

*press information*

## **“Social Production” – Value Creation through Appreciation: Sustainable Opportunities for the Environment, Economy, and Society**

### **9 partners from East Austria and West Hungary work on cooperation between economy, the public sector and social enterprises in the EU project of “SoPro HU-AT”**

*At the premises of the BENE AG company at Waidhofen/Ybbs, a pioneer enterprise in sustainability, the model of cooperation of “Social Production” has been introduced. Lower Austrian Minister for Economy, Dr. Petra Bohuslav, officially launched this EU project. Ms. Bohuslav: “It is the aim of this project to strengthen the social column of sustainability in Lower Austria and its partner regions. Our task is to expand cooperation between economic and social enterprises, and to build cooperation at eye level, in order to develop sustainable products and services of high quality, and to further their marketability.”*

**Social Production** is a project approach, which has been developed within a working group consisting of three Lower Austrian Departments (Rural Development, Economy, Social Affairs) and the initiator of this project, KOMUNITAS OG. **Social Production means regional economic activity with social competence.** Social enterprises of the 2nd and 3rd labour markets produce **quality products for economic enterprises and public clients** with creativity and commitment, under technical support according to sustainable criteria. Needs and opportunities of this cooperation have in the meantime been tested in a large number of practical examples. **The results show that all participants benefit from the model of “Social Production”:**

- **Social enterprises and their employees** generate increased internal cash flow, meaningful work, and a broader offer for qualification of male and female employees.
- **Economic enterprises and public institutions** receive sensible products coming up to the standards of CSR, and services from the region.
- **Environmental responsibility** is assumed by **recycling or even upcycling** of waste material from enterprises into processed quality products, and by **support of eco-design** of new products.

The central finding from previous experience is that **an interface is required between the idea of a potential customer and its implementation within a social enterprise**, where process-oriented efforts are taken:

- for the development of products and services coming up to demand
- for a permanent negotiation between the players concerning contents and time management.

This **process of negotiation** ideally starts at **the product idea or innovation needs**, and it is oriented towards the opportunities and requirements of a **CSR strategy**, which can be implemented successfully and credibly in the enterprise by such cooperation with social enterprises.

In the “SoPro HU-AT” **project of Territorial Cooperation, financed by the European Union**, the approach of Social Production as a model of a process-oriented consultation is developed further in a well-directed manner until mid-2014 in Lower Austria, Vienna, Styria, Burgenland, and in West Hungary in the administrative units of Vas, Zala, Győr-Ménfőcsanak-Sopron.

From the project of “**SoPro HU-AT – socially produced for the environment**”, 1,000 contacts with enterprises shall arise, and 100 **practical examples of cooperation between the players** shall be elaborated and supported. For the **trademark of „socially produced“**, registered in the trademark register, a catalogue of criteria shall be elaborated together with partners from social economy. Also publications, such as **training manuals and scientific volumes**, and a **structure of a platform for an independent further development** of this topic on a regional and transnational basis shall be created. This project approach shall also be integrated into **scientific discussion**.

### **Aims of “Social Production”**

Strengthening of enterprises and social institutions, well-targeted processing of waste material from enterprises into new products, innovation, and optimization in products and processes, vitalization of regional economic cycles, focus on sustainability through “process-oriented consultation”, quality, and cooperation based on mutual appreciation, creation of an interface, where ideas are developed and partners can be linked = “platform of socially produced”, basis for further training and qualification

### **Partner organizations of “Social Production / SoPro HU-AT” EU project**

- SENEC Association, Soil and Bioenergy Network of European Countries – LEAD PARTNER
- LEED Non-profit GmbH., Szombathely (HU)
- Zalakar Non-profit GmbH, Zala (HU)
- BMV Burgenland Association for Waste Management, Oberpullendorf
- Radkersburg Waste Association
- Assisted Living Radkersburg
- Bio Research Austria, Vienna
- Vienna Environmental Consulting
- KOMUNITAS OG, Eschenau, Lower Austria

### **Strategic partners of “Social Production”**

- Lower Austrian Governmental Authorities: Department of Rural Development, Economy, and Social Affairs
- ÖIN – Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development at BOKU University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences
- BDV – Vienna Federal Umbrella Association for Social Enterprises
- BMASK / Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
- Austrian Chamber of Agriculture
- GREENCARE
- Chamber of Labour of Vienna
- Public Employment Service Lower Austria
- RepaNet – Repair Network
- ATM – Mid-Tyrol Waste Association
- Lilienfeld Waste Association
- Pannon Textile Cluster
- Pannon Renewable Energy Cluster
- REKORD network
- ZALAI SPA Zrt.