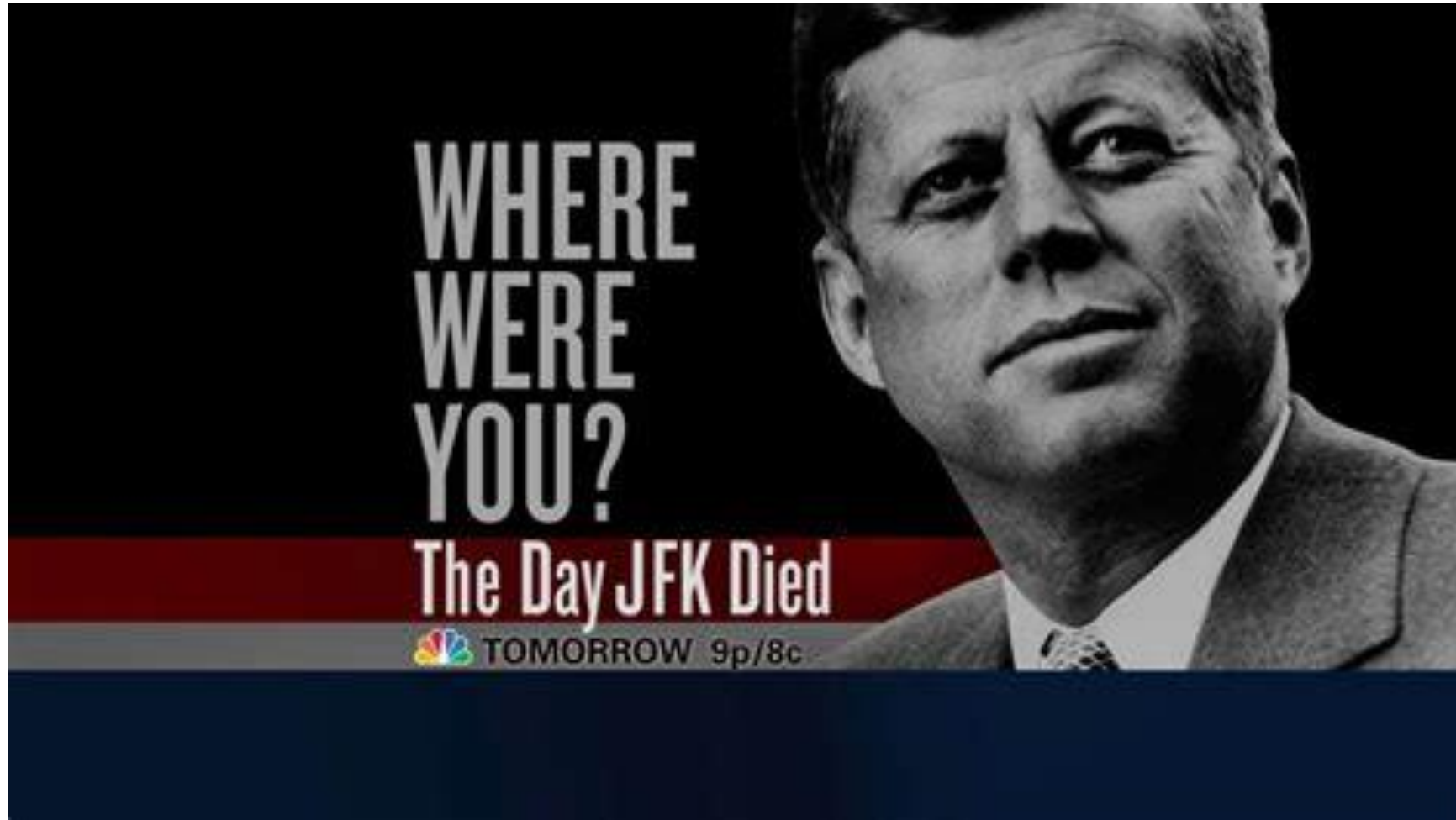


To achieve results, CRAFTS CODE will focus on four main topics aimed at the crafts sector:

- How to improve innovation in business models and process
- Access to new markets
- Innovative approaches and tools to modernise the craft sector
- Access to Finance



Where were you?



Looking back upon 1 year of COVID

Overview of the status in the different partner regions

This crisis is different from all others before

- health segment
- consequences in every layer of society
- the whole world is affected
- economic consequences are different as economies differ

Most countries come with financial packages in order to PRESERVE economy

- save existing SMEs
- no money for start ups

Looking back upon 1 year of COVID

Different types of economy → different reactions

- digitalization! (was an extra, is now necessity)
- more start ups! (Bulgaria, UK)
- people become more versatile (Norway)
- not everybody asks for the aid they are entitled to (Spain)
- adapt or die!! (all partners)

Looking closer at BULGARIA

- regional level covid financial measures
 - on line support services on various things (fin, advice on new markets, etc)
- national level covid financial measures (EU + national money) for
 - micro and small enterprises
 - medium enterprises
 - targeted funding for specific industry branches
- national level organizations and institutions support
 - > example: Bulgarian SME promotion agency → start-ups
 - digitalization: used to be recommended, now it is necessary:
 - the BSMEPA will support 130 SMEs that move their businesses on line

Looking closer at BULGARIA

The Sofia Tech Park:

- incubator

- informer

- GROWORKING: shared office space for start ups, innovators

- 6 start ups since 2020

Interview BULGARIA

Opening tourism 1 May → possible?
national or international?
changes?
local initiatives?

Looking closer at SPAIN

Analysis by Spanish Entrepreneurship Observatory

‘paralyzed’ business activity

‘uncertainty’

→ maintaining as much as possible! surviving the lockdowns

Reality : many SME’s went down, due to cancelled orders

bigger companies seem less affected

50% did not get aid?

→ EU money -> county -> companies (existing + starting)

Looking closer at SPAIN

REACTIVATION

Business demography:	especially youngest and smallest have been affected
Employment:	reduction of salary and of employment esp SMEs
Agility:	adapt to the new situation
Synergies:	innovative capacity to collaborate
Opportunities:	expectations need to change drastically, new business models are needed
Financing:	range of possibilities (credit lines, crowdfunding...)

Interview SPAIN

- Looking at the future:
 - digitalization?
 - entrepreneurship?
 - new markets?

Looking closer at NORWAY

Maritime sector (typical More og Romsdal)

Grants are available for companies that want to facilitate on line skills development

- regional + national
- mainly money for laid off staff
- not: 'money for digitalization'
- multi-disciplinarity
- esp smaller companies do so (large ones are not so flexible)
- change of how people are skilled
- prepare staff for when the company will take off again

Interview with NORWAY

Norway seems to be already beyond digitalization?

Similar initiatives in all of Norway?

Looking closer at POLAND

Regional money (coming from EU) to support businesses

Grants for SMEs and start ups

- supporting maintenance of the economic activity
- beneficiaries were micro and small entrepreneurs from the region
- the help stopped in nov 2020 but the pandemic is still going on

- really meant a lot to the region where so many suffered problems

Interview POLAND

How necessary is further funding?

What is the situation today, 4 months after the funding period is closed?

Looking closer at UK

Collaborative/ All Round (Business Centered) Approach

People started re-thinking their lives: amazingly many wanted to start up
WSX Enterprises provided free support to businesses (stopped after 6-9
months)

Grant scheme (regional money)

initially there was panic, not any more now: everybody knows what the
schemes are

local councils in Hampshire granted money to local businesses
no money however for companies that want to refresh!

Looking closer at UK

Numerous initiatives by WSX

- temporary free business support
- temporary free office space
- start up workshops on line continue

Numerous smaller, local initiatives

Interview UK

Can you inspire us with some of the smaller initiatives that have popped up to fight the COVID consequences?

Looking closer at SLOVENIA

Extensive fiscal & other financial packages

- assistance to the population
- assistance to the economy
 - to support payment of contributions, taxes, health insurance, ...

- Measures to
- preserve jobs, improve social situation
 - support the field of labor (public finances)
 - overcome the period to find work
 - extend loans, subsidize part time working

No explicit mentioning of grants esp for start ups

Interview SLOVENIA

How do you look at the future?

Are there local, small initiatives going on?

Signs that the economy is recovering?

Looking closer at Belgium

Extensive financial packages

- to preserve economy (existing comp not start ups)
- to protect staff during lockdown (70%)

Belgian start ups

- foreign money (pitch internationally) COVID = turbo effect
- asked for financial support to be able to survive
- change business model according to new society

Belgium in light lockdown (2nd) since 28 Oct 2020

- bars & restaurants closed – less and less help from State

Expected: huge crisis post-COVID with new opportunities

Any Questions?



Let's have a 10 min
coffee break
FAR AWAY
from the screen!

