



## 244264 PERARES (Call SiS-2009-1.2.1.1)

### *Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society*

<http://www.livingknowledge.org/livingknowledge/perares>

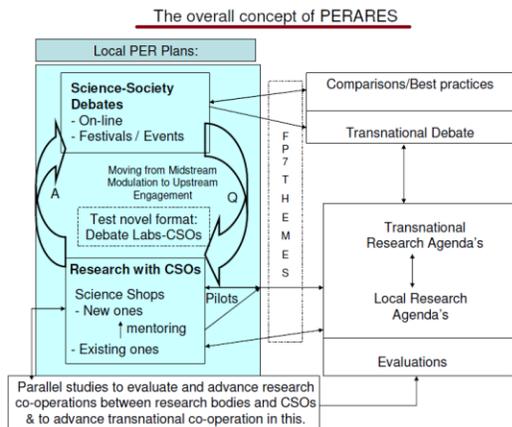
26 participant organizations from Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, UK, Spain, France, Greece, Romania, Hungary, Norway, Cyprus, Israel, Italy, Estonia, Denmark. Sweden

48 +6 months

PERARES aims to strengthen interaction in formulating research agendas between researchers and Civil Society Organisations in Europe. More equitable access to science and technology, and more response from science and technology towards civil society are both needed to achieve the ideal of the knowledge society, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.



The PERARES project is divided into 12 work packages. Each package is coordinated by one of the PERARES partners. A brief presentation of the project is made by the project co-ordinator, dr. Henk Mulder, during the Living Knowledge Conference 2012, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLFSmzR6lm0>. A Science Shop provides independent, participatory research support in response to concerns experienced by civil society.



The Science Shops are small entities that carry out scientific research in a wide range of disciplines **on behalf of citizens and local civil society**. The fact that Science Shops **respond to civil society's needs for expertise and knowledge** is a key element that distinguishes them from other knowledge transfer mechanisms. They are often, but not always, linked to or based in universities, where research is done by students as part of their curriculum – under the supervision of the Science Shop and other associated (university) staff. This is the case of **InterMEDIU Science Shop at Politehnica University of Bucharest (UPB, Romanian partner in PERARES)** that are involved in educational activities mainly related to promotion of scientific knowledge and environment protection.

Sharing the expertise of existing science shops and support for the development of new science shops by improving the networking of science shops will advance citizens' participation in the dialogue between science and society. An international science shop network is an instrument to link or initiate local or regional initiatives. In this way it will advance the outreach, size and impact of the contribution of Science Shops to **citizens access to scientific information, knowledge and expertise**.

The PERARES online debate series allows civil society organisations, researchers and members of the public to discuss research needs on different topics with the aim of creating new research projects. The current debate is on Food Gardens and the City. The previous debates subjects were Promoting Local Economic Development, Nanotechnology Debates, Domestic violence, Big Tent Group, Code of conduct for research with and for the Roma people. UPB team

UPB partner is involved in the following main work packages: *Structuring Public Engagement with Research through knowledge debates, Capacity Building for Structuring PER through Research with CSOs, and Advancing PER through support from Research Councils for research of CSOs with Research Institutes.*

The project staff (**two professors, two assistant professors and one lecturer**) has a good experience as InterMEDIU Science Shop members. **More than 20 students** were involved in the project activities on voluntary basis.



The existing infrastructure was used for the small projects carried out by the **students in the research activities.**

Since April 2010, the Romanian partner was involved, so far, in organizing of **three Science Festivals in Calărași county**

(<http://www.ziarulstiintelor.eu/stiri/2011-09/targ.aspx>), **three editions of the National Symposium "Education for a Sound Environment"** and public debates for teachers and young students, **coordinating desk research projects** related to the quality of environment for students of Faculty of Applied Chemistry and Material Science, development of a **Question and Answers website** for supporting national debates (<http://intermediu.pub.ro>). A good collaboration was developed with Teaching Inspectorate of Calarasi county that contributed and collaborated with UPB team.



The **Science Festivals** were of great success among children and teachers of Calarasi county aiming to encourage children in taking further interest in the sciences, to acquaint children with natural phenomena; to acquaint pupils with the wide outline of scientific principles and the ways in which these are applied to serve the man; to explain the scientific method based on observation, guess and experiment in helping pupils to think correctly about science in relation to other subjects.

In June 2013 UPB partner organized the **national meeting of the Romanian Science Shops Network, INRO**, at Technical University of Iasi.

PERARES brings together a group of research bodies with different backgrounds. They learn from each others approaches. This is most prominent in ways to set up a meaningful **dialogue between CSOs and researchers** and in the sharing of experiences to start and operate research co-operation with CSOs through science shops or other ways.



Most important, however, is the fact that the partners are linked through two lasting activities: the transnational knowledge debate, which can only be successful in cooperation, and in the international science shop and community-based research network Living Knowledge that enables them to answer together to research requests from civil society organisations and citizens in internet communities throughout Europe.

In the PERARES framework, Romanian partner was able to coagulate a group of interested public that will represent a future partner for activities that will be carried out for scientific knowledge development. The PERARES project intends to contribute to **bridging the gap between science and society** by facilitating the accessibility of the scientific information and the clarity and quality of this information.

By Rodica Stanescu, UPB partner co-ordinator.

September 2013

References:

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