

# EU News Bulletin

The latest monthly EU funding opportunities, news, publications and events of relevance to Ireland's local and regional level

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Produced by the Irish Regions Brussels Office (IRO)



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## FUNDING, NETWORKING & PROJECTS

### CALL: SOCIAL HOUSING ENERGY, WATER MANAGEMENT, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT.

The annual ICT-Policy Support Programme call for proposals, as mentioned in last month's issue, was published on 21 January. ICT-PSP aims to accelerate the development of a competitive, innovative and inclusive information society through the wider uptake and best use of existing ICT focused on areas of public interest. A number of specific areas within one of the 6 designated themes announced - "ICT

for energy efficiency and smart mobility" – may be of relevance to local authorities.

€9.5m is being provided for a number of pilot actions ("pilot Bs") bringing together stakeholders to implement actions fostering ICT innovation under realistic conditions with the objective (1.2) of "ICT for energy and water efficiency in social housing". This might possibly include actions relating to improving energy use efficiencies through smart metering or other ICT components – possibly involving extended use of prototype technology or application of completed research and development work.

€0.5m has been set aside for a single transnational stakeholder forum on "ICT for water efficiency" (objective 1.2).

Objective 1.3 - "Energy efficient co-operative transport management systems" - offers €4m towards several pilot actions leading to a set of specifications for cities for the procurement, testing, installation, operation and monitoring of state of the art cooperative traffic management systems and services to improve both safety and energy efficiency.

DEADLINE: 1 JUNE  
[More information](#)

### CALL: URBAN TRANSPORT STUDIES, EVENTS AND EXCHANGES

The CIVITAS initiative and network supports and evaluates the implementation of ambitious integrated sustainable urban transport strategies. Funding opportunities are available under the CIVITAS Activity Fund for smaller projects to promote the concrete up-take of the initiative's general principles and to facilitate the building up of critical mass and markets for innovation.

Two main types of activities are eligible: preparatory and follow-up activities (e.g. studies and events); and staff exchange activities between a hosting city (CIVITAS member city) and that of an applying city (take-up city).

DEADLINE: 16 FEBRUARY  
[More information](#)

### CALL: PREPAREDNESS FOR AND PREVENTION OF DISASTERS

The European Commission's Civil Protection Unit has launched a call for proposals with the aim of identifying projects on preparedness and prevention. The Civil Protection Financial Instrument aims to support and complement the efforts of the Member States for the protection, primarily of people but also of the environment and property, including cultural heritage, in the event of natural and man-made disasters as well as acts of terrorism and technological, radiological or environmental accidents. A budget of up to €3 million will be available.

The aim of 'preparedness' projects is to improve the effectiveness of emergency response by enhancing levels of preparation and awareness of civil protection professionals and volunteers, by supporting and complementing the efforts of the participating countries, and by facilitating reinforced cooperation supporting and complementing the efforts of the participating countries, and by facilitating reinforced cooperation between EU Member States in the field of preparedness in civil protection and marine pollution. 'Prevention' projects focus particularly on areas where a common European approach is more effective than separate national approaches.

DEADLINE: 31 MARCH  
[More information](#)

## CALL: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

On 30 December 2009, the European Commission announced that €20.4 million will be available for the 2010 call for proposals under the Europe for Citizens programme (2007-2013).

Among the programme's specific objectives relating to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture are:

- \* Bringing together people from local communities across Europe to share and exchange experiences, to learn from history and to build for the future.
- \* Bringing Europe closer to its citizens by promoting Europe's values and achievements, while preserving the memory of its past.
- \* Encouraging interaction between citizens and civil society organisations from all participating countries (particularly between newer and older EU Member States), contributing to intercultural dialogue, and bringing to the fore both Europe's diversity and unity.

The call focuses on the following measures:

- \* Town twinning activities that involve or promote direct exchanges between European citizens:

- Citizens' meetings (Deadlines: 1 June and 1 September; €7 million available); and
- Thematic networks. (1 Sept.; €5.165m).
- \* 'Citizens' projects' (€1.5m) and 'Support measures' (€1.535m) to bridge the gap between citizens and the EU by innovatively encouraging citizens' participation and stimulating dialogue with the European institutions (1 June).
- \* Concrete projects initiated by civil society organisations from different participating countries to raise awareness on matters of European interest and contribute to fostering mutual understanding on different cultures and to identifying common values (15 February; €3.4m).
- \* Active European Remembrance in memory of the victims of Nazism and Stalinism (30 April; €1.8m).

[More information](#)

CONTACT: [EuropeforCitizens@jpa.ie](mailto:EuropeforCitizens@jpa.ie)

## CALL: YOUTH IN ACTION

The annual YOUTH in Action call for proposals, as flagged up in last month's issue was published along expected lines

on 23 December. The total budget is €115.3 million.

Several changes in the application process have taken place – notably a simplification of procedures for bi-lateral and tri-lateral exchanges (action 1) and a modification of the mechanism for calculating activity costs. Applicants under action 2 (European Voluntary Service) now need to provide evidence of their contribution covering 10% of the project travel costs.

Deadlines are 3 months before the planned project start date up to a limit of 1 November.

[Call Programme Guide](#)

## CALL: PUBLIC HEALTH

The Commission has launched the 2010 Calls for proposals for the Public Health Programme with an allocated budget of €48.4 million. Priorities include:

- 1) Improving citizen's health security; and
- 2) Health Promotion – public health capacity building, sexual health and HIV/AIDS and prevention of major chronic diseases and rare diseases.

Approximately 28% of the budget will be spent on best practice projects in public health, with more emphasis and resources allocated to cooperation and joint actions between Member States.

DEADLINE: 19 MARCH

[More information](#)

## GLOBALISATION FUND: MORE OPTIONS FOR IRELAND?

On the same basis that it was pressed into action to help alleviate the effects of the mass redundancies announced last year by DELL, SR Technics and Waterford Crystal, the European Commission is now recommending that the Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) be used in relation to the Lithuanian building construction industry. As with Ireland, construction activity in the Baltic country collapsed during 2009 with small or medium-sized enterprises being hardest hit. Now, subject to approval from the European Parliament, the fund is expected to approve an EU

contribution to cover 65% of the costs associated with active labour market measures at individual level to benefit over 800 affected workers. These will include retraining initiatives, self-employment assistance and incentives, and career guidance.

Although details of the application are not yet publically available, this would seem to represent an interesting precedent for EGF in that the proposed intervention would appear to be more in response to the effects of the general economic downturn within national borders than to those of global trade patterns and jobs being relocated to cheaper economies. The application is also on a sector-wide as opposed to single firm (plus suppliers/downstream producers) basis and the threshold for deploying the EGF in this manner in Ireland's case would be 500 redundancies nationally within a single sector, particularly in SMEs, over a period of nine months.

Sectors relating to building construction which would theoretically be similarly eligible for attention on these terms include "specialised construction activities", "civil engineering", "architectural and engineering activities", "services to buildings and landscape activities", and "real estate activities". Aside from the property market, other hard-hit industries for which an application might be put together by Ireland include "accommodation" (hotels etc.), "retail trade", "trade and repair of motor vehicles", and "public administration". In this vein, Lithuania is awaiting a judgement on an application on behalf of its furniture manufacturing sector. €500 million is being made available each year to finance such interventions.

[EGF](#)

[Programme Guide](#)

## ELENA ENERGY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE – MORE DETAILS

The Irish Regions Office has met separately with representatives of the Commission's DG TREN (Transport & Energy) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to discuss the new ELENA (European Local ENergy Assistance) facility. This initiative has been created

to facilitate the mobilisation of funds for investments in sustainable energy at local level.

Financed through the Intelligent Energy-Europe programme, ELENA's annual budget of €15 million for 2010 and 2011 will part cover the cost of technical support and financial engineering necessary to overcome barriers to preparing and implementing energy investment programmes or large-scale projects. Eligible actions include feasibility and market studies, structuring of programmes, business plans, energy audits, and preparation for tendering procedures. The objective is to increase experience in developing activities of a certain scale. Small projects can be supported once they are grouped together for critical mass/integrated into larger investment programmes. A guaranteed investment leverage factor of 25 times the grant provided is necessary within 3 years.

The following areas may potentially avail of support:

- 1) public and private buildings, including social housing and street and traffic lighting, to support increased energy efficiency;
- 2) integration of renewable energy sources into the built environment - e.g. solar, photovoltaic, thermal collectors, biomass;
- 3) renovation, extension or building of new district heating networks, including decentralised combined heat and power (CHP) systems at building or neighbourhood level;
- 4) urban transport to support increased energy efficiency and integration of renewable energy sources, e.g. hybrid buses, electric/low-carbon cars, freight logistics in urban areas; and
- 5) local infrastructure including smart grids, ICT infrastructure for energy efficiency, energy-efficient urban equipment, inter-modal transport facilities and refueling infrastructure for alternative fuel vehicles.

No calls for proposals are involved. Applications are to be tabled directly (using a two-stage process) and the funding will be dispersed on a first-come-first-served basis. ELENA supports the EU Covenant of Mayors pledge for local authority Sustainable Energy Action Plans which provide a good basis for well-developed investment

programmes – however, covenant membership is not a formal prerequisite.

[More information](#)  
[Brochure](#)

### **INTELLIGENT ENERGY EUROPE: LOCAL ENERGY LEADERSHIP**

The IEE Programme organised its annual Information Day in Brussels on 3 February where the 2010 Work Programme was unveiled. As well as the familiar energy efficiency (SAVE), transport (STEER), and renewables (ALTERNER) focuses, local energy issues are being given a renewed emphasis this year as part of the Integrated Initiatives' component of the programme.

€6.7 million is being set aside for "Local Energy Leadership" actions to support large-scale networking and capacity-building activities among national and international networks of local authorities to improve the stakeholder participation (including elected representatives) in local sustainable energy policy implementation.

Alternatively, local authorities with poorly-development levels of expertise in local energy actions may engage in direct exchange (e.g. one-to-one mentoring) and meaningful capacity-building with more experienced counterpart authorities. The objective should be to operationally institutionalise sustainable energy policies and implement adopted Sustainable Energy Action Plans. Links between old and new Europe are encouraged.

The programme authorities stressed that short to-the-point actions may be acceptable including some minor applied research but that the development of tools and guidelines would no longer be supported as ample examples of these are already available for adaptation. They also underlined that the indicators by which applications would be judged will relate to numbers of local authority staff and target groups concretely impacted by capacity-building or networking activities as well as long-term local level effects arising: jobs created/secured in the energy sector; CO<sub>2</sub> reductions; renewable energy capacity installation; and energy savings achieved.

Support will also be available towards the development and implementation of tailor-made long-term financial schemes to improve the energy performance of

existing housing. These mechanisms should utilise the possibility of channeling up to 4% of the national ERDF allocation (from the Regional Structural Fund programmes) and operate by combining subsidies and loan arrangements based on public and private resources.

The annual call is expected over the course of the spring with a June deadline

[More information](#)

### **PROGRESS 2010 WORK PROGRAMME**

The European Commission has published the 2010 Work Programme of the PROGRESS employment and social solidarity fund. Approximately €110 million is being provided to finance studies and projects addressing the following key challenges:

- 1) coping with the aftermath and lasting effects of the economic crisis;
- 2) addressing skill shortages;
- 3) demographic changes, including population ageing and the social inclusion of migrants; and
- 4) ensuring high standards of work quality and health and safety at work.

It is expected that four calls for proposals will be launched this year with one of these focusing on local employment development and skills for a low carbon economy.

[More information](#)

### **PROJECT FOCUS: NORTH-SOUTH BROADBAND SET TO BE REVOLUTIONISED**

A joint venture between the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Northern Ireland's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to give the island of Ireland a direct telecommunications link with North America has been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2010 RegioStars, the awards for innovative projects supported by EU cohesion policy, in the category of "broadband coverage in less developed regions or rural areas".

PROJECT KELVIN, a €32 million initiative including INTERREG 4A funding, is currently developing a hi-tech fibre-optic cable

system to directly tap into the transatlantic telecommunications connection that links Canada and Cumbria. The 32km spur from Co. Derry will, in turn, interconnect with existing telecoms infrastructure on both sides of the border.

This is set to substantially enhance the availability of faster, more reliable and cheaper broadband and to provide direct international telecoms connectivity for companies in Letterkenny, Monaghan, Castleblayney, Drogheda and Dundalk as well as Belfast, Derry, Coleraine and Armagh. Until now this sort of communication has had to be routed through London-based networks with consequent impacts on cost and service quality. The benefits which access to the fastest connectivity line to North America will bring for locally-based US-owned firms are expected to be especially attractive. The investment is expected to be complete and operational by March.

[More information](#)

**Other recent calls:**

[www.iro.ie/funding/news/funding\\_calls/](http://www.iro.ie/funding/news/funding_calls/)

**Partner Searches received by the IRO from other regions:**

[www.iro.ie/funding/news/partner\\_searches/](http://www.iro.ie/funding/news/partner_searches/)

## NEWS & POLICY

### **New Commissioner outlines his vision of Regional Policy**

New Commissioner-designate Johannes Hahn has declared his support for an EU Regional Policy covering the entire territory of the Union. In his 14 January hearing in front of the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development, the former Austrian Minister acknowledged that the intervention of Cohesion Policy should not be limited only to the poorest areas but should be spread more widely as a means of realising the economic development potential of all parts of the Union.

Without making any concrete commitments, Hahn also announced his intention to maintain regional policy's

claim on approximately one third of the EU budget despite clamours to reallocate much of this resource elsewhere. Doubtless mindful of the increasing profile of the knowledge economy, he cited the need to bring regional policy goals more closely into line with the overarching 'EU 2020' strategy than was the case with the Lisbon strategy it replaces. This will clearly entail targeting a greater proportion of regional funds into innovation, research and education activities.

From an Irish perspective, this statement of intent comes as national media reports have been reporting the success of Irish organisations (mainly Higher Education Institutes and companies) in winning approximately €1 million per week in EU research & development funding from the Seventh Framework Programme. While this performance is impressive, it is worth considering that this figure continues to be bettered by Ireland's take from its two regional (Competitiveness & Employment) and one national (Human Capital) Structural Funds which are providing an average of over €2 million per week to Ireland right throughout the 2007-2013 period. Additionally, as opposed to the highly competitive bidding that surrounds FP7 funding (Irish applications enjoy a one-in-four success rate), the sums negotiated under the Structural Funds are guaranteed to the state and are channelled towards defined priorities in order to maximise their effect.

Hahn also gave particular emphasis to the need to develop proactive urban policies tailored at improving the contribution of European cities towards regional development goals. This may point the way towards future EU programmes specifically for cities. He also advocated improvements in urban environment policy which is expected to mean a programming emphasis on energy efficient housing. The need to adopt an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of regional policy was another issue to catch the Commissioner's attention and he underlined that this should involve developing a model of shared management and financial control between national and regional authorities.

[Summary of hearing](#)

### **An Integrated Atlantic Strategy?**

The adoption of the Baltic Sea Strategy in 2009 prompted discussion on the application of this approach in other 'macro-regions' of the EU. In September, the Atlantic Arc Commission of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) adopted a call for the development of an Integrated Strategy for the Atlantic Area - which groups Ireland along with the Western coastlines of UK, France, Spain and Portugal - to better manage the environment and natural resources, promote economic development and improve co-operation across the area.

Since then the CPMR has had discussions with the European Commission and the Spanish Presidency to advance this proposal. In this regard, it will hold a series of working group meetings and seminars on issues such as transport, energy, and innovation in the coming months with a view to preparing a report by June, which will be submitted to the European Commission. Whilst the Commission has yet to adopt its work programme for 2010, it is likely that it will adopt a Communication exploring a possible Integrated Atlantic Strategy by the end of 2010 or early 2011.

*Further information from IRO*

[CPMR](#)

### **New National Committee of the Regions Delegation**

The Irish government has appointed the 9 member national delegation for the new term of Committee of the Regions. The list of members, County and City Councilors who will represent their respective Regional Authorities in the EU decision-making process, is (alphabetically) as follows:

- Gerry Breen (Dublin City Council and Dublin Regional Authority)
- Constance Hanniffy (Offaly Co. Council and Midland Regional Authority)
- Dennis Landy (South Tipperary Co. Council and South-East Regional Authority)
- Declan McDonnell (Galway City Council and West Regional Authority)

- Patrick McGowan (Donegal Co. Council and Border Regional Authority)
- Brian Meaney (Clare Co. Council and Mid-West Regional Authority)
- Michelle Mulherin (Mayo Co. Council and West Regional Authority)
- Paul O'Donoghue (Kerry Co. Council and South-West Regional Authority)
- Fiona O'Loughlin (Kildare Co. Council and Mid-East Regional Authority)

The members take up their mandates at least until the next local elections in June 2014 and if re-elected at that stage will continue thereafter until January 2015. Minister John Gormley formally appointed Cllr McGowan as the new Head of Delegation in Dublin on 27 January.

A set of alternates was also appointed:

- Terry Brennan (Louth Co. Council)
- Maria Byrne (Limerick City Council)
- Mary Freehill (Dublin City Council)
- John Lahart (South Dublin Co. Council)
- Michael McGreal (Roscommon Co. Council)
- Niall McNelis (Galway City Council)
- John Pender (Carlow Co. Council)
- Mary Shields (Cork City Council)
- Barney Steele (Longford Co. Council).

[Delegation website](#)

### **Irish 2020 renewables target on track**

In common with most EU Member States, Ireland has delivered a positive preliminary verdict in relation to its assessment of its ability to meet its commitments on the production of renewable energies. This relates to the national targets set out in the renewable energy directive for at least a 20% share of the EU's overall energy mix to be derived from green sources by 2020.

Under the directive, Ireland is committed to a 16% domestic renewables target by the due date. The current state-of-play is estimated at a 7% share according to a national forecast document, submitted to the European Commission in mid-January but this reflects good progress since 2005 and a Sustainable Energy

Ireland analysis indicates that the 2020 goal remains on course. This estimation is in part based on the presumed effects of some measures from the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan. It is intended that in a decade's time, renewables will account for 44% of national electricity production (currently 21%), 12% of heating and cooling (currently 5%), and 11% of transport fuels (currently 3%).

Some Member States including Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Spain have announced that they expect to exceed their goals and would consider trading credits in excess of intermediary targets to underperforming countries if necessary. Indeed, a key aspect flagged up in the Irish document is that of the need for further development of energy interconnections, including possible joint projects, to harness the export potential of offshore wind and ocean power. Detailed National Renewable Energy Action Plans setting out each Member State's set of measures to achieve the targets are set to follow over the coming 6 months.

[Ireland's Forecast document](#)

### **Paper on future of Cohesion Policy in richer regions**

DG Regional Policy has produced a working paper focused on the future of Cohesion Policy in richer regions. The Paper reviews two distinct issues: 1) whether richer regions, particularly those from relatively prosperous Member States, should be eligible for expenditure from the Structural Funds at all; and 2) whether the relative prosperity of the Member State in which the region is located should be taken into account.

The essence of the debate on future Cohesion Policy seems to hinge on whether the policy should be about redistributive transfers between rich and poorer regions, or whether it should be an instrument to promote economic change and development and the realising of potential in all regions.

[More information](#)

### **Biodiversity Protection options**

In a bid to launch a debate among Member States with a view to developing a post-2010 biodiversity EU policy framework, a Communication setting out four possible scenarios as mid-term vehicles to contribute to achieving a long-term (2050) vision for reducing biodiversity loss in Europe was published by the European Commission on 19 January. The vision is grounded in the proper valuing and preservation of natural "ecosystem services" and biodiversity given their functions in supporting economic prosperity and human well-being as well as environmental stability.

The options, which take account of what can be achieved within the next decade, are tiered in terms of their respective levels of ambition:

- 1) Significantly reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- 2) Halting the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- 3) Option 2 plus restoration as far as possible, and
- 4) Option 3 plus stepping up the EU's contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.

The extent of the biodiversity loss in the EU and globally, the main drivers of this crisis, and its implications for the environment, economy and society as a whole are also highlighted in the Communication. It further outlines the main achievements and shortcomings of the current EU Biodiversity Action Plan. A major conference on this issue will be held in Athens at the end of April.

[Options for an EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010](#)

[Conference](#)

### **Waste Enforcement Agency planned**

Enforcing compliance of national laws with EU waste legislation merits a new EU body according to recommendations contained in a European Commission feasibility study published on 1 February. The quality of the implementation efforts

attached to the various waste regulations and directives in many Member States has long been a concern in Brussels with the backlog of time-consuming infringement proceedings mounting year on year. Almost one in five environmental infringement cases is now waste-related yet the Commission is not in a position to provide the practical resources to address this situation through early-stage interventions.

The study depicts this situation as being mirrored within many national jurisdictions where a lack of technical capacity to prepare waste management plans, poor coordination among organisations, and a lack of resources for enforcement activities are seen to be widely in evidence – creating an environment where implementing waste laws is a distinctly low priority at national level while ranking among the EU's top concerns.

The proposed agency is being envisaged as carrying out reviews of Member States' enforcement systems, supplying guidance on the interpretation of EU waste requirements, and providing training for national officials. Where serious cases of non-compliance arose, direct inspections and controls of facilities would take place. An in-depth cost-benefit analysis on the proposal is to be carried out over the coming year.

[More information](#)

### **An end to annual accounts for microenterprises?**

An amendment to the EU accounting directives rules, approved by the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee on 28 January, is a significant step in exempting micro-enterprises from having to draw up annual accounts. This follows upon a Commission proposal from February 2009 to realise one of the ambitions of the European Economic Recovery Plan to simplify the business environment for small firms so as to enhance their competitiveness and realise their growth potential.

Although firms would still have to maintain records of their business transactions and financial situation, the

move would help to alleviate some of the disproportionate regulatory burden on the smallest companies by differentiating them from larger firms. The exemptions would have to be granted by national authorities. In order to qualify, firms would need to meet two of the following criteria: balance sheet total under €500,000, net turnover under €1 million and/or an average of 10 employees or less during the financial year.

[More information](#)

### **Report highlights Irish regions' potential for employment**

Strategic focusing of investment towards the National Spatial Strategy gateways; enhanced oversight roles for Regional Authorities; and ongoing business support-local government cooperation are among the key recommendations being proposed by the a new Forfás report on employment.

*Regional Competitiveness Agendas* (RCAs) comprises separate analyses of both the baseline economic situations plus the "Realising Potential" options for each of the Border, East (Dublin & Mid-East), Midlands, Mid-West, South-East, South-West, and West. The latter documents detail the key opportunities for each region to optimise use of its enterprise assets towards achieving quality mid-term employment prospects.

In what is described as a "refresh of the NSS", the report urges the need to assure suitable coordinated and resource efficient governance arrangements for each gateway along with its hinterland - including reinstating the NDP's deferred Gateway Innovation Fund to encourage strategic development initiatives to drive competitive and attractive environments for sustainable business investment.

Similarly, the importance of achieving widespread buy-in and compliance with the renewed and soon-to-be strengthened Regional Planning Guidelines is emphasised with the Regional Authorities being suggested as best placed to ensure adequate implementation arrangements as well as having responsibility for developing strong inter-regional linkages "to harness

services and/or leverage key 'national' infrastructures as appropriate".

In seeking to deliver a more strategic and coherent regional response, harnessing stakeholder engagement in an enterprise-focused agenda is highlighted as a particular challenge. To achieve this, the creation of an Economic Forum is suggested for each region whereby the appropriate expertise and competences from the enterprise development agencies and planning and development authorities (at Regional and Gateway level) would be regularly brought together to monitor and update action oriented progress.

[More information](#)

### **Environmental Benefits of Agriculture**

The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) has published a report identifying, for the first time, the full range of environmental and wider societal benefits arising from European farming. 'Public goods provided by agriculture in the European Union' concludes that many of these benefits – including the maintenance of high quality water and soils, cultural landscapes, and biodiversity habitats – are highly valued but are already not being provided on a sufficient scale (a situation likely to further deteriorate in the future with technological change and the threats of climate change impact upon farming).

Instigated on behalf of the Commission's DG Agriculture and Rural Development, the report sets out the arguments for increased public intervention in the delivery of such goods and services. It argues that this can best be achieved through appropriately targeted Common Agricultural Policy measures whereby direct payments are, as now, tied into standards compliance based on environmental factors such as maintaining the condition of land. The publication comes at a time when the debate about the size and character of the CAP beyond 2013 is intensifying.

[Report](#)

## Services Directive enters force

Three years after its agreement by Member States and the European Parliament, the directive on services in the internal market entered into force at the turn of the year. The so-called "Bolkenstein Directive" is an attempt to eliminate national regulations which impede the cross-border delivery of services in a manner that is discriminatory or objectively unjustified on the grounds of public interest.

Among other fields, provision of services in/by the distributive trades (including retail); regulated professions (such as legal and tax advisers, architects, engineers, accountants, and surveyors); construction and crafts; business activities (e.g. office maintenance; management consultancy; advertising); accommodation; leisure; catering; installation and maintenance; media; training and education; real estate services; and renting and leasing are covered by its terms.

Only a limited number of service provision activities are explicitly excluded from its scope of application: these include financial services; electronic communications networks; transportation; healthcare; and certain state-provided social services.

It now falls to governments to have adequately transposed the Directive into national legislation. To date, compliance has been limited.

[More information](#)

## Universal broadband across EU?

The incoming Spanish EU Presidency, along with its immediate successors in Belgium and Hungary, wants to include broadband as part of the range of telecommunications services covered by the Universal Service Directive (which relates mainly to fixed-lines). This follows agreement between the European Parliament and Council in November on a major overhaul of EU telecoms rules ('Telecoms Package'), which will strengthen consumer rights, safeguard internet access, protect data, boost competition, and modernise signal technology from mid-2011. December's

European Council subsequently agreed priorities for a new European Digital Agenda (which is set to have its own Commissioner) - highlighting the importance of an ambitious European ICT policy in terms of reaching key goals for growth, jobs, social inclusion and sustainability. These include achieving 100 percent broadband coverage across Europe by 2013.

The Spanish ambition would oblige Member States to make broadband available right throughout their territories and for citizens to have a right to be offered the opportunity to access it. The move is aimed at improving web access in rural areas and to ward off a socio-economic 'digital divide' as an increasing number of services are made available online. At present, national regulators maintain the right to declare universal services unnecessary in areas which are already covered by existing offers. According to the three governments' joint programme for the next 18 months of the EU Council, "the presidencies will launch work on the new scope of the universal service in electronic communications and on the incorporation of broadband in the scope of universal service."

[Telecoms Package](#)  
[Draft Programme of the next three EU Presidencies](#)

## PUBLICATIONS

### Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)

The joint European Environment Agency (EEA) - Commission SEIS initiative aims to assist Member States in establishing an integrated and shared EU-wide information system to simplify environmental data and information monitoring and reporting. The latest newsletter includes information on the Environmental Atlas of Europe and the online European pollutants map.

[Newsletter](#)

## EVENTS

### 22-24 February, Barcelona Summit of Local Governments

The role of local authorities in delivering policies and measures to enable greater levels of economic, social and territorial cohesion, competitiveness and quality of life, is the theme of this event. Discussions revolving around topics including models of local governance, improving the management of services, regional planning, and citizen participation are expected to produce specific proposals to feed into a EU policy landscape which has strengthened the principle of subsidiarity and local autonomy through the Lisbon Treaty.

[More information](#)

### 23-24 February, Brussels ICT for Energy Efficiency

The European Commission's DG for Information Society & Media will gather policy makers and experts on the potential of ICTs in a bid to drive progress in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Among the challenges to be addressed are ICTs' potential in developing sustainable Smart-Cities; inducing behavioural changes; reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption in freight logistics; and sustainable management of non-renewable resources.

[More information](#)



**Irish Regions**  
Brussels Office  
*Oifig Réigiún na hÉireann, An Bhrúiséal*

*Working for Ireland's  
local and regional levels in Europe*

Rond-Point Schuman, 11  
B-1040 Brussels  
[www.iro.ie](http://www.iro.ie)

Robert Collins      Ronan Gingles  
Head of Office      EU Programmes  
   & Communications

[robert.collins@iro.ie](mailto:robert.collins@iro.ie)    [ronan.gingles@iro.ie](mailto:ronan.gingles@iro.ie)

Tel: +3222331122      Tel: +3222331120  
GSM: +32498120821    GSM: +32493203666

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