

EU News Bulletin

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

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FUNDING, NETWORKING & PROJECTS

Call: Small-scale Urban Transport

The CIVITAS Initiative seeks to inspire cities and towns interested in achieving more sustainable, clean and energy efficient urban transport systems, by implementing and showcasing ambitious sets of technology and policy based measures. In doing so, CIVITAS

funds small-scale projects that are meant to stimulate the exchange of ideas, expertise and concrete actions in the field of urban sustainable mobility.

Funding opportunities are being made available through a dedicated CIVITAS ACTIVITY FUND call launched on 22 November. The fund seeks to enable the exchange and/or transfer of experiences between CIVITAS cities and other cities interested in the initiative's integrated approach to sustainable mobility.

Deadline: 18 January 2011.

[Further details](#)

Call: INTERREG IVC

The precise terms of reference for the 4th call for proposals of the INTERREG IVC programme on exchange and transfer of local/regional development policy knowledge and experience were made available on 1 December.

All sub-themes remain open for project proposals although only 'Regional Initiatives' (i.e. classic INTERREG projects as opposed to 'Capitalisation' Projects to transfer regional development good practices into Structural Fund programmes) need apply.

A remaining budget of around €100 million at a 75% intervention rate is available for projects in what is to be the final opportunity for funding under this programme.

Deadline: 1 April 2011

[Further details](#)

Call: Integration of Third-Country Nationals

On 8 November the 2010 call for proposals for transnational projects under the European Integration Fund (EIF) for third country nationals was launched. Applications need to correspond with the objectives and priorities of the annual Work Programme for "Community Actions" published on 9 September.

Four Priorities for support have been established:

- diversity management in neighbourhoods;
- immigrants' participation in the democratic process;
- integration measures targeting different immigrant groups; and
- links between admission policies and integration processes.

Financed actions could include measures relating to public perceptions; urban governance and intercultural dialogue; local services adjustment to different target groups; and migrant women involvement in civic and political life among other themes.

Projects of up to €1 million co-financed by the EU at a rate of up to 90% are encouraged. A budget of €6 million is available.

Deadline: 14 January 2011

[Further details](#)

Call: Renewable energy and Low carbon

The first call for proposals for the world's largest programme of investment in low carbon and

renewable energy demonstration projects is underway as of 22 November. The 'NER300' initiative will provide very substantial financial support for at least 34 projects involving innovative renewable energy technologies and at least eight projects involving carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies.

It is hoped that at least one project, funding up to 50% of the construction and operation costs, (there may be a possibility of employing Structural Funds as co-financing) will be funded for each EU Member State. Applications must go through national assessment firstly (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland) in advance of the European Investment Bank undertaking detailed financial and technical due diligence.

Deadline: 9 February 2011

[Further details](#)

Non-EU Call:

Smarter Cities for quality of life

IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge is a new grant programme addressing a wide range of financial and service delivery challenges in areas as diverse as transportation, energy, clean water, education, social services, public safety and economic development. It aims to enable cities to become smarter by enhancing their capacity to collect, analyze and act upon information across multiple systems, to create an environment where global cities can learn from one another, and to foster cross-sector partnerships.

The equivalent of \$50 million-worth of services and technology will be made available to 100 cities which present the strongest cases for participation. Winning bids will be able to avail of a team of IBM employees to address their specific problems.

The 2011 grant allocation deadline, the first of three annually, is 31 December 2010.

[Further details](#)

Call: Territorial Development experts

The Call for Expressions of Interest for the ESPON 2013 research network Knowledge Support System opened on 23 November. The Call aims to enlarge the pool of experts supporting ESPON applied research, in particular in the following themes: Territorial Dimensions of the Europe 2020 Strategy; Territorial Scenarios for Europe; Territorial Governance; and Territorial Potentials related to the Green Economy.

Deadline: 21 January 2011

[Further details](#)

Catch up on previous calls for proposals [here](#)

Launch of PROGRESS Microfinance Facility

A 9-10 November conference on 'Microfinance in Europe' officially marked the launch of the European Progress Microfinance Facility (EPMF).

The instrument will offer a budget of €100 million for the 2010-2013 period to facilitate access to credit for microenterprises, the self-employed, the unemployed or individuals facing uncertainty in the job market who wish to create or develop their own small business. Loans of less than €25,000 are to be provided.

A particular focus will be placed on groups with limited access to the conventional credit market, including women, young people, minorities and the disabled.

The specific application procedures for Ireland are expected to be published in the coming weeks.

[Further details](#)

Consultation on future of CIP

The Commission has opened a public consultation on a possible successor to the Competitiveness & Innovation Programme (CIP). This framework programme is the main EU budgetary instrument targeting competitiveness outside the research and skills areas. It encompasses three operational programmes for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (EIP), Information Communication Technologies Policy Support (ICT-PSP), and Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE).

The online survey will be available until 4 February 2011.

[Further details](#)

NGOs influencing EU Policy and obtaining Funding

In early November, staff from this office took part in a series of skills seminars for community and voluntary organisations on influencing and connecting with European policy.

The events which were held in Castlebar, Waterford and Dublin were organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland and supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs as part of the Communicating Europe Initiative.

The Irish Regions Brussels Office role was to attempt to demystify EU funding concepts and to highlight possible opportunities for the particular target audience. As such not all EU funding programmes were covered.

Other contributors dealt with “Bridging the Gap between NGO’s and the EU” in policy terms, and the new “NGO EU Connect” website which aims to break down the barriers faced by this sector. MEPs Marian Harkin, Sean Kelly, Gay Mitchell and Proinsias De Rossa also gave of their time to contribute on the role of the European Parliament.

[Presentations and video](#)

[NGO EU Connect website](#)

New marine & maritime research funding website

A dedicated website and a practical guide to funding for marine and maritime research have been launched. The idea behind this is to help potential beneficiaries of EU funding programmes find their way through the three main maritime research funding instruments and identify the most appropriate funding scheme for them among FP7, the CIP, and Structural Funds.

[Further details](#)

Interim evaluation of FP7

On 18 November the Commission’s DG Research launched the Interim Evaluation of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The report is intended not only to take stock of the successes and stumbling blocks of FP7, but also to put forward ideas and means of improvement for the next Framework Programme (FP8), which is in the early stages of being developed.

The evaluation offers some insight into the Commission’s current thinking in advance of the publication next February of the first orientation paper on this issue. It has been compiled taking into account the need for effective coordination between EU research and other major policies such as those for regional development and for innovation.

Among the problematic issues it highlights are concerns over brain drain from peripheral regions – “suggesting that countering deficiencies in infrastructures at the regional level should be a more prominent objective in FP8”.

[Evaluation Report](#)

Town twinning approvals

Sligo and Listowel are the latest Irish towns to have secured EU funding for town twinning actions through the Europe for Citizens Programme. The approval of their applications in response to last summer’s call for proposals to organise ‘citizens’ meetings’ in 2011 brings to €118,000 the value of grants earned by Irish towns from this particular source over the past 6 months alone. Monivea, Kanturk, Macroom, Camp, Ballylanders, and Belclare have been the other recent beneficiaries.

[Further details](#)

Project: Supporting SME internationalisation (WIN Atlantic)

A new European Business Support Network has been established by the Midland Regional Authority and WESTBIC amongst others with the aim of assisting innovative start-ups and SMEs to build a presence and expand their presence across other European markets.

Funded by the INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Programme and with other partners in France, Spain, Portugal and the UK, WIN ATLANTIC (Western Internationalisation Network in the Atlantic Area) is a free service providing enhanced networking opportunities to companies and supporting them in the internationalisation of their businesses. The network is particularly focussed on

assisting growth businesses in the ICT, Biotechnologies and Energy/Environment sectors, whilst other sectors are also considered.

Since the start of the pilot initiative, more than 150 SMEs have joined with approximately one third having already received financial support to attend international fairs and network events to progress ambitions including market exploration, assessing new technologies and meeting prospective partners. Further advantages of membership for firms considering international markets include assistance in accessing funding resources and essential information on cultural and legal issues for newly internationalised firms as well as contact with market players, multinationals, venture capitalists, and innovation actors.

Further details and registration:
www.winatlantic.com

Wanted: Local Energy case studies

ManagEnergy, the technical support initiative for local authorities active in the Intelligent Energy - Europe (IEE) programme, have issued a call for case studies on activities that have demonstrated positive results in energy efficiency, sustainability and environmental impact at local or regional level.

The best such examples to have been completed in 2009 or 2010 will be displayed on the ManagEnergy website and will be included in the biennial publication ‘Local Energy Action - EU Good Practice’. They will also be nominated for the ManagEnergy Local Energy Action Award, which will be held during the EU Sustainable Energy Week, 11-15 April 2011, in Brussels.

Deadline: 14 January
[Further details](#)

Partner search requests:

- Sustainable urban regeneration (INTERREG NWE/Life+)
- Cooperatives of Employment and Services in Rural Areas (INTERREG IVC)
- Developing 'science translation' to bridge the communication gap between research, industry and public policy (INTERREG NWE)
- Skills strengthening for teachers working with intellectually disabled adults (Grundtvig/Leonardo)
- Adult education tools for immigrants (Grindtvig)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder education and coping strategies for young adults (Leonardo)
- Apprenticeship programme delivery (Leonardo)
- Sport mentoring to improve the lives of vulnerable and excluded people (Sport Preparatory Action)
- Encouraging creativity and innovation in the youth sector (Youth in Action).

Contact the office for further details.

We can also circulate your draft project ideas to regions across Europe as required.

NEWS & POLICY

Cohesion Report maps out future thinking on Regional Policy

Every 3 years the European Commission delivers a report to the other European institutions on the performance of EU Regional Policy in achieving economic and social cohesion through. The latest version was published on 12 November. As well as assessing progress to date, the Fifth Cohesion Report: *Investing in Europe's future*, suggests potential avenues for improvement of policy

delivery and outlines the Commission's thinking on the future design of the policy after 2013.

The report is in the main based on the potential role of Cohesion Policy in realising the ambitions of the Europe 2020 Strategy, effectively the EU's growth-based response to the economic crisis.

For the first time, analysis of the goal of territorial cohesion – implying sustainable development and balanced regional development – is included alongside economic and social cohesion.

Among the key points proposed are:

- Eligibility for all European regions regardless of levels of income in order that they may be "able to tailor their strategy in an integrated manner to their specific strengths and weaknesses".
- Adoption of a Common Strategic Framework to translate the somewhat vague Europe 2020 Strategy into concrete investment priorities across all funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EFF). This would include formal 'Development Contracts' between the Commission and each Member State on the use of EU (and national co-financing) funding.
- A new intermediate category of support reflecting the particular situation of regions whose status is in transition between the current Objectives 1 and 2.
- A more concentrated (limited number of priorities) and results-orientated policy for each region focused on delivery of economic and social development (as opposed to equating spending compliance with achieving success).
- The need for flexibility in involving local actors in programme design and implementation including particular reference to the "local development model" (integrated, bottom-up approaches involving appropriate actors and levels of administration at functional scales).

- The wider use of alternative funding approaches to the traditional non-repayable grants. This would see a greater emphasis on "financial engineering instruments" (loans and venture capital) whose "revolving fund" investments can deliver a repeated rather than once-off impact. Likely areas to which this could be extended include urban transport, research & development, local development, lifelong learning, climate change and environment, ICT and broadband.

- "An ambitious urban agenda" where urban authorities would play a stronger role in designing and implementing urban development strategies.
- A review of both the co-financing (modulated in terms of activities undertaken, regional income levels etc.) and additionality (to more reliably reflect the added value of EU intervention) principles by which EU support is justified.
- Extending the territorial dimension of Member States' Strategic Environmental Assessments and Impact Assessments to avoid imbalances in the impact of policy across the EU and to ascertain cost-benefit analyses.

A formal consultation has been launched and will run until 31 January 2011 when a Cohesion Forum will take place in Brussels. Responses received will feed into legislative proposals to be presented in spring 2011 along with the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020.

[Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion](#)

[Consultation](#)

Subsequently, Ministers meeting at the Informal Cohesion Policy Council in Liege on 22-23 November have broadly welcomed and cautiously backed the general thrust of most of these proposals in a bid to achieve ongoing growth at regional level. While the

Cohesion Report avoided giving any real pointers as to the future shape of the ESF, Ministers have recommended the strengthening of the fund's regional dimension so as to increase its visibility.

[Cohesion Policy Council of Ministers](#)

Resistance to linking regional funds with national economic factors

One area of the Fifth Cohesion Report (see above) which proved more controversial with the Council was the prospect of introducing "conditionality" provisions and sanctions linked to national macro-economic policy reforms (e.g. environmental protection, flexicurity, research and innovation) to ensure effective use of financial resources. Here Ministers have stated a preference for any incentives to relate specifically to the management of Cohesion Policy rather than wider economic conditions.

Similarly, Commission proposals circulated in early summer to align regional programming more closely to national policy and budget performance are being resisted by the Committee of the Regions and other regional interests.

In a bid to strengthen the coordination of economic policies across the EU and to ensure better compliance with the rules of the Stability & Growth Pact", the Commission hopes to deploy "a new system of financial sanctions and incentives" relating to the EU budget. This would theoretically entail suspending or cancelling EU payments, including "most expenditure related to Cohesion Policy", to those Member States that break the rules on national budget deficits and public debt levels.

At a roundtable event in Brussels on 16 November, CoR President Mercedes Bresso told EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn that it would be unfair to use macroeconomic conditionality arguments to punish

regions for flawed decisions taken at national level. Furthermore, she pointed out that such a stance would represent an erosion of the principle of subsidiarity and respect for the autonomy of national and regional governments.

[Further details](#)

EU Auditors criticise LEADER approach

The European Court of Auditors, the EU's spending watchdog, has published a special report focusing on the added value of the Leader approach for executing EU rural development policy through Local Action Groups (LAGs).

The report is sceptical of the added value involved in Leader, noting that many LAGs have actually been administering funding in ways that serve to actively limit the potential for key features of area-based development such as bottom-up approaches, the fostering of public-private partnership and follow-through on agreed local strategies.

It also calls into question the overall effectiveness and efficiency of Leader expenditure and financial management. Ongoing instances of weaknesses have been uncovered in grant awarding procedures, including conflicts of interest and lack of transparency. Part of the blame is placed on Member States as well as the Commission for not having been more rigorous in terms of monitoring and evaluation costs and risks involved in implementing the programme.

The report makes a series of recommendations in this regard, particularly clamping down on projects which do not necessitate EU support in order to be undertaken ("deadweight") and ensuring properly documented project selection procedures. The Commission is also urged to ensure that Member States require each LAG to set

accountable and measurable objectives for their local area strategies relating to what a Leader strategy can realistically achieve.

['Implementation of the Leader approach for rural development'](#)

'New Skills & Jobs' Initiative

'An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment' is the latest Flagship Initiative associated with the Europe 2020 Strategy to be launched by the Commission.

Designed primarily to help the EU increase the proportion of 20-64 year olds in employment to 75% ("full employment") by the end of the decade, the agenda also sets out to deliver better quality jobs, to help people of all ages to anticipate and manage change by equipping them with the right skills, and to improve the functioning of European labour markets and welfare systems.

Thirteen proposals for concrete actions to help deliver these objectives are detailed. These relate to issues including flexicurity; lifelong learning; an EU 'Skills Panorama' (updated overviews of national labour market conditions); skills, competence and occupations classification; cross-border recognition of professional qualifications; integration of third country nationals into the workforce; migrant workers' rights; working conditions; EU directives on part-time work and fixed-term contracts; and barriers to job/business creation.

The Agenda is intended to complement, in particular, another 'Europe 2020' flagship initiative - 'Youth on the Move' initiative (see September's *Bulletin*), which aims to help young people to gain knowledge, skills and experience.

Cllr Denis Landy (South Tipperary County Council and South-East Regional

Authority) has been appointed as the Committee of the Regions' rapporteur on the new skills and jobs Communication and will work on coordinating the local and regional levels' response in 2011.

[Further details](#)

Energy 2020 Strategy unveiled

On 10 November the Commission's DG for Energy announced its strategy for securing sustainable energy supply in Europe over the coming decade.

The 'Energy 2020' Communication develops the main energy saving, renewable energy and energy efficiency improvement policy objectives established by the EU as part of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy'. It details the five top priorities, which will form the basis for concrete legislative initiatives and proposals to be brought forward by the Commission within the next 18 months, and for discussion at February's inaugural EU Summit on Energy.

The mainstreaming of energy efficiency into all relevant policy areas is presented as the overriding priority. This will include proposals in 2011 to create investment incentives and innovative financial instruments to help house owners and local authorities to finance renovation and energy saving measures. It is also stressed that the public sector should take energy efficiency into consideration when procuring works, services or products. The EU has set itself an overall 20% energy savings objective for 2020 to be achieved via the implementation of national energy efficiency action plans.

Further priorities included are:

- a plan for an integrated pan-European energy market by 2015 through improved infrastructure and fast-tracked planning approval;
- coordinated EU energy relations with third countries;

- Launching four major projects in key areas for Europe's competitiveness - new technologies for intelligent networks and electricity storage, research on second-generation biofuels and the 'smart cities' partnership to promote energy savings in urban areas.
- New measures to benefit consumer choice.

['Energy 2020 - A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy'](#)

2011 Budget negotiations stall

Relations between the European Council and Parliament have been put under strain after three Member States – the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK – refused to discuss demands made by the European Parliament for greater influence in negotiations on the post-2013 multi-annual budget. Parliament's claim is based on a Treaty of Lisbon provision.

This spat means that negotiations on the EU's budget for 2011 (see October's *Bulletin*) have broken down for now. If a deal is not reached in mid-December, the EU will be forced to impose a provisional month-by-month budget, based on 2010 figures.

In response, on 26 November the Commission presented a reworked proposal based on what common ground has been reached to date with an increase on 2010 spending of €126.5 billion limited to the Council's 2.9% ceiling. This would see reductions in spending on rural development; the environment; fisheries; direct aid for farmers and other market-related expenditure; initiatives related to citizenship; plus the Commission's share of the budget for administration.

A further sticking point between the institutions – how to devise a mechanism by which funds can be

flexibly reallocated from one budget heading to another over the coming years – has seen more progress with the Council dropping its insistence on such decisions requiring unanimous agreement across all Member State governments on 24 November.

[Further details](#)

Innovation Partnerships

The European Parliament has passed a resolution backing the 'European Innovation Partnerships' (EIP) scheme associated with the Commission's 'Innovation Union' flagship initiative to turn ideas into jobs, green growth and social progress (see October's *Bulletin*). The aim of these partnerships is to bring together EU, national, regional, and other public and private actors across policy areas and industries to tackle specific societal challenges.

MEPs have made clear to the Commission that the partnerships should fully avail of the experience offered by existing European and national structures without unnecessarily creating new ones. Funding would involve pooling resources among participants.

Early 2011 will see the launch of the first pilot on "Active and Healthy Ageing". This will set out to uncover new forms of "social innovation" to improve the health and quality of life of older people, enabling them to live active and independent lives; to contribute to the sustainability and efficiency of public health and social care systems; and to foster competitiveness and business opportunities. There are strong links with the EU's Health Strategy "Together for Health" (2007).

In the longer term, a proposed partnerships on smart cities is on the cards. This seems likely to focus on improving energy, transport and infrastructure efficiency and management. A possible raw materials

initiative would address security of supply including sustainable extraction, processing, recycling and substitution.

[Active & Healthy Ageing consultation](#)
(until 28 January)

[Smart Cities](#)

[Raw Materials](#)

Disability Strategy

On 15 November the European Commission adopted a new strategy intended to tackle the obstacles that prevent persons with disabilities from participating in society on an equal basis.

Concrete measures proposed include investigation of how public procurement, standardisation, and state aid rules relating to assistive devices can best be adapted to make goods and services accessible to people with disabilities; facilitating access to citizens' rights through the use of Braille or sign-language; and awareness-raising such as through the European award for accessible cities.

['European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe'](#)

Industrial Emission rules tightened

Stricter EU legislation adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 November is intended to bring down industrial emissions across the EU.

The Directive on Industrial Emissions has been in the pipeline since a December 2007 Commission proposal. It has been shaped by a 2 year stakeholder review process to examine how legislation in this area could be simplified to offer a high level of protection for the environment and human health while cutting unnecessary administrative costs for industry.

It updates and merges seven existing pieces of legislation, with particular focuses on:

- Strengthening the consistent application of environmentally-sound Best Available Techniques (BAT) within the management of emissions permits decision-making;
- Reducing acceptable limits for air and other environmental pollutants from large combustion plants;
- Improving Member State mechanisms for checking and enforcing compliance (monitoring, reporting and environmental inspections) as well as public access to information; and
- stimulating the deployment of emerging environmental techniques (eco-Innovation).

[Further details](#)

Community Innovation Survey

The sixth Community Innovation Survey shows that more than half (52%) of the EU27 enterprises are innovative. The survey collects information about product and process innovation as well as organisational and marketing innovation.

For Ireland a healthy 56.5% of enterprises display some evidence of innovative activity – the fifth best score of 26 Member States. Germany with a corresponding figure of 79.9% leads the way by some distance, followed by Luxembourg, Belgium and Portugal.

[Further details](#)

Social inclusion through sport

The Education, Youth, Culture & Sport Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels on 18 November agreed on a series of conclusions on the societal role of sport. The agreed document acknowledges that the sports movement can make an

important contribution to issues of public interest, particularly as a source of and a driver for active social inclusion, and stressed that this potential should be used at all EU levels in order to allow all citizens, and especially young people, to benefit from it for personal development, an individual's sense of identity and a sense of belonging.

The following common priorities were agreed upon and recommended towards the Commission and Member States:

- Support the "Sport for All" principle based on equal opportunities in particular for physically inactive people.
- Make better use of the potential of sport as a contribution to community building, social cohesion and inclusive growth.
- Support the transnational exchange of strategies and methodologies to make better use of the potential of sport for social inclusion on a national and European level.

The Council has invited the Commission to incorporate these issues in the upcoming Communication on the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on sports, and to ensure that social inclusion is considered a priority in future proposals for an EU Sport Programme as well as examining possibilities to support activities in the area of sport through existing funds.

[Further details](#)

CAP reform questionnaire

Following the publication of the 'CAP towards 2020' Communication outlining reform objectives and scenarios for the future Common Agricultural Policy (see October's *Bulletin* for a review of the leaked copy), the Commission launched a questionnaire on 23 November on the impact assessment on the proposals. This is not so much a broad consultation as a 'sounding out' of the proposed

scenarios in the Communication, inviting views from stakeholders and experts.

It is understood that the Commission would be particularly keen to receive examples of initiatives where the Rural Development Programme (including LEADER funded projects) has made a difference to the local economy.

['The CAP towards 2020: Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future'](#)

[Consultation](#)

Deadline: 25 January

Tourism Roadmap

The European Commission has unveiled a road map to implement the main actions set out in last June's ambitious strategy 'Europe: the world's No.1 Tourist destination'. The short and medium term plan designates the key actors for each of the strategy's actions and proposes a timetable for implementation.

Over the next year this will include efforts to assess the possibility of increasing tourism sector SMEs' access to new technologies; to set up a web-based platform to facilitate exchanges on low season supply and demand between Member States (the EU is already active in promoting off-season cross-border 'social tourism' opportunities through the Calypso initiative); and to launch consultations leading to the drafting of a strategy paper to develop sustainable coastal and marine tourism.

[Further details](#)

'Regional competitiveness through sustainable energy' seminar

Presentations and conclusions from a 5 October workshop on energy

management for competitive regions are now available online. The Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE) event examined examples from across Europe of how that programme along with the Structural Funds have supported coordinated actions in the use of new financing opportunities in energy efficiency for private households; regional energy system/cluster management for economic growth and employment incentives; and energy auditing of public buildings.

[Further details](#)

EVENTS

Climate Change and Cities Brussels, 12-13 January

'Climate change and cities: How the EU can assist local and urban governments in their efforts to address climate change' is being organised by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS). The focus of the conference will be on the role of local authorities in promoting and undertaking climate change actions and identifying concrete ways in which the EU can assist this level. The conference is linked to a forthcoming CEPS report, which has identified the policy changes required in the EU for territories to undertake sustainability policies.

[Further details](#)

Local Energy Brussels, 18 January

The annual Intelligent Energy - Europe (IEE) programme Information Day will provide additional information on the 2011 call for proposals which is due to be published at the same time. This event will be broadcast live on the Internet. A National Information Days is

also expected to take place in the New Year.

[Register](#)

Volunteering: local & regional role Brussels, 26 January

As the 2011 European Year of Volunteering gets underway, a Forum on the role of regional and local authorities in this respect will be held at the Committee of the Regions. The event aims to discuss how to create an enabling and supportive environment for volunteering activities in which awareness can be raised, volunteer organisations can be empowered, and achievements and experience gained can be properly recognised. The event will also present best local practice in voluntary action in order to feed into the European Commission's conference on volunteering in Athens in October 2011.

[Further details](#)

Upon request, IRO staff may be available to attend events in Brussels on behalf of local and regional authorities.



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