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## **Editorial**

Welcome to the initial TSE project newsletter. We aim to produce a regular newsletter with monthly updates to bring you current information on activities and updates on developments within the project that may be of interest.

The TSE project is a partnership of three local authorities - Gent, Rotterdam and Southampton and is working together to;

- Examine some of the most important factors in social inclusion
- Bring together professionals and experts to learn from one another and the activities taking place in each city
- Test out new ideas under the guidance of the other partners

The partners have been delivering local activities in each of the partner cities over that past 12 months and have met regularly to discuss and develop the objectives of the project and to understand some of the common challenges and issues facing those most disadvantaged in our communities. TSE will develop tools that address some of these issues and challenges to share with other similar cities and municipalities in Europe.

'Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade' and sets out how the EU is to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. It is these three priorities that will support the EU and its Member States to deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion these priorities are supported by five objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020.

<http://tse.two-seas.eu>

The TSE Partnership consists of the following public authorities:

Stad Gent (BE)  
[www.gent.be](http://www.gent.be)

Gemeente Rotterdam (NL)  
[www.rotterdam.nl](http://www.rotterdam.nl)

Southampton City Council (UK)  
[www.southampton.gov.uk](http://www.southampton.gov.uk)



The TSE project is part funded by; The EU's Interreg 4A 2 Seas Programme.

## Project Events

A key aim of the TSE project is to make effective links with other professionals in each of the cities at local regional and national level. The project partners are holding regular cross border events and encourage participation from different sections and organisations in the local government structures.

February 2011	Rotterdam – mid-term study visit and workshops
May 2011	Gent - mid-term study visit and workshops
October 2011	Southampton - TSE final conference

## Local Activity

**Gent** - identifying practices on accessibility and design for all. Local staff will undertake an exercise to research and exchange effective local practices by all stakeholders.

**Rotterdam** - identifying new employment and training opportunities for people with multiple barriers to employment.

**Southampton** - identifying employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and developing community engagement in isolated communities to improve access to services

## Gent

The City of Gent held a Symposium in 2010 on Accessibility. The event was an opportunity to discuss the relationship between the preservation of monuments and access to historic monuments and public buildings for people with disabilities. The full accessibility of services and society is more than ever a current topic. Early 2010 saw the start of a new regulation focused on accessibility, with full accessibility of services and public gateways a big challenge for Gent with its many historic streets and buildings. The demand to access these sites is high and growing as the social trend is towards a longer and more independent life. The question of how to improve access without losing visual authenticity was discussed with an exchange of knowledge and experience by experts from the Flanders region as well as from across Europe. There are workable solutions to these questions and through a review of best practice in European cities, decision makers are better informed to make the right choices.

There is also information on the webpage:

<http://www.gent.be/eCache/THE/1/781.cmVjPTE2MTQ4MA.html>



## Rotterdam



New inflow into the harbour is part of the revitalization strategy for the Rotterdam Port and aims to encourage young people without qualifications into regular employed work. The project has partnered with DAAD employment service and Rotterdam Port Authority to provide apprenticeship positions with cargo companies. Over the course of 40 weeks, 50 candidates experience a 4 day working week learning on the job skills with 1 day a week studying under the guidance of the Shipping and Transport College. Each participant receives an apprentice fee for 4 months followed by a minimum 12 month contract if they are successful. After graduation more than 80% of employees get the opportunity to become all-round port operators, greatly enhancing their skills and prospects. The success factors for the project so far have been the willingness of cargo companies to invest in this target group and also the willingness of the candidates to invest in themselves through their own motivation. The project has so far succeeded in employment opportunities for more than 200 young people in the Rotterdam.

## Southampton

Rosebrook Court is a residential facility for elderly people that require extra support to live independently. This facility has an on-site kitchen and dining room which provides residents with their daily meal and has formed an ideal base to provide training opportunities. City Limits Employment part of Southampton City Council's supported employment service has developed and is delivering a training opportunity offering hands-on skills in high quality food preparation and food service. Other aspects of the programme offered, include time spent in a public serving café, where trainees learn food preparation and customer service skills. The project allows individuals of all abilities to build confidence, gain work experience and practical skills for the future.



## Gent Study Visit

The partnership met in Gent in 2010 and had a full itinerary including panel debates discussing issues of accessibility. During the workshop, jointly organised by the Cell Persons with a Disability and the non-profit organisation Licht en Liefde, discussion tables were being held during which crucial themes as regards employment opportunities for visually impaired people were being addressed.

## Gent Study Visit (cont.)

'Hands-on' experts counselled each of the following topics: adjustment of working stations, mentality and job climate, modification of the function, job search, regular work versus volunteer work and the unemployment trap.

Our visit to Varsenare was concluded with an impressive 'Dinner in the Dark' and an opportunity for the representatives from the partner cities to experience Dinner in the Dark. Laura Barber, Employment Officer, City Limits Employment Services in Southampton reflects that "This experience has been extremely valuable to me within my professional development"

I undertook a visit to Gent to study the work of Light and Laughter who employ visually impaired people. The project invites the public to dine in a restaurant that is completely dark and without light, and table service provided by the employees. The purpose of this is to actively broaden the publics' awareness and knowledge of the difficulties faced by people with this disability. The darkness made it difficult to eat and drink and I had to rely on touching my food to decide what I was about to consume. The most noticeable problem I encountered was how hard it is to communicate in these circumstances as the darkness created a lack of social cues which led to a few awkward moments between fellow diners. This experience has been extremely valuable to me within my professional development, as it has highlighted the kind of difficulties faced by the visually impaired in their everyday activities.

## EU 2020

One of the guiding principles of the European Union is that all citizens should be able to share in the benefits of prosperous times, while also sharing the burden of times of difficulty. Yet many people face serious obstacles in accessing employment, education, housing, social and financial services. 2010 marked the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. It's goals cover four broad objectives and guiding principles;

- A recognition of the right of those living in poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity, and play an active part in society
- A shared responsibility for and participation in the fight against poverty, with an emphasis on both collective and individual action
- The promotion of cohesion, highlighting the advantages of the eradication of poverty, and greater social inclusion, for all member states
- Political commitment and concrete action to eradicate poverty and social exclusion at all levels of governance, as well as a commitment to these goals within societies

## Partner Cities



### **GENT**

Luc Van Asch  
Departement Bevolking en Welzijn  
Stad Gent  
Botermarkt 1  
9000 Gent  
Belgium  
+32 9 266 7290  
[luc.vanasch@gent.be](mailto:luc.vanasch@gent.be)



**Gemeente Rotterdam**  
Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid  
Sociaal-wetenschappelijke Afdeling

DAAD



### **ROTTERDAM**

Kris Luijsterburg  
Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid  
Gemeente Rotterdam  
P.O. box: 1024  
3000 BA Rotterdam  
Nederland  
+31 10 498 2347  
[k.luijsterburg@sozawe.rotterdam.nl](mailto:k.luijsterburg@sozawe.rotterdam.nl)



### **SOUTHAMPTON**

Su Mihelic  
City Limits Employment  
Southampton City Council  
340b Shirley Road  
Southampton SO15 3HJ  
UK  
+44 2380 917880  
[Su.Mihelic@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Su.Mihelic@southampton.gov.uk)



**TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION**



**TSE PROJECT MANAGERS**

Su Mihelic & Kerrie Prowting  
Southampton City Council  
340b Shirley Road  
Southampton SO15 3HJ  
UK

+44 2380 917639

[Su.Mihelic@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Su.Mihelic@southampton.gov.uk)

[Kerrie.Prowting@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:Kerrie.Prowting@southampton.gov.uk)

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