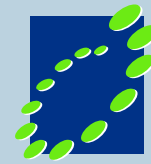


EU News Bulletin

The latest EU funding opportunities, news and events for local & regional government

Number 53 – October 2008

Produced by the Irish Regions Office (IRO), Brussels
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Irish Regions Office



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FUNDING & NETWORKING

Recent Calls

Lifelong Learning 2009 Calls

The timetable for applications for the 2009 calls across the various strands of the Lifelong Learning Programme to develop and foster exchange, cooperation and mobility in schools and higher education, vocational training and adult learning systems in accordance with the Lisbon Strategy has been announced:

- 28 Nov; University Charter;
- 16 Jan. 2009, 30 April and 15 Sept; In-service Training (COMENIUS and GRUNDTVIG);
- 30 Jan., Assistantships (COMENIUS);
- 6 February; Mobility (Leonardo Da Vinci including the mobility certificate); and Intensive Language Courses (Erasmus);
- 13 Feb; Jean Monnet Programme (teaching and research on European integration);
- 20 Feb; Partnerships (COMENIUS, LEONARDO DA VINCI and GRUNDTVIG); Comenius Regio Partnerships; and Workshops (Gruntvig);
- 27 Feb; Multilateral projects, Networks and Accompanying Measures (COMENIUS, ERASMUS, LEONARDO, GRUNDTVIG); and Transfer of Innovation multilateral Projects (LEONARDO);

- 13 March; Intensive Programmes; Student mobility for studies and placements including consortium placement certificate; and Staff mobility for teaching assignments and staff training (Erasmus);
- 31 March; Assistantships; & Senior Volunteering Projects (GRUNDTVIG);
- 9 April; Study visits on Policy Cooperation and Innovation (Transversal programme)

Funding worth €961 million is available

Details: <http://ec.europa.eu/llp>

Civil Protection

This call under the Community Civil Protection Instrument aims to improve civil protection preparedness and response to emergencies through providing a testing environment and learning opportunity for all actors involved in civil protection. More specifically, the purpose is to identify organisations/bodies whose actions in the field of simulation exercises might be eligible for financial support. Action supported:

- Full scale civil protection exercises with a command post part, involving intervention teams;
- Full scale civil protection exercises with command post part, involving civil protection modules and/or technical assistance and support teams;
- Command post exercises.

Deadline: 19 December

Details: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/protection/docs/call_2008/grant_guide_2008.pdf

'Youth in Action' Partnerships

The aim of this call is to allow regional or local public bodies to provide overall structures for the small-scale Youth sector projects ongoing within their territory - thereby creating visibility and a European dimension for long-lasting quality projects, and partnerships based on exchange of experiences, expertise and good practice. The eligible activities which may be included in a local/regional programme of activities are Youth exchanges, Youth initiatives, and training of those active in youth organizations.

Deadline: 1 December

Details:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm

i-Learning Awards

To recognise excellence in the use of ICT for learning, applications are sought from initiatives using technology:

- to seamlessly integrate individual and organisational, formal and informal learning;
- to develop the competencies of individuals or communities (e.g. through social networking);
- for the integration of quality management as organisational learning (iQuality);
- to support equal access to learning, recognition of informal learning and social inclusion.

Deadline: 15 December

Details: www.elearningawards.eun.org

Interreg IVC

This programme's second call was launched on 24 October. Contact the IRO for a list of some project ideas seeking partners or visit <http://www.interreg4c.net/>

Imminent Deadlines (see previous Bulletin issues)

Life+: 21 November

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/events/events2008/documents/workshop_ireland_en.pdf

Online Partner Searches:

- Voluntary sector/NGOs and public procurement
- Modal Shift Actions within Marco Polo
- Innovative, sustainable and cost-effective rural planning and construction methods
- Active citizenship
- Youth democracy and exchanges

Check out other offers on

http://www.iro.ie/funding/news/partner_searches/ to get involved.

NEWS & POLICY

Your say on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion

The European Commission adopted the *'Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion - Turning territorial diversity into strength'* on 6 October, signaling the start of a major consultation (until 28 February) with regional and local authorities, associations, NGOs, civil society and other organisations, aimed at achieving a better and shared understanding of territorial cohesion (the term is not expressly defined) and its implications for the future. The objective of the process is to trigger debate among stakeholders at all levels on how to balance territorial, economic and social development by focusing on "new themes, new sets of relationships binding EU territories at different levels and new forms of cooperation, coordination and partnerships".

Among the issues it hopes to clarify are determining the extent to which new social challenges such as climate policy, energy supply and demographic change should be addressed by EU Regional Policy. The paper sets out a series of initial positions for discussion that suggest that an integrated place-based approach allied with improved coordination with sectoral policies is desirable to achieving sustainable development and providing access to services; that different problems can most appropriately be addressed at different scales and levels of governance from the transnational to local; that partnership approaches with a strong local knowledge dimension to policy formation and implementation are valuable; and that building on the experience of INTERREG in coordinating responses across administrative boundaries is worthwhile.

Green paper and consultation:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/terco/index_en.htm

New Twinning Website

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) will unveil its new dedicated town twinning website in November. The multilingual tool is intended to help local governments across Europe to find twinning partners via an elaborate online form enabling them to upload their own details and profiles and post detailed requests for partners whose circumstances conform to requirements. A launch event in Brussels on 13 November will debate the relevance of twinning in the modern era.

Contact:
pierre.vanderauwera@ccre-cemr.org

Local Public Services Reform

'Reform of public services: what role for social dialogue?' is a recent European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) study which looks at how services at local level are being modernised and made responsive to challenges including financial shortfalls, rising customer demands, changing age structures, social dialogue and procurement rules. The report places a particular emphasis on the role of dialogue between employers and employees and also features 10 case studies to illustrate how European municipalities and regions have modified a range of public services to adapt to new trends and developments.

http://www.ccre.org/docs/publication_reform_public_services_en.pdf

Public, Office & Industrial Lighting

The EU Member States' Regulatory Committee on Eco-design and Energy Labelling of Energy-using Products (EELEP) has approved (26 September) proposals by the European Commission for a regulation setting performance standards to reduce electricity consumption in lighting products. According to the Commission, savings for fluorescent lamps, high-intensity discharge lamps and related ballasts and luminaires typically used in street, office and industrial applications could amount to 15% of the equipment's current usage - or around the annual electricity consumption of Romania.

This is among the first concrete regulatory proposals coming out of the preparatory studies under the Energy-using Products (EuP) Ecodesign Directive and will now be scrutinised by the European Parliament with formal adoption scheduled for next January. Other regulation proposals are expected by spring 2009 on external power supplies, house lighting including a phase-out of incandescent light bulbs, electric motors and other energy using product groups.

Draft proposal:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/demand/legislation/doc/regulatory_committee/2008_09_26_tertiary_sector_lighting_products_regulation_post_vote_en.pdf

Fisheries Programme Approved

The European Commission has now approved the Fisheries Operational Programme for Ireland for the 2007-2013 period. The total eligible public expenditure of the programme amounts to €66.35 million, with European Fisheries Fund (EFF) assistance amounting to €42.27 million. The new programme aims to consolidate the framework for a viable

fisheries sector that respects the environment and supports vulnerable coastal fishing communities. Three of the EFF's five priority axes are eligible, namely adaptation of the fishing fleet (€46.36 million); measures of common interest (€12.8 million) and sustainable development of fisheries areas (€7.2 million). Unlike the previous (2000-2006) programme under the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance the new programme does not provide for aquaculture, inland fishing, processing or marketing of fishery products.

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/press_corner/press_releases/2008/com08_63_en.htm

Urban Quality of Life

Initial results are being made available from the second full-scale Urban Audit (carried out in 2006/2007) to compare living conditions in Europe's cities. These are drawn from measuring more than 300 indicators on social matters, the economy, the environment, demographics, training and education, culture and recreation, mobility and transport, the information society, and civic involvement. 321 cities across the continent including Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford (note: some data is awaiting an update reflecting Census 2006) plus Belfast and Derry were examined on criteria from recycling rates to crime figures and air cleanliness to housing stock. Achieving a good quality of life is emphasized by the renewed Lisbon Strategy and the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion for 2007-2013 as a crucial instrument in attracting and retaining a skilled labour force, investors, tourists and residents to a city or region.

A detailed analysis of the raw data is currently underway and a *'Report on the state of European cities'* will be published in 2009. The full findings will provide valuable information on emerging trends which will be used to determine possible future priorities for EU Cohesion Policy funding and the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs as they will enable investment to be better matched to observed needs. The process is to be repeated in full at three-year intervals with an annual data collection being planned for a limited number of key variables. Additionally, the information including city profiles and data covering core city centres, sub-city districts (initial results reveal striking evidence of social segregation within larger cities), and functional urban areas including wider commuter belts where appropriate, should also be usefully employed in national, regional and local decision-making.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1387&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quillanguage=en>

Web 3.0: 'the internet of things'

If second generation internet or 'Web 2.0' has become synonymous with blogging, social networking (e.g. Facebook) and content sharing (e.g. YouTube) the future lies in the web as a self-sufficient entity capable of intelligently linking objects together and allowing appliances, sensors, vehicles and other devices to be pre-programmed to communicate and carry out operations. This 'internet of things', aided by portable devices, has the potential to deliver flexible new applications such as interactive control of energy consumption, safety systems in vehicles and roads, and building security. There is also huge potential to enable cost-effective and productive commercial transactions such as automatically reordering supplies once existing stocks have been detected to have run low.

In a 29 September communication the Commission outlined five challenges to developing and deploying Web 3.0:

- Stimulating investment and competition in new fibre optic networks (forcing dominant operators to open access to cabling trenches);
- Moving toward 'broadband for all';
- Promoting open norms;
- Changing to internet protocol version 6 (IPv6) to compete with the future shortage of IP addresses under the current version (IPv4); and
- Protecting privacy and safety (a Commission paper on the use of radio frequency identification microchip tags is already underway).

A public consultation, open till 28 November, on the private and public initiatives to be undertaken is attached to the Communication.

http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/di_spatch?form=IOTconsultation

Cooley scoops tourism prize

Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula with their "unrivalled natural appeal" are among the twenty European Destinations of Excellence recognized at this Autumn's European Tourism Forum in Bordeaux. The award of "best local intangible heritage destination in Europe" recognises achievements in the promotion and management of tourism and local characteristics such as cuisine, traditions, arts and craft, and village life where successful business models for competitive tourism are developed in a manner that ensures their social, cultural and environmental sustainability. The winning destinations, who will officially sign a declaration setting up the Network of EDEN destinations, can look forward to increased exposure and opportunities to create a platform for the exchange of good practices at European level.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tourism/maj_or_activities/eu_tourist/second_phase/ed_winners_2008/index_en.htm

World Class Clusters

Europe boasts an estimated 2,000 industrial clusters - groups of firms, related economic actors and research institutions that are located near each other who have developed specialised expertise, services, resources, suppliers and skills - yet these are often fragmented and lacking the necessary critical mass and innovation capacity to sustainably face global competition. A communication from the Commission published on 17 October calls for greater efforts to facilitate their emergence as world-class entities to drive economic development.

Improved synergies between the different policy levels are felt necessary to strengthen clusters and the document addresses five key challenges: deepening the internal market to remove remaining barriers to the circulation of knowledge, personnel and finance; improving national cluster policies through the Lisbon National Reform Programmes; fostering complementary transnational cooperation on cluster-design among Member States and regions; promoting better cluster management; and improving the integration of innovative SMEs into clusters and international technology transfer.

To fully reap the benefits of these actions, the Commission proposes a pilot scheme offering training programmes and a platform for cooperation of cluster managers towards a quality label and to further streamline its funding programme initiatives of relevance to cluster support. Establishing a European Cluster Policy Group to share intelligence about cluster policies is also proposed.

Communication:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/innovation/doc/com_2008_652_en.pdf

CoR member at Oireachtas

Committee of the Regions' rapporteur on Adult Learning, Cllr. Mary Shields, appeared before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science on October 23 to present her recent CoR opinion and possible implications for Ireland. Adult participation in lifelong learning is one of five key objectives for education in the Lisbon Strategy but Ireland, like most other Member States, is not on course to reach the 2010 target of a 12.5% rate of participation. For a copy of Cllr. Shields report contact IRO.

Proceedings of Oireachtas Committee:

<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/DDebate.aspx?F=EDJ20081023.xml&Node=H2&Page=4>

Local Authorities and the developing world

In the run-up to European Development Days on 15-17 November (see July Bulletin) the European Commission has adopted (7 October) a communication calling for increased 'hands on' participation by European local authorities in the design and implementation of development activities in poorer countries. Such proactive involvement is recognised as delivering proportionally impressive and effective impacts on the ground for a comparatively small financial outlay.

This may open opportunities for more significant local authority engagement in the roll-out of national development assistance programmes – a trend that has evolved in several EU countries in recent years in recognition of the practical skills possessed at this level. The Commission is proposing the setting up of a structured dialogue firstly among European local authorities through the Committee of the Regions in order to take stock and capitalise on available expertise and to ensure better cooperation efforts and deployment of resources.

<http://www.eudevdays.eu/Public/Page.php?ID=703&language=eng>

Border Region to benefit from telecoms state aid

The European Commission has approved up to €30 million of joint UK and Irish State Aid to provide direct international underwater telecommunications connections to/from Northern Ireland and the Border Region. By linking Letterkenny and Monaghan to Derry where the submarine cable terminates, the assistance will help to offset the impediment of the border to doing business. The investment is designed to bring the cost of international 'backhaul connectivity' services (intermediate links between the backbone and the "edge" of the telecommunications network) in border counties into line with that of major urban areas of the two countries.

<http://www.publictechnology.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=17485>

Sustainable Housing

A European Parliamentary Symposium "Towards a European policy for sustainable housing?" took place on September 18. Its findings are available to Local and Regional Authorities upon request.

Contact the IRO.

EVENTS

4 November, Kilkenny Liquid Biofuels

The South-East Regional Authority and the Irish Bioenergy Association will host a workshop on the Biofuels Obligation Proposal and its relevance to industry. This initiative arises from SERA's involvement in the REGBIE+ project (Bio-Energy Initiatives to increase the Market for Biomass) under the Intelligent Energy Europe programme and complements the Regional Bio-Energy Implementation Plan published in March which is designed to make the South-East the leading Irish region in the use and promotion of bioenergy over the coming years.

Contact:

sheevaun.thompson@southtippcoco.ie

4 November, Brussels FP7 Opportunities for Ireland

A half-day seminar profiling the opportunities available to Irish organisations under the 7th Framework Research Programme will be hosted by Brian Crowley MEP with contributions from Science & Research Commissioner Janez Potocnik, Minister for Science & Innovation Jimmy Devins, and National FP7 Director Imelda Lambkin of Enterprise Ireland.

Register with

Claire.donlon@europarl.europa.eu

9-11 November, Bologna Cities & Mobility

'Cities' Mobility: Change is possible' is the theme of the 2008 CIVITAS Forum – the initiative which has helped cities to achieve more sustainable, clean and energy efficient urban transport systems by implementing and evaluating ambitious, integrated sets of technology and policy based measures. The event will examine how radical and innovative solutions can overcome the barriers of vested interests to create a new culture of urban mobility shared by institutions and citizens. A particular focus will be placed on the main ideas of the Green Paper on Urban transport and its Action Plan.

www.civitas-initiative.eu

11-13 November, Barcelona Wireless & Digital Cities

With underlying themes and workshops dedicated to social inclusion, economic development, health and social care, transportation, and public safety, the third annual European Congress for Wireless and Digital Cities will examine:

- Regulatory and Spectrum issues;
- The reality beyond the hype;
- Business models;
- Optimal technology structure;
- Case studies and applications;
- Using technology to help green our communities.

<http://www.wirelesscitiescongress.eu/>

17 November, Brussels Local Public Enterprises

The theme of this year's Annual Conference of the European Centre of Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP) is 'Trends and guidelines for the future of local enterprises'. Featured sessions will take place on:

- Climate change and public water;
- Local strategies for sustainable energy supply;
- Tourism – role of local public operators;
- Rehabilitation of urban industrial wasteland for sustainable development purposes;
- A possible EU legislative initiative on service concessions;
- Local public enterprises as providers of services of general interest.

http://www.ceep.eu/media/right/events/11th_european_conference_of_local_public_enterprises

20-21 November, Helsinki Energy Financing

Measures to increase sustainable energy practices at local level in order to mitigate climate change are likely to require EU support. The European Commission DG for Energy and Transport is holding a conference entitled 'The Covenant of Mayors: how to finance it' to profile and discuss the most relevant EU instruments and to determine how these programmes fit the needs of cities and how they can be improved upon by local-level input in the short and long-terms. This opportunity is likely to be beneficial even to cities without an intention of formally signing up to the Covenant.

www.managenergy.net/events_me.html#helsinki0811

21 November, Brussels State Aid

A one-day conference entitled 'The new approach to State Aids – recent reforms under the State Aid Action Plan and next steps', to be chaired by Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroos, will present the current situation regarding the implementation of the reform of State Aid policy in a broad context of its contribution to the Lisbon Strategy objectives and its

role in relation to globalisation and the challenges of climate change.

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state_aid/conferences/21112008.html

27-28 November, Vienna Rural potential for regional development

A joint conference of the 6th Framework Programme projects TERESA and ETUDE on the future of European rural development will be addressed from the perspectives of decision makers and their policy strategies on one hand, and the European regions and their strategies towards diversification and the promotion of a living countryside on the other. Day one looks at 'Regions engaging in rural development: The impact of policy strategies' while day two discusses regional systems' ability to deal with disturbances ("resilience") and its relationship with rural diversification.

<http://www.teresa-eu.info/conference>

30 Nov. - 3 Dec., Montpellier Urban Development (2 events)

From 30 November to 2 December the 2008 Annual Conference of URBACT, the European Programme for sustainable urban development will provide opportunities for city representatives to learn, discuss, and exchange ideas about the challenges facing employment, growth & competitiveness, innovation, social inclusion, and sustainable and integrated development policies

Following this event (2-3 December) the French EU Presidency will host the 'Cities Forum' on urban sustainability and solidarity in a bid to identify practical ways forward for the implementation of the May 2007 Leipzig Charter to give urban development considerations more prominence in sectoral EU policies. Eleven workshops will be held on themes relating to accessibility, governance and inclusion and innovative practices in urban development.

URBACT:

<http://www.ptolemee.com/urbact/en/>

Cities Forum:

www.villes2008.fr

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