

# EU News Bulletin

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

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Irish Regions Office



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## FUNDING

### Recent Calls

#### ICT for user-friendly administrations, public services and inclusion

(CIP - ICT Policy Support Programme)  
Last month's bulletin contained details of a call on "ICT for Energy Efficiency & Urban Sustainability". Additionally this call is prioritising projects on:

- implementing the Services Directive
- capacity building for e-Inclusion
- certification of eHealth products
- consensus building and experience sharing on the future of the Internet.

Budget: €39 million. Deadline: 9 September. *Further details:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/ict\\_psp/participating/calls/call\\_proposals\\_08/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/participating/calls/call_proposals_08/index_en.htm)

#### Networks for the Competitiveness and Sustainability of European Tourism

The DG ENTERPRISE Grants Programme will support knowledge gathering/sharing, awareness-raising, and education and capacity building towards improving the sustainability performance of European tourism by underlining the competitive advantage to be derived by small and micro tourism enterprises from sustainable activities. Identifying useful practices and tools; joint actions between stakeholders that address sustainability challenges; and involving knowledge-creating actors in the integration of

sustainability principles into existing practices are actions envisaged. Budget: Up to €100,000 per action at 50% of eligible costs. Deadline: 31 July. *Further details:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/files/themes\\_2008/calls\\_prop.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/files/themes_2008/calls_prop.htm)

#### Renewable & Smart Energy

(FP7 '2008 Cooperation' Work Programme – ENERGY)

Applications are sought for collaborative projects on:

- renewable electricity generation
- renewable fuel production
- clean coal technologies and activity energy
- smart energy networks
- energy efficiency and savings

Budget: €147 million. Deadline: 8 October (see national information event details on page 4). *Further details:*

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=usersite.FP7DetailsCallPage&CALL\\_ID=127&ACT\\_CODE=ENERGY#infopack](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=usersite.FP7DetailsCallPage&CALL_ID=127&ACT_CODE=ENERGY#infopack)

#### Youth in Action programme

Support is available for collaborative information activities for young people and youth workers and entailing:

- participation of young people
- cultural diversity
- European citizenship
- inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities

Budget: €900,000. Deadline: 30 June.

*Further details:*

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:109:0013:0014:EN:PDF>

#### Citizens' Projects and Support Measures

The 'Europe for Citizens' programme will support citizens' panels towards dialogue with the EU on intercultural relations; female participation in political life; sport for active citizenship and social inclusion; active European citizenship institutional development; and the 2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation (see 'News'). Budget: €75-150,000 per action at 60% of eligible costs. Deadline: 1 July. *Further details:*

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/action1/citizens-projects/call/index\\_en.htm](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/action1/citizens-projects/call/index_en.htm)

#### Young People and Science

The 'Science in Society' sub-programme of FP7 Capacities will support formal and informal science education through schools, science centres, museums and other relevant and innovative means.

Budget: €4.78 million. Deadline: 24 July.

*Further details:*

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=usersite.FP7DetailsCallPage&CALL\\_ID=117](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=usersite.FP7DetailsCallPage&CALL_ID=117)

#### Eco-Innovation in Enterprises

(CIP EIP)

Innovative projects are sought on the environmental management and eco-design of products, processes and services and the greening of business (smart purchasing) in material recycling, sustainable construction, and the food & drink industry. SMEs will receive priority. Budget: €28 million. Deadline: 11 September. *Further details:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/ecoinnovation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/ecoinnovation/index_en.htm)

## Imminent Deadlines

(contact the IRO for more details)

- **eContentplus** - geographic information; educational content; digital libraries: 12 June
- **European Tourist Destinations of Excellence** - economic growth pursued in such a way as to ensure the social, cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism: 16 June
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (PROGRESS)** - including socially responsible production, consumption & investment: 18 June
- **Intelligent Energy Europe** Including strategic studies and structures and instruments for sustainable energy development: 26 June
- **Bottom-up (regional-scale) R&D policy coordination initiatives** - development of an appropriate R&D policy mix; conditions for stimulating private R&D investment; technology transfer (OMC-NET under FP7 Capacities): 26 June
- **Interreg IVB Atlantic Area:** First call extended until 27 June.

## NEWS & POLICY

### Innovative Regional Projects: Case Studies

Those involved in the fields of knowledge transfer; business networking; bringing ideas to market; information society applications and services for citizens and businesses; and the use of innovation for sustainable development; can now avail of 122 detailed online case studies of relevance to their fields of activity. This selection has been gathered from among Europe's regions and cities' project activity as co-financed under EU Cohesion Policy during the 2000-2006 period. The studies present the objectives and activities of the projects, the strategic context, the innovative aspects, partnership, obstacles in terms of design or implementation, results and impacts from Objective 1 and 2 programmes and include 38 examples from the regional programmes of innovative actions and profiles of 26 RegioStars 2008 Finalists.

Further information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/studies\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/studies_en.cfm)

### Offshore wind energy

The Commission has opened a consultation on offshore wind energy to feed into an EU Action Plan for offshore wind energy. The Action Plan recognises both the potential of this resource to make a significant contribution towards the 20% target for the overall share of renewable energy by 2020 (as per last year's *Renewable Energy Road Map's* projections and as endorsed by the 2007 Spring European Council) and the number of specific challenges this target faces.

In doing so, the Commission would like to establish the barriers to the future development of offshore wind energy in the EU (e.g. access to national grid systems; potential instability of the installations in the sea) and identify what actions should be taken to address these, especially at EU level. It is recognized that some themes may also be relevant for other offshore renewable energy developments such as tidal and ocean current energy. The process will also help progress the January 2008 energy and climate package which includes a proposal for a directive on the promotion of the use of renewable energy, setting national binding targets for the share of renewable energy consumption aimed at achieving the overall 20% target.

The online questionnaire will remain open until 20 June at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=OffshoreWind&lang=en>  
Proposal for directive on the promotion of the use of renewable energy:  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52008PC0019:EN:NOT>

### Environmental Damage to be criminalised

MEPs at their recent plenary session in Strasbourg have agreed on the principle that, in order to ensure EU environmental legislation is properly applied, governments should apply criminal measures to punish any illegal behaviour likely to seriously damage the environment. Parliament has reached a first-reading agreement with the Council on the proposed legislation and adoption seems likely in the near future.

If the directive is approved, illegal conduct seriously damaging air, soil, waters, plants or humans or animals, whether committed intentionally or through negligence, would be considered as a criminal offence subject to "effective, proportionate and dissuasive" criminal, rather than civil, sanctions in all Member States. This is the first time the Parliament has approved a comprehensive piece of legislation implying the use of criminal law and may set a precedent towards the possible extension of criminal sanctions to other areas.

Further information:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5445232>

### Cutting company red tape

'Administrative burdens' are defined as costs specifically linked to information that businesses would not collect and provide in the absence of a legal obligation to do so – a compulsion which can be needlessly complicated and time-consuming. The Commission's *Better Regulation* strategy is aimed at measuring such costs and reducing burdens to businesses by 25% by 2012 – thereby possibly allowing firms more time and opportunities for additional investment and innovation, and improved productivity.

Spring 2008 has seen a host of Fast Track Actions (FTA) – relatively minor changes in existing rules bringing immediate reductions in the burden on European businesses – being brought forward. These are Commission

proposals linked to the strategy's *Action Programme for Reducing Administrative Burdens in the European Union* to demonstrate in concrete terms the way in which it intends to work with Member States to address certain existing information obligations in areas including company law, food safety and agriculture.

More than half of the original package of FTAs from 2007 (valued at €1.3 billion in savings annually across the EU) have already been adopted meaning that: companies no longer need to produce costly expert reports for mergers/divisions; farmers' reporting obligations regarding energy crops have been reduced; unnecessary hygiene requirements for small fishing vessels have been removed; and the documentary proof requirements to receive export refunds for certain agricultural products have been eased. Other FTAs including differentiating micro-enterprises (small bakers, grocery shops, market stalls etc.) from large supermarkets on certain food hygiene requirements are to follow in the coming months. Within the next year the 2008 set of FTAs will mean, for example, that medium-sized companies will be exempted from providing detailed data in their annual accounts and parent companies with no material subsidiaries will no longer need to prepare consolidated accounts.

The 'Cutting Red Tape' newsletter:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/admin-burdens-reduction/docs/E-magazine\\_Issue%201\\_2008.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/admin-burdens-reduction/docs/E-magazine_Issue%201_2008.pdf)

### Post-2012 Carbon Credit Fund

The European Investment Bank (EIB) – the EU's financing institution – along with four other public financing institutions have launched an initiative to establish market mechanisms that will encourage the production and trade of the carbon credits foreseen by the Kyoto Protocol and the "linking directive" admitting these credits to the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

The groundbreaking 'Post-2012 Carbon Credit Fund' (€125 million) will boost investment in clean energy projects that are to generate 'carbon credits' after the Protocol expires in 2012. This is part of a series of EIB efforts to promote environmental lending and develop carbon markets.

As well as directly supporting the market value of worthwhile environmental projects the aim is to alleviate uncertainty over the actual form that carbon credit

trading will take after 2012. Investment in longer-term projects is currently being hampered by an intergovernmental failure to agree a follow-up climate pact but this initiative should give a clear signal to the market of its partners' confidence in the development of a post-Kyoto regime by assuming the inherent regulatory risk.

The Fund will contract credits from projects, for up to a 10 year delivery period, under Kyoto's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI) schemes, which allow industrialised nations to offset carbon emissions at home by funding "clean" projects in the developing world. This should make additional CDM and JI projects viable by offering guaranteed carbon off-take at attractive prices.

*Further information:*

<http://www.eib.org/about/press/2008/2008-027-five-european-public-finance-institutions-start-post-2012-carbon-credit-fund.htm>

## **2009: European Year of Creativity and Innovation**

Next year will be given a dual focus at EU level if Commission plans to make it the 'European Year of Creativity and Innovation' are realised. With Europe striving to become the world's leading knowledge-based economy it is widely agreed that it is crucial to encourage skills development in key areas including education and training in mathematics, science, information and other technologies. The Year will therefore concentrate on helping people develop better problem-solving skills and applying knowledge and ideas in real life situations. Activities focusing on social and entrepreneurial innovation will also be encouraged. Because of the importance of the cultural sector to the economy, artistic creativity will also be promoted, as a follow-up to the current European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Other policy areas covered will include business, media, research, and social, regional and rural development.

The designated theme for each year finds its expression in meetings, events, dissemination of good practices, awareness-raising campaigns and research projects. These activities are resourced from within existing funding programmes via national implementing bodies nominated by the Member States. These annual initiatives are also recognised as useful tools in generating synergies across borders and between hierarchies from Community to local level and in helping to focus policy debate on specific issues.

*Further information:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/news1269\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/news1269_en.htm)

## **Improving impact of EU laws on local & regional authorities**

Given that around two-thirds of EU legislation is implemented at sub-national level, the European Commission's recent statements in relation to strengthening the analysis of expected impacts of EU laws "will be music to the ears of local and regional authorities" according to Committee of the Regions (CoR) President Luc Van den Brande. This pledge was made in an April report responding to various CoR opinions (reports) adopted in mid-2007 and relates specifically to one on 'better lawmaking'. It was further accompanied by a Commission commitment that its impact assessments are also to strengthen the analysis of the extent to which the EU gets involved in issues (Proportionality) and at what level decisions are made (Subsidiarity). The Commission report, presented by Vice-President Margot Wallström, states that it is also "carefully examining how it can better take account of the local and regional dimension in its ex ante (pre-legislative) consultations".

*Commission's follow-up report on various CoR opinions from June-October 2007:*  
<http://cor.ip.lu/cor/cms/ui/ViewDocument.aspx?contentid=19251b0d-9ab2-4ed3-844f-94aca407984a>

## **PEACE Report & Launch**

Bairbre de Brún MEP has successfully had an own-initiative report on experiences gained from the PEACE programmes adopted by the European Parliament. The document sets out best practice from both sides of the border of the programmes' empowering of local actors and agencies, encouragement of cross-community projects, and investment in building an enterprise economy as well as remaining challenges still to be faced and lessons to be learned. The possibility of creating a Europe-wide network of regions and cities living with, or emerging from, conflict and exclusion is now under discussion, notes the report which also stresses the need to retain funding for support groups for victims and survivors even after the formal end of PEACE III.

The new programme (€333m), along with the INTERREG IVA Northern Ireland/Ireland/Scotland (€256m) and the Objective 2 Sustainable Competitiveness programmes (€614m) were launched in

Belfast last month by Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner; Northern Ireland Finance Minister, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MP, MLA; and Taoiseach-designate Brian Cowen.

*Further information:*

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/059-29260-140-05-21-910-20080519IPR29259-19-05-2008-2008-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/059-29260-140-05-21-910-20080519IPR29259-19-05-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm)

## **'Regions for Economic Change' Networks**

"Regions for Economic Change" (RfEC) is an initiative to introduce new means of economic modernisation to Europe's cities and regions. This proactive policy tool allows the formation of regional and urban networks to draw on, test and apply innovative best practice ideas from elsewhere. Financing is possible under programmes which support the exchange of experience and transfer of knowledge inter-regionally on 'Innovation and Knowledge economy' and 'Environment and Risk prevention' (INTERREG IVC) and between cities on effective sustainable integrated urban development policies (URBACT II).

The first set of "fast track" network projects under RfEC have now been provisionally approved. Two of the 24 URBACT II thematic networks have Irish involvement: Dublin City Council is part of the *OpenCities – towards openness and the competitive advantage of diversity* fast track network (led by Belfast City Council) on the attraction and retention of human capital and the social and economic integration of migrant workers; while Cork is involved in the *Creative Development* network on creativity and culture as a driving force in local development processes.

Meanwhile, under INTERREG IVC, ERNACT (European Regions Network for the Application of Communications Technology) based in Donegal/Derry will lead PIKE (Promoting Innovation and the Knowledge Economy) – a fast track 'capitalisation' network seeking to stimulate the successful mainstream Structural Funds uptake of identified Information Society policies at regional level, particularly in the area of broadband and internet access, and eGovernment practices.

*Further information:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index\\_en.cfm?nmenu=1;](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm?nmenu=1;)  
[www.interreg4c.net](http://www.interreg4c.net) and  
<http://urbact.eu/>

## EVENTS

### 1-4 June, Stuttgart

#### **Environmentally-friendly urban mobility**

'Towards environmentally friendly mobility in our cities' - the 2008 World Congress of the global Network Cities for Mobility - aims to bring together local and regional governments and other partners from business, science and society to discuss the interplay of traffic and the environment in cities. In the various sessions and workshops participants will have the opportunity to learn about concrete projects of local governments which promote sustainable forms of urban mobility. The workshops serve as a forum for five thematic clusters (Public Transport; Motorized Individual Transport; Air Quality; Mobility Management at Mega-Events; Non-Motorised Mobility) and for developing new project ideas.

Further information:

<http://www.cities-for-mobility.net/>

### 3 June, Brussels

#### **Public Service Reform**

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the European federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) are organising a joint conference on "Changes in the organisation of public services". This is the final conference of a joint project undertaken by these European Social Dialogue partners on the modernisation of public services and the role of social dialogue in local and regional government. Faced with political and financial challenges and pressures local authorities have to adapt the way their services are organised, which results in modifications and changes. In this context, good change management and the cooperation between the local government and the stakeholders concerned have proven to be crucial for preparing and successfully organising the change process. The conference aims to present the main findings of the research and to reflect on the key challenges regional and local government in Europe are facing in changing the organisation of services.

Further details:

[http://www.ccre.org/news\\_detail\\_en.htm?ID=1337](http://www.ccre.org/news_detail_en.htm?ID=1337)

### 3-6 June, Brussels & Online

#### **EU Green Week 2008**

Unsustainable natural resources depletion and the resultant mountains of waste this generates is the focus of an upcoming major week of events in Brussels. Nine sessions on each of four themes - Resources and Waste Management; Sustainable Consumption and Production; Nature & Biodiversity; and Climate Change - will tackle issues such as whether businesses can be successful while using resources in a sustainable way; 'responsible' consumption; the best way to recycle and whether it make a difference; how to combat the effects of climate change; how to switch to using sustainable transport; and whether major construction projects can be truly 'green'. All sessions will also be webstreamed.

Further details:

<http://greenweek2008.alligence.com/>

### 9 June, Dublin

#### **Energy Funding**

Sustainable Energy Ireland host an information seminar for prospective applicants to the new Calls for Proposals under FP7 (DG TREN) – ENERGY (sustainable energy technologies) and CIP Intelligent Energy Europe II (non-technological barriers to the market uptake of energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transport measures). Register with

[clara.stack@sei.ie](mailto:clara.stack@sei.ie) or on 01 8082286

### 10 June, Brussels

#### **Urban Quality of Life**

The Urban Audit initiative has in recent years gathered the support of national statistical services across the EU to work together in order to compile a wide range of comparative indicators on the quality of life in over 300 European cities including Dublin, Cork, Limerick Galway, Belfast and Derry. A conference will be held on this subject to disseminate information on the Urban Audit beyond its immediate protagonists to city representatives and anyone with an interest in urban statistics. Several key issues for the future of cities will be addressed: the ageing population, migration phenomena, housing, and the competitiveness and attractiveness of cities. Further details:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/urbanaudit2008/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/urbanaudit2008/index_en.htm)

### 25 June, Brussels

#### **European Road Congress**

The third annual congress of the European Union Road Federation (ERF) - "Making Roads Ready for the Future" - will provide a unique opportunity for sector leaders – both public and private – to identify the strategies, measures and trends which will be essential in addressing the future needs of the road sector. The Congress will offer a state-of-the-art overview of European road policy issues, through interactive sessions with high-level specialists. Session topics to be covered are road safety, ICT, sustainability and tolling. Register at: <http://www.europeanroadcongress.com/>

## Publications

#### **Practical Guide to EU Funding for RTDI**

"What is the difference between the Structural Funds, the Seventh Research Framework Programme, and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme and which is most suitable as a funding support for a knowledge-based proposal?" The answer should be provided by the 'Practical Guide to EU funding for research, development and innovation' developed by the services of the European Commission. In addition to a description of each fund, advice for policy makers, an innovative Checklist and Scorecard, and reviews of the various existing Internet sites and information points, the guide also provides information as to what extent several funding sources may be advantageously combined. These tips will allow potential beneficiaries to quickly identify exactly how they can access European funding at every stage of the development and implementation of a project. Further information: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/consultation\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/consultation_en.html)

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