



MILIA 2002 AND LINKS WITH SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS: A SUCCESS FOR THE NORTH EAST REGION

Milia is an international interactive media show held annually in the South of France which brings together digital media professionals from around the world. This year a record 30 delegates attended the show from the North East of England, larger than any other UK delegation.

The delegation shared a joint exhibition stand, which showcased leading edge content and services from nine exhibiting companies; Mere Mortals, Enigma Interactive, Eutechnyx, AskAlix, Images, Chilli Media, Urban River, Superkrush and The Beat Suite. All of the companies were attending for the first time and the results have been fantastic, with delegates building on relationships with existing clients as well as meeting new ones.

Eutechnyx had a particularly successful show. They sold their game **Big Mutha Truckers** on Sony PlayStation 2 and Microsoft XBox to Empire Interactive, bringing over £1million of revenue to the North East, and they are in the process of agreeing another deal with a US publisher as a result of the show. The Gateshead based games company has been having a great year, as well as their success at Milia, it was announced in April that they ranked in the 2002 Deloitte & Touche Technology Fast 500, a ranking of the 500 fastest growing technology companies in Europe.

As well as the business Eutechnyx did at the show itself, Business Development Director, Darren Jobling, highlighted the benefits of joining a larger delegation, "we did a great deal of networking with other local companies which has led to the possibility of some joint ventures with other North East companies new to the games business. Also, a lot of interest has been generated in Eutechnyx with the local government agencies that have become aware of what we do, the number of people Eutechnyx employs, and the revenue we bring into the Technology sector of the North East".

The trip was also a productive one for Chilli Media, Simon Brown has been enthusiastic about the benefits for his company, "Milia has been a real eye

opener for us as a business, we gained several useful contacts and potential clients, we're already looking forward to next year. The regional networking alone made it worthwhile".

The delegation was organised by the Digital Media Network with help from the French Business Council and Club Sophia UK. Project Manager, Sophie Lee, said, "The delegation to Milia 2002 was a real success, the number of companies that did business at the show made it very worthwhile, we now want to build on this success for future delegations". Sue McDonnell from BT, one of the delegation sponsors, has also been delighted with the results, "BT supported the delegation to promote their involvement in the digital media cluster. We feel we have really benefited from involvement and developed a relationship with the digital media companies attending".

Although most of the activity focused on the opportunities at Milia 2002, Club Sophia UK helped the participating companies meet potential partners at Sophia Antipolis the science and technology park which is only 20 miles away in Nice.

Also, in collaboration with the British Consulate-General in Marseilles, Club Sophia UK organised a working dinner at the prestigious Carlton hotel in Cannes. The objective of the meeting was to bring together the decision makers in the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur region with North East representatives in order to explore key opportunities for collaboration and investment between the two regions.

This evening was very successful and helped the participants analyse existing and future links between the two regions relating particularly to current and future developments in European regional and research funding. The proposed themes included nanotechnology and biotechnology, participation to the Sixth Framework programme (2002-2006) and interregional projects (Interreg 2 and JEV).

Following this meeting Club Sophia UK was invited to represent the North East of England and partner with the Chamber of Commerce Nice Côte d'Azur (Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre), the Cambridge Centre for Entrepreneurship and the Turin Chamber of Commerce in order to bid for a fifth framework programme project: SME Innovation. The project will bring excellent international network opportunities for the region's SMEs and support organisations.

The DMN and Club Sophia UK are currently gauging the level of interest for the visit to Milia 2003. Following the success this year it looks like most of the companies that attended Milia 2002 will be making a second visit.

By Sophie Lee, project manager DMN and Estelle Chatard, project manager Club
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