



The political Climate in Ribe County

The political climate in Ribe County is in general terms characterised by a willingness to co-operate. Of course there are political disagreements and political challenges, but on an overall level, the politicians have realised, that it does not serve to have too strong local ideas and / or ideas to protect one municipality against another. The politicians seem to have realised that if the region shall develop, the municipalities have to co-operate and look at the region as a whole, with the industrial, cultural, natural and human assets it possesses. *This idea is the one which is behind the establishment of EU Vest.*

EU Vest started as a pilot project that was economically supported by the agency of industry and housing. The conclusion from that pilot project was that some of the areas, where municipalities could co-operate with a common gain, were industrial development and internationalisation, hence EU Vest was created with the overall objective to support the industrial development and the internationalisation process of the region's enterprises and other institutions. Over the years, the objective has changed and enlarged to be holistic and oriented towards regional development as a whole.

EU Vest was created as a member organisation, where the municipalities are members, and where each municipality pays in relation to the population. All mayors are represented in the executive board, where they discuss and take common decisions.

The creation of a membership organisation like EU Vest, is a typical Danish tradition, which is based on democratic principles, where the overall idea is to get as many partners involved as possible instead of creating an "exclusive club" and give all members the same rights and the same level of influence. This has shown extremely motivating for the political engagement and the willingness to co-operate.

Moreover, the organisation of the political co-operation through EU Vest is also very stimulating for the consultants working in EU Vest, as it is very easy to get into contact with the political level, and getting a feeling that the work we are doing is being noticed and is making a difference! Maybe not always as quickly as we want to, but the changes happen little by little.....

As described, the willingness to co-operate and find concrete solutions is very strong, but the willingness to develop overall regional strategies is not. Among our liberal politicians, the overall opinion is that strategies can be good, but concrete results are better....!!! It seems like there is a common idea that strategies risk to become too academic, without any concrete results.

We have often discussed whether this is a problem or not. Sometimes when we have to work on a regional level, it could be a very helpful guideline for us to have an overall regional goal, but on the other hand, the present situation provides a flexibility in our work, as all good ideas are welcome as long as they are presented in a project – and result oriented way to the politicians.

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Regional Key Competencies

- a way to manage structural changes (AT6)

HHA / EU Vest

