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## Final Conference of the project

On 30 August 2012 the final conference of the project „Centre of Excellence in ICT,, was held in Varazdin in the Big Hall of the County House. All the partners were given the opportunity to present their views on the project and future plans.

### 1. Welcome note from Varaždin County

Predrag Štromar – Varaždin County Prefect



### 2. Introduction about the project

Silvija Ladić Fischer – Varaždin County

The main activities and goals of the project were presented to the audience. Thanks to the project, we realized an increasing quality of IT education for pupils and students in Varazdin, an improved knowledge and skills of teachers and mentors at the Center of Excellence in IT for schools in Varazdin County and an exchange of experience about the models and approaches to education in informatics in Belgium and Croatia.

### 3. Europe 2010 and the Digital Agenda: Experiences from Flanders

Lutgart Spaepen – Flemish Government

The ideas for this presentation are based on the views of Neelie Kroes, European Commissioner for the Digital Agenda. The ICT Sector is an engine of progress, growing faster than the overall economy and creating new jobs every year. Key issues in Europe for the ICT sector are: broadband access for every citizen, digital inclusion, eSkills training, eGovernment, citizen participation and involvement, privacy and identification of individuals, rural inclusion, Green ICT, single market and cross-border services.



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## 4. Education of mentors in the Centre of Excellence

Janja Banić - First Gymnasium Varazdin

From 21 to 24 February 2011 Croatian partners visited Flanders, along with 10 mentors who work at the ICT Center of Excellence. An important task for the partners of the Centre of Excellence in ICT was to develop a profile of competences for the target groups of the project. In May 2011 recommendations were formulated on how to integrate ICT in the curriculum of Croatian education based on a benchmark analysis. In that same period visits to schools in the Varaždin region were organized. They allowed the Flemish partners to understand the Croatian primary and secondary educational system. The training program that was developed for the ICT mentors was also inspired by both the benchmark analysis as the working of the Croatian educational system. In November 2011 (9.-16.11.2011) ten mentors attended the “training of the mentors”, which took place in the premises of First Gymnasium in Varaždin, Croatia. The training offered a mix of content of IT-training and didactic skills training. Since mentors have good ICT knowledge an additional training was organized in May 2012 where they focused on the Internet routing implementation techniques and didactic tips/materials linked to it.

## 5. State of ICT in primary and secondary schools: comparison of Varaždin county and Flanders

Goran Hajdin – Faculty of Organization and Informatics

During the conference we presented key results from the survey conducted among 54 primary and secondary schools in Varaždin County. The results were compared to the ones obtained in the previous study conducted in Flanders. The sample had over 1000 participants (headmasters, teachers and students) in Varaždin County (VC), and over 5000 in Flanders. The survey was focused on four key elements: ICT infrastructure, ICT policy, ICT competences and perception of ICT. The results showed existing similarities and differences between the regions within each of the four mentioned categories. They have set a firm ground for education of the mentors that was a next step in the project. This way mentors could focus on differences and implement best practices provided by Flemish instructors. After the conference participants showed great interest for the results and emphasized their will for future engagement in similar projects.

## 6. ICT Competencies in Europe

Yvan Rooseleer – HUB

The activities of the COE-ICT project were influenced by international and European organizations like CEPIS, EUCIP and e-CF. Because Croatia, like Flanders and Belgium, is an open economy, also international offerings from leading IT companies were taken in to consideration. In order to determine an approach that is coherent with the expectations of the partners, a large number of topics was presented to the ICT mentors: ICT in education, didactic principles, innovative technologies, business applications, e-learning environments.

The evaluation of the mentor training and the pilot semester shows a progress in the awareness of new methods and tools for education, as well as increasing competence levels.

We see possibilities to continue the collaboration between the project partners, such as continuing Networking Academy instructor training, extending Center of Excellence approach to other domains (communication & business, science).



## 7. A Constructivist Learning Environment in IT lessons - Learning model for digital natives in the future

Fernand Mesdom - HUB

Constructivist learning takes place in a rich learning environment, offering numerous learning events with possibilities to receive, imitate, experience, experiment, practice and create content. The characteristics of a rich learning environment are: (inter)active, constructive, cumulative, problem solving, goal oriented, contextual, differentiated, self-regulative, social.

Throughout the project twenty-five ideas or scenarios for constructivist learning in IT were developed as examples for the mentors. Based on these examples the mentors were able to produce their own constructivist learning environments.



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## 8. Future plans for develop ICT Centres for Secondary school in Varazdin County

Miroslav Huđek – Varazdin County

By 2013-2014 the County intends to start a new large COE class with around 28 students for the following subject areas: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, ICT, Business Economics, Croation language. Each group should have 6 to 8 talented students that will be prepared for higher education in one or more of the above mentioned subject areas. The reason why COE classes are important is that too few students choose technical or technological education in secondary school. This results in a poor inflow into higher education for technical and technological degree programmes.



### Press conference

Varaždin news, Regional news, Megaton and VTV were present at the final conference and several articles were published.

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