

# 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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In association with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA)



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## FUNDING, NETWORKING & PROJECTS

### Technical assistance for local energy investment

The shape of the ELENA (European Local ENergy Assistance) facility has been clarified. This joint European Commission and European Investment Bank (EIB) initiative is to provide €15 million in 2010 (through the Intelligent Energy Europe programme) for technical assistance actions associated with local authority undertakings which lay the groundwork for and mobilise further investment in large-scale sustainable energy activities.

ELENA support is intended to partly cover the costs necessary in preparing for viable long-term investment projects and programmes relating to the upgrading of public and private buildings, district heating networks, and environmentally-friendly transport. The support is especially intended to help

local authorities to realise the ambitions underpinning their own Sustainable Energy Action Plans – a prerequisite for membership of the Covenant of Mayors which recently welcomed its 1000<sup>th</sup> signatory.

Actions which may be supported include energy audits, investment identification, feasibility and market studies, business plans, programme/plan development, and assembling suitable external financing arrangements. The ultimate large-scale investments that emerge may possibly be financed by loans from the EIB or other sources.

[Further information](#)  
[Covenant of Mayors](#)  
[Brochure](#)

### Call: Interreg IVC

Interreg IVC has opened a call restricted to Capitalisation Projects including Fast Track Projects, only. This will require applications based on the transfer of recognised good practices into Structural Funds programmes – therefore requiring that they are put together in consultation with the relevant Managing Authority (BMW/S&E Regional Assembly or Dept. of Enterprise, Trade & Employment). A minimum of 6 partners from different countries is required. Project budgets should range from €1-2 million.

The IRO has received partner search requests relating to:

- **Social Economy and micro-financial services** to support the development of local/regional strategies for employment and enterprise development;
- **Tackling young people's welfare** by looking for ways to enhance their inclusion into the labour market and wider social participation; and
- **Beyond GDP:** Measuring the sustainable development impact of

Operational Programmes at local/regional level.  
Please notify us of your interest in pursuing these requests by 20 January.

[Further information](#)  
Deadline: 5 March 2010.

### Call: International Development issues for local authorities

A call for proposals was opened on 1 December for European local and regional authorities to involve themselves in international development issues. This may include actions taking place within the EU (public awareness initiatives on development issues and development education; or coordination and networking activities) as well as in the Developing World. Approximately €27.3 million in support is available. A two-stage selection process applies: firstly applicants will need to send a concept note by 25 February 2010, successful projects will then be requested to submit a full application package.

[Further information](#)

### Upcoming Call: ICT-PSP

The next call for proposals under the ICT Policy Support Programme is due to be launched at the beginning of January with a likely closure in June. Six themes will be covered with the emphasis being on the needs of public entities. An Information Day is scheduled for Brussels on 14 January.

[Draft 2010 Work Programme](#)

### Upcoming Calls: Freedom, Security & Justice programmes

The 2010 calls for proposals for transnational projects (grants to support one-off actions which are over and above

an organisation's normal activities) under the DAPHNE III, Drug Prevention & Information and Fundamental Rights & Citizenship programmes are all to be published in late January. Deadlines for submitting applications are likely to be set for April.

[DAPHNE  
Drug Prevention  
Fundamental Rights & Citizenship](#)

### **Youth in Action 2010 priorities**

The 2010 annual priorities of the Youth in Action programme were published on 8 December. Next year, on top of the rolling priorities (European citizenship; participation; cultural diversity; and inclusion), an emphasis will be placed on projects focusing on the following themes: i) 2010 the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion; ii) Youth unemployment and promotion of young unemployed people's active participation in society; and iii) Awareness-raising and mobilisation of young people around global challenges, such as sustainable development, climate change, migration, and the Millennium Development Goals.

[Further information](#)

### **New Fund for Energy, Climate Change and Infrastructure**

A "post-crisis" pan-European infrastructure fund backed by an alliance of some of Europe's leading public financial institutions was unveiled on 4 December. The Marguerite fund aims to offer capital of €1.5 billion to act as a catalyst for infrastructure investments implementing key EU policies in the areas of climate change, energy security, and trans-European networks (TENs).

The new fund, which includes €80 million in European Commission support, was initiated last year as part of the European Economic Recovery Plan's drive to reinforce Europe's long term competitiveness by combining EU policies and funds to help Member States bring forward investments in energy and priority infrastructure. The approach should serve as a model for the establishment of other similar funds in the EU wishing to combine a market-based principle of return to investors with the pursuit of public policy objectives.

The Fund will focus on greenfield

investments within its target sectors: TENs energy or transport infrastructure, sustainable energy production, clean transport infrastructure, energy distribution and systems for hybrid transport (e.g. wind, solar), geothermal, biomass, biogas, hydro, and waste-to-energy projects.

[Further information](#)

### **New Public Administrations ICT programme**

The new ISA (Interoperability solutions for European public administrations) programme came into force in November. This successor to the IDABC (Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens) programme is intended to facilitate practical electronic cross-border and cross-sector interaction between administrations – notably local and regional government - across Europe, enabling the delivery of common public services and solutions.

The programme priorities will relate to four areas of activity:

- Common frameworks (policies, strategies, specifications, methodologies, guidelines);
- Reusable generic tools (demonstrators, shared and collaborative platforms, common components to meet user needs across policy fields);
- Common services (generic operational applications and infrastructures); and
- Analysis of ICT implications in the implementation of new EU legislation.

ISA will run from 2010-2015 with a budget of €164 million.

[Further information](#)

### **Future Sport Programme**

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has given the EU a formal competence in sport. This allows for better promotion of the benefits of sport in other EU policy areas and programmes, including health and education. The Commission will launch a wide stakeholder consultation in the first half of 2010 to prepare for the first EU Sports Programme, which should be launched in 2012. The inaugural

meeting of EU Sports Ministers in the Council is scheduled for May 2010.

The future programme is likely to be designed to encompass aspects including sport's cultural, social and educational function; its contribution to the promotion of a physically-active lifestyle; as well as promoting the transfer of knowledge, innovation, dialogue and good governance including with third countries.

[Further information](#)

### **Projects: Interreg NWE latest approvals**

The Steering Committee of the North West Europe Programme conditionally approved 14 more projects (from 37 applications) at its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in Brussels on 8-9 December. Four of these involved Irish partners:

- **Senior Enterprise**, led by the Mid-East Regional Authority, will support and tap into the potential of people aged 50+ as an undervalued resource for entrepreneurial activity and enterprise creation in their local communities. The focus will range across new business start-ups (alone or with others); investing in or acquiring businesses started by others; and advising or supporting innovation in SMEs.
- The **SUCCESS** project, which involves the Dublin Regional Authority, has been awarded €2.8m to establish a 'carbon card' scheme in four major city regions in order to change the patterns of citizen and consumer behaviour towards activities which will increase sustainability and reduce CO2 emissions. The project is led by Belfast City Council with Brussels and Liverpool being the other participants.
- CODEMA (City of Dublin Energy Management Agency) will be using their involvement in the **GREENOV** project to develop expertise, and stimulate the innovation capacity and economic prospects of SMEs active in sustainable renovation of buildings as part of the transition to low-carbon cities and a sustainable economy.
- DIT's Dept of Transport Engineering are partners to **Enevate** which will enable cooperation and collaboration to accelerate the introduction and growth of the

market for Electric Vehicles (EV) across the NWE programme area.

Interestingly, none of the approvals were within the 'Environmental Challenges' category whereas 'Innovation', 'Connectivity' and 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' were all represented on several occasions. The programme has now allocated in excess of half of its overall budget. Its 6<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals will open from 12 March to 9 April 2010.

Contact: [ajordan@seregassembly.ie](mailto:ajordan@seregassembly.ie)

**On our website:**

[Other recent calls](#)

[Partner Searches received by the IRO from other regions](#)

## NEWS & POLICY

### **Orientation Paper on Future of Cohesion Policy**

Outgoing Regional Commissioner Pawel Samecki has presented an orientation paper looking at the goals that future cohesion policy and Europe's regions as key actors should pursue in response to the challenges of the 21st century. The crux of the document, which comes at a time when post-2013 EU policy agendas are being shaped, argues that cohesion policy should continue to focus on addressing market failures and ensuring that regions make full use of their development potential in the context of European economic integration. Aspects of improving future performance and the simplified delivery of results are also addressed.

[Orientation paper](#)

### **Ministers agree to strengthen local autonomy and democracy**

Ministers from across Europe with responsibility for local and regional government have agreed to strengthen local autonomy despite economic pressures to achieve savings across the public sector. At a Council of Europe summit entitled 'Good local and regional governance in turbulent times: the

challenge of change', held in Utrecht in November, the ministers signed a declaration recognising the importance of municipal and regional governments and the need for national governments to guarantee their future financial stability, especially when faced with the challenge of dwindling public finances in the coming years.

The ministers also signed a new protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government giving citizens a legal "Right to Participate in the Affairs of a Local Authority" including to be consulted on matters of local policy. This is especially aimed at those facing particular obstacles to participating in democratic procedures. The Charter, which was signed by the Irish Government in 1998 and ratified in 2002, commits signatories to the principle of subsidiarity whereby decisions are taken at the appropriate level closest to the citizen.

[Declaration](#)

### **Green Digital Charter**

14 European cities have taken an initiative to harness Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) to address climate change, especially to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions. By signing the 'EUROCITIES Green Digital Charter' on 27 November during that network's conference on local government action for a green recovery, the mayors of these cities, which range in population size from Reykjavik (120,000) to Vienna (1.5 million), have agreed to:

- Deploy five large-scale ICT pilot projects before 2015;
- Decrease ICT's direct carbon footprint by 30% by 2020; and
- Create a partnership of cities on ICT & Energy Efficiency to work until 2011.

Among the activities which are expected to put this pledge into practice are regulatory incentives; establishing new types of public-private partnerships with business, industry and the voluntary sector; and sharing expertise and practice with other cities. The Green Digital Charter is led by Manchester and builds on 'Greenshift Europe', an initiative of a group of UK cities.

[Charter](#)  
[Greenshift Europe](#)

### **2010 European Year in Ireland**

The Office for Social Inclusion and EU International within the Department of Social and Family Affairs is the National Implementing Body for the *EU Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010*. A National Programme to guide EY2010's implementation has been prepared. This document is based on three cross cutting themes reflecting the priorities for social inclusion set down in the 2006-2008 National Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSSPSI) Report - child poverty; access to quality work and learning opportunities; and access to services for older people and people with disabilities.

A series of seminars are to be held regionally over the year in relation to these themes in order to increase public awareness of the existence and effect of poverty and social exclusion, and to determine how it can be eliminated. Marginalised groups and disadvantaged communities are particularly encouraged to get involved in organising and participating in such events as (in a non-funded sense) are stakeholders including employer organisations, trade unions and sporting and cultural organisations.

The Year in Ireland will be formally launched on 5 February 2010 in Dublin Castle. The European Anti-Poverty Network is organising the 'Building Social Europe: from Crisis to Opportunity' international conference at Croke Park on 19 February. Designated "Social Inclusion Weeks" in May and October will see local authorities organising activities and events.

[Ireland's National Programme](#)

[EAPN conference](#)

### **'Inclusive Cities'**

A portal to feature news on the latest urban social affairs developments in the EU, key documents, and a calendar of relevant events has been launched. The *Inclusive Cities* website reflects a partnership between the European Commission and EUROCITIES funded by PROGRESS (the EU Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity), revolves around a collection of real-life examples of social affairs practices and strategies used by cities to alleviate and counteract social problems. The information is categorised both by city and by policy area (education, health,

housing, etc) in a bid to provide inspiring examples of work to alleviate poverty and social exclusion.

[Further information](#)

### **ESPON tools for local spatial planning**

A 2-3 December seminar in Malmo discussed and showcased how planning and development policy-making can be enriched by the activities of the ESPON 2013 observation network for territorial development and cohesion. The event was organised to demonstrate how an awareness of the broader context of territorial issues and trends drawn from the network's pan-European research activities - including comparable analyses and framework conditions for the development of large and small areas - offer important opportunities for regions and cities to appreciate and realise their development potential. This includes aspects of comparative advantage, network positions and spheres of influence.

ESPON has already produced many recognised results where its first set of Applied Research and Targeted Analyses projects have introduced elements of the European dimension into regional and local development analysis and policymaking. Many of these research approaches, techniques and tools were profiled at the event and a report will be made available in early 2010.

[Further information](#)

[ESPON 'Trends in Accessibility' report](#)

### **Public Procurement Thresholds**

As of 1 January 2010 the WTO agreement on Government procurement will enter into force, meaning that new public procurement thresholds will be applicable in the EU. The Commission Regulation 1177/2009 published on 30 November will modify the figures defined in the existing Directives on Utilities (2004/17/EC) and Procurement (2004/18/EC). The transaction cost figures above which tendering must take place have been revised downwards by approximately 5-6% in all cases.

[Regulation](#)

### **European Green Capital**

The search has begun to find the cities (above 200,000 inhabitants) that will become the European Green Capitals for 2012 and 2013. The prestigious award recognises and showcases cities and local authorities that demonstrate a commitment to ambitious sustainable development and environmentally-friendly standards, to solving environmental problems to become more attractive and healthy places, and to factoring the environment into urban planning.

Entries will be assessed on the basis of 11 environmental criteria, including local contribution to fighting global climate change, waste production and management, nature and biodiversity, transport, air and water.

*Deadline: 1 February 2010.*

[Further information](#)

### **'Whole area' approach to public services**

A new British local government pilot programme is looking at how a 'whole area' approach to public services can offset the impact of the economic downturn by uncovering radical new solutions to not only achieve better value for money, but also better local services more tailored to local needs. The *Total Place* approach seeks to identify and avoid overlap and duplication between organisations, delivering a significant change in both efficiency and service improvement between the different agencies at local level, as well as in their interaction with central Government.

Thirteen pilot areas in England are adopting at least one of the various themes for investigation in order to explore in more detail how public money flows into a place and how the delivery system can be improved regardless of institutional structure. The pilots aim to identify and make widely available innovative models to deliver better, user-led local government services for less outlay. They will also identify ways in which central Government's delivery structures could be changed to remove obstacles to frontline collaboration and innovation.

[Further information](#)

### **'Open Days' seeks young academics**

The European Commission's DG Regional Policy is seeking the participation of young academics and researchers to be part of panels debating a range of regional development and cohesion policy themes with an audience of regional actors as part of the Open Days 'University' to be held in Brussels in early October 2010. The overall theme of the week will be 'competitiveness, co-operation and cohesion'. For consideration, send a CV and letter of motivation to [elisa.roller@ec.europa.eu](mailto:elisa.roller@ec.europa.eu) by 22 February.

[Further information](#)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Transport & the Environment**

The European Commission's Transport Research Knowledge Centre has published a policy brochure focusing on transport and its effects on the environment.

[Further information](#)

## **EVENTS**

### **21 January, London Urban design**

The key ingredients and techniques for redesigning, re-engineering and remodelling urban environments to cater for modern lifestyles and a sustainable future as vibrant and liveable places, will form the basis of the annual Re-making Places conference. 'Places in Transition' will allow participants to hear about new ideas and latest thinking on the future of the city, planning, urban design and development, place-based leadership and project delivery.

[Further information](#)

## 28 - 29 January, Limoges The Elderly Economy

The fourth *Silver Economy Conference of European Regions* from the SEN@ER network (including the Mid-East Regional Authority), which sees ageing as an opportunity for regional economic growth, will include a roundtable on "Regional silver economy and ageing strategies - examples and lessons learned" with experts from different European regions plus a series of parallel workshops relating to issues such as employment and voluntary work, well-being and local strategies for independent living. A Good Practice Competition to award successful projects on these themes is also open (until 31 December) online.

[Further information](#)

## 3 February, Brussels Intelligent Energy Europe

Learn more about the IEE programme's upcoming call for proposals – due to be published in the first quarter of 2010 – at this Information Day. The event will involve a plenary session in the morning and a series of thematic workshops in the afternoon.

[Details will be available shortly](#)

## 3 February, Brussels Growth & Jobs Strategy

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) and Eurochambres will jointly host 'EU 2020 - Regional Actors for Growth and Innovation' where both organisations will present the positions they each contributed to the Commission's consultation on the planned 'EU 2020 Strategy' (see last month's *Bulletin*). The event is also an opportunity to showcase good practices involving both public and private sector regional actors in creating the conditions for growth and employment.

[Further information](#)

## 3-4 February, Brussels Intermodal Transport

*Intermodes 2010* is the first international convention devoted to intermodal passenger transport. Intended primarily for transport sector professionals at both the domestic and European levels, the event and an associated exhibition will

address how to develop solutions to issues including signage, electronic ticketing, accessibility, real-time information, safety, and comfort.

[Further information](#)

## 21 February, Dublin Lifelong Learning

Pobal is organising the annual *EU Lifelong Learning National Conference* to be based around the themes of:

- Community-based access as a route to further and higher education; and
- Early childhood care and education & family learning.

[Further information](#)

## 22 February, London Integrating Cities

The fourth *Integrating Cities* Conference, organised by the Mayor of London, Eurocities and the European Commission, will be entitled 'Europe Enriched: towards a shared vision for migrant integration in European cities'. During the conference the European City Charter promoting equality and integration of migrants will be signed by European Mayors in attendance. The conference is part of the *Diversity and Equality in European Cities* project co-financed by the European Integration Fund.

[Further information](#)

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

The 2009 *ICT4EE* event to give visibility to the potential of ICTs in enabling energy efficiency, aims to become a vehicle to drive progress in the transition to an energy-efficient and low-carbon economy - largely based on a Commission Recommendation from October which calls on the ICT sector to agree by 2010 on common methodologies for measuring energy consumption and carbon emissions. Discussions will focus on policies and technical advances in the fields of smart cities; smart buildings; logistics and transport; smart grids; smart metering; energy efficient data centres; new business models on an energy liberalised market; and the role of the media in improving awareness.

[Further information](#)

## 22-26 March, Brussels & across Europe EU Sustainable Energy Week

The centerpiece of the European Commission's Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign to boost renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, clean transport and alternative fuels is the annual *EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW)*. It includes a three-day conference in Brussels on intelligent energy policy issues as well as thematic workshops; and funding and networking seminars. At local level, stakeholders are invited to bring forward events promoting energy efficiency or the use of renewable energy and formally include them as part of the EUSEW 'Energy Days' – thus earning extra visibility. As well as conferences etc. this might include exhibitions, celebrations, guided tours, media campaigns, online events, and performances. In organising an event, potential participants may wish to work with their nearest local and regional energy agency and/or one of the Enterprise Europe Network offices based in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Waterford or Sligo.

[Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign](#)

**On request and whenever possible, IRO staff can attend meetings and seminars in Brussels on behalf of local & regional authorities.**



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