

DOSSIER

2nd UNICORNQUEST MEETING

Lille, France

28-29 September 2023



Table of contents

Introduction	3
2 nd Interregional Event Summary	4
Event agenda	5
Opening session	7
Startup Pitches	8
Visit of EuraTechnologies	9
Project consortium meeting	10
Visit of a local Unicorn, Exotec	11
Visit of Lille	12
Presentation of Hauts-de-France Regional Council	13
CASE Workshop Training	14
Meeting with regional stakeholders	14

Introduction

UnicornQuest aims to build entrepreneurial ecosystems by promoting, attracting, and retaining to-be-unicorns thriving under EU principles and values, such as respect of human rights, freedom, democracy, and equality. This project arises from the need to reduce the exodus of promising start-ups and unicorns from Europe, especially the regions outside the capitals, which results in losses in terms of job creation, intellectual property and more. As such, the project is focused on learning and experience sharing activities, regional assessments and peer analysis and review of real cases to delineate strategies to improve regional policies which influence SME competitiveness and the retention and attraction of entrepreneurial talent.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Science and Technology Park of Alentejo (PACT) (PT)
- Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SK)
- Western Development Commission (IE)
- Innovation & Management Centre Limited (WestBIC) (IE)
- North-West Regional Development Agency (RO)
- Business Development Friesland Foundation (NL)
- Liguria Region (IT)
- Zemgale Planning Region (LV)
- Pannon Business Network Association (HU)



- Hauts-de-France Regional Council (FR)
- EuraTechnologies (FR)

2nd Interregional Event Summary

On September 28 and 29 of 2023, EuraTechnologies and the Hauts-de-France Regional Council hosted the second UnicornQuest meeting, which brought together project partners as well as some local and regional stakeholders.

The first day was initiated by welcome speeches from EuraTechnologies CEO and Interreg Europe Programme Director, followed by startups pitches and a visit of EuraTechnologies' premises. In the afternoon, the project consortium meeting was held. After that, partners and stakeholders had the opportunity to meet local unicorn, Exotec. The day ended with a cultural and gastronomic visit of Lille by L'Echappée Bière.

On the second day, the day began with a presentation of the Hauts-de-France Regional Council and the policy instrument addressed in UnicornQuest. The second CASE method workshop took place afterward. The day ended by a meeting with regional key stakeholders: Hello Lille, Hauts-de-France Innovation Development, and Hauts-de-France Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Event agenda

DAY 1 (September 28th 2023)

Main venue : EuraTechnologies, Place de Saintignon, 165 Avenue de Bretagne, 59 000 Lille

9h30 - 10h00 - Welcome and registration

10h00 - 12h00 - Presentation of EuraTechnologies

Welcome speeches:

- Koussée Vaneecke, CEO at EuraTechnologies
- Erwin Siweris, Programme Director at Interreg Europe

Meeting with Startups:

- Clément Francomme, CEO and founder of Utocat
- Romain Deffrenne, CEO and founder of Reyouzz

Visit of Le Blan Lafont (EuraTechnologies' main office)

12h00 - 13h00 – Lunch

At EuraTechnologies

13h00 - 14h15 - Consortium meeting

Management - Finance - Communication

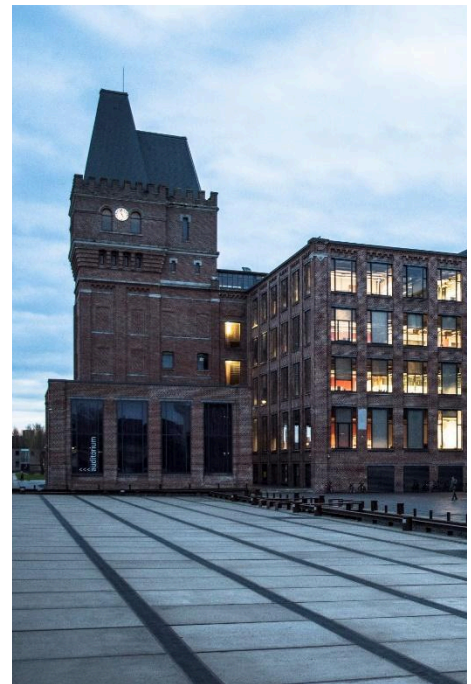
14h30 - 17h00 – Meeting and visit with local unicorn

Exotec

17h00 - 19h00 – Free time

18h45 – Social activity and dinner

Meeting point: 38 place de Rihour



DAY 2 (September 29th 2023)

Main venue: Conseil Régional Hauts-de-France, 151 Avenue du Président Hoover, 59 000 Lille

9h00 - 9h30 - Welcome and registration

9h30 - 10h30 – Presentation of the Hauts-de-France Region

Meeting with elected representative
Presentation of the policy instrument

10h30 - 12h30 - CASE Method workshop part 1

12h30 - 13h30 – Lunch

At the Regional Council

13h30 – 15h00 - CASE Method workshop part 2

15h00 – 16h30 – Meetings with regional key stakeholders

- Maxime Vermeulen, Directeur Invest at Hello Lille
- Louise Vignau, Project Officer Europea Research and Innovation at Hauts de France Innovation Développement (HDFID) & Mariam Saad, EEN Event and Communication Officer at Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Hauts-de-France (CCI)



Opening session

The first day took place at EuraTechnologies premises. The host partner, EuraTechnologies, briefly introduced the project, its objective, and the agenda of the Interregional Learning Event #2. Koussée Vaneecke, EuraTechnologies CEO, welcome the participants and presented EuraTechnologies activities and provided some insight on the importance of understanding the need of startups to better support them in their development. It was followed by a welcome speech by Erwin SIWERIS, Interreg Europe Programme Director, who explained the priorities and missions carried by Interreg Europe Programme in favor of European regions and territories.



Startup Pitches

Two promising startups accompanied by EuraTechnologies pitched their project in front of the participants and answer their questions. It was also the opportunity for them to make connections.

The startups were:

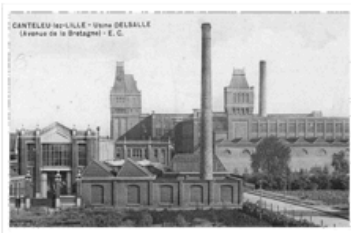
- **UTOCAT** – presented by Clément FRANCOMME, CEO and Founder – Founded in 2014, Utocat aims to facilitate investment in unlisted companies with a PEA, PEA-PME or CTO. The company develops unique software using Blockchain technology.
- **ReYouzz** – presented by Romain DEFFRENNE, CEO and Founder – Created in 2019, Reyouzz is creating a complete eco-system that is 100% circular, from the collection to the new life of everyday objects. Located as close as possible to consumers, its connected terminal assesses the value of products according to their condition, buys back what can be reconditioned and rewards items that are sent for recycling with vouchers.



Visit of EuraTechnologies

The consortium participated in a guided visit EuraTechnologies' premises, Le Blan-Lafont, having the opportunity to get to learn about the history of the building, its missions, and its ecosystem.

EuraTechnologies' motto is embedded in its history and consists of turning abandoned industrial sites using digital technology in order to revitalize the economic activity, the life and the ecological activity of a neighborhood and its surroundings. The visited premises, Le Blan-Lafont, were former textile factories which went bankrupted in 1989 and were rehabilitated into an innovation center and incubator in 2009. The mission served by EuraTechnologies is to create sustainable jobs, build innovative businesses, transform the traditional economy through sustainable innovation and create impact in the region.



1900

**Le Blan et Lafont
textile factories open**



1989

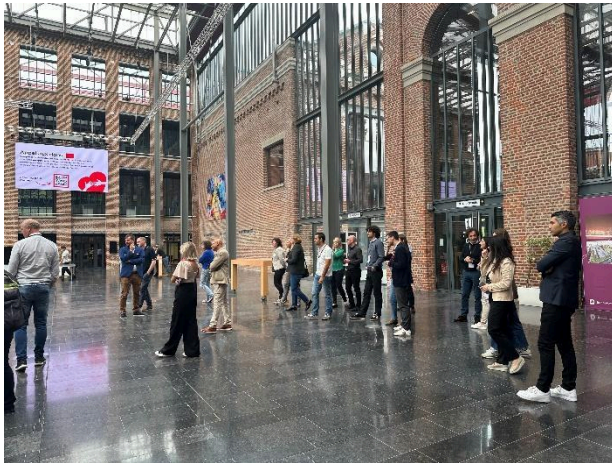
**Bankruptcy, the
site is abandoned**



2009

**EuraTechnologies is
inaugurated**

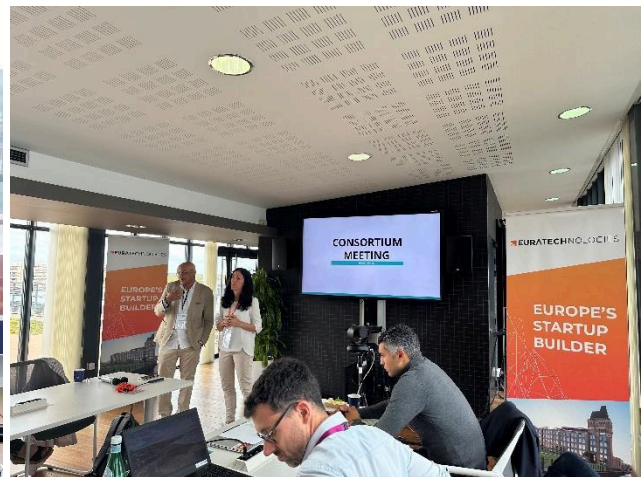
Participants notably visited the Learning district, a 200 m² space entirely dedicated to digital initiation and training activities, the incubators areas in which 200 startups are incubated yearly, and the floors where around 120 companies have their offices.



Project consortium meeting

The kick-off meeting was coordinated by the Lead Partner PACT and addressed aspects such as project calendar, reminder of activities to be delivered and deadline, communication activities and reporting matters.

The consortium had the opportunity to ask question to Ilaria RAMAGLIONI, Senior Policy Officer at Interreg Europe and UnicornQuest's project officer.



Visit of a local Unicorn, Exotec

The participants then took a bus to visit Exotec, a local unicorn, and met with the Yann LECA, the CFO of Exotec. Exotec is a French company, located in Croix (Hauts-de-France) that manufactures retail order preparation systems. Valued at two billion dollars in January 2022, Exotec was the 25th French startup – and the first French industrial company – to become a unicorn.

Partners and stakeholders had the opportunity to visit Exotec's factories and facilities, demonstrating the building and use of their robot. The order picking solution designed by Exotec, the Skypod, is a system based on a fleet of autonomous mobile robots controlled by a software layer with advanced algorithms that will choose which order to assemble at which time, and send the robots to fetch the bins in the warehouse in order to bring the items to the operator, with one objective: to get the orders out of the system as quickly as possible. Exotec is the only company in the world capable of making a robot that moves freely in three dimensions, with the ability to climb onto racks.



Visit of Lille

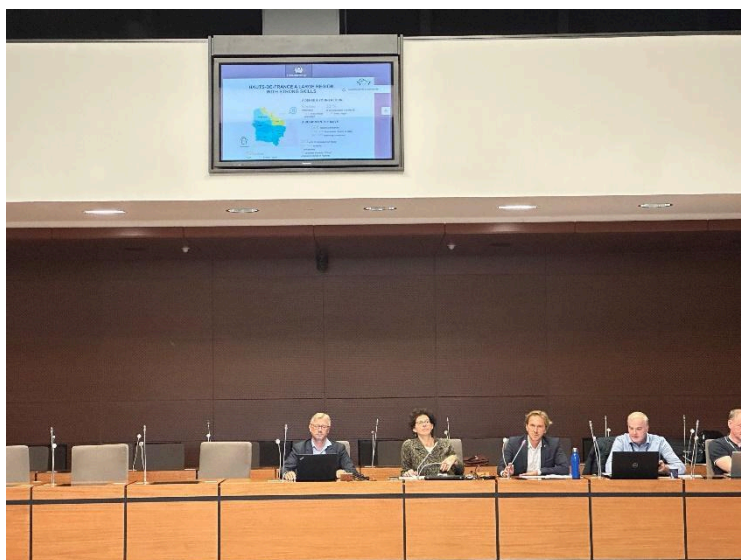
At the end of the day, participants visited the city of Lille through a unique guided tour on the city's history and brewing culture.



Presentation of Hauts-de-France Regional Council

The second day was hosted at the Hauts-de-France Regional Council and a presentation from the regional council's representatives:

- Frédéric SINGER Manager of the Department “Filière d’excellence” (“Industry of Excellence”) and Mélanie VALLEE, SRDEII Project manager, presented the Hauts-de-France Region and the policy instrument: Regional Plan for Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalization (SRDEII)
- Caroline GAUTHIER and Christophe ULIAZS, Interreg Europe National Contact Point, explained the role of National Contact Points and existing Interreg programmes in the region.



CASE Workshop Training

The second CASE Workshop Training was animated by Americo Mateus from PACT. The Harvard Case Method was explained. Partners then practiced, in groups, a CASE workshop using an already written case that was shared beforehand. Partners were able to better understand what is expected in the preparation of a CASE and how should a workshop be facilitated.

Meeting with regional stakeholders

Finally, the visit closed with a meeting and exchanges with regional stakeholders active in supporting companies in the region. The following stakeholders presented their activities and answered to partners questions:

- Maxime Vermeulen, Directeur Invest at Hello Lille, Lille's attractiveness agency.
- Louise Vignau, European Research and Innovation Project Officer at Hauts de France Innovation Développement (HDFID), the regional innovation agency.
- Mariam Saad, European Enterprise Network Event and Communication from the Officer at Hauts-de-France Chambre of Commerce and Industry (CCI).

