

Sophia Antipolis – a model for a similar project at the Black Sea ?

The suggestion to authorities in Bulgaria and Rumania (and potentially Ukraine) is, to envisage the foundation of a science & technology park situated near to the Black Sea. The Science & Technology Park of Sophia Antipolis would serve as a model.

The conveyor and proposer of this project, Prof. Günter Koch °) (koch@execupery.com), is the former CEO of Austria's largest R&D organisation "Austrian Research Centers" (and himself member of the French-German Association for Scientific Cooperation, in France presided by the French Senator Pierre Lafitte), suggests to the countries interfacing the Black Sea which soon are accessing the EU, to try a similar approach compared to Sophia Antipolis, France, near the Mediterranean Sea.

(Larger parts of the text in the sequel are taken from <http://www.sophia-antipolis.net/>)

1. History and Concept

In just one generation we have seen the "Latin Quarter in the fields" described by Pierre LAFFITTE, a French senator and the former president of the "University of Mining" in Paris in an article published by Le Monde newspaper in 1960, grow into a Science Park known throughout the world. In this time a success story has been created in not only economic terms, but also on a social, cultural level. It is also known because of its concern for urban development, the environment and the repercussions on society as a whole.

But Sophia Antipolis would not have become a reality had it not been for concerted action on a local and national level. In his speech at the centenary of the French Riviera Chamber of Commerce, in 1960, the French minister Jean-Marcel JEANNENEY, spoke about the potential for economic diversity in the region by encouraging service industries and research.

The actual launch of Pierre LAFITTE's ideas done privately was quickly taken up and developed at State level. So the local authorities all worked together to bring about this project: the five original communes (Antibes, Biot, Mougins, Valbonne and Vallauris), the Alpes-Maritimes Local Council, the French Riviera Chamber of Commerce (which on the initiative of the President Jean-Jacques ROBERT would ensure that everything became fully operational and the decisive support of the State with the DATAR and successive prefects -- René-Georges THOMAS and Pierre LAMBERTIN among the first ones.

And so Sophia Antipolis was born. It was then made official by the Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement du Territoire (Interministerial Committee for Land Development) in April 1972, led by a joint syndicate developer, in 1974, under the name of SYMIVAL, which then became SYMISA, presided over by Francis PALMERO, and so Jacques MEDECIN became President of the Alpes-Maritimes

General Council. SYMIVAL delegated the same year, the operational work load of Sophia Antipolis to the French Riviera Chamber of Commerce.

An economic development model had come into being and continues to serve as a reference for the whole world

In just 30 years of hope, human and financial investment have transformed a mad dream, thought up in the scrubland, into the construction of a technological and human community that plays a role in the world economy.

2. Key institutions supporting the Sophia Antipolis project, demonstrating the multitude of support needed for such a project.

PREFECTURE DES ALPES-MARITIMES

Route de Grenoble - BP 1
06286 NICE CEDEX 3
Tel 33 (0)4 93 72 20 00– Fax 33 (0)4 93 72 20 97
Web : <http://www.alpes-maritimes.pref.gouv.fr>
Prefect : Mr. Pierre BREUIL

△

Interministerial co-ordination group for Sophia Antipolis (DATAR)

President : Mr. Pierre MAYET
General Secretary : Mr. Jean-François PINELLI
Tel 33 (0)4 93 72 20 90– Fax 33 (0)4 93 72 20 97
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ALPES-MARITIMES GENERAL COUNCIL - CONSEIL GENERAL DES ALPES-MARITIMES

BP 3007
06201 NICE CEDEX 3
Tel 33 (0)4 97 18 60 00
Email : cq06@cq06.fr
Web : <http://www.cq06.fr>
President : Mr. Christian ESTROSI, Deputy Member of the French Parliament

△

THE FRENCH RIVIERA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE ET D'INDUSTRIE NICE CÔTE D'AZUR

20 boulevard Carabacel - BP 1259
06005 NICE CEDEX 01
Tel 33 (0)8 20 42 22 22
Web : <http://www.ccinice-cote-azur.com>
President : Mr. Francis PERUGINI

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SYMISA

In charge of the general policy for the development of the park, its administration and financial management until 31st December 2001.

c/o CICA - 2229, Route des Crêtes

06560 VALBONNE

Tel 33 (0)4 04 92 94 24 80 - Fax 33 (0)4 92 94 24 88

Email : symisa@wanadoo.fr

President : Mr. Jean-Pierre MASCARELLI

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SAEM SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS CÔTE D'AZUR

Company responsible for the development and commercial mission of the Sophia Antipolis Science Park and other departmental industrial development areas from time to time in other areas of the "département".

Place Joseph Bermond – BP 33

06901 SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS CEDEX

Tel 33 (0)4 92 94 59 94 – Fax 33 (0)4 93 65 40 69

Web : <http://www.sophia-antipolis.net>

President : Mr. Fernand BLANCHI

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FONDATION SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS

To foster cultural and scientific exchange within Sophia Antipolis and prospective discussions.

Place Sophie Laffitte - BP 217

06904 SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS CEDEX

Tel 33 (0)4 92 96 78 00 – Fax (0)4 93 65 44 01

Web : <http://www.sophia-antipolis.org>

President : Senator Pierre LAFFITTE

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CÔTE D'AZUR DEVELOPPEMENT

The regional economic development agency of the Alpes-Maritimes region, responsible for the external communications and marketing of Sophia Antipolis.

Immeuble Communica

455 Promenade des Anglais - BP 3185

06204 NICE CEDEX 3 - FRANCE

Tel 33 (0)4 92 17 51 51 – Fax 33 (0)4 93 80 05 76

Email : info@investincotedazur.com

Web : <http://www.investincotedazur.com>

President : Mr. Jean-Pierre MASCARELLI

△

The Sophia Antipolis Urban Authority, comprising of the 14 communes, is responsible for the Science Park development general policy, its administration and

the financial management. New terms and conditions will enable the State, the Département, the French Riviera Chamber of Commerce and those working in the local communes to join forces.

3. Facts & Figures of Success of the Sophia Antipolis Science Park

The economic results over a period of 18 months from July 2001 to January 2003, i.e. in a period, during which world economy was near recession

- **1,326** jobs created.
- **Thirty** new companies set up, which makes a total of **25,911** jobs and **1,260** companies.

These figures are a result of an exhaustive study carried out by SYMISA *) and SAEM SACA **)

Sophia Antipolis has never experienced negative variations, even during international business crises. The figures resulting from the survey clearly show that the science park continues to attract both French and foreign investors and is appreciated as a label of quality by the companies concerned.

The survey confirms a net balance of a further 1,326 jobs over the past 18 months. This positive figure is the result of a combination of company arrivals and departures, expansions or reductions in activity levels, and stable activities that already existed in the park. **This year, for the first time since 1995, it is exogenous growth which is driving the park's development, with 32 more firms and 717 additional jobs.**

In this period of economic crisis, one observes that **Services have chalked up a very good score and now account for 50% of the total number of companies, providing 26% of the jobs and occupying 32% of the premises.**

As for **Information Technologies, they represent 26% of the companies**, 49% of the jobs and 29% of the park's premises; these figures are higher than those registered in the previous survey, proving that this sector remains a spearhead factor in the development of Sophia Antipolis.

Life Sciences only account for 4% of firms, 8% of jobs, and occupy 12% of premises.

The number of companies backed by foreign capital dropped by 3.3%, **while the overall number of firms in the park advanced by 2.7%.**

In fact, the slight drop in the number of these companies, and especially the consequent loss of jobs, is not a true reflection of the facts. It is explained by a change in capitalisation in the case of certain firms which, while originally of foreign origin, have fallen into the lap of companies with French capital.

« In the 10-year period from 1993 to 2003, » emphasizes Jean-Pierre Mascarelli, Chairman of the SAEM Sophia Antipolis Côte d'Azur, « a total 10,633 jobs have been created. With today's sustained growth, even if it is more moderate than in 2001, the Sophia Antipolis label is a guarantee of quality

which, more than ever before, attracts companies which value the strategic importance of their localisation at a difficult time for the economic and technological community ».

**) SYMISA: a body comprised of the institutional organisations at Sophia Antipolis. It is responsible for the Park's general development policy, its administration and the operation's financial management. Chairman: Senator Charles Ginésy, Chairman of the General Council of the Alpes-Maritimes.*

****) SAEM SACA: a company entrusted with the planning, development and commercialisation of the Park of Sophia Antipolis, as well as occasional operations in the general interest throughout the rest of the Alpes-Maritimes. Operational arm of the SYMISA.*

4. Living of managers and scientists in Sophia Antipolis

One can often hear executives and managers in Sophia Antipolis based companies and institutes saying that "Sophia Antipolis is a place where the grey matter likes to settle down to stay and prosper".

At a time when the world economy is facing the rough ride that we know all too well, Sophia Antipolis remains a site where technological advances are developed to produce new applications, new tools and new forms of business.

But Sophia Antipolis is not only a pleasant place to work. People, in specific form Academia, study and live here too.

One example is the outlet institute of INRIA at Sophia Antipolis, France's largest IT and Informatics Institute. INRIA is member of the pan-European ERCIM organisation of research centers in IT, in which the Austrian Association of Research in IT (AARIT) is as well a member of. The proposer of the project to found a science & technology park close to the Black Sea, *Günter Koch* °), is also the president of AARIT and as such plays a second role as an expert in the field of infomatics in specific.

150 hectares of Sophia Antipolis are dedicated to greenery, leisure and to residential areas are home to 3,500 families of which 70% come from outside of Sophia, many from international origins.

The 1,500 hectares of greenery planted with Mediterranean species that surround the park make up the "green belt" of Sophia Antipolis. Space made into parks that are largely open to the public.

5. Development perspectives and the development charter for companies

The development principles of Sophia Antipolis largely contribute to its success. The working environment thus created makes for an extremely high quality of life, which fosters creativity and productivity and comforts worldwide specialists that Sophia Antipolis is the perfect choice.

The development principles of the park allow the 2,300 hectares (1/4 of the area of Paris) of green land, business sites, inhabited areas and leisure zones to come together harmoniously. These principles were decreed in a charter by the Ministry for

the Environment in 1976, just 4 years after the actual creation of the park in its current form.

Keeping 2/3 of the total area as green land

This charter imposes the ratio of 2/3 to 1/3 of green belt land to developed area as well as making sure that any construction fits in harmoniously to the surrounding area ensuring a balance between the two.

No exceptions are to be made to the charter's main principles.

The 1,500 hectares of green land planted with Mediterranean species make up the "Green Belt" around Sophia Antipolis. This Departmental park land is largely accessible to the public.

The 150 hectares dedicated to leisure and inhabited areas are the home for almost 3,500 families of which 70% come from outside of the park to avoid a ghettoisation effect.

The 650 hectares left are for national and international companies as well as research organisations and centres for higher education.

The 800 hectares of leisure and inhabited areas are subject to a coefficient of 30% of land occupancy. A quick calculation of the construction ratios shows that only 10% of the 2,300 hectares of the park will be mineralised in the long term.

Harmony between buildings and landscape

No building can exceed the height of the highest point of the hills around Sophia. The buildings are elegant using solar panels on the roof and balconies often covered with bushes showing the freedom of expression left to the architect.

Olive and pine trees are reflected in the glass facades of the buildings. Company cafeterias often look out onto water. 40 tennis courts, 5 golf ranges and various other sporting facilities finish off the whole respecting the environment.

6. Contact for following-up of this project

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