

# EU News Bulletin

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

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In association with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA)



### Inside in News & Policy...

- **Match funding relaxation?**
- **ESF overheads**
- **Integration online tools**
- **Swedish Presidency plans**
- **Greenhouse emissions**
- **Territorial Impact and energy vulnerability tools**
- **Active Inclusion network**
- **Regional air access**
- **LIFE Environment projects**
- **European Enterprise Awards**
- **EU Youth Report and Strategy**
- **Cultural Heritage prize**
- **Regional Energy and Environment Agencies**

## FUNDING

### LIFE+

The LIFE+ call for 2009 has now been launched. €250 million in funding is available across its three sub-programmes.

LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity aims to protect, conserve, restore, monitor and facilitate the functioning of natural systems, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna, with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance will support actions on:

- Climate change (greenhouse gas stabilisation);
- Cost-effective measures to enhance water quality by achieving good ecological status through Water Framework Directive river basin management plans;
- Air quality;
- Sustainable use and restoration of soil functions;
- Improved environmental performance of the urban environment;
- Noise;

- Protection from chemical risks;
- Environment and health information;
- Ensuring sustainable management and use of natural resources and waste, and improving the environmental performances of products, sustainable production and consumption patterns, waste prevention, recovery and recycling;
- providing comprehensive information on forests in relation to climate change, biodiversity, fires and their protective functions;
- developing and demonstrating innovative approaches for environmental technologies;
- developing strategic approaches to
  - promote the effective implementation and enforcement of EU environmental legislation and improve the policy knowledge base;
  - improve the environmental performance of SMEs.

Proposals dealing with climate change issues will be especially favoured.

LIFE+ Information and Communication will support awareness-raising measures on environmental issues, including forest fire prevention.

*Deadline: 15 September*  
[Link](#)

### Sport: health, access and equality

This call for proposals will provide €4 million to support transnational projects to identify and test suitable networks and good practices in the field of sport, in the following areas:

- Promoting health-enhancing physical activity;
- Promoting education and training in sport;
- Encouraging sport for persons with disabilities;
- Promoting gender equality in sport.

*Deadline: 31 August*  
[Link](#)

### Youth and non-formal education

Action 4, Youth Support Systems, of the Youth in Action programme, will support projects that target the introduction, implementation and promotion of creative, innovative and qualitative elements in non-formal education and youth work for a non-profit-making purpose. This may relate to the activity content and/or the methods used provided these are based on novel approaches. Priority will be assigned to projects focusing on media literacy of young people; and E-youth work. This call is associated with the current European Year of Creativity and Innovation and offers an overall budget of €1.2 million.

*Deadline: 30 September*  
[Link](#)

### Lifelong learning

This call under the Lifelong Learning Programme will finance projects supporting European cooperation in education and training, particularly by funding national awareness campaigns on this theme and developing transnational networks in the development and implementation of national and regional lifelong learning strategies. Approximately €2.7 million will be available.

*Deadline: 14 August.*  
[Link](#)

### Cultural Diversity in Art

The European Cultural Foundation are offering Artistic Project Grants ranging from €30,000 to €60,000 for works led by cultural organisations and individual artists on the theme of diversity in Europe.

*Deadline: 31 July.*  
[Link](#)

**Other recent calls:**

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

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

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

## NEWS & POLICY

### **'Match-funding' to be relaxed for Structural Funds?**

The rules that Member States must follow to obtain regional aid, employment aid and infrastructure project financing from the EU budget seem likely to be temporarily relaxed in the light of the current economic crisis. The European Commission is suggesting that, for 2009-2010, national governments could be exempted from the requirement to co-finance Structural Funds assisted projects – a burden which typically amounts to 50-60% of a project's overall cost. This would effectively free up access to hundreds of millions of euros which might otherwise have been seen as more of a drain on national public finances than a benefit at the current time. A further positive arising from this move would be a reduction in the threat of committed but unused funds being revoked if they have not been spent nationally within three years of being allocated by the EU. ("n+2" rule).

The proposal, published in a policy paper on measures to support employment on 3 June with further details to follow later in the month, could apply to all Structural Fund facets of the European Regional Development Fund (including Ireland's two regional Operational Programmes) and the European Social Fund (National Human Resources Programme) if approved by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers. While it will be enthusiastically welcomed by many parliamentarians and governments, achieving agreement seems likely to depend on wealthier states securing assurances that any EU funding without the security of a national equivalent will only be directed towards projects which are cost-effective, well managed and will deliver real and strategic benefits.

### **Social Fund overheads revision**

On 5 May the European Council adopted a Regulation to boost the effectiveness of the European Social Fund (ESF) – i.e.

accelerating the spending of Structural Funds - against the impact of the current economic crisis. The new Regulation is to simplify and improve ESF management and control procedures in relation to the paperwork necessary to justify expenditure on indirect costs/overheads (as opposed to more identifiable 'real costs'). This will allow for the application of a flat-rate basis of up to 20% of overall costs, to be calculated using standard scales of unit cost (as defined by Member States), with lump sums up to €50,000 (for both direct and indirect costs) being applicable. The new rules are to be applied retroactively from 1 August 2006.

[Link](#)

### **Integration online tools**

The European Commission has launched two new tools to assist the integration of third country nationals living in the European Union. The 'Integration at your fingertips' website is designed to provide high quality resource materials from across the EU, and breed a strong online community. This will allow integration practitioners to share good practices as well as to investigate funding opportunities and partnerships as well as staying updated on the latest developments at EU, national and local level. This development follows on from the European Integration Forum, organised in April in conjunction with the European Economic and Social Committee, as a platform through which EU institutions, stakeholders and civil society organisations can exchange views on integration issues.

['Integration at your fingertips' European Integration Forum](#)

### **Swedish Presidency sees key local/regional role**

The upcoming Swedish Presidency of the EU has acknowledged the importance of involving local and regional authorities in European policy discussion and the role these levels across Europe can play in a number of EU policy areas that will be prioritised in the second half of this year. The Swedes have made it clear that one of their objectives will be to progress the Lisbon Strategy for Jobs and Growth where they are keen to encourage EU Member States to take on greater responsibility, and are calling for local and regional authorities to be given a greater say in drawing up and implementing initiatives to see its ambitions realised. Similarly, with

another main concern, climate change, in mind, Sweden is keen to see its own highly regarded model of sustainable development, with local authorities being heavily involved in areas such as district heating schemes and waste recycling, being investigated and considered for wider deployment in other countries.

As such, EU affairs minister, Cecilia Malmström, local affairs minister, Mats Odell, and the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Per Westerberg, recently pledged to work closely on these issues with the Committee of the Regions (CoR) during their country's 6-months at the helm of the EU. This collaboration will be especially focused on two key conferences - on sustainable cities in September and on the post-2010 implementation of the Lisbon Strategy at the local and regional level in November. A further stated area of agreement between the next Presidency and the CoR is monitoring the application of the principle of subsidiarity, underlined in the Treaty of Lisbon, whereby decisions are taken at the most appropriate level.

Of real potential interest to Ireland, with a view to possibly being involved in a replication along Europe's Atlantic shore, is a third priority to develop a strategy facilitating cooperation at national, regional and local levels between the various countries bordering the Baltic Sea. The European Commission is to present its proposal for the strategy in June.

[Link](#)

### **Greenhouse emissions - falling but unevenly**

A European Environment Agency inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the EU in 2007 shows a year-on-year drop for the third consecutive year, 1.2% overall in this case (1.6% in the EU15). This achievement, which coincided with a sustained period of economic growth, brings these emissions to 12.5% below their levels in 1990 and sets the EU well on its way to meeting its Kyoto Protocol target of an 8% reduction (by reference to the base year) for 2008-2012.

Despite this progress, Ireland has been calculated as being among the poorest of EU15 performers since 1990 with a GHG rise 11.5% above the additional 13% emissions increase what was permitted by the national 2008-2012 Kyoto commitments. Only Spain, which has exceeded its own allowed 15% increase by a further 37.6%, faces significantly

greater challenges in reining in its excesses while, at another level, Denmark and Austria have, as yet, been slow to fulfill their scheduled reductions.

On a related matter, Geraldine Tallon, Secretary General of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, briefed the Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Scrutiny on 23 May on the most imminent EU environment developments. In regard to the implementation of the elements of last December's climate and energy package to reduce GHGs by 20% on 1990 levels, the Department is devoting its attention to continued work on measures to reduce domestic emissions supported by the use of flexible mechanisms. The key areas of focus for the foreseeable future are the revision of the emissions trading directive (with the system set to be administered by the European Commission from 2012); the effort sharing decision on emissions from sectors beyond the trading system; and the new regulation on CO2 emissions from cars.

[EEA Report](#)  
[Joint Oireachtas Committee on European Scrutiny](#)

### **Territorial Impact and energy vulnerability tools**

Two pan-European research projects under the ESPON 2013 Programme on the sustainable and balanced development of the continent's regions and cities have unveiled new information and created tools on the potentials, challenges and opportunities presented by the territorial footprint of EU Policies. These are felt likely, in time, to also be of relevance in predicting regional and local impacts of the current global economic and financial crisis and in shaping appropriate responses.

The first interim report of TIPTAP (Territorial Impact Package for Transport and Agricultural Policies) shows progress in developing a robust and fully operational model for Territorial Impact Assessment. Its application shows how scientific modelling can help detect relevant trends with respect to the territorial impacts of the respective EU policies. Meanwhile the RERISK (Regions at Risk of Energy Poverty) interim report maps for the first time the economic vulnerability of European regions in terms of energy recourse. According to the project findings, differences in regional vulnerability mainly derive from the consumption side

as defined by the prevailing economic base, transport structure, social situation and climate conditions.

[TIPTAP](#)  
[RERISK](#)

### **Local Authority Active Inclusion network launched**

A new 'Network of Local Authorities' Observatories on Active Inclusion' (NLAOI) under the banner of the EUROCITIES organisation will see five member cities set up 'observatories' to monitor the local implementation of social policies and identify good practice. These instigator cities will report on governance arrangements; procurement practice; and provisions for quality management in a range of social service areas with particular emphasis on training/employment as well as social and supported housing. Each observatory has pledged to engage with NGOs, the research community and public bodies at national level with EUROCITIES coordinating this work and producing comparative reports. This initiative, supported and financed by the European Commission, is an attempt to significantly boost urban local authorities' influence by putting cities' concerns centre stage in both EU and national social policy-making.

[Link](#)

### **Regional air access**

High accessibility for visitors and investors from elsewhere is a prerequisite for attractiveness and economic development potential. A recent ESPON study of the relative change in potential accessibility by air for Europe's regions from 2001 to 2006 examined the detailed air transport network of scheduled flight connections between all European airports. An associated map rates every region's relative position by reference to a European average.

The findings indicate that the South-East followed by the West were in the categories to have gained most ground during this period while all other Irish regions, particularly the South-West, receded in the rankings. The dominant factor seems to be the opening up of Eastern Europe which, along with improved access to remoter parts of Spain, Italy and Scandinavia, mainly through the growing proliferation of low-cost airline routes, has greatly redressed the traditional European core-periphery

pattern to the extent that several major Capital regions have lost their comparative advantage.

[Link](#)

### **Best of...LIFE Environment**

The 'Best LIFE-Environment Projects 2008-09' exercise has documented what are felt by the programme and national authorities to be the outstanding funded initiatives of which five have been selected as the 'Best of the Best' and are therefore eligible to receive extra financing. The projects, from across the EU-25, cover all of LIFE-Environment's main themes: Land-use development and planning; Water management; Minimising the impact of economic activities; Waste management; and Integrated Product Policy.

[Link](#)

### **European Enterprise Awards**

The Commission presented the prizes for the 2008/2009 European Enterprise Awards on 13 May as part of the inaugural European SME Week. These annual awards recognize initiatives that support entrepreneurship at local and regional level and this year attracted more than 350 entries across 5 categories. The Scarborough Renaissance Partnership from Yorkshire received the Grand Jury's Prize for achieving a "seaside renaissance brought about through creative and cultural enterprises".

The 'Spirit of Enterprise Forum', a collaborative network (with the South East Regional Authority prominently involved) of over 50 public and private sector organisations aiming to collectively boost levels of entrepreneurship and to enhance the business environment of the South-East, was nominated from Ireland in the Entrepreneurship Promotion category. The other Irish initiative to be shortlisted (for Enterprise Development) was Macroom E, the country's first environmental business park/enterprise centre. This joint venture among a number of public agencies in the South-West provides "conscientious entrepreneurs" who commit to an environmental charter with favourable rents and access to shared services, state supports, and mentoring and training.

[Spirit of Enterprise](#)  
[Macroom E](#)

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## EU Youth Report and Strategy

The first European Youth Report – ‘A Strategic Vision to Promote a Better Knowledge of European Youth’ – was published in late April by the European Commission’s Youth Policy Unit. This compilation of data, brief analyses on the situation of young people in Europe, and overview of the comparative situation in the EU Member States is intended to provide an improved evidence-base for policy-making and identifying research gaps by complementing the recent adoption of the Communication “An EU Strategy for Youth - Investing and Empowering”, outlining a new youth cooperation framework in Europe. The latter initiative will promote a cross-sectoral approach to address important youth-related issues: creating more opportunities in education and employment, improving the participation in society, and fostering solidarity. The Report is now expected to be published every three years.

[Strategy for Youth Youth Report](#)

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## Cultural Heritage prize

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government’s ‘Survey of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes’ - a research and fieldwork inventory of the extent and state of survival of these sites - has been awarded a European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage and is shortlisted for an overall grand prize to be awarded on 5 June 2009.

The Awards scheme, jointly organised by the European Commission and the Europa Nostra federation of cultural heritage organisations, highlights exceptional restoration and conservation, research and education/training achievements, and awareness-raising initiatives to promote high standards and high-quality skills in conservation practice and to stimulate useful trans-border exchanges based on heritage protection. Previous Irish winners since 2002 have been the restoration work on the Ha’penny Bridge, Trim Castle, Sligo Courthouse and the National Botanic Gardens plus the efforts of the Irish Georgian Society. Applications for the 2010 award are already welcome with a deadline of 1 October.

[Europa Nostra](#)

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## Energy & Environment Agency Network

FEDARENE, the European Federation of Regional Energy and Environment Agencies, is a not-for-profit network of local/regional organisations from seventeen different EU countries which implement, co-ordinate and facilitate initiatives related to local energy demand and supply and the pursuit of sustainable development. The network is also strongly involved in representing the grassroots community interest in EU policy-making in these fields, forming inter-regional partnerships to foster exchange, and capacity-building operations.

One of FEDARENE’s key current issues is a belief that the solutions proposed last winter in the European Commission’s ‘Second Strategic Energy Review’ to address the security of energy supplies, fail to give energy efficiency the role it deserves and also overlook the role of local and regional stakeholders. The Covenant of the Mayors is another initiative the federation is keen should be used to give more visibility to local and regional energy actions. A recent report drafted within the Committee of the Regions by the network’s President reflects and documents this perspective.

The current issue of *FEDARENE Info* contains a special ‘Focus on Regional Strategies for Sustainable Energy’ and illustrates the importance of regional action for sustainable energy by profiling two outstanding examples, from France and Sweden. The previous issue focused on the regional role in Energy Performance in Buildings.

[Report on ‘Second Strategic Energy Review’](#)  
[FEDARENE Newsletter](#)

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## PUBLICATIONS

### Sustainable urban development

A new DG REGIO brochure summarises the experiences and new approaches pioneered by the Urban Pilot Projects and the URBAN Community Initiative which collectively ran from 1989 to 2006 as well as the current URBACT programme. Among the key achievements of these actions has been strengthening acceptance across Europe of a culture of integrated urban development to envisage and deliver

each project within a broader development context taking account of various social, economic and environmental objectives. This approach has also been allied with an emphasis on ensuring both new forms of local input into policy-making and ever-greater public participation in planning.

The publication details a series of examples and recommendations from some of the over 200 cities to have participated in site projects during this time in order to inspire local and regional authorities to undertake similar physical regeneration and social inclusion actions. It also looks towards future prospects for any city or region to engage in networking to exchange knowledge and benefit from guidance in order to develop competence and build capacity.

["Promoting Sustainable Urban Development in Europe - Achievements and Opportunities"](#)

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## Economic crisis impact on Social Housing

CECODHAS, the European Liaison Committee for Social Housing, has published a special edition of their newsletter, focusing on the impact of the financial crisis on the social housing sector.

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## EVENTS

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

### 15-19 June, Rotterdam Spatial Data Infrastructure

The Third Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) Conference provides a forum for stakeholders from government, academia and industry to hear about and discuss the latest developments of the INSPIRE Directive. This year’s event is combined with the International Conference of the GSDI Association: ‘Building SDI Bridges to Address Global Challenges’ and the National conference on Dutch SDI: ‘Results and Challenges’.

[Agenda](#)

## **19 June, Dun Laoghaire Ireland-Wales Creativity**

The Interreg 4A Ireland Wales Annual Event for 2009 will focus on the programme's Priority 1 activity of 'Innovation and Creativity'. The half-day event will discuss the support of innovative activity on a cross-border basis and showcase the achievements of the programme to date in developing common regional development projects to jointly address the challenges laid out in EU, Irish and Welsh policies while positively impacting on local communities. The event is especially aimed at organisations involved in innovative business development activity in the eligible regions and will include discussion on networking, clustering and creative innovation.

### Agenda

Register:

[ireland\\_wales@seregassembly.ie](mailto:ireland_wales@seregassembly.ie)

## **22-23 June, Brussels Low carbon economy**

The need to adjust to a low-carbon economy and its effect on restructuring trends will underline the 'Forum on the Impact of Climate Change on Employment' to be organised by the Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities. This event plans to raise awareness of the changes and new skills that will be necessary in the medium term and to provide an opportunity to disseminate information on practices that have already been used to promote change and develop innovative solutions.

### Agenda

## **22-23 June, The Hague Innovation for energy**

The Assembly of European Regions and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions are organising the 'Innovation at the service of regions and cities for implementing sustainable energy strategies' conference. Local and regional authorities and energy sector professionals who wish to find out how to optimise their sustainable energy strategies in the current European framework, by leveraging innovation, are invited to attend. Concrete, practical information on EU support mechanisms for placing innovation at the service of energy will be provided as well as good practice presentations to illustrate how innovation can serve energy objectives.

### Agenda

## **23-26 June, Brussels Green Week 2009**

3,000 participants are expected to be involved as part of the annual three days of environmental exhibitions and conferences organised by Commission DG Environment which this year turns the spotlight on the multi-faceted challenges of climate change. The week will be structured along four themes of eight sessions each:

1. EU climate policies,
2. International dimension,
3. Living with climate change and,
4. 2050 Vision: a carbon-free society.

In particular a late afternoon session on 23 June on "Mobilising Local Authorities" may be of interest in that it will focus on recent developments that are key to local government in Europe, All sessions will be streamed live online.

### Agenda

## **24-25 June, Dinton, UK Natura 2000 rivers**

The STREAM conservation project's closing conference 'Managing Natura 2000 rivers: restoration, monitoring and linking with the floodplain' will demonstrate practical aspects of how to plan, manage and implement a large programme of river restoration in response to the Water Framework and Habitats Directives in order to develop detailed whole-river restoration plans, and integrate management of river and floodplain Natura 2000 designated sites. This LIFE project has developed a range of innovative techniques to restore, monitor and manage lowland rivers and floodplains in South-West England.

### Agenda

## **8 July, Dundalk INTERREG NWE on tour**

The INTERREG IVB North West Europe programme is embarking on a roadshow in the coming months to reach new potential project partners, highlight the funding available to take real action at transnational level on issues such as climate change, and to increase awareness of the programme's Climate Change themed Annual Event in Rotterdam on 8-9 October. The Irish event will take place in the offices of Louth Local Authorities. Programme officials, successful Irish projects, the

Irish Contact Point and climate change experts will be there to discuss the issue of climate change, how the NWE programme can fund actions in this area and how to get involved in an INTERREG project. The event is aimed at national and local partners in climate change; local, national and regional policy makers; managers of small and medium businesses; universities and researchers; and NGO's.

Register with Antoinette Jordan, NWE Contact Point in Ireland,

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

## **15-17 July, Ballyheigue, "Father of Modern economics"**

A Summer School bringing together leading academics, entrepreneurs and community developers, will commemorate economic theorist Richard Cantillon, born in Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry in 1680, and most famous for his "Essay on the nature of commerce in general", published in 1755 which contains the first known occurrence of the term "entrepreneur". Cantillon's work is quoted by Adam Smith in "Wealth of Nations" and he was described by Murray Rothbard as "the father of modern economics". The Summer School will provide workshops, debates and lectures to appeal to academics, third level economics and business students and entrepreneurs alike. This is a joint venture between Kerry County Enterprise Board, the South West Regional Authority's Rethinking Entrepreneurship Initiative and Ballyheigue Community representatives.

### Agenda



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