

# EU News Bulletin

The latest news, funding and events from the EU for local and regional government

## Number 38 – May 2007

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Irish Regions Office



INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION

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## FUNDING

### Town Twinning 2007

The next deadlines for applications under the EU's Town Twinning Programme are 1 June and 1 September 2007. This call covers Town Twinning Citizens' Meetings, which bring together citizens from twinned towns and aims to reinforce the participants' commitment to European integration through discussions and debates on the future of the EU. Further details at:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/act ion1/towntwining/funding\\_en.htm](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/act ion1/towntwining/funding_en.htm) or contact: Imogen Sudbery, IPA, Tel: 01 240 3702, e-mail: [isudbery@ipa.ie](mailto:isudbery@ipa.ie)

### European Destinations of Excellence

The European Commission has published a call for proposals on the establishment of a procedure for the selection of European destinations of excellence. All Member States will have the opportunity to select one destination, which will then advance to a European-level award scheme to be organised in 2008. The overall theme is, "Tourism and Local Intangible Heritage." The aim is to reward destinations that have developed new tourism products based on this theme. The total budget is €700,000, with a maximum of €35,000 per proposal. Deadline for submission: 16 July 2007. Further details at: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/gr ants/themes\\_2007/doc/0\\_EDEN\\_2007\\_call.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/gr ants/themes_2007/doc/0_EDEN_2007_call.pdf)

### Mutual learning on Employment

The European Commission has published a call for proposals under the PROGRESS programme on "follow-up and dissemination activities to the Mutual Learning Programme of the European Employment Strategy (EES)." The objective of the call is to build on,

and complement European-wide activities, which aim to: develop partnerships or networks, encourage mutual learning, and/or promote a wider and more effective dissemination of knowledge about the EES and its implementation. The total budget is €1.0 million, with co-financing of up to 75%. Closing date for applications: 29 June 2007. Further details at: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/ emplweb/tenders/tenders\\_en.cfm?id=1326](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/ emplweb/tenders/tenders_en.cfm?id=1326)

### Women & Youth Issues

The European Commission office in Ireland has published a call for proposals from national and regional civil society groups on information actions relating to issues of concern to youth and women. The call specifically relates to initiatives to promote public participation in debates on topics of European interest in the framework of the European Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate. Actions proposed should also increase dialogue on issues related to the EU between the target groups and political authorities. A budget of €100,000 is available, with co-financing of up to 70%. Deadline for proposals: 15 June 2007. Further details at: [http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/tenders\\_and\\_grants/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/tenders_and_grants/index_en.htm)

### Local Energy Action Award

For the second consecutive year, ManagEnergy, an initiative of the European Commission to support action on energy efficiency and renewable energies at the local and regional level, will organise a Local Energy Action Award at the European Sustainable Energy Week in 2008. Case studies submitted will not just be eligible for the award but will also be publicised in the ManagEnergy newsletter, on the website and at ManagEnergy events. Further details at: <http://www.managenergy.net/download/ CaseStudyTemplate.doc>

## NEWS & POLICY

### Research Funding for SMEs

The European Commission is currently finalising proposals for a new research funding initiative for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The new initiative, called 'Eurostars', will have a budget of €400 million during the period 2000-13, made up of €100 million from the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Research and €300 million from participating Member States. Its focus will be on providing support to near-market research carried out by SMEs. Projects should last for a maximum of three years and the results should be ready for release on the market two years after project completion (or, in the case of medical products, two years should be enough to prepare them for clinical trials). The plan is to fund around 90 projects per year, on the basis that each project would have an average overall budget of €1.4 million, with public co-financing of around 50%. Projects will need to involve at least two SMEs from two participating countries. There will be two deadlines for applications each year, with the first planned for 2 December 2007. *Further details at:* <http://www.eurostars-eureka.eu/tiles/main.html>

### Consultation on Biofuels

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the development of the biofuels sector in Europe. The consultation follows the recently adopted Energy Policy for Europe, which includes a binding target of 10% biofuels in the transport fuel mix by 2020. The consultation is aimed at helping the Commission to draft proposals on incorporating these targets into legislation. In particular, it looks at how best to achieve the 10% biofuels target while also ensuring environmental sustainability. The Commission is looking for the views of public authorities, businesses, NGOs and other interested parties on four key questions: How should a biofuels sustainability system be designed? How should overall effects on land use be monitored? How should the use of second-generation biofuels be encouraged? What further action is needed to achieve a 10% biofuels share? The consultation is open until 4 June 2007. *Further details at:* [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/consultation/biofuels\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/consultation/biofuels_en.htm)

### Consultation: Sustainable Tourism

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on an "Agenda for Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism." The consultation seeks to gather views on a report prepared by the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG – made up of tourism stakeholders from across the EU) entitled "Action for more Sustainable European Tourism", published in February 2007, and also to gather views on possible new initiatives at EU level, which could usefully complement Member State initiatives. Based on the consultation, the Commission plans to present a new "Agenda for Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism" in September 2007. This will provide the general framework for the implementation of the 2006 Communication, "A Renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a Stronger Partnership for European Tourism", which highlighted tourism as one of the EU economic activities with more potential to generate growth and employment, provided that its development takes place in a sustainable way. The consultation is open until 14th June 2007. *Further details at:* [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/services/tourism/sustainability\\_public\\_consultation.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/services/tourism/sustainability_public_consultation.htm)

### First European Strategy for Culture

On May 10, the European Commission adopted a strategy paper entitled, "A European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World". The paper presents three major objectives, which together form a new cultural strategy for the European Institutions, the Member States, and the cultural and creative sector: 1. Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; 2. Promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy; and 3. Promotion of culture as a vital element in the EU's international relations. A fundamental feature of the new policy is the proposal to introduce a more structured system of cooperation between the Member States and the EU institutions on cultural matters. The system would be based on the 'open method of coordination' (OMC), which has been successfully used to structure the collaboration of Member States and the EU in the area of education and training, youth and social protection. Under this system, the Member States

and the European Commission would jointly agree on general objectives and progress towards achieving these would be reviewed every two years. The Communication also seeks to involve the cultural sector more closely in European affairs by introducing improved structures for dialogue and partnership through a new "Cultural Forum". The European strategy for culture will be complemented by other actions in the area of culture, such as the forthcoming European Year for Intercultural Dialogue 2008. *Further details at:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/communication/comm\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/communication/comm_en.html)

### Europe for Citizens

The new "Europe for Citizens" programme was officially launched on 10 May. The programme aims to promote greater civic participation in Europe in order to enhance the participation of EU citizens in the construction of Europe. The programme promotes active European citizenship by jointly funding projects in the participating countries under four main headings: Action 1, "Active citizens for Europe": this involves citizens directly, either through activities linked to town-twinning or through other kinds of citizens' projects; Action 2, "Active civil society for Europe": this is targeted at Europe-wide civil society organizations, which can receive either structural support on the basis of their work programme or support for trans-national projects; Action 3, "Together for Europe": this supports high visibility events, studies and information tools, addressing the widest possible trans European audience and making Europe more tangible for citizens; and Action 4, "Active European Remembrance": supporting the commemoration of the victims of nazism and stalinism. The overall budget for the programme for 2007- 2013 is € 215 million. *Further details at:* [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.html)

### New EU Policy on Immigration

On May 16, the European Commission published proposals for a new European policy on immigration. The Commission's proposals include: a Communication on "EU Migration Policy – The Way Forward," which explains the EU strategy on immigration; a Communication on legal movements of people, which looks at ways to facilitate "circular migration" (a new mechanism

by which non-EU workers would be allowed into the EU when work is available and would then return when the work ceases), offering the potential to help fulfil labour needs in Europe while responding to the development needs of countries of origin; a proposal for a Directive providing for sanctions against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals; and a proposal to apply a “Global Approach” to migration from the East and South East. The Commission believes its proposals will help to better match job offers in the EU Member States with job seekers from third countries. Currently, there is an estimated 5 to 7 million illegal immigrants in the EU, but 87% of these are undereducated and do not meet the union’s labour market needs. Immigrant labour is seen as a key component of economic growth in the EU in the coming years, with labour shortages expected to peak in 20 years time when 25 million Europeans are expected to retire from work. To prepare for this, the European Commission suggests pooling offers from individual Member States and then conducting talks with third countries that can provide the required labour. EU Member States would then ensure recognition of local diplomas, provide additional professional and language training, as well as granting visas. Africa and the EU’s eastern and south-eastern neighbours are expected to be the main focus of this initiative, providing skilled workers in sectors such as agriculture, construction and tourism.

Further details at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/im/migration/fsj\\_immigration\\_intro\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/im/migration/fsj_immigration_intro_en.htm)

### **Call for Experts on Territorial Cooperation**

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) has launched an open call for expressions of interest in the establishment of an Expert Group on European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) – a new provision to facilitate the establishment of cross-border legal structures in the EU. Political action taken by the CoR on EGTC matters aims to be strictly evidence-based. Therefore, the Committee has decided to launch a call to facilitate the setting-up of a new Expert Group on the subject. The aims of the Group, which will act as a bridge between practitioners and institutions, will be: to monitor the adoption and implementation of provisions at Member State level; to facilitate the exchange of experiences on the establishment of EGTCs at territorial level and share knowledge of best practices; to identify

the potential exploitation of EGTC as a tool for cohesive territorial development; and to improve communication on EGTC opportunities and challenges at territorial level. The Group’s activities (meetings, collection and exchange of information, analysis and reports) will be led by the CoR. The Group will be composed of experts from local and regional authorities or existing legal structures for territorial cooperation. Participation in the Group will be on a voluntary basis. The CoR will initially select about 30 organisations and designated experts. The deadline for submission of candidatures is 18 June 2007. Further details at:

[http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/activities/egtc\\_expert.htm](http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/activities/egtc_expert.htm)

### **Update on Open Days 2007**

As outlined in the EU News Bulletin no. 36, the Irish Regions Office will participate in Open Days 2007 as a member of the ‘Celtic Connections’ conglomerate, which also includes Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, South West England, Brittany (FR), Asturias (ES) and Norte (P). The overall theme for Open Days 2007: European Week of Regions & Cities is, “Making it Happen: Regions Delivering Growth and Jobs,” and during the week, events will focus on aspects of the implementation of the new round of Structural Funds programmes in the period 2007-13. The Celtic Connections conglomerate will organise and host two seminars, one on Maritime Policy (on Tuesday, 9 October 2007, 14.30-16.30) and one on Energy Policy (on Wednesday, 10 October 2007, 11.30-13.30). The latter will focus in particular on renewable energy and new energy technologies. Online registration for Open Days 2007 seminars and workshops is expected to begin on 1 July 2007. Further details at:

<http://www.opendays.europa.eu>

### **Call for Local Action on Energy**

The European Commission is inviting proposals from Local Energy Agencies interested in conceiving, organizing and promoting a series of events that will help to raise public awareness of energy issues and contribute to changing patterns of energy consumption. These events could take the form of “Energy Days” or “Campaign Events”, both of which are PR events that can be planned as new initiatives or as part of an existing seminar, conference or workshop. While Campaign Events

would essentially target specialists, businesses and decision-makers, Energy Days are aimed more at the general public. Energy Days aim to demonstrate to a wide audience that sustainable energy technologies are viable, cost effective and better for the environment. The European Commission’s Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign will support any proposed local events with technical advice, communication tools and media promotion. Those participating will also be officially entitled to use the Campaign logo and will be highlighted on the Sustainable Energy Europe website. Further details at:

[http://www.sustenergy.org/UserFiles/File/Energy\\_Day\\_2007.pdf](http://www.sustenergy.org/UserFiles/File/Energy_Day_2007.pdf)

### **Lack of Data on Drink-Driving in Ireland**

A report published by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) on 17 April highlights the lack of data on drink-driving in Ireland and indicates mixed progress in the EU generally in relation to reducing the number of deaths from alcohol-related accidents. The report divides EU countries into three groups. In the first group of nine countries, reductions in deaths from drink-driving accidents are greater than reductions in deaths from other crashes in the period 1996-2005. The biggest difference was found in the Czech Republic where deaths from alcohol related accidents dropped more than 11% per year faster than other road deaths. Germany, Poland, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Latvia, Austria, France and Greece also had positive results. In a second group of countries drink-driving related traffic deaths dropped more slowly than deaths not related to drink-driving. In five of these: Hungary, Lithuania, Finland, Spain and Great Britain, there was even an increase in drink-driving deaths during the period 1996 to 2005. In relation to the third group, which includes Ireland, Belgium, Italy, Malta, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, the report points to the alarming lack of knowledge surrounding the issue of drink-driving. It notes that these countries are not able to produce the data needed to evaluate the developments in the drink-driving situation over time. It also shows that actual numbers of drink-driving deaths are considerably higher than reflected in reports from police and medical staff. Further details at:

<http://www.etsc.be/PIN.php>

## EVENTS

### 12 June 2007, Brussels

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the European Parliament are organising a conference on "The Urban-Rural Dynamic: Towards an Integrated Territorial Governance." The conference will highlight the interdependence between urban and rural areas and examine key challenges and potentials in areas such as economic development, innovation, and spatial planning and nature conservation. It will also look at ways to strengthen urban-rural partnerships and the link between rural development policies and regional policy. Further details at: [http://www.ccre.org/champs\\_activites\\_detail\\_news\\_en.htm?ID=1040&idca=3116](http://www.ccre.org/champs_activites_detail_news_en.htm?ID=1040&idca=3116)

### 22 June 2007, Taunton (UK)

The South West Region (UK) is organising a seminar to highlight opportunities under the new Structural Funds programmes for 2007-2013, in particular the North West Europe, Atlantic Area, and Interreg IVC programmes. The organisers are keen to include representatives from other EU regions that will be involved in these programmes and to provide an opportunity to discuss potential projects and present case studies of successful projects from 2000-'06. Further details at: <http://www.southwestuk.eu/pages/key-events/funding-roadshows/territorial-co-operation/view.html>

### 29 June 2007, Cornwall (UK)

The conference, "Energy in Regional Development – Learning from European Best Practice" will look at best practice from EU regions that have implemented successful sustainable energy programmes. These include the regions of Navarra (Spain), Samso (Denmark), Gussing (Austria), Apeldoorn (Netherlands) and Gothenburg (Sweden). Delegates will consider how these examples can help other regions to develop low-carbon regional economies. Details from: Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership. E: [lindsay@csep.co.uk](mailto:lindsay@csep.co.uk), Tel: +44 (0) 1209 614 974

### 29 June 2007, London (UK)

Partners in the ESPACE (European Spatial Planning: Adapting to Climate Events) project are organising a conference on, "Planning in a Changing Climate." The project publication, "ESPACE – Planning in a Changing Climate," will also be officially launched at the event. The conference (and publication) will examine how adaptation to climate change can be incorporated into spatial planning strategies and provide policy guidance, tools and mechanisms for integrating adaptation strategies into planning systems and processes at local, regional, national and European levels. The ESPACE project is funded by the North West Europe Interreg IIIB Programme. Further details at: <http://www.espace-project.org/publications/final%20conference/invitationv4.pdf>

### 8-9 Nov. 2007, Stockholm (Sweden)

The "Clean Vehicles and Fuels, European Symposium and Exhibition," is aimed at addressing climate change and reducing the dependency of the transport sector on oil. Current initiatives and projects will be presented and national and international policies and trends will be discussed over the two days. Products and services for cleaner vehicles and cleaner fuels will also be on display. Further details at: [www.cleanvehicles.net](http://www.cleanvehicles.net)

## NETWORKS

### ManagEnergy Network

ManagEnergy is an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, which aims to support organisations working on energy efficiency and renewable energies at local and regional level. ManagEnergy Network membership is open to all local and regional energy actors with a public mandate. Benefits of membership include: the right to use the ManagEnergy logo; free access to a Sectoral Advice facility (which makes short-term expert technical assistance available free of charge); the right to

participate in selected discussion fora and discussion groups organised by the European Commission; priority in participating in ManagEnergy training events; and priority in securing ManagEnergy and European Commission staff participation in events. Further detail at: <http://www.managenergy.net/network.html> or contact Chiara Anglesio on [sa@managenergy.net](mailto:sa@managenergy.net)

## PUBLICATIONS

### EU Handbook on Integration

On May 10, the European Commission published the latest edition of the 'European Handbook on Integration', highlighting best practices and lessons learned on the integration of immigrants in the EU. The handbook deals with topics such as induction courses for new immigrants and refugees, civic participation and indicators on education, employment and entrepreneurship. A first edition of the handbook was published in 2004. Further details at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/doc\\_centre/immigration/integration/doc\\_immigration\\_integration\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/immigration/integration/doc_immigration_integration_en.htm)

**Irish Regions Office**  
6 Rond-Point Schuman,  
B-1040 Brussels  
Fax: +32 2 2828475  
Website: [www.iro.ie](http://www.iro.ie)

Robert Collins  
E: [robert.collins@iro.ie](mailto:robert.collins@iro.ie)  
Tel: +32 2 282 8474

Eamon O'Hara  
E: [eamon.ohara@iro.ie](mailto:eamon.ohara@iro.ie)  
Tel: +32 2 282 8477

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