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Policy Recommendations of the CeRamICa project





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1 Introduction

Traditional ceramics and small crafts manufacturers have had a high reputation in the world market for a long time, and are still famous for the high quality and added value of their production. However, their share in the economy has shown a decline during the last decades. Although these are crucial issues for a number of regions in Europe, so far no European level integrated approach has been elaborated. In this respect, the CeRamICa initiative can be considered as one of the first attempts to face the challenges by joint effort of some leading European regions, cities, organizations committed to developing their ceramics and small crafts sectors.

In the past three years project partners have implemented the CeRamICa project following one of its key objectives: to present a set of policy proposals and recommendations that can serve as a basis for development projects to be funded from mainstream European programmes. This has been done on the basis of jointly developed situation and market analyses, local and regional policy recommendations and action plans, in order to formulate policy recommendations implacable on a European level and/or in any region facing a similar situation and to elaborate concrete instruments to support and boost the ceramics and small crafts sectors in the partners' regions, offering also operative models to all Europe.

The present set of recommendations has been drawn with the aim of preserving and revitalising this significant European cultural heritage; and thus, making this sector a competitive driving force of the local economies.

The process has involved the relevant local, regional, and European stakeholders for exchange of knowledge and experiences, inputs and dissemination of project outputs both on a local/regional and European level. It was based upon thorough analyses of the current situation and an intensified exchange of experiences among project partners and related stakeholders, trying to find responses to the most urging questions of our days the ceramics and small crafts sector is facing: whether the sector, being more labour intensive than average is able to survive in a globalised world with changed market needs and extensive competition? Whether there are sufficient market opportunities the sector can use and benefit from? What are the main criteria for the enhancement of these sectors? What are the views of the representatives of the sectors regarding their situation and what efforts do they wish to make in order to save their market position? What already existing good practices can be identified that already proved to be efficient tools for the improvement of competitiveness and thus could be adapted elsewhere as well?

Apparently, the sector is one that will not revive by itself, but clearly needs interventions and policy support for its sustainability. There is a sense of urgency to modernise this sector while maintaining the traditions and processes of the older generations. Modernising this sector should be carried out in a stepped approach building a bridge between old heritage and a modernised sector that fits within overall urban and regional structures, tourism trends and the available resources and infrastructure. The CeRamICa project thus intended to provide an integrated strategy and policy recommendations for the rejoining of the sectors into the market ensuring sustainable development.

The CeRamICa Partners now will carry out their own tailored local/regional action plans tackling the priorities set by the project. The present recommendations will guide them, and all other cities, regions of Europe in a similar situation in their local development activities, especially in aiming at an overall transition to a modern, innovative ceramics and handicraft sector.

1.1 Methodology

The final recommendations have been formulated largely based on the results and lessons learnt from the following main project activities:

- SWOT and market analyses prepared by all Partners and their synthesis on project level;
- Collection of best practices of each Partner and the CeRamICa Best Practice Catalogue;
- Experiences of the intensified exchange of experience visits
- Policy Recommendations and Action Plans of each partner

Besides, similar projects' / initiatives' (e.g. the Creative Clusters URBACTII project) findings and results have also been taken as a basis.

The following policy and developmental recommendations have been grouped according to their themes into five main categories:

1. Economic and Legal Support,
2. Research, Technology and Innovation,
3. Knowledge and Education,
4. Tourism and Cultural Heritage, and
5. PR and Marketing

As economic development and the need for an overhauling modernisation of the sector is key to the thriving of this sector, recommendations have a major focus here. All the following recommendations linked to technological development, innovation, tourism, and PR-marketing and lobbying are largely corresponding to this main aim.

The CeRamICa partners have each developed local or regional action plans to be implemented in tandem with these recommendations. However, action also needs to be taken on higher (national, European) levels especially in issues the regulation of which goes beyond local responsibilities. This is to ensure consistency and added value of joint action. Thus within the above themes, recommendations have been grouped into local level actions and regional/national/European actions.

2 Policy and Developmental Recommendations

2.1 Economic and Legal Support

2.1.1 Regional / National / European Level Recommendations

2.1.1.1 Measures related to intellectual property rights

Food products with regional origins enjoy protection through an EU law designed to protect the names of regional food, prevent inferior copies, and boost trade (i.e. these pieces of food are listed in the Protected Designation of Origin' list. Handicraft and ceramics can for instance be protected through industrial design right (a form of intellectual property right), where an industrial design has to be understood as a two- or three-dimensional pattern used to produce a product, industrial commodity or handicraft.

- **More efficient protection of intellectual property rights in order to prevent the copying of protected (juried) products or manufacturing processes**
The European handicraft and ceramics sector is marked by long traditions and cultural heritage. Many of the products and processes can be linked to our ancestors and need protection. Other products are partly the result of innovation and excellence and equally need legal protection in form of Intellectual Property Rights.
- **Efforts to extend the intellectual property protection for further products (e.g. through campaigns, workshops)**
Such measures would provide a better insight into local know-how, resources and innovative projects that can provide basis for IP protection measures.

2.1.1.2 Enhancing economic cooperation at regional, national and European level

The economic cooperation between CeRamICa partners and other relevant stakeholders on regional level could encompass marketing, innovation, lobbying to realise the largest possible impact in the EU region. The measures could include:

- **Exploration of market niches and shift in production structure**
New market niches should be explored with a view to adapt to market needs by creating new handicraft concepts, trademarks, brands, "certified or accredited products".
- **Pooling of funds and cooperation in tender opportunities**
Regional and local producers, handicraft associations and also tourism organisations should more extensively cooperate to access information and partners within the frame of European level cooperation with the financial support of the Structural Funds.
- **Organisation of fairs and exhibitions**
Fairs and exhibitions at regional, national and international levels have great potential to create an opportunity to build professional and economic relations. Therefore local/regional or even national authorities could support the sector by organizing such events, thus creating a platform for such relation buildings.

➤ **Setting up regional business incubators for artisans**

A business incubator could provide artisans with an opportunity to join the market with smaller financial investments and benefiting from trainings on marketing and management activities. This could be undertaken in line with the “educational factory” model: (i) establishment of shops, studios and galleries, (ii) building cooperation with schools and learning centres, (iii) organisation of workshops and exhibitions.

2.1.1.3 Easing legal and financial burdens for entrepreneurs

➤ **Decrease in certain taxes, e.g. building and industrial taxes**

One measure anticipated could be reduced building and industrial taxes for small-scale ceramics and handicraft production as well as for innovation and incubation centers where the trade is being taught.

Another possible step to be taken is tax reduction for intellectual property protected products which will create financial incentives for further innovation and submission of applications for intellectual property protection.

➤ **Legal and financial support schemes for the development of SMEs, micro- and family enterprises and businesses**

This support could include start-up contributions from central or regional governments, as well as other pecuniary or non-pecuniary benefits, provided that they do not constitute illegal state aid. These measures can include favourable bank loans, guarantees etc.

➤ **Reviewing overly stringent regulations**

Actions could involve reviewing and amending regulations regarding the specifics of the establishment of location, environmental and occupational health and safety regulations for the reason of making it easier to establish and operate on the market. On the other hand, in the light of the need for an overall modernisation of the sector, it would be even more important to think ahead and take a “systems thinking”, which rather include an integrated system for ensuring compliance with environmental and health and safety regulations. It is equally important, however, that the more lax regulations do not conflict with binding EU legislation or EU state aid rules.

2.1.1.4 Creating a level playing field with non-EU competitors

The sector is facing a growing competition from non-EU producers, partly because these producers normally benefit from cheaper production, distribution and marketing and thus can sell their products at a below market price in the EU. CeRamICa Partners are calling for measures that will create a level playing field more actively promoting EU originated ceramics and handicraft products. Such measures could include promotional schemes regarding the support for ceramic and handicraft sector and products from EU countries. For instance, local and regional actors could come together to devise promotional schemes to highlight the attractiveness of European ceramic and handicraft products.

2.1.2 Local Level Recommendations

2.1.2.1 Enhancing economic cooperation at local level

Measures to enhance economic cooperation at local level, among the local stakeholders could include:

➤ **Joint commercial strategies**

New forms of collaboration should be explored such as public private partnerships, networks and clusters especially with regard to commercial strategies and innovative initiatives. Joint commercial strategies could also include producers indirectly connected to the sector (e.g. alternative use of ceramics in packaging for honey, sweets, alcoholic drinks, marmalade, etc.).

➤ **Setting up associations and cooperation platforms of craftsmen**

Local authorities can have an important role to play in supporting the establishment of associations of local craftsmen, providing a forum and leadership for the local and regional craftsmen. The associations and forums could facilitate for stakeholders to define common marketing strategies addressing obstacles and opportunities regarding access to and development in the markets.

One example is the Habitat Cluster in Portugal: an initiative launched by the central government. These cooperation platforms function best where linked to an overall economic or marketing strategy, and where the cooperation activities are implemented pursuant to a concise operational programme.

➤ **Triple Helix Cooperation**

A triple-helix cooperation between academia, local government and the ceramics and handicraft sector could provide for many innovative and integrated solutions, especially in the quest for achieving an overall modernisation of the sector. This will ensure a better linkage between market needs, policy agendas and business opportunities.

➤ **Strengthen existing and creating new clusters**

Existing clusters and cooperation networks should be strengthened and if new ones need to be created, those should specifically focus on cooperation for innovation, joint marketing strategies etc. These clusters can be lead and driven by engaging a development expert. Both horizontal and vertical cooperation is necessary among local (and regional) actors and stakeholders. The local legislative and financial framework should be adapted to ensure that they support the forming of clusters and strategic projects in the sector. Examples of successful clusters include the Portuguese "Sustainable Habitat Cluster".

2.1.2.2 Job creation

Streamline action linked to EU2020 Strategy and the Flagships relating to job creation, especially in SMEs and micro-companies. The recent financial crisis is evidence of the importance of continuing to support the development of SMEs and micro companies which are built around family and cultural values rather than purely economic strands.

Some further measures include creating job opportunities for young people such as young designers in factories and as instructors in various educational facilities.

2.1.2.3 Easing legal and financial burdens for entrepreneurs

- **Reduced rental fees for local events**
Especially new entrants should have the benefit of applying for reduced rental fees (of stands, stalls, selling space etc.) for local events, e.g. handicraft fairs, workshops, artisan festivals.
- **Legal and financial support schemes for the development of SMEs, micro- and family enterprises and businesses**
This support could include start-up contributions from local governments, as well as other pecuniary or non-pecuniary benefits, provided that they do not constitute illegal state aid. These measures can include favourable bank loans, guarantees etc.
- **Introduce public procurement rules and mechanism for handicraft**
Public bodies such as central governments, as well as public entities could introduce limited positive discrimination of ceramics and handicraft enterprises, provided it is in line with EU competition rules on state aid, meaning that such discriminatory rules do not favour one Member States' products over another one's.

2.2 Research, Technology & Innovation

2.2.1 Regional/National/European Level Recommendation

2.2.1.1 Developing technologies:

- **Innovation**
More innovation is necessary in the value chain, including using and combining available technology in processes and products. This innovation aspect can be further emphasised through mobility programs, residency programs and innovation incubation centres. Innovation can also extend to exploring the place for ceramics and handicraft industry in urban integration and development, such as public spaces. FP7, INTERREG and URBACTII funding programmes could provide some financial contribution to these activities.
- **Development of cleaner technologies, including use of alternative energy sources**
Innovative, cleaner technologies in producing ceramics and handicrafts will further provide a competitive edge to the sector in the EU. Especially the ceramics sector could enjoy benefits from using alternative energy sources. Local and regional artists and craftsmen should preferably pool resources and apply for common EU funds to elaborate on the environmental and energy related dimensions. The sector and especially local and regional ceramic and handicraft associations and actors should apply for available research and development resources (e.g. FP7 programme and Intelligent Energy Europe programme) as well as available Objective 1 related structural funds for cleaner technologies and more efficient production processes.
- **Optimisation of products in terms of health and safety**
It will give the sector a market advantage where they can offer safe products, not having toxic material or substances. This can also help to fend off competition from non-EU countries where the health and safety norms are normally lower than the EU ones.
- **Promotion of the use of ICT technologies**
Promotion of ICT technologies in the design and production processes does not only support high technological solutions but also can result in more economically advantageous processes. The first step is to engage ICT developers and providers in collaboration networks and to jointly identify opportunities.

2.2.1.2 Supporting research to identify the best available technologies

Available research and development funds for innovative processes, products and services both in the form of EU funds (e.g. FP7 and IEE) as well as through Objective 1 related structural funds and also in the form of regional cooperation to strengthen networks and exchange good practices that is supported through regional and transnational cooperation programmes such as INTERREG should be made use of.

2.2.2 Local Level Recommendations

2.2.2.1 Sustainable production and processes

➤ **Exploiting existing environmental management systems and eco-labelling schemes**

For instance, handicraft made from recycled materials, or with low-energy consuming processes have major environmental characteristics that are attractive for a segment of the consumers. Such environmental advantages should be marketed smartly and can also constitute a positive element in public procurement procedures.

➤ **Reduction of total energy use in production processes, management systems, transportation and services**

The sector should take joint action, especially local and regional actors, to assess energy savings in production process, management systems, transportation and services. A first assessment, survey will enable the identification of gaps and opportunities. A second step is to identify cooperating partners and specific actions. It is recommended to take a strategic approach focusing firstly on processes or systems which are the most energy intensive and where the most attractive sustainable energy solutions exist. Local municipalities should take the lead in facilitating and/or organizing such joint action.

2.3 Knowledge & Education

The cooperation between generations, institutions and economic sectors should be extended in the field of knowledge and education and vocational training. This is also a field where relatively low-cost interventions, such as creating a training curriculum aimed to develop craftsmen's business and marketing skills, or organising more vocational training and workshops can have a relatively large and direct impact, especially in terms of investment in human skills.

2.3.1 Regional /National / European Level Recommendations

2.3.1.1 Enlarging cooperation and sharing of knowledge between generations, institutions and sectors

The sector can develop economic and technological intelligence strategies to anticipate changes in technologies, markets and products, especially shifts in consumer preferences.

- **Establishment of a professional association for the exchange of ideas and experiences linked to education and training**
A professional association could be established at regional or at larger EU level regarding the exchange of ideas and experiences linked to education and training in the ceramics and handicraft sector. Such an association or centre of excellence could also partially be financed through one of the EU funding programmes such as INTERREG or FP7.
- **Dissemination of good practices of the region and benchmarking among the artisans**
Good practices should be exchanged more frequently among artisans from different regions and countries around Europe. This can take place through workshops and virtual forums. Workshops could be followed up with establishing indicators and parameters for benchmarking and the implementation of good practices. Such parameters should preferably be drafted in close cooperation with local authorities. Benchmarking is important in terms of learning and development and for identifying innovative techniques and practices.
- **Cooperation between vocational schools and elementary schools specialised in general and special arts**
Extend and deepen the existing cooperation between vocational schools and elementary schools specialised in arts, especially streams relating to ceramics and handicraft. If need be, establish new cooperation networks to specialise specifically on ceramics and handicraft. This cooperation should include the development of new educational profile in close cooperation with ceramic and handicraft artists.

2.3.1.2 Enhancing the level and quality of education and training

- **Investment in new education and training programmes**
Devise training programmes for both skilled and unskilled artisans. The employment institutions could also provide training programmes in ceramics and handicraft for unemployed who would like to re-qualify themselves. These education and training programmes could include research, technology and

development elements to increase the interest from local and foreign artists and the access to EU funds.

➤ **Launching of Bachelor and Master programmes connected to ceramics and exploitation of programme accreditation**

This measure can include setting up of master-student contact network and to establish a common scholarship tender. Local and regional educational institutions with sufficient capacity and smart location could also launch international postgraduate programmes, taught by guest lecturers from different European countries.

2.3.1.3 Organising trainings, workshops and seminars

➤ **Design applied to the crafts**

In addition to the activities envisaged in the educational sector, the handicraft and ceramic associations can in association with universities, schools, chambers of commerce, private companies etc. organise trainings, workshops and seminars mainly to enhance the knowledge and skills, especially focusing on design using innovative, ICT-based and environmentally friendly techniques.

➤ **Business management and marketing**

The success of the small-scale ceramics and handicraft is to a large extent dependent on effective business management and marketing. Specific training and workshops can be organised for ceramists and craftsmen with private companies and business management training institutes on a regional or national level that can provide advice and tools that can be easily applied by the participants.

2.3.2 Local Level Recommendations

2.3.2.1 Enlarging cooperation and sharing of knowledge between generations, institutions and sectors

➤ **Dissemination of good practices of the region and benchmarking among the artisans**

Good practices should be exchanged more frequently among local artisans. This can take place through workshops and virtual forums. Workshops could be followed up with establishing indicators and parameters for benchmarking and the implementation of good practices. Such parameters should preferably be drafted in close cooperation with local authorities. Benchmarking is important in terms of learning and development and for identifying innovative techniques and practices.

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- **Trainings for specialisation of workers**
Educational centres and employment institutions could offer training for specialisation in certain techniques, processes, also offering modules in innovative techniques. Extended access to locations for practice and vocational training is recommended.
- **Attracting designers or engineers to the sector and to secondary and postgraduate education**
Efforts should be undertaken to attract designers and engineers to the sector. In this context, their possibilities for participation in educational elements must be increased through engaging them in vocational programmes etc. This measure could include more financial incentives to invest in the ceramic and handicraft sector. The financial rewards must be comparable to engineers and designers in other sectors, e.g. building, automotive, furniture etc.
- **Launching of Bachelor and Master programmes connected to ceramics and exploitation of programme accreditation**
This measure can include setting up of master-student contact network and to establish a common scholarship tender. Local and regional educational institutions with sufficient capacity and smart location could also launch international postgraduate programmes, taught by guest lecturers from different European countries.

2.3.2.3 Organising trainings, workshops and seminars

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2.3.2.4 Involving local children from an early age

- **Introduction of ceramics and small crafts activities in kindergartens and elementary schools**
Ceramics and handicraft activities could be integrated in the curricula of kindergartens and elementary schools just as art and wood carving are. These elements can either be taught by handicraft artists themselves or by the teachers having first received some basic training and skills in this trade. These activities can be undertaken by actors of local networks in accordance with a predefined action plan. In addition, competitions or exhibitions can be organised to display the work of these young children.

➤ **Organisation of non-profit summer camps**

An activity for children and teenagers is summer camps, where for a few weeks they learn the basics in small-scale ceramic and handicraft production. The summer camps could have several themes and work with techniques and materials which are suitable for children. Funding could be provided jointly by local authorities, ceramics companies, ceramics associations or through national or even EU youth programme opportunities.

2.4 Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Since a large share of handicrafts and ceramics goods are being sold to tourists, especially in the summer high season, the integration of ceramic and handcraft products should be further extended into the touristic offer.

2.4.1 Regional / National / European Level Recommendations

2.4.1.1 Integration of ceramic and handcraft activities in the tourist offer

Integration of handcraft and ceramic activities and products into the overall tourist offer needs to be carried out in close cooperation with artisan associations, tourism organisations, and local authorities. Measures should include:

- **Establishing a collaborative distribution network**
A collaborative regional / national / European distribution network involving local producers, distributors, NGOs, tourism agencies and companies could further contribute to target tourists in the right locations.
- **Revitalisation and continuation of traditions – connecting ceramics and small crafts with other typical tourist attractions of the region**
In the frame of globalisation and the flood of products including ceramics and handcraft goods from non-EU countries, including Asia, it is of paramount importance to widely promote the cultural and social value of ceramic and handcraft production on a regional and national level as well. The target audience here includes artisan artists, handcraft and ceramic representatives and associations as well as the main segment of the general public especially interested in this sector, i.e. older generation as well as young handcraft artists. One short-term measure could be providing a regional or national forum for discussions for the artisan sector with tourist offices, tourist guides and other tourism providers with a view to identify areas of cooperation, synergies and concrete measures.
- **Exploitation of cultural activities in the region and promotion of traditional production procedures, design and activities**
Cultural heritage is a local and regional asset that can be built upon, especially in regional or national tourist packages.

2.4.2 Local Level Recommendations

2.4.2.1 Facilitate access

- **Improving the attractiveness of the sales locations**
The workshops and studios could be made more attractive (in terms of physical appearance, services offered, opening hours etc.) for tourists and local buyers to extend the wholesales directly from the artist. This may also involve specific funds or micro-credits offered by local/regional authorities in order to facilitate the renovation and re-decoration of such workshops and studios, as well as the broadening of their service portfolio.

➤ **Common pottery house / exhibition / creative house / handicraft shop for the local ceramists and craftsmen**

Creation and setting up of common pottery houses, workshops or incubation centres hosting several smaller scale local (and regional) producers.

These would have several economic advantages in terms of sharing running operational and energy costs. Furthermore, common marketing and outreach for tourists also could increase the chances for successful market penetration and sales. For instance, the establishment of a „House of Craftsmen“ would provide ample opportunities for marketing, innovation ideas, and bridge with local administration, tourism and academia. A House of Craftsmen could feature exposition place, design contests, forum for dialogue and pooling resources for artisan projects and business ideas.

➤ **Better timing of trade fairs and linking opening hours with the tourist season**

More fairs should be organised in the high tourist season to maximise the potential sales and interaction with tourists and tourist organisations. These fairs can also be made part of a larger cultural heritage tourist package.

In addition, it is essential to adapt the opening hours of shops and the timing of events both to local traditions but also to the habits of tourists. In this regard, local regulations on opening hours may have to be amended.

➤ **More efficient promotional measures**

The ceramic and handicraft sectors could more actively cooperate with tourist organisations and operators in the promotion of domestic and international tourism, which also will provide tangible benefits from them, leading to an increase of demand for these products. For instance, tourist offers and promotional material can include videos, samples of local handicraft products, or a list of ceramics and handicrafts studios with profile, specialities they offer, as well as opening hours.

2.4.2.2 Integration of ceramic and handicraft activities in the tourist offer

➤ **Revitalisation and continuation of traditions – connecting ceramics and small crafts with other typical tourist attractions of the region**

In the frame of globalisation and the flood of products including ceramics and handicraft goods from non-EU countries, including Asia, it is of paramount importance to widely promote the cultural and social value of ceramic and handicraft production. The target audience here includes artisan artists, handicraft and ceramic representatives and associations as well as the main segment of the general public especially interested in this sector, i.e. older generation as well as young handicraft artists. One short-term measure could – for the local administration – provide a forum for discussions for the artisan sector with tourist offices, tourist guides and other tourism providers with a view to identify areas of cooperation, synergies and concrete measures.

➤ **Creation of arts thematic routes connecting the typical locations of crafts with sales locations**

This mainly means to provide a more logical link between the location and origin of handicrafts to sales locations. For instance ceramics and handicraft designed for storing wine and other alcoholic products should be sold together with these products or even in wineries. This could provide ample opportunities to combine marketing and sales of ceramics and handicraft with other commercial or non-

commercial activities, which would further ensure synergies and economic spin-off.

➤ **Establishment of open workshops where tourists can observe and experience the production of ceramics and handicraft**

Potential customers and tourists can try out certain segments of the design and production, e.g. ceramic production, clay formation or glass blowing. The open workshops could be organised and financed in cooperation with local authorities, private sponsors, art associations etc.

➤ **Organising design competitions to select products to be highlighted in tourist offers**

The local authorities in cooperation with artisan organisations, chambers of commerce and private companies could organise design competitions with the view to identify a range of products that are likely to be particularly appealing to tourists.

2.5 PR & Marketing

Some of these activities are strictly marketing and PR related such as publication in magazines, developing marketing material etc. However, another set of measures have a broader focus combining many approaches, target groups and strategies. These include events, fairs and exhibitions.

2.5.1 Regional / National / European Level Recommendations

2.5.1.1 Enhancing visibility of the sector

Visibility and image building are perhaps the most essential elements of successful marketing.

- **Cooperation on a common brand highlighting the uniqueness of the products of the region**
Local and regional branding is wide-spread in food produce with goods like Parma ham, Champagne, Tokaji etc. These regional brands are protected by EU legislation. Even if the local and regional brands for ceramics and handicraft do not enjoy this legal protection, branding would still provide numerous advantages. However, efficient branding, including specific, local or regional branding campaigns require local anchorage based on cooperation between all the main actors.
- **Creation and operation of a common website**
A joint website promoting the regional or national ceramic and handicraft sector can either be set up by artisan associations or with the help of the regional / central administration. For instance a regional website can be extended to include pages on local ceramic and handicraft activities, producers and suppliers, or a specifically dedicated regional or national website can be set up for the same purpose. This information should be in national language but also preferably in the most common foreign languages, so that it can reach tourists as well.

2.5.2 Local Level Recommendations

2.5.2.1 Local Visibility

- **Image development of the sector**
Image building campaigns could be explored in wide cooperation with the main actors of the ceramics and small crafts sector.

The image should be based on local cultural and social values combined with the available natural, financial and institutional resources. In some regions, the image could be centred around IT and development of cleaner products. Image building should result in an enhancement of attractiveness in the eyes of the skilled labour force by investment in technology programmes and the development of cleaner products.
- **Creation of awards for craftsmen connected to local fairs and events**
Periodic local fairs and events enhance visibility but it normally takes years before a fair or event is receiving wide regional and international recognition.

Events could take a certain approach or niche such as arranging for awards for best product design, innovative elements and quality etc.

➤ **Media outreach**

The sector should cooperate to prepare shorter movies for local media about small-scale handicrafts and ceramic production to be broadcasted locally, regionally and nationally. International outreach where publicity of handicrafts form part of general tourist media clips is also recommended.

Furthermore, best practices in the sector can be quickly and effectively disseminated through various media channels – TV, radio, booklets, local newspapers, etc – to reach both potential skilled craftsmen and customers.

➤ **Creation and operation of a common website**

A joint website promoting the local ceramic and handicraft sector can either be set up by artisan associations or with the help of the local administration. For instance a city website operated by a city can be extended to include pages on local ceramic and handicraft activities, producers and suppliers. This information should be in national language but also preferably in the most common foreign languages, so that it can reach tourists as well.

2.5.2.2 Promotion of social responsibility of local companies

Social responsibility and inclusion in terms of engaging local workers and especially people in high unemployment categories, including women, are examples of social corporate responsibility. These endangered categories of workers can be found in high portions in the ceramics and small crafts sectors, thus social responsibility of companies would be of crucial importance here.

A first step would be to define some indicators and conditions for social responsibility and possibly to organise some kind of benchmarking or competition. Strong ambassadors of social responsibility should be marketed among customers, suppliers, shareholders and the general public.

3 CONCLUSIONS

The ceramic and handicraft sector in the CeRamICa partner countries has long traditions and there are many interesting initiatives at regional level for its overall growth and development. The project has succeeded in identifying both challenges and opportunities in the sector and all Partners have adopted an action plan with concrete actions at local or regional level. Besides, the project has drawn development policy recommendations involving measures that can easily be adapted by any local, regional or national government, or related European authorities and organizations.

However, to ensure a common approach taking into account this sector's contribution to the general European economy, besides the above detailed measures to be taken by authorities, the CeRamICa project's implementation has proved that **some further joint European steps would be advisable, so as to facilitate and make the local/regional measures more effective**. These steps could and hopefully will be implemented by the CeRamICa partnership, to provide further tools for a wider European adaptation.

These further steps most importantly are to involve **developing jointly a socio-economic transition plan for the ceramics and small crafts sector and through it providing more concrete tools and instruments for (local/regional/national) authorities throughout Europe**. This plan should focus specifically on two fields: **tourism and education**.

A first element within this plan has thus to be **a tool kit enabling integration of handicraft and ceramic activities and services in the tourist package of the given area/region**. This would mean concrete solutions, tools on how to do it and will require effective cooperation between tourist agents, artisans and local authorities, especially in terms of ensuring that the tool kit is carried out by all parties.

A second element of the transition plan has to be to invest in education and training and especially focus on high unemployment groups such as women, youngsters and old people. This would mean **developing a specific training methodology and curricula providing practical knowledge for the stakeholders of the sector** (ceramists and craftspeople, who are very often women or older people) mainly **in two fields: economics basics - business and financial skills** (how to start and run a business successfully and how to ensure financing, financial stability – including business planning), and **marketing skills** (how to sell “themselves”, their business and products, how make the most out of their assets through various means – including planning marketing activities).

It is out of question that there is a sense of urgency to modernise this sector while maintaining the traditions and processes of the older generations. Modernising this sector should be carried out in a stepped approach building a bridge between old heritage and a modernised sector that fits within overall urban and regional structures, tourism trends and the available resources and infrastructure. The sooner we act, the higher the chances of preserving and revitalizing our joint European traditions. The gist can be done locally or regionally, but not alone and not in an isolated way. Cooperation is a must in this sector and thus joint actions on European level can be the real catalyst for all local actions.
