

CORK AND KERRY ON THE MARK IN ENTERPRISE AWARDS

Kerry wins European Entrepreneurial Region award

County Kerry has been awarded the prestigious title of European Entrepreneurial Region of the Year 2011 by the Committee of the Regions, one of three EU areas granted the label for 2011. Kerry's successful bid came from the Institute of Technology, Tralee and Shannon Development, who share a joint campus at Kerry Technology Park. The quality, efficacy and long-term success of its entrepreneurial vision were the decisive factors in Kerry's winning bid. Driven by Shannon Development's Kerry Technology Park, Institute of Technology, Tralee and entrepreneur Jerry Kennelly, a number of groundbreaking initiatives have been developed in recent years to grow Kerry's position as a central hub of enterprise education and business development. Now in its third year, the Young Entrepreneur Programme is a pioneering initiative designed to cultivate a spirit of entrepreneurship and real life

business skills among second and third level students in the region. The programme brings students face to face with internationally successful entrepreneurs on a regular basis.

The Endeavour Programme, launched in 2009 with the aim of fast-tracking Ireland's next generation of entrepreneurs, attracted over 500 applications from up-and-coming business people around the country. Fifteen successful business start-ups are currently embarking on the programme at Kerry Technology Park with access to top quality facilities and individual business mentoring.

Kerry was selected following an assessment by a jury of CoR members, representatives from the European Commission and from business organisations BusinessEurope, UEAPME and Eurochambres.



Dr. Clare Rigg of Institute of Technology, Tralee receiving the EER award

CORK PROJECT SHORTLISTED FOR EUROPEAN ENTERPRISE AWARDS 2010

The Genesis Enterprise Programme (GEP) from Cork has been shortlisted for this year's European Commission-backed European Enterprise Awards (EEA). The initiative has been run by the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) since 1998 and brings together regional and national partners. Every year it provides a package of support measures to 18 entrepreneurs in the South-West to accelerate the development of their businesses during their first 12 months in operation. Eligible projects have to be knowledge-based and to show export potential. Until 2008, almost 4 out of 5 participants were still active, employing over 1100 persons.

This approach has now been replicated successfully elsewhere.

338 projects competed in national competitions across all 27 EU Member States and Norway for the European Enterprise Awards 2010. Each participating country could select up to two candidates for the European competition. The 53 selected entries were then reviewed by a high-level jury with representatives from business, government and academia, who have now established a shortlist of 12 nominees in 5 categories: Promoting the Entrepreneurial Spirit; Investing in Skills; Improving the Business Environment;

Supporting the Internationalisation of Business and Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship.

The winners will be announced on May 31 at an award ceremony in Madrid to which all national nominees will be invited. Organised in cooperation with the Spanish EU presidency, the event will focus on the exchange of best business promotion practices across Europe. It will also mark the closing of the second European SME Week, a pan-European campaign to recognise the role of entrepreneurs and highlight the support available for small businesses.

Interested in EU news and policy?

The Irish Regions Office (IRO) in Brussels publishes a regular EU News Bulletin. Circulated by email and with eleven issues annually, the News Bulletin contains the latest news of interest for local and regional government along with updates of EU funding and details of relevant publications and events. A related publication the EU Policy Review, is published by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in association with the IRO, and provides an analysis of recently released proposals for EU legislation. Past issues of both, which are available free of charge and subscription details are available at the publications section on the IRO website at www.iro.ie



Photo Committee of the Regions



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Delegation d i a r y

EUROPEAN UNION

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

IRISH DELEGATION

Newsletter of the Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions

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CLLR. PATRICK MCGOWAN NEW HEAD OF IRISH DELEGATION

Committee of the Regions begins new five-year term



Mr. John Gormley T.D. Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Govt. with members of the Irish CoR Delegation



Cllr. Patrick McGowan
President of the Irish Delegation

Cllr. Patrick McGowan (Donegal County Council and Border Regional Authority) has been appointed to lead the Irish Delegation of the EU Committee of the Regions (CoR) for its new mandate from 2010-2015. Announcing Cllr. McGowan's appointment, Mr. John Gormley T.D. Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government emphasised the significance of the Delegation's role in representing the views of Irish local and regional authorities in the EU policy-making structures given the increasing impact of the EU on the responsibilities of the local and regional authorities.

Minister Gormley underlined that the government would continue to support the work of the Delegation through continuing liaison between his Department, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Brussels-based Permanent Representation, and the Delegation in supplementing the policy input to Irish members. The Minister also reflected on the geographical, political and gender balance of the Delegation and the range of political experience that this

would bring to the Committee. The nine-member Irish Delegation ensures that all Irish regional authority areas are represented in the 344 member EU body and use their experience as local and regional authority members to make an input into the EU policy-making process. Members highlight issues of concern as to how proposed Regulations and Directives may be implemented at a local or regional level and also learn from the experience of members from other Member States and bring the experience back to Irish local and regional authorities. The nine Irish 'full' members are backed up by a further nine alternate or substitute members.

Cllr. Patrick McGowan indicated that he was proud of the contribution of Irish members at the Committee over the years, that he was delighted to get the support of the Minister and the Government and that he looked forward to the Delegation working closely together over the five years to best represent Irish local and regional authority interests in the EU. Cllr. McGowan added "I would hope that in the next five years that we can consolidate the achievements made during previous mandates, especially in raising the Committee's profile at national and regional/local levels and in enhancing the impact that we can make in EU decision-making but also in influencing national positions on EU affairs". At the inaugural plenary session held in February, Cllr. McGowan was elected a Vice-President of the Committee for the first half of the new term.

Cllr. McGowan meets European Affairs Committee of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly

The European Affairs committee of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) met in Dublin on March 8th under the chairmanship of Mr. Robert Walter MP. The committee invited both Cllr. McGowan and Delegation Secretary Ms. Patricia Potter to discuss the evolving regional policy issue of macro-regions and specifically, the potential for an EU Commission-backed strategy for the Irish Sea region. A lively discussion ensued on the possibilities for the geographic scope and thematic priorities for the area. This issue will come into greater focus as the strategies for the Baltic Sea, the Danube Area and other likely macro-regions develop and as the debate on the funding of EU regional policy post-2013 comes under the spotlight. The BIPA Committee is drafting a report on the issue for consideration by the British-Irish Council.



The CoR in plenary session.

THE IRISH DELEGATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – FULL MEMBERS



Cllr. Patrick McGowan

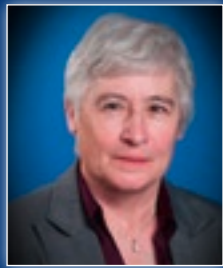
President of the Irish Delegation, Donegal Councillor, Patrick McGowan is a member of the CIVEX (Constitutional Affairs) and COTER (Territorial Cohesion) commissions where he maintains a particular interest in cross-border cooperation. Cllr. McGowan is a Vice –President of the CoR and sits on the Bureau, the executive body of the CoR. Cllr. McGowan represents the Border Regional Authority in the Committee.



Cllr. Gerry Breen

Cllr. Gerry Breen (Dublin City Council and Dublin Regional Authority) has been nominated to represent the Dublin region in the CoR. Cllr. Breen is a member of the Economic & Social Policy (ECOS) and the Territorial Cohesion (COTER) committees.

Cllr. Breen will bring his straight-talking, business-like approach to the work of the Committee where he will want to see the real concerns of Dublin people addressed particularly the need for employment and investment stimuli. A further priority is the sustainable development and environmental protection of Dublin Bay given the increasing impact of EU policies on local authorities. Cllr. Breen is a member of the EPP group in the CoR.



Cllr. Connie Hanniffy

Vice-President of the Irish Delegation, Cllr. Connie Hanniffy is the second Irish nominee to the Bureau, the CoR executive. Cllr. Hanniffy has responsibility for a policy advisory role in the wider EPP group and is a Vice President of that group in the CoR. A past President of ECOS (the Economic and Social Policy commission), Cllr. Hanniffy remains a member of ECOS and of the NAT (Natural Resources) commission.



Cllr. Denis Landy

Cllr. Denis Landy (South Tipperary County Council and South East Regional Authority). Cllr. Landy is a member of the ECOS (Economic and Social Policy) and EDUC (Education and Culture) commissions. Priority issues for Cllr. Landy for the coming mandate are employment, workers rights, fairness and equality in society and educational issues. Cllr. Landy is also a member of the Croatia Working Group and is the Irish representative on the Ad Hoc Commission on the Future Composition of the CoR. Cllr. Landy is a member of the European Socialist grouping in the CoR.



Cllr. Declan McDonnell

Cllr. Declan McDonnell Mayor of Galway and member of the West Regional Authority retained his position on the Committee, as an independent councillor. A member of the Education and Culture (EDUC) and Environment (ENVE) commissions, Cllr. McDonnell is coordinator of the ENVE commission for the ALDE political group.

EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING 2011

Cllr. McDonnell was rapporteur of an opinion adopted at the February plenary session on the European Year of Volunteering for 2011. His report recommends three changes to the proposed Decision; to broaden consultation within Member States, to seek further resources for the Year and to underscore the regional as well as, local roles. Cllr. McDonnell's report also makes a number of broader points, including: volunteering should not be seen as a replacement for employing staff; volunteering opportunities must be easily accessible; and it draws attention to the various barriers that currently prevent some people from volunteering.



Cllr. Brian Meaney

Cllr. Brian Meaney is the first Irish Green Party member of the CoR. Representing Clare County Council and the Mid-West Regional Authority, Cllr. Meaney is a member of the ENVE (Environment) and COTER (Territorial Cohesion) commissions, being coordinator for the EA political group on COTER. Cllr. Meaney is also a member of the Working Group on the Western Balkans and is looking forward to strongly representing the Green ethos and values in the Committee of the Regions.



Cllr. Michelle Mulherin

Mayo County Councillor and member of the West Regional Authority, Cllr. Michelle Mulherin was previously an alternate member of the Committee. With a deep interest in the development and promotion of sustainable energy resources, Cllr. Mulherin is looking forward to representing Mayo and the wider West of Ireland interests in the Committee. Cllr. Mulherin is also a member of the EPP political group.



Cllr. Paul O' Donoghue

Cllr. Paul O' Donoghue (Kerry County Council, South West Regional Authority and S&E Regional Assembly) is returning to the CoR to represent the South West region of Cork and Kerry. Cllr. O' Donoghue, a member of the Constitutional Affairs (CIVEX) and Natural Resources (NAT) (where responsibilities include agriculture and fisheries) commissions is also a member of the working group on the Western Balkans and coordinator of the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform for the ALDE group.



Cllr. Fiona O' Loughlin

Having been first appointed to the CoR in 2009, Cllr. Fiona O'Loughlin brings expertise to the Committee from the education, community and voluntary sectors has worked extensively with the Special Olympics movement. Representing Kildare County Council and the Mid-East Regional Authority, Cllr. O'Loughlin is a member of the Turkey Working Group, is deputy coordinator of the EDUC commission for the ALDE group and also sits on the CIVEX commission.

MEMBERS PRIORITIES FOR 2010

Meeting in Brussels in February, the Delegation adopted its work programme for 2010 under the broad priorities of maximising its involvement and influence within the CoR, best reflecting the views of Irish local and regional levels in the CoR while advancing the national interest generally, in EU affairs.

Work programme actions and activities come under the four main headings:

• KEY TASK - EU ADVISORY BODY

Members will concentrate on policy issues of most relevance to Irish local and regional authorities that will be under focus this year, specifically the EU Budget Review, the EU 2020 Strategy for Growth and Jobs and the Future of Cohesion Policy. The Delegation plans to discuss these issues with the Irish Ambassador to the EU in June. Members agreed to prioritise the issues of green jobs, the smart economy, broadband infrastructure and particularly their application to Ireland, in their work.

2010 will also see key developments within the Common Agricultural Policy, in Environment, Climate Change and Energy policies and in Enterprise, Research and Innovation that will be closely followed by the Delegation. The Committee of the Regions normally prepares about 60 opinions annually in response to EU legislative and policy proposals.

• ENHANCING MEMBERS' IMPACT

The Delegation will aim to raise the visibility of the work, remit and activities of the Committee of the Regions, particularly the Irish members.

• CONTRIBUTING TO THE COR'S DEVELOPMENT

One key issue is that the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on the CoR has prompted a discussion on its future composition. The Delegation will continue to be active in maximizing future Irish membership on the CoR.

• THE COR AS A FORUM – THE REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE

The Delegation will seek to enhance its relationships with relevant contacts within Ireland – the local and regional authorities, the Association of Irish Regions, relevant Govt. Departments and Parliamentary Committees as well as the European Commission Representation here and the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels.

Similarly, Irish members will build on links already established with representatives in other EU institutions and bodies such as the MEP's and members of the EESC as well as developing good working relationships with other national delegations in the CoR.