



Irish Regions Office

EU Bulletin No. 5 (21/05/04)

IN THIS ISSUE

FUNDING

- Interact – Second Call
- eLearning
- Transport Policy
- Enterprise Grant Programme 2004
- MODINIS Work Programme 2004
- Leonardo da Vinci – 2nd Phase
- The Daphne II Programme

NEWS & POLICY

- The Third Cohesion Forum
- Revised Regional Aid Guidelines
- “Natural Effect” Regions’ Declaration
- New Dialogue with the Regions
- LEADER to be Discontinued
- Appointments at DG REGIO
- Pilots to Boost Regional Innovation
- Services of General Interest & PPP’s

EVENTS

- Foresight for Innovation (Dublin)
- EU Charter for SME’s (Dublin)
- Foresight Actions in the Regions
- Competitive Regions – Best Practice

PARTNER SEARCH

- Culture 2000

NETWORKS

- LOCIN+ combating social exclusion

FUNDING

INTERACT - Second Call

The Managing Authority of the Community Initiative Programme INTERACT 2002-2006, has published the Second Call for Proposals for Projects under Priority 2 (local and regional initiatives that contribute to the development of the institutions involved in the INTERREG programme) and Priority 3, Measure 2 (projects that contribute to the development of joint cooperation tools and mechanisms at the external border) of the Programme. Deadline: 15 July 2004. Budget €7.8m. *Further details at:* <http://www.interact-eu.net/> or from the IRO.

eLearning

A call for proposals for the eLearning programme (2004-6) was published on April 26th. The programme aims to improve the quality and accessibility of European education and training systems through a more effective use of ICT. The current call builds on the eLearning Initiative 2000-2003 and covers 3 of the 4 key areas of the eLearning Programme: promoting digital literacy (€1.6m); European Virtual Campuses (€4.8m); and Transversal Actions (€1.3m). Funding of up to 80% can be provided and projects must involve at least 3 partners from 3 different Member States. Deadline: 28 June 2004. *Further details at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programes/elearning/doc/calltext_2604_en.pdf

Transport Policy

The European Commission has published a call for proposals for projects designed to promote the objectives of the EU's common transport policy. A number of priorities have been established for 2004, including: "Designated driver" campaigns; Action by police forces in the EU to improve respect for road traffic rules; Publicity campaigns on seat belts and child restraints; Accident data recorders; and specific priorities relating to road transport, maritime transport, rail transport and inland waterway transport. Budget: €15.4m. Deadline: 30 June 2004. *Further information at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport/home/calls/proposal_en.htm

Enterprise Grant Programme 2004

DG Enterprise recently published its grant programme for 2004. A specific call for proposals will be published for each of the grant themes described in the list of planned actions. *Further details at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/funding/grants/themes_2004/index.htm

MODINIS Work Programme 2004

The Council and the European Parliament have approved the MODINIS Work Programme for 2004. MODINIS is a multi-annual programme (2003-2005) for the monitoring of the eEurope Action Plan, the dissemination of good practices and the improvement of network and information security. One of the main objectives is to measure progress towards the key targets of

the Action Plan. The 2004 Work Programme has a budget of €12.8m out of a total budget of approx. €22.4m. *Further details at: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/europe/2005/doc/all_about/adopted_version_mordinis.doc*

Leonardo da Vinci – 2nd Phase

The Council has adopted a second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme for the period 2000-2006. This third and final call for proposals is valid for two years (2005-2006) and concerns the following Community measures: Mobility; Pilot Projects; Language competences; Transnational networks; and Reference material. The following themes have been identified: Promoting transparency of qualifications; Developing the quality of Vocational Education & Training (VET) systems and practices; Developing relevant and innovative e-learning content; Continuous training of teachers and trainers; Credit transfer in VET; and Validation of non-formal and informal learning. Pre-proposals must be sent to the National Agency (Leargas) by 1 October 2004. *Further details at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2_en.html*

Leonardo da Vinci - Exchanging results

This call for proposals aims to support the organisation of events (conferences and exhibitions) to promote the exploitation of results from innovative projects supported under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. Funding: Maximum of 75 % of the eligible expenditure, with a ceiling of €70,000 per

project. Total budget: €500,000. Deadline: 28 June 2004. *Further information at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2_en.html*

The Daphne II Programme

The second phase of the Daphne programme was recently approved and runs from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2008. The aim of the programme is to prevent and combat all forms of violence, occurring in the public or the private domain, against children, young people and women by taking preventive measures and by providing support for victims and groups at risk. It also aims to assist and encourage non-governmental organisations and other organisations active in this field. Budget (2004-2008) €50 million. Calls will be published in November of each year, except for 2004. The deadline for applications in 2004 is June 30. *Further details at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm*

NEWS & POLICY

Third Cohesion Forum Highlights Division on Future Budget

The future EU budget was the clear point of contention during the debate at the Third Cohesion Forum, which met in Brussels on the 10 - 11 May. The Forum provided a first opportunity for regional representatives, Member States and the EU institutions (total

of over 1200 participants) from across the EU to publicly debate the Commission's new Cohesion Policy proposals (published in February 2004). The Forum confirmed that, while there is widespread support for the thrust of the Commissions proposals, there is a significant gap between the position of the net contributor Member States and that of the Commission (supported by the Parliament, regional interests and the other Member States) on the future budget. The net contributors are adamant that the overall EU budget must be limited to 1% of GNI (with the CAP budget already agreed until 2013 this would greatly restrict the regional policy budget). The Commission has proposed a budget for Cohesion Policy of 0.46% of GNI, which would require an overall budget of 1.24% of GNI. A number of compromise proposals were suggested at the Forum, including a possible review of the budget in 2009/2010. Other issues debated include: the continuation of interregional cooperation (the Commission have proposed that the current Interreg IIIC programme should be mainstreamed post 2006) and future state aid rules. The Commission will publish the new legislative package and revised Regional Aid Guidelines in July 2004 (see below).

Revised Regional Aid Guidelines

The European Commission's Competition services submitted a private consultation paper to the Member States at the beginning of May on the revision of regional state aid rules. The Commission document proposes that future Objective 1 regions (Convergence Objective) should be eligible for state aid under Article 87.3(a), as is currently the case. Nothing would therefore change for these

regions. However, rules for the future Objective 2 regions (Competitiveness and Employment Objective) are less straightforward, since all EU regions will potentially be eligible for this Objective from 2007. Regions eligible for aid under Article 87.3(c) will therefore no longer coincide with Objective 2 since that would mean that all EU regions would benefit from state aid. The document submitted to the Member States by the Competition services therefore proposes that eligibility under Article 87.3(c) should be restricted to: the 18 “Statistical Effect” regions (possibly a declining rate of intensity, beginning with eligibility under Article 87.3(a) in 2007 and ending with the normal rate proposed under Article 87.3(c); the Canaries and Madeira (ultra-peripheral regions leaving Objective 1), under the same conditions as the “Statistical Effect” regions; the “Natural Effect” regions (naturally removed from Objective 1); and sparsely populated regions of Scandinavia. All other Objective 2 regions would not be eligible for aid under Article 87.3(c) but would be subject to the general regime outlined in horizontal frameworks on state aid (concerning transport, research, the environment and small and medium-sized enterprises). *The Commission’s consultation paper is available from the Irish Regions Office (IRO).*

Natural Effects Regions Seek “Phasing-out” Status

A group of 8 “Natural Effect” regions (regions leaving Objective 1 in 2006 due to their own economic growth), which includes the BMW region, recently launched a declaration calling for their inclusion under

the Convergence objective of the new Cohesion Policy. The Natural Effect regions are seeking “Phasing-out” status, similar to that given to regions leaving Objective 1 in 2000, including a gradual transition from Articles 87.3(a) to 87.3(c) in terms of State Aid rules. The “Statistical effect” regions (regions whose GDP will go above 75% of the EU average because of enlargement) have secured similar terms under the current Commission proposals. *Copies of the declaration are available from the IRO.*

Launch of Dialogue with Associations of Local and Regional Authorities

On May 10, officials from the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and regional representatives from across Europe met in Brussels to launch the new “Structured Dialogue” between the Commission and national and European associations of local and regional authorities (see Bulletins no. 1,2 and 3). This was the first meeting organised within the framework of this new “Structured Dialogue”, which was proposed in a Commission Communication adopted in December 2003. The aim is to facilitate political dialogue “on the main issues affecting European integration” at the early stages of policy formation. The inaugural meeting was addressed by Commission President, Romano Prodi, as well as by Regional Policy Commissioners Barrot and Balazs. While a detailed work programme has not yet been agreed, it is likely that the next meeting will focus on cross-border cooperation. Ireland’s sub-national authorities were represented at the meeting by the Association of Irish Regions. *Further details are available from*

the Irish Regions Office. Or at: http://www.eu-ophlysningen.dk/upload/application/pdf/c1219a61/com2003_0811en01.pdf

LEADER to be Discontinued

Speaking at a Conference of Peripheral & Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) meeting in Florence on April 30, Dirk Ahner, Deputy Director-General for Agriculture, said the Commission did not want to continue the LEADER initiative. Mr Ahner said that the Commission plans to add half of the funds from LEADER to a new rural fund, which it says would build on LEADER’s success (mainstreaming of LEADER) in driving local community development. For the 2007 to 2013 period the Commission plans to simplify rural development funding by replacing the three current sources of financing (ERDF, ESF and EAGGF) with one single fund within the EAGGF. The three main priorities for rural development in the future will be: to increase the competitiveness of the agricultural sector; to enhance the environment and countryside through support for land management; and to enhance the quality of life in rural areas and promote diversification of economic activities. The Commission is planning to publish its Rural Development Regulations for the 2007-2013 by the end of July. *Mr Ahner’s speech is available from the IRO*

Recent Appointments at DG Regional Policy

The Commission has appointed Mr Graham Meadows to the post of Director-General for Regional Policy. Mr Meadows, a Commission official of British nationality, 62, joined the Commission in 1975 as an administrator in DG Agriculture. He has been acting Director-General of DG Regional Policy since March 2003. His appointment took effect on the 1st May 2004. Mr Michele Pasca-Raymondo, former Director of the Rural Development Unit in DG Agriculture has been appointed to the post of Deputy Director General for Regional Policy. *Further details at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/regional_policy/index_en.htm

14 Pilot Projects to Boost Knowledge Economy in EU regions

The European Commission has selected 14 pilot projects, to be allocated a total of €2.5 million, to boost the regional dimension of the knowledge economy. The projects were selected from a call for proposals under the Regions of Knowledge pilot action (KnowREG), which was published on August 1st 2003. Projects will help to improve regional research and innovation strategies, regional public-private partnerships, links between researchers, companies and financial institutions and networking between technological innovators across Europe's regions. The National University of Ireland-Cork is a partner in one of the projects, *SMERNA* (Strategic Mentoring Initiative for the Region of North Aegean). *Further details at:*

http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/04/548/0/RA/PID&lg=EN&display=

New Action Plan for Innovation

DG Enterprise is developing a new innovation action plan to address the main market deficiencies that currently hamper innovation in European enterprises. In this context a public consultation is welcoming contributions from innovation stakeholders from throughout Europe. Deadline for contributions: 31 May 2004. *Further details at:*

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/innovation/consultation/index.htm>.

Promoting High-Quality Services of General Interest

On May 12, 2004 the European Commission adopted a White Paper setting out the EU's approach to fostering the development of high-quality services of general interest. The White Paper presents the Commission's conclusions from a broad public consultation launched on the basis of last year's Green Paper. The White Paper develops the main elements of an EU strategy aimed both at ensuring that all citizens and businesses have effective access to a broad range of services of general interest and at improving legal certainty. In the coming months the Commission will be focusing on three issues: the legal framework for the financing of public service obligations; the need for a clear and transparent framework for the selection of undertakings entrusted with a

service of general interest; and social and health services. *Further details at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/services_general_interest/

Commission Launches Debate on PPPs

On the basis of the results of the public consultation on services of general interest, the Commission has launched a debate on the desirability of adapting the Community rules on public procurement and concessions to accommodate the development of public-private partnerships (PPPs). The main objective is to see if it is necessary to improve the current rules in order to ensure that economic operators have access to PPPs under conditions of legal clarity and real competition. *Further details at:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/ppp *Deadline for submissions: 30th July 2004.*

EVENTS

14-15 June 2004, Dublin

The Irish EU Presidency is organising a conference on "Foresight for Innovation - thinking and debating the future: shaping and aligning policies". The Foresight conference will focus on the use of foresight (results) for improved and stronger alignment of policy making and its contribution to the Lisbon Agenda, as well as to national initiatives currently underway or planned. *Further details at:*

http://www.forfas.ie/news/foresight_for_innovation_conference_2004/index.html

29-30 June 2004, Dublin

The Irish EU Presidency is organising a conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises. The conference will focus on the Charter's three priorities: access to finance, in particular venture capital and micro loans; innovation and technology transfer; and consultation of small businesses. *Registration at:*

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/events/carter/index.htm> Further information on the European Charter for Small Enterprises at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/charter/index.htm

23 September 2004 (tbc)

The "Blueprints for Foresight Actions in the Regions" expert group, chaired by Professor Liam Downey of Maynooth College, will hold a dissemination conference on the 23 September. The "Building the Future on Knowledge" conference aims to inform national and regional policymakers and policy-shapers of the combined policies and instruments of the European Union supporting the development of regional knowledge-based economies. Several Commission Directorates (Agriculture, Enterprise, Environment, Regional Policy and Research) will participate. *Further details will soon be available at:* <http://www.cordis.lu/foresight/news.htm>

13-15 October, Rovaniemi (Finland)

The Finnish region of Lapland, in collaboration with the European Commission and the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, is

organising a seminar called "Competitive Regions - Shaping Best Practice II". The seminar aims to promote the exchange of experience and dissemination of best practice between authorities involved in the implementation of Objective 1 and Objective 2 Structural Fund programmes in Finland, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Sweden and the UK. The conference will build on the success of last year's seminar on the same theme which was held in Sheffield. *Further information will be available in June on the REGIO website:* http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/newsroom/index_en.htm

PARTNER SEARCH

Culture 2000

The Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) is offering a free service to organisations (primarily museums and exhibitions) seeking partners for Culture 2000 projects. Interested parties can enter a description of a project in a database or outline the basic ideas of a project that is still in the making. It is also possible to consult a list of all the projects included in the database. The next Culture 2000 call is expected in June 2004. *Details at:* <http://www.ne-mo.org/partner/>

NETWORKS

Combating Social Exclusion

LOCIN+ is a web-based research and exchange project on local initiatives to combat social exclusion. The project's website contains an extensive database of social inclusion projects in the EU. The project was launched by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), with the support of the Directorate-General for Research. *Further information is available at:* <http://locin.jrc.it> or contact: fintan.farrell@eapn.skynet.be

PUBLICATIONS

Guide to Evaluating Socio-Economic development

DG Regional Policy has launched a new guide to evaluating socio-economic development. The guide revises a former publication, the MEANS collection, and is designed to assist policy makers and programme managers who commission and use evaluations of regional programmes, as well as the evaluators who carry them out. The guide has been developed by evaluation experts for the Commission and is available (FOC) at: <http://www.evaled.info/>

Irish Regions Office
6 Rond-Point Schuman,
B-1040 Brussels

Robert Collins
Tel: +32 2 282 8474
E: robert.collins@pophost.eunet.be

Eamon O'Hara
Tel: +32 2 282 8477
E: eamon.ohara@pop.kpn.be