

Located towards the very head of the world's longest fjord, the 160km Sognefjord, the artisans make the shoes by hand against a backdrop of legends. Cruise ships change every morning as thousands of tourists flock to see the spectacular sights of this beautiful region. Seldom has a product had a better launch pad or a better location.



The customers... and the packaging - does it come any better than this?

The EU-financed project has a total of 7 partner regions in 7 countries around the North Atlantic, each with their own language, culture, heritage and traditions. In common they have the interest and the farsightedness to see that unless supported and aided, some of the rich inheritance of skills will gradually fade away, leaving many communities without jobs and local businesses. To reverse the downward spiral, the Économusée Northern Europe project builds on a Canadian idea for rebuilding and re-launching the best of local craft businesses.



Queued up

Only the day before The Launch, the Project Steering Group visited the Oselvar workshop, home of the famous rowing boat. This craft business had its feasibility study approved at the last PSG meeting and is now heading for the conversion to full Économusée Northern Europe status, with an opening hopefully before Christmas. In Northern Ireland, the candidate artisan Marion Woodburn is moving towards starting the physical conversion work on her premises. Again, the opening could come very soon! It is great to see the project starting to gather real momentum.



Welcome to Austevoll, Chair of ENE, Councillor Helge Njåstad receives the PSG members.

Finally, the Website is Live!

At the Osevar workshop the project Website was launched and www.economusee.no is now part of the information provision and artisan support for the Économusée Northern Europe. Even this event was very well attended and local media followed the project from one event to the other to see how the project concept had been translated in to reality. Project Chair Councillor Njåstad first provided a briefing to his impressive Municipality, home to a third of the Norwegian deep-sea trawler fleet. www.oselvarverkstaden.no



The Oselvar, the Viking craft traditions as still alive

TV series

Canadian Partner, International Économusée Network Society has recently scored a particular success with its series of TV programmes covering a series of their local sites.

Night at the Museum....

At present several of the IENS candidates are working towards the opening. One of these, Bilodeau Inc., based at Normandin 330 km north of Quebec City, makes fur boots, using local traditional designs and furs. Their unique skills in taxidermy and animal physiology etc. has meant that their skills are in demand in very wide circles, in fact, they produce animated animals for many cinema released films like Night at the Museum. www.bilodeauinc.com The business was launched as an Économusée by The Honourable Denis Lebel, Minister of State for Canadian Economic Development.



Beautiful Inuit boot making and the Burgundy Squid Café, Change island

Stages and Stores

At Change Island, off the Canadian eastern seaboard, the plans are ready for the work to convert the building to better fit with the Économusée concept. The intriguingly named **Burgundy Squid Café**, (in a building painted in a colour described as 'red ochre') will accommodate the new sales outlet. The local artisans produce handcrafted woollen products on a Newfoundland theme. The remoteness of this business means that the internet and the project websites will be particularly important.

www.stagesandstores.com and the www.economusee.com

Greenland Partners building up steam

The superb boots featured in the photo above represent one of the highly developed crafts from Greenland. Along with beading and lace, they have a significant base of crafts to pick from. On these boots, each of the tiny black and white patches has been stitched on individually. Local interest in the project is growing as are ambitions for their input into a Phase II of the project! Expectations are growing for a further submission....



Change Islands in April.



Artisans at work at Bilodeau.



Chocomotive

Being successful, and being located next to a world-famous hotel – in an Abandoned railway station is bound to trigger plenty of comments about 'being on the right track'... Chocolatier Chocomotive sells handcrafted chocolate designs to many of North America's most famous politicians as they meet next door at the renowned Chateau Montebello. www.chocomotive.ca



Chocomotive in action

Meanwhile in Iceland...

The latest candidate craft has been selected, a special cheesemaker based in Northwestern Iceland. Gusta Design, meanwhile is proceeding towards the conversion, which has been scheduled for later this year, or early 2010, to accommodate other alterations to the business routine. www.gustadesign.is

Filana,

The Faeroese specialist wool spinner Filana is now moving forward towards plans for the future.

Blacksmith

Even the architect planning Mikkjal's new forge has discovered a new supplier! As the only working blacksmith in the islands, this looks like a very sound business indeed. Working with a Norwegian professor, expert on metalwork techniques since the Vikings, the dream of taking on his forefather's cherished skills is slowly moving towards reality.

New project badge

After a carefully run selection process, Marion Woodburn Jewellery won the contract to supply the project with its distinct badge. The marriage of the Canadian logo, displaying the traditions of the past with the project logo with a wave of new interests sweeping in from Europe, Marion's design was a clear winner. The solid silver pin will be a Badge of Honour for all who are associated with the project. Needless to say, the Norwegian Minister opening the first Économusée wore her new badge within minutes of receiving the gift.

Who is next?

It is likely to be a close run thing who opens next as an Économusée; Studio Donegal and Marion Woodburn Jewellery are both powering ahead with their plans, as is the Oselvar workshop. Scullion Hurls, in Northern Ireland are also working on great plans for the conversion of their business.

www.studiodonegal.ie

www.scullionhurls.com



www.economusees.com



www.imealltra.net



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