

Study visits to Barcelona

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This May, EIPA Barcelona organised a ten-day ‘internship’ within the ‘Town Twinning between Turkey and the EU’ programme in which ten senior public officials from Turkish institutions: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both the Union of Municipalities and the Union of Provinces, and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation had the opportunity to acquire a solid combination of practical and theoretic knowledge on topical issues such as city-to-city cooperation schemes, city-to-EU participatory channels and relevant institutions, networks and partnerships for complying with EU policies and practices.

The specific goals of the ‘internship’ were:

- to improve the administrative capacity of the participants (and, by extension, their public institutions) for town twinning and to get involved in other forms of city networks and cooperation programmes;
- to enable the transfer of know-how/best practices in the fields of city partnerships, multilevel governance, innovation practices, cooperation-related EU policies etc.;
- to foster understanding of the institutional and organisational setting required in order to make a success of the abovementioned actions as well as to promote future collaboration opportunities.

The City of Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, is home to more than 1.6 million inhabitants and is at the heart of a metropolitan area covering 2 500 km² and with a population of close to five

million, representing 63.4% and 10.2% of the Catalan and Spanish populations respectively. As one of Europe’s most innovative, vibrant and interconnected cities, the diverse, intercultural and cosmopolitan spirit of Barcelona can also be seen in the fact that almost 20% of the city’s residents are from outside Spain.

It has a well-known and well-established ‘ecosystem’ combining academia, businesses and entrepreneurs, and public organisations. In 2014, Barcelona was the European Capital of Innovation.

EIPA has had a centre in Barcelona for many years, and as such there is no better place for a learning experience in a spirited Mediterranean city such as a study visit, an internship, and/or an innovation journey.

The purpose of these activities for each group is to learn and enter into a structured and steered dialogue about a specific issue with innovative and renowned organisations while also discovering the places of interest in the city and its surrounding area.

For instance, Barcelona has already hosted dynamic EPSA knowledge transfer events on four occasions thanks to its vibrant atmosphere and international appeal – not only for tourists, but also for businesses and entrepreneurs – which perfectly complements the interconnection of public administration and the private sector.

The objective is to create a space for the exchange of knowledge and know-how, debate and reflection in which visitors can learn from core local best practices, share key results and, while engaging with local innovators behind the many experiences, also be supported by the lessons learned from those experiences, facilitating replication internationally and/or back home.

To give an impression, field visits included projects such as:



A well-balanced mix of in-house lectures, workshops, discussion forums and in particular the visits to local 'champions' and organisations such as the UCLG, Metropolis, Cidob, the Province of Barcelona, the Catalan Association of Municipalities, the European CEFG Group by EIPA and various cities that have received European recognition or awards facilitates the transfer of top-level and first hand know-how and best-practice models.

- 22@Barcelona and Districte de la innovació (innovation district). 22@ is an initiative of the Barcelona City Council to transform 200 hectares of industrial land in the Poblenou district into an innovative and productive area with modern spaces for the strategic concentration of knowledge-intensive activities.
- Vilawatt Project in Viladecans, a pioneer project of energy transition, consisting of the creation of a new joint structure formed by citizens, companies and the City Council with the aim of creating an integral energy operator for more efficient energy management. This project has taken the form of a Public-Private-Citizen Partnership (PPCP).
- AMB (Metropolitan Area of Barcelona) and the river Llobregat restoration project, with the objective of improving the natural character of the river from an ecological perspective in order to enhance its function as an ecological connector as well as to restore its values and its biodiversity.



inspired by the opportunities for best-practice transfers, please contact us. We would be delighted to tailor an initiative to your needs and wishes and welcome you and your group to Barcelona soon.



Interested?

If this preview of what our Centre in Barcelona has to offer got you interested, and if you would like to learn more about EIPA 'journeys' in our exciting city and its surroundings or to be