



The Studios

Howest University College West Flanders has, thanks to the North Sea Region Interreg project E-CLIC, been able to set up its first business accelerator, The Studios. The Studios was set up to stimulate entrepreneurship with bright young people. Business incubators like The Studios are not only launching points for new businesses but also places where ideas take off and are disseminated around so that entrepreneurship becomes a common word in the European vocabulary like it is in the American one.

Places like The Studios can play an important role in knocking down all sorts of walls and barriers and in opening up European regions and countries, locally and internationally, to various, exciting entrepreneurial adventures.

The entrepreneurship spirit in Europe has weakened even further thanks to bad economic climates, which feed the fear of failure. Places like The Studios at Howest can help to encourage students and graduates to try a winding path and step out of the "safety zone". The Studios can continue to setting up student and business exchanges with international partners and open up worlds and networks for people. It is a place, where students and businesses can pitch ideas and make contacts. As Antonio Tajani, the European Commission Vice-President, states in *NewEurope.eu*: "Small and medium sized enterprises run by dynamic entrepreneurs are the job generators of Europe". The concept of The Studios is a main key for stimulating growth in Europe for the future.

The Studios at Howest proudly opened its doors to the public on the 9th of September 2010. Many guests came to this well-publicized event to see our European Collaborative Innovation Centre in all its glory. We were proud to have presentations by Howest's general manager Lode De Geyter, The Studios manager Christel De Maeyer, The Studios entrepreneurs, Triangle Factory, elevenfeet and MobileMinds and speakers from Flanders Investment and Trade and from the regional government. The presenters and the audience were a perfect triple-helix mix of education, industry and government, which allowed for an evening of worthwhile networking. We even heard that some great contacts were made for some of the start-ups at The Studios. For example, after seeing a 3D presentation of The Studios made by Triangle Factory, a company in the audience set up a meeting with them, which has led to their working together on a big marketing campaign.

We also got to introduce The Studios to our colleagues at Howest. Now they are more equipped to spread the word about The Studios and to hopefully further motivate students at Howest to be entrepreneurial. With such a great business accelerator on campus, Howest students have a great place to set up a business at their fingertips. It's essential for us to get this information out to as many people as possible, and the opening on September surely helped us to do that.

The Studios opening also led us to make Studios brochures and notebooks to hand out to everyone. These have been a helpful tool in letting people know what The Studios has to offer. We are sure this has already led to and will continue to lead to a broader network and some great results!

We were pleased to see several of our E-Clic German partners at our opening and even managed to all speak with people from the Smart Cities project, who were also guests at the opening.

