

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:

Sustainable tourism development

On 12 May, the Commission's DG Enterprise & Industry published its 2011 'Sustainable Tourism' Preparatory Action call for proposals aiming to fund projects that enhance the visibility of transnational thematic tourism products including (physical or virtual) trails, routes or itineraries. Projects will ideally be aimed at promoting cooperation and exchange of best practice between Member States to create a favourable environment for sustainable and responsible tourism. Partnerships require a minimum of four partners covering at least four European countries.

The following objectives are being focused on to stimulate competitive and high-quality European tourism:

- Raising awareness of the contribution of different cultures to a common European identity, through the understanding of shared history and common values on the basis of its tangible, intangible and natural heritage;
- Promoting cultural tourism as a factor for sustainable economic development, European citizenship and intercultural dialogue;
- Promoting sustainable and responsible tourism;
- Strengthening the capacity of tourism operators and small enterprises in remote and less known destinations to reach out to new publics (exchange of experience, networking and clustering efforts).

Among the shared tourism themes or linkages which this call might apply to are cycling routes, greenways, protected natural sites, cultural heritage, historical references, food and drink, health and wellbeing, education, sport, rural matters and maritime issues. 4-6 projects of up to 12 months' duration are likely to be funded to the tune of approximately €100,000 each. The maximum EU co-financing rate is 75%.

Deadline: 1 July

[Further details](#)

Call: Low Carbon Industry

Specific support is being provided by DG Enterprise & Industry for actions that will focus on enabling traditional manufacturing and process industries covered by the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to maintain their competitiveness while coping with the challenges of a low carbon economy. The Sustainable Industry Low Carbon scheme (SILC) announced on 26 May is a "short-term innovation measure" within the Competitiveness & Innovation (CIP) Framework Programme.

The objective of the financing is the development and deployment of innovative measures of 12-24 months duration leading to a demonstrable and quantifiable reduction of specific Greenhouse Gas emission intensities in an eligible energy-intensive industry sector covered by the ETS Directive. The projects are to be carried out by consortia of industrial stakeholders, possibly in partnership with public or private organisations.

Measures may be technological (e.g. achieving the use of alternative fuels; joint energy or waste recovery systems

development projects between industrial stakeholders and technology providers and/or research institutions) or non-technological (e.g. deployment of best practice approaches based on mapping of options for process improvements in companies; development and deployment of a model how companies could get access to alternative forms of finance) in nature.

Two further calls for proposals for short-term SILC projects are expected to be published in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The second phase of SILC (2014-2020) will concentrate on deploying mid- to longer-term innovation measures which spur further progress and possible breakthrough solutions, requiring further validation steps prior to their full-scale industrial implementation.

Budget: €2.85 million (up to €0.95 million per project) at 75% EU co-financing.

Deadline: 30 August

[Further details](#)

Call: Employment Services

A Call for Proposals specifically targeting Employment Services has been published under the PROGRESS employment and social solidarity programme. The PROGRESS – PARES (PARTnerships between Employment Services) Call is intended to deliver new, complementary and high-quality forms of collaboration between public, private and third sector employment services.

Actions to be financed (at up to an 80% rate) should combine the development and delivery of specific services (with measurable pre-defined outcomes) to the end users along with the provision of analytical and methodological findings related to the success and failure of the partnership experienced between the co-operating partners in pioneering the services.

Projects should involve training providers, NGOs, or welfare institutions. Up to 5 projects are expected to benefit from the €1.5 million available budget.

Deadline: 17 August

[Further details](#)

Ireland bids for major clean technologies projects

Following a Call for Proposals last November, two large-scale Irish-based demonstration projects were among the 78 proposals deemed eligible by EU Member State authorities to compete for funding under the 'NER 300' programme. This is the world's largest demonstration programme to attract investment in innovative renewable energy and carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies that are proven, but have not yet been implemented at full-scale.

The programme is to be funded from the sale of 300 million emission allowances held in the New Entrants Reserve (NER) of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). An indicative 34 renewable energy and 8 CCS projects are expected to be supported from the current Call (valued at €3 billion) plus a second Call expected in 2012 and worth in the region of an additional €1.5 billion depending on the market price for carbon allowances which the European Investment Bank can obtain.

One of the Irish bids is the WestWave project, led by ESB International in conjunction with a number of wave energy technology partners, which aims to generate an initial 5 Megawatts of electricity by 2015 from particular sites off the coasts of Mayo and Clare. The two relevant County Councils are included as partners to the consortium. The second application relates to the bio-energy category. At least one Irish project will be approved for funding under the terms of the Call.

[NER300](#)

[Department of Community, Energy & Natural Resources - NER300](#)

Wanted: FP7 Independent experts

The Commission is asking research institutions to nominate appropriate candidates as experts to assist in the evaluation of FP7 proposals. Evaluation work includes making recommendations on ways to gear research towards optimum achievement of the aims of the specific programme concerned, and also monitoring projects that are currently underway, including projects funded by the Community under previous research framework programmes.

[Further details](#)

Job offer: Project Coordinator (Lille)

The INTERREG IVB North-West Europe Programme is currently recruiting a Project Coordinator to work in its Joint Technical Secretariat based in Lille.

Deadline: 22 June.

[Further details](#)

Catch up on other recent calls for proposals through previous issues of this Bulletin by contacting this office.

Partner search requests received for joint funding bids and/or knowledge exchange:

- Developing an urban river catchment modelling tool to predict the impacts of physical changes on water quality, develop a systematic approach to identifying and addressing water framework directive failures, and plan physical remediation to degraded urban watercourses with socio-economic benefits for cities.
- Strategies to reduce the environmental impact of livestock farms across Europe (LIFE+, 18 July submission deadline)
- New approaches to qualification and job placement in the field of nursing of the aged (Progress or Leonardo da Vinci)

- Development of an apprenticeship model to facilitate youths establishment in the labour market, thereby overcoming social exclusion.
- European Network for Practitioners in Alcohol and Traffic Courses
- Common strategies to promote and develop recognisable regional cultural products and sites based on culturally diversified regional areas.
- Collaboration between employment services to deliver quality complementary services (PROGRESS- PARES).

Contact the office for further details.

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

NEWS & POLICY

Governments approve "Territorial Agenda for Diverse Regions"

A 19 May informal meeting of Ministers responsible for territorial development and spatial planning (Ireland was represented by Department of Finance officials) in Gödöllő, Hungary reached agreement on providing strategic orientations to foster the integration of the territorial dimension within different policies at all governance levels. 'Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020: Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions' (TA2020) has been driven by the current Hungarian Presidency of the EU and is supportive of the principle of 'territorial cohesion'. This implies efforts to provide for "harmonious, balanced, efficient, sustainable territorial development" in order to allow each European region to achieve its potential including through integrated strategies based on a tailored 'place-based' approach.

This is especially pertinent in relation to ensuring that the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart,

sustainable and inclusive growth are achieved through the implementation and monitoring of policies and actions which take due account of the varying territorial impact based on different regions' specific development opportunities.

As the EU does not have any competence in territorial development, this represents a high-level policy framework agreement rather than a binding spatial strategy. Its success will depend on Commission recognition - including through carrying out integrated impact assessments and detailed local and regional stakeholder consultation in advance of all significant EU legislative initiatives, policies and programmes to properly take territorial matters into account – as well as national actions (notably relating to the National Spatial Strategy in Ireland's case). Ireland has recently provided the Commission with a National Reform Programme (by which to deliver on Europe 2020) which conspicuously did not outline any specific measures to address regional imbalances or set any sub-national targets.

The TA2020 document identifies six main territorial challenges facing the EU and its regions collectively or more selectively:

- 1) Increased exposure to globalisation: structural changes after the global economic crisis;
- 2) EU integration and the growing interdependence of regions;
- 3) Territorially diverse demographic and social challenges, segregation of vulnerable groups;
- 4) Climate change and environmental risks: geographically diverse impacts;
- 5) Energy challenges threatening regional competitiveness;
- 6) Loss of biodiversity, vulnerable natural landscape and cultural heritage.

In response to these challenges, six 'Territorial Priorities' for the EU are also set out:

- 1) Promote polycentric and balanced territorial development;

- 2) Encourage integrated development in cities, rural areas and specific regions;
- 3) Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions;
- 4) Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies;
- 5) Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises;
- 6) Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions.

Efforts to ascertain the feasibility and desirability of a coherent EU spatial policy as opposed to standalone sectoral policies date back beyond the publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999 where the concepts of polycentric development and integrated urban-rural interrelationships were placed on the EU agenda.

['Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020'](#)

[Further details](#)

State Aid relaxation for Local Authorities?

New legislation that would allow local authorities to avoid EU state aid scrutiny when subsidising small-scale public services of a purely localised nature such as recreational and cultural amenities is at an advanced stage of preparation by the Commission. This practical approach would involve adapting public procurement rules – raising the so-called 'de minimis' threshold – in order to relieve local authorities from having to file complicated public tenders in relation to works and services which evidently have little or no impact on trade between Member States or potential to distort market competition. The indication was given by Competition Commissioner Joaquín Almunia at an early May conference on reforming the state aid

rules on Services of General Economic Interest.

The general principle of state aid scrutiny is that its application should be proportionate to cases where competition distortions are likely to result. The proposed move would free up resources within the Commission's DG Competition to re-orientate efforts away from investigating complaints of negligible significance towards a prioritising of infringements which are of sufficient scale to constitute a matter in which Brussels should involve itself as part of its responsibilities to the proper functioning of the Single Market. The Commission is expected to publish a communication on state aid reform in November before new rules come into force by the end of the year.

[Further details](#)

Irish Stakeholders call for binding ICZM

At a Public Hearing in Brussels on 30 May to discuss future policy on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) a number of Irish stakeholders requested the European Commission to establish legislation binding Member States to fully implement ICZM in the planning and management of coastal areas. Currently, a non-binding EU recommendation from 2002, which defined the principles of sound coastal planning and management, is in place and earlier this year the European Commission undertook an on-line consultation to review the ICZM recommendation, with a view to a follow-up proposal by the end of 2011. Participants at the subsequent Public Hearing received preliminary outcomes of the consultation from the European Commission.

On the issue of a binding or non-binding framework for ICZM, no clear consensus has emerged from the consultation. However, support for EU financial assistance to be provided to implement ICZM principles and practices does seem

to be apparent. Nonetheless, the Commission was noticeably reticent at the Public Hearing about the need for a stronger legislative framework and not overly optimistic on the funding issue. Both DG environment and DG Maritime Affairs expressed the need for better governance of the marine and coastal area, the need for coherence between land and sea planning and between existing legislative instruments and the need for longer-term thinking and a move away from the 'project approach' to the programme-based approach.

[EU ICZM](#)

[Further details](#)

EP committee supports intermediate regions category

On 26 May, the Regional Development (REGI) Committee of the European Parliament voted in support of the creation of a new intermediate category of regions for the next Structural Funds programming period post-2013. The proposal, which overturned the recommendations of a report which went before the committee, would represent a new bridging mechanism between the strongly-subsidised Convergence ('Objective 1') and the less well-financed Competitiveness ('Objective 2') categories of assistance. Despite the committee's approval the final decision from the Parliament is expected to be a close-run issue at the 23 June plenary session.

If ratified by both the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, the decision would group about 50, mainly Western European regions with GDP between 75% and 90% of the EU average. Whether or not the Border, Midland & Western Region could figure among this set will ultimately depend on which years' figures are taken as the calculation basis.

The committee also set down a marker against the prospect of forthcoming Commission budget proposals fragmenting EU cohesion policy spending

along sectoral lines. It sees separate initiatives for themes such as climate change or transport as a retrograde step which would fly in the face of the tried and tested regional programming approach and its ability to significantly address the Europe 2020 objectives relating to combating poverty, education and training, employment, innovation, and competitiveness as well as energy and the environment.

[Further details](#)

Minister Perry to be Ireland's 'SME Envoy'

As part of the European Commission's efforts to improve the implementation of measures, at EU and national level, to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), all Member States were requested to nominate national SME Envoys. The chief role of these appointees is to take responsibility for ensuring that full account is being taken of the 'Think Small First' principle with the cross-cutting design and implementation of policies at national, regional and local levels being enterprise-friendly and with EU legislation relating to small firms being both correctly and appropriately applied at national level. The Irish Government has appointed Minister for Small Business John Perry T.D. to the role and he and other national nominees have now formed a new 'SME Envoy Network' which met for the first time in Hungary on 24 May.

The initiative is part of plans for better business governance under the Small Business Act (SBA) - the European Commission's SME policy framework to strengthen the performance of SMEs so that they can create and grow employment; to make Europe more business friendly; and to encourage entrepreneurship. The SBA Review is currently the subject of an Opinion within the Committee of the Regions (CoR), with Irish member Cllr. Connie Hannify (Offaly County Council, Midland Regional Authority and Border, Midland &

Western Regional Assembly) acting as rapporteur in providing the local and regional perspective. Her report will be adopted by the CoR at its October plenary session.

'Small Business Act'

Border region's productive sector potential

Initial findings from a new Interreg-funded study by the Centre for Cross Border Studies underline the untapped potential of industrial activity in the Border Region and Northern Ireland. The 'By-passed places? The post-Belfast Agreement Border Region Economy' study, presented in a recent article in the Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland, has paid special interest to gaining an understanding of the productive structure and long-term prospects of the region by analysing issues including sectors of manufacturing and service industry activity; clustering potential; expansion or contraction trends; productivity levels; employee skills; and ownership (local or foreign).

The report is critical of regional development policy in both jurisdictions for leaving the border area "stranded" with the exception of major infrastructural improvements along the Belfast-Dublin corridor. The authors conclude that "new and more relevant frameworks of analysis are urgently needed if the border region and its struggling economy is to be reincorporated into the mainstream of island business life."

An over-reliance on external investment to the detriment of building in a self-sufficient manner on the existing productive industry base is cited as a particular structural weakness hindering the region's prospects. To the South of the border, this is illustrated by the observation that most County and City Development Plan documents make scant reference to analysing the character and potential of their current

indigenous and local manufacturing base – instead concentrating on pursuing a marketing-style approach to attract Foreign Direct Investment, much of which is reliant on external factors such as quality access to international connectivity for exports. The lack of scope for formal local/regional policy initiatives to facilitate the enterprise environment is alluded to as a factor in this disconnect.

Cllr. Patrick McGowan (Donegal County Council and Border Regional Authority), Head of the Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions, welcomed the report, saying that it "underlines the challenges facing peripheral sub-regions within regions that are themselves peripheral" and said that it "demonstrates the need for continuing support for a strong Cohesion Policy post-2013 to encourage investment and to ensure that the necessary infrastructure can be put in place." However, he warned of the need to recognise recent work on cross-border development at various levels including ongoing investigations by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Regional Development into possibilities for a spatial strategy for the island of Ireland.

Further details

BMW Innovation Audit

The Border, Midland & Western (BMW) Regional Assembly has published a strategic report on the regional innovation system. 'An Audit of Innovation in the BMW Region: An evaluation of a Regional Knowledge Economy' examines the innovation and economic performance of the region and sets out the key challenges and opportunities for significant job creation and economic growth in a range of emerging knowledge-intensive services (KIS).

These specific sectors - Medical Devices, Computer and Communications

Hardware, Bio-Pharmaceuticals, Software and Communication Services, Processed chemicals and Materials, and Diversified Manufacturing and Processing are already worth close to €1bn to the local and regional economy, principally through high-value graduate employment in almost 1,500 firms, many as part of clusters. The report builds on a 2004 analysis of regional innovation whose update and extension to the KIS sector including R&D, ICT and management support services has been made possible through the Assembly's involvement - along with WESTBIC and the Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly - in the Interreg Atlantic Area project Atlant KIS.

A particular area of concern highlighted in the report is the underwhelming share of public R&D investment directed towards the BMW region over the past decade by Enterprise Ireland, the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions, and Science Foundation Ireland. The report recommends that national innovation policy should include a more explicit regional dimension to reflect local and regional economic realities and existing networks and linkages. It argues that regional innovation strategies can both take national considerations into account while also fostering a more effective level of implementation at the regional and local level. The report also strongly advocates the development of technology transfer intermediary bodies between industry and academia which can help overcome the 'culture gap' that currently persists.

Welcoming the launch of the report at the Assembly's Conference in Athlone on 20 May, Minister for Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation, Richard Bruton T.D. stated his desire for regions to better understand their economic assets and to maximise their impacts on jobs both locally and regionally and gave a commitment to work more closely with the BMW Regional Assembly to review the implementation of the report's recommendations.

The BMW Assembly's current Structural Funds Regional Operational Programme is providing €200m (50% co-funded by the

EU) for planned investment in support of the development of the regional research and innovation system under the Innovation, ICT and Knowledge Economy Priority. The Assembly has also managed two Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions enabling 12 pilot actions to be developed in Partnership with regional stakeholders in support of technology transfer, innovation management and ICT development.

'An Audit of Innovation in the BMW Region'

Intellectual Property Rights blueprint to reward creativity

Rapid technological change and, in particular, online activities, have greatly altered the operation of patents, trademarks, geographical indications and other forms of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in relation to manufactured products, services, food and entertainment. In order that the currently complex and costly rules to manage and protect IPR in Europe should be streamlined and enabled to adapt to the new circumstances, on 24 May the Commission adopted 'A Single Market for Intellectual Property Rights' – a comprehensive strategy proposing to revamp the legal framework for the use and marketing of inventions and creations.

The main objective of this initiative is to benefit creative firms of all sizes and sectors by striking an appropriate balance between promoting and rewarding innovation – including by assuring income opportunities to reward creators' investment in developing new products and services – and ensuring the widest possible consumer access to goods and services protected by IPR. A key element would be a unitary patent protection system covering most EU countries – thereby reducing costs and red tape. The blueprint also sets out a more effective enforcement strategy for IPR within and beyond the EU.

'A Single Market for Intellectual Property Rights'

Cloud Computing consultation

The use of cloud computing – an industry expected to generate worldwide revenues of almost €35 billion by 2014 – is growing steadily in Europe. A recent announcement by DELL of plans to open the world's first Cloud Research & Development Centre in Dublin shows that Ireland is making a play to be at the forefront of this emerging technology field.

Through energy savings resulting from making more efficient use of hardware, reducing ICT costs and allowing public services to be supplied more cost-effectively, cloud computing is likely to play a significant role in the EU Digital Agenda for Europe over the coming decade. Promoting the right conditions for citizens and businesses to benefit from this technical development is a priority of that initiative and the Commission is now consulting all stakeholders on this issue for their views.

The consultation focuses on four areas: data protection, liability and other legal and technical barriers; potential standardisation and interoperability solutions; uptake of cloud services, especially by SMEs; and how to promote research and innovation in cloud computing. The responses will contribute to the Commission's development of a European cloud computing strategy in 2012 as a means to stimulate the development of a competitive industry and market, facilitate the roll-out of innovative services for citizens and businesses and clarify the legal conditions for take-up.

Deadline: 31 July

Consultation

Digital Agenda: the first year

On 31 May, a year after its launch, the European Commission published a scoreboard of the progress made by the Member States towards the objectives of the Digital Agenda for Europe. This flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy aims to contribute significantly to stimulating European innovation, and creating jobs and prosperity by spreading the benefits of the digital era across society to citizens and businesses.

Overall progress is deemed to be on track, especially on the deployment of Internet including basic broadband (targeted to be available to all Europeans by 2013); regular use by disadvantaged groups like the less well-educated and the elderly (48%); online shoppers (40%); eGovernment services; and low energy (solid state) lighting market share. However, some areas, in particular the key goal of roll-out of new super fast networks, remain disappointing and largely restricted to urban areas despite some success in upgrading existing cable and copper networks. The strategy is committed to providing universal coverage of next generation broadband across the EU by 2020.

Other identified areas of concern which have seen insufficient progress over the last year include:

- Cross-border eCommerce, which remains almost static (the Commission intends to address barriers to the Digital Single Market in a forthcoming Communication on the eCommerce Directive);
- Online sales presence (13%) of SMEs;
- Falling levels of public investment in ICT R&D which will now require a 6% annual growth up to 2020 in order to stay on target;
- High roaming prices.

The Scoreboard, which incorporates data and analysis previously found in the Commission's annual Progress Report on the Single European Electronic Communications, is accompanied by a series of reports on specific aspects of the Digital Agenda. The report classifies

Ireland (70%) as being slightly ahead of the EU average (65%) on household take-up of basic internet but remaining below (58%) the 61% average for broadband. Only a small increase in fixed broadband uptake (now 23%) was recorded but a well-developed mobile broadband market is a significant factor in this. Ireland is the top performing Member State for e-government (though this is noticeably skewed towards business rather than citizen online services). Use of e-commerce by the public is somewhat underperforming.

[Further details](#)

[Report on Ireland](#)

Broadband financing changes?

In advance of a planned review of EU Broadband Guidelines on the public financing of infrastructure (i.e. state aid measures) adopted in September 2009 and due to be revised by September 2012, the European Commission has formulated a questionnaire for stakeholders regarding issues such as the development of very high speed broadband technologies or how best to design the access conditions on subsidised next generation networks. The Guidelines form an important part of the EU Digital Agenda – a cornerstone of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Input received will influence the extent of revision required on the basis of rapid technological progress and evolving market and regulatory requirements, and will shape a legislative proposal for discussion early next year.

Deadline: 31 August

[Further details](#)

Mayo greenway gets regeneration recognition

The Great Western Greenway in Co. Mayo has been announced by Fáilte

Ireland as the Irish winner of this year's European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) award. The scheme promotes a more socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable form of tourism development in non-traditional destinations as a means of rebalancing tourist flows and/or combating seasonality.

The designated EDEN theme for 2011 is "Tourism and Regeneration of physical sites" with an emphasis being placed on recognising previous and ongoing efforts to convert derelict local heritage sites and disused assets into catalysts for wider renewal actions.

The winning bid – a 17.5 km trail along the disused railway line from Newport to Mulranny - was opened last summer. It was selected in part for the manner in which the local community conceived of exploiting the full potential of the greenway for the betterment of the tourism economy, with the engagement with local landowners being cited as a key factor. It beat off competition from the Arigna Mining Experience, Co. Roscommon and the Lough Boora Lakelands, Co. Offaly.

The project received €160,000 in Fáilte Ireland developmental investment with a further €1.6m being earmarked last year for a forthcoming 24km extension of the route to the north and south linking Westport with Achill Sound via the original stretch. Mayo County Council and the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht have also provided funding. In recognition of its success, an application to the EDEN Call for Proposals for 2011 (part of the Competitiveness & Innovation Programme) is expected to provide up to €50,000 towards certain costs associated with aspects of the project.

Previous Irish destinations which have secured EDEN designation have been Clonakilty, Co. Cork; Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula, Co. Louth; Sheep's Head peninsula, Co. Cork; and Loop Head Peninsula, Co. Clare.

[Further details](#)

Revised fisheries reform plans due

The Commission will present proposals to reform the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) on 13 July. A draft document in circulation presents a series of radical options relating to, amongst others, the ambition of achieving maximum sustainable yield no later than 2015, application of the precautionary principle, controls of catches and landings, development of more selective fishing practices, and fleet adaptation.

One of the key innovations is set to be 'multiannual management plans', which will aim at maintaining or restoring fish stocks to a level capable of ensuring maximum sustainable yield. Specific regulations will also lay down technical measures for protection of marine resources and reduction of the impact of fishing activities on stocks and ecosystems.

Smart-Energy Buildings campaign

The European campaign for smart-energy buildings, aiming at investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy for the construction sector, was launched in mid-May. The 'Take your energy back' campaign plans to exploit the huge energy-saving potential of a sector which currently represents 40% of the EU's overall consumption. This massive untapped potential to reduce usage and CO2 emissions needs to be exploited if Europe is to meet its short- and long-term energy and climate goals. The campaign invites citizens, building owners, and public authorities to interact, get informed and act to create 'smart-e buildings' and draws support from the European Commission's Intelligent Energy Europe II programme.

www.takeyourenergyback.eu

Cultural & creative industries

In a resolution adopted on 12 May in response to the Commission's Green Paper on unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries (CCI), the European Parliament has underlined that this sector represents one of the main drivers for job creation and growth in the EU through key roles in global value chains; spurring innovation and the development of new ICT; and providing added value as a factor for social cohesion.

The resolution details seven areas of particular importance in regard to allowing CCIs to fulfill their potential:

- Education, training and awareness-raising;
- Distribution of works in the digital age;
- An internal market for cultural and creative content;
- Intellectual property rights;
- Funding;
- Local and regional cooperation;
- International relations and trade.

[Resolution](#)

Parliament agri-committee backs greener CAP

On 25 May, the Committee on Agriculture & Rural Development (AGRI) of the European Parliament approved a report setting out the key principles on how its members wish to shape the Common Agricultural Policy post-2013. The committee also supported keeping the CAP budget broadly as it currently stands but stressed that EU agricultural policy needs to focus primarily on securing supplies of high quality food, while contributing to environmental protection and renewable energy.

The report puts forward the following objectives: 1) fairer distribution of direct support based on independent criteria including active farming and "greening

measures" (low carbon emissions, capture of GHG emissions, low energy consumption); 2) the introduction of a 100% EU-financed 'green' payment to farmers for sustainable production methods and sound management of water, soil and energy resources including through the use of modern, environmentally friendly techniques; 3) more flexibility for Member States; and 4) specific budgetary resources for coping with market crises.

The draft resolution on CAP reform will be put to the vote at the European Parliament plenary session on 22-23 June.

[Further details](#)

Community work plan for sport

National Ministers adopted a resolution on a Community Work Plan for Sport for the period 2011-2014 at the European Council's sport working session on 20 May. The resolution focuses on three main aspects of sport: integrity (e.g. fighting against doping), social values (e.g. inclusion, volunteering), and economic factors. The Council and Commission also agreed to set up a number of expert groups over the next three years. The Council will assess implementation of the plan on the basis of a report by the Commission by the end of 2013.

[Further details](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Cities fostering active inclusion

The latest EURO CITIES report on cities and active inclusion shows how ten of Europe's biggest cities are moving towards improved coordination,

decentralisation and personalisation of services as well as increased outsourcing to social economy organisations in delivering social services and active inclusion policies in the face of the economic crisis.

[Report](#)

Forest and biomass management by satellite

A new report from EURISY – the network which promotes the use of space-related applications for societal and business purposes – provides new ideas to local and regional authorities and companies who are seeking to leverage innovation in their forestry and biomass activities and strategies of the benefits arising from deploying satellite information & services. This report is Eurisy's contribution to the final output of the inter-regional project MORE4NRG, a toolkit on innovative approaches and tools for improving local energy strategies.

[Report](#) [MORE4NRG project](#)

EVENTS

Business Innovation Centres and Regional Strategies 15-17 June, Toulon

The EBN, European Business Innovation Centres (BICs) Network, annual congress is the biggest gathering of the Applied Innovation stakeholders and community in Europe this year. The event will examine the emergence of "regional innovation strategies" (RIS) as an integrated framework for the territorial deployment of innovation policies and how BICs' regional presence can provide an accelerating effect. Current EU policies and initiatives of high relevance such as the Innovation Union and Digital Agenda

flagship initiatives and the concept of 'Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) being promoted by the Commission's DG Regio will also be examined.

The current EBN President is Joe Greaney of WESTBIC while there are other BICs based in Cork, Dublin and Waterford providing customised delivery of a range of professional support & incubation services addressed to innovative start-ups, spin-offs and entrepreneurs.

www.ebn-retistoulon2011.com

ICT and energy in public buildings 16 –17 June, Helsinki

The Save Energy project (under the ICT-PSP programme) has been addressing the challenge of behavioural transformation through the use of ICT ("serious games" and real time information from sensors and actuators) as an enabler of energy efficiency in public buildings. Its 2011 Conference will focus on building upon the Living Labs methodology to provide an engaging virtual environment for users, citizens and policy makers to gain awareness, understanding and experience associated with energy saving attitudes.

[Further details](#)

Green Economy for Regional Development 28 June, Brussels

The Brussels representation of the Czech region of Karlovy Vary is hosting a seminar focusing on the role of the green economy as a tool for regional development. The programme will include interventions on topics such as an evaluation of current and post-2013 Cohesion Policy and the issue of "partnership contracts" which the Commission is pressing to conclude with EU Member States as part of the Structural Funds programme

negotiations. The event will also address the question of how the regions can contribute to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

[Further details](#)

Smart procurement 29 June, Brussels

The Basque Country EU Office in Brussels is organising the 'Smart Procurement – Reducing costs & saving energy' conference. The morning session will address the latest policies and perspectives from the European Parliament and the Commission on how public purchasing can be used as a powerful instrument for boosting the development of innovative low carbon emission solutions and technologies for lighting, vehicles, heating and cooling systems, ICT and electricity production. The afternoon sessions are dedicated to providing hands-on training and practical workshops for procurement practitioners. The event will conclude with an open informal forum for dialogue and networking among potential project partners for projects related to sustainable procurement and innovation.

[Further details](#)

Governance and Climate Change 29 June, Lille

The Climact Regions project (Interreg IVC) on boosting regional capacity to develop and implement policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) will hold a seminar to examine how generally-accepted concepts of 'governance' apply to the observation & mitigation of climate change. This aims to feed into the production of a manual for European regions, to be published in July.

[Further details](#)

Sustainable Urban Mobility 30 June, Brussels

The European Metropolitan network Institute (EMI) and POLIS, the network of European cities and regions specialised in innovative technologies and policies for a more sustainable mobility, are inviting policy makers, urban practitioners and researchers to share their knowledge and experience at an interactive workshop. Topics for discussion include ensuring that policies address both the challenges and opportunities regarding sustainable mobility in cities and selecting priorities to be addressed by innovative solutions. The two organising bodies are jointly developing a Knowledge & Research Agenda on sustainable urban mobility as part of efforts to stimulate the creation and dissemination of research-based, practice-led knowledge.

[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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