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## FUNDING

### *Extension of PEACE Programme*

On October 13<sup>th</sup> the European Commission adopted a package of proposals that will extend EU support for the peace process in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland to the end of 2006. The extension will provide an additional €75 million in EU funding, which will give a total of €150 million (including national co-financing) to be delivered through the PEACE programme and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). The Commission's proposals will now be forwarded to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers for their approval by the end of the year. The extension was proposed by the Commission following a request from the European Council in June 2004 to examine the possibility of aligning the PEACE programme (due to end in 2004) with other programmes scheduled to end in 2006. *Further details at:* [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm)

### *Funding for EU Information Points*

The European Commission, via its Representation in Ireland, is launching a call for proposals to select organisations to host one or more public information relays, to be known collectively as the "EUROPE DIRECT Information Network", over the period 2005-2008. The new relays will perform the tasks currently carried out by the Info-Points Europe and rural Carrefour's. Bodies selected will be eligible for annual

co-funding of between €12,000 and €24,000 for up to four years and will also receive a wide range of EU related documentation, training and networking services. The call is open to public bodies or private entities that have a public-sector mission. Deadline for applications: 29 November 2004. *Further details at:* <http://www.euireland.ie/home.htm>

### *Town Twinning*

The next deadline for calls under the Town Twinning initiative is November 15, 2004 (for actions to be carried out between March 15<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005). The Town Twinning initiative is intended to promote events and actions which contribute to "a sense of belonging to Europe" and reinforcing European awareness. The current call is aimed at supporting two kinds of actions: 1. Meetings of citizens of twinned towns and municipalities; and 2. Conferences on European themes relating to town-twinning and training and information seminars for town-twinning officers. Future application deadlines include: 3 Jan. 2005 (for actions between 1 May-15 June 2005); 15 Feb. 2005 (for actions between 16 June-31 July 2005); 1 April 2005 (for actions between 1 Aug.-30 Sept. 2005); and 1 June 2005 (for actions between 1 Oct.-31 Dec. 2005). *Further details at:* [http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education\\_culture/towntwin/call\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/towntwin/call_en.html)

### *Economic & Technological Intelligence*

The Commission recently published a call for proposals aimed at "stepping up economic and technological intelligence" in the EU. This call is part of the specific

programme for research, technological development and demonstration: 'Structuring the European Research Area'. Support will be provided for one or more of the following: organisation of conferences or seminars; performance of studies, analyses, benchmarking or mapping exercises; assessment and monitoring activities; dissemination, transfer and broad take-up of programme results; development of research or innovation strategies; organisation of high level scientific awards and competitions; setting up of working groups and expert groups; operational support; and information and communication activities. Closing date: 10 February 2005. Total budget: €22 million. Eligible projects must include at least three partners from three different Member States or Associated States. *Further details at:* [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/c\\_257/c\\_25720041019\\_en00060008.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/c_257/c_25720041019_en00060008.pdf) or e-mail: [research-sme@cec.eu.int](mailto:research-sme@cec.eu.int)

### ***LIFE III – Extension of Deadlines***

Project promoters planning to submit proposals under the EU LIFE programme have been granted a deadline extension of one and a half months. For the Environment and Nature chapters of the LIFE programme the new deadlines are: LIFE Environment - demonstration actions: November 30 (instead of October 15); and LIFE Nature: November 30 (instead of September 30). The deadline for LIFE Environment "preparatory actions" (November 30) is maintained. *Further details at:* [http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/funding/life-env\\_call2005/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/funding/life-env_call2005/index.htm)

### ***LIFE III - Guide for Applicants***

To assist applicants for LIFE-Environment projects 2005, DG Environment has recently published a new guide for applicants. This guide provides a useful insight into the criteria and the procedures that will be used for project evaluation. *Copies can be downloaded at:* <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/funding/documents.htm>.

## **NEWS & POLICY**

### ***Irish Views on Proposals for Future Territorial Cooperation***

Referring to the European Commission's proposals for future Territorial Cooperation (part of the proposals in the Third Cohesion report), Mr Stephen O'Sullivan, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Finance, has called for greater "flexibility in the allocation of resources between each of the proposed Territorial Cooperation strands." The mechanism currently proposed by the Commission requires a minimum allocation to each strand. Speaking at the seminar, "Cross-Border Cooperation – Building on Achievements," hosted by the Irish Regions Office in Brussels on September 28<sup>th</sup>, Mr O'Sullivan said that flexibility in the allocation of resources between the three strands would "ensure the selection of the most effective delivery mechanisms for developing and improving cross-border links". "In my view this is preferable to the proposal to allocate an exact amount of

funding to each strand as it allows the balance of resources to be targeted where it gives greatest value," he said. Mr O'Sullivan was addressing an audience of over 150 people who attended the seminar on cross-border co-operation. The seminar examined the key lessons and successes of cross-border cooperation in Ireland and considered how these could contribute to further enhancing cross-border cooperation in the period after 2006. Following the seminar, Mr David O'Sullivan, Secretary General of the European Commission, officially opened an exhibition on "Successful Cross-Border Cooperation" at the Irish Regions Office. *Further details from the Irish Regions Office.*

### ***Debate on Future EU Budget Kicks Off***

Dutch Finance Minister, Gerrit Zalm, will kick-start the debate on the EU budget for the period 2007-2013 on October 21, when finance ministers meet at the Ecofin Council. Mr Zalm is determined to push forward what is expected to be a very contentious debate during the Netherlands' presidency. Battle lines were drawn earlier this year when six of the net contributors to the EU budget, France, Germany, the UK, Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands, said that the 2007-13 budget should not exceed 1% of EU gross national income (GNI), significantly below the current limit of 1.24%. The European Commission has proposed a budget equivalent to an average of 1.14% of EU GNI over the seven years. If this is reduced then it is likely that the Structural Funds will be the first area to lose out. Sweden in particular is arguing strongly that EU regional aid (Structural Funds) should no

longer be given to poor regions of rich member states (which would include Irish regions). Instead, support should be focused on the new, poorer, EU members. It would now appear that, despite the aspirations of the Dutch presidency, it is unlikely that member states will reach an early agreement on this issue. With an election expected in the spring of next year and then a possible vote on the EU constitution in 2006, it is expected that the UK will try to delay any decisions until the second half of 2006. It is understood that EU officials are already trying to find a date in 2006 for an emergency summit at which a final agreement could be reached. *Further details at:*

<http://www.eu2004.nl/default.asp?CMS ITE M=42DDA82B54254791A7395A92B76883E5X1X56637X33>

### ***MEPs Interview New Regional Policy Commissioner***

Addressing the European Parliament at the end of the September, the new Regional Policy Commissioner-designate, Danuta Hübner, outlined her position on some of the key regional policy issues currently facing the EU. With regard to the gruelling budget debate shaping up with the Member States, Ms Hübner indicated that she was confident that the Commission would convince the EU Council of Ministers of the justification for an EU Budget of 1.14% of the EUs GNI for the 2007-2013 period. “1% is not enough to accomplish all the tasks in the coming years, we have our arguments at the ready for the debates”, she declared. Ms Hübner emphasised the importance of the Lisbon Agenda and insisted that competitiveness

must be at the heart of the programming process. She also referred to the role of public/private partnerships (PPP) as a means of maximising the impact of government investment. She restated her commitment to the “N+2” rule (which would de-commit or cancel any approved programme which does not give rise to a payment claim within two years of the year of allocation) and firmly rejected the idea of changing this to an “N+3” rule, as some Member States have sought. Finally, asked about the controversial idea floated by French Finance Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, of linking the level of regional aid to company taxation (whereby counties such as Ireland, with lower corporation tax would be subject to lower levels of regional aid), Ms Hübner said she would strongly “resist” such a proposal. Beyond this most of her replies reflected what is already contained in the draft Regulations the Commission unveiled in July. *Further details at:* [http://www.euoparl.eu.int/hearings/commission/2004\\_comm/questionnaires\\_en.htm](http://www.euoparl.eu.int/hearings/commission/2004_comm/questionnaires_en.htm)

### ***Proposal for new LIFE+ Instrument***

On September 29<sup>th</sup> the European Commission published a draft Regulation proposing a new funding programme for the environment, LIFE+ (LIFE plus). LIFE+ will succeed the current LIFE III programme, which expires on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2006. It is proposed that the new programme will become the EUs “single” financial instrument for the environment and will closely support the priorities of the 6th Environment Action Programme 2002- 2012 (i.e. combating climate change, halting the decline in biological diversity, minimising

negative environmental effects on human health, and dealing with natural resources and waste in sustainable ways). The Commission envisages two strands: Strand 1, “Implementation and Governance”, to consolidate the knowledge base and help Member States to get better and quicker results in applying EU environment policy; and Strand 2, “Information and Communication”, to raise environmental awareness and share best practices. LIFE+ will complement the rural and regional development funds and additional funding to support environmental innovation will be available under a new ‘Innovation and Competitiveness Framework Programmes’ and from the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research. It is proposed that LIFE+ will have a budget of €2.19 billion for the period 2007-2013, or roughly €300 per year (the current budget is about €250 per year). *Further details at:* [http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/index_en.htm)

### ***Delivering e-government services***

The IDA (Interchange of Data between Administrations) unit of the Directorate General (DG) for Enterprise of the European Commission has launched a call for papers from organisations concerned with the supply of, or demand for, cross-border e-government services. This call arises in the context of the new IDABC, a programme for cross-border e-Government services’ for administrations, businesses and citizens. Endorsed by EU ministers in July 2003, IDABC builds on the accumulated experience of the current IDA programme and aims to encourage the establishment of

cross-border services that can directly benefit administrations, businesses and citizens. To discover what kind of services these stakeholder groups want, DG Enterprise is now commissioning a study and organising a conference in Brussels on 17-18 February 2005. The new programme will be officially launched at this conference. The event's working sessions will revolve around the findings of the current call for papers on citizens' and businesses' needs in this area. *Further details at:* <http://europa.eu.int/ida/en/document/3363>

### ***Ireland fails to comply with Waste Disposal Directive***

On September 24<sup>th</sup> the European Court of First Instance ruled against Ireland, and ordered it to pay costs, for failing to comply with the Waste Disposal Directive (Council Directive 75/442/EEC on waste). The case was based on a series of complaints received by the Commission between 1997 and 2000 from Irish citizens on a number of incidents involving the deposit of waste allegedly in violation of the provisions of the Waste Directive. 12 separate complaints covering 18 dumps nationwide were lodged with the court. The Court was told that over a "protracted period of time" Ireland had failed to properly licence the disposal and recovery of waste, and, as a result, it had failed to prevent the "abandonment, dumping and uncontrolled disposal of waste, thereby endangering human health and causing environmental harm". Specific issues aired during an oral hearing earlier this year included the tolerance by local authorities of private, unauthorised firms carrying out disposal without a licence, including in

protected areas. One of the examples raised by the Commission was located in Fermoy, Co Cork. *Further details at:* <http://curia.eu.int/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=en&Submit=Submit&docreqire=alldocs&numaff=&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=Ireland%2C+Commission&doaine=&mots=Ireland%2C+Waste+Disposal+Directive%2C+dumping&resmax=100>

### ***Risk Capital for SME's in Northern Ireland***

The European Commission has approved a scheme intended to promote risk capital financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Northern Ireland. The scheme is based on a similar umbrella scheme for risk capital financing to SMEs in the UK, the "Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Venture Capital and Loan Fund (SMEVCLF)", which was approved by the Commission in 2003. The SMEVCLF foresees maximum amounts of €750,000 for risk capital financing for SMEs. The UK stated in its notification that the "Invest Northern Ireland 2003" scheme would respect all conditions laid down in the Commission's decision on the SMEVCLF, with the exception of the allowable maximum investment tranche. Instead of €750,000, the UK proposed to grant up to €2.2 million. In order to justify this deviation from the approved SMEVCLF scheme, the UK put forward a market study that shows that the venture capital market in Northern Ireland is particularly underdeveloped as compared with the rest of the UK. Northern Ireland accounts for 2.2% of total UK GDP, but only represents 0.7% of total risk capital investments in the UK. The Commission

concluded that the "Invest Northern Ireland Venture 2003" scheme was compatible with the common market. *Further details at:* [http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/state\\_aids/industrie/N620-02.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/state_aids/industrie/N620-02.pdf)

## **EVENTS**

### ***27-29 Oct. 2004, Krakow (Poland)***

"Kraków Social Economy 2004" is being co-organised by the Polish Government and the European Commission and will bring together over 1000 social economy actors from across the EU. The objective of the conference is to give visibility to the various forms of social economy in Europe and to strengthen co-operation between the social economy of Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Topics for discussion include: an appropriate legal framework; a new social economy development fund; access of the social economy to the Structural Funds; sustainable local development; cooperative banks and rural development; etc... *Further details at:* <http://www.krakow2004.coop/>

### ***15-16 Nov. 2004, Prague (Czech Rep.)***

This IRE (Innovating Regions in Europe) workshop entitled, 'Innovation financing at regional level', will present successful innovation financing schemes as well as schemes to match entrepreneurs and investors. The conference will bring together regional, national and European examples of

ways of providing SMEs with innovation finance. Denis Marnane from Enterprise Ireland is among the speakers. *Further information at:* [http://www.innovating-regions.org/services/pub\\_library/index.cfm?level=4&name1=AABO&cat\\_id=316](http://www.innovating-regions.org/services/pub_library/index.cfm?level=4&name1=AABO&cat_id=316)

### **24 Nov. 2004 London (UK)**

Greater London Enterprise (GLE) is organising a conference to launch the European Learning Network on enterprise and innovation in deprived urban areas. The Network consists of five core partner cities; Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Milan and Prague, which are all actively developing and implementing policies to promote enterprise and innovation in deprived urban areas. The network will develop common approaches to realising the economic and social potential of deprived urban areas and build practical tools to promote enterprise and innovation such as toolkits and how-to guides. Registration deadline: 19 Nov. 2004. *Further details at:* <http://www.thelearningnetwork.net>

### **11-12 / 22-23 Nov. 2004, Brussels**

The INTERACT Qualification and Transfer Point is organising two practical seminars in November on the management of Interreg IIIA programmes. The seminars will enable professionals involved in managing Interreg IIIA programmes to identify common problems and solutions. Representatives of the Commission and other institutions involved will participate in the two seminars and attendance is limited to three people from

each programme. *Further details at:* <http://www.interact-eu.net/4107/0/0/515998>

### **5-7 Dec. 2004, Stuttgart (Germany)**

The 4<sup>th</sup> European Forum for Innovative Enterprises is being co-organised by the European Commission and the regions of Stuttgart and Karlsruhe. The conference will focus on: financing schemes; innovation clusters; internationalisation of SMEs; and the regulatory environment as a catalyst for new markets. Panels will explore how innovation can boost entrepreneurial activity and how best to shape future European innovation policy. Non-technological aspects of innovation will receive particular focus. *Further details at:* <http://www.fourthforum.org>

### **9-11 June 2005 Copenhagen (Denmark)**

The 6<sup>th</sup> European Biennial of Towns and Town Planners 2005 will bring together town planners, politicians and mayors from both Eastern and Western Europe to discuss core issues in contemporary planning. The Biennial will take place at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, and will include the conference, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, excursions, and multimedia presentations. *Further details at:* <http://www.cityliving-livingcity.org/>

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### ***Structural Funds Studies***

The European Commission has recently published two studies which accompany the publication of the 3rd Cohesion Report. The first examines the implementation methods and the effectiveness of the Structural Funds, based on a number of programmes selected in different Member States. The second focuses on national policies, examining how, and the extent to which they contribute to reducing economic and social disparities and enhancing cohesion. *Further details at:* [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/study\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/study_en.htm)

### ***New Innovation Portal***

The EUs R&D web service, CORDIS, has launched a new innovation portal. The portal publishes the latest news and events related to European innovation, including sections devoted to innovation policy, EU support services provided to enterprises, and innovation within the research framework programmes. Practical information on participation in EU innovation activities, along with related funding opportunities, is also provided in the section on 'Innovation in the Framework Programmes'. *The website address is:* <http://www.cordis.lu/innovation/>

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