

# eurobulletin

January 2005

## 2004 – a busy year!



### Last year was a busy one for the EU, bringing about a whole raft of changes.

Firstly, ten new member states joined the EU on 1st May, enlarging the Union to 25 members. The geographical spread and the economic and linguistic character of the EU may have changed, but the new member states have integrated into the EU smoothly. As for future enlargements, in December EU leaders agreed to Bulgaria and Romania joining in 2007 and to starting accession talks with Croatia and Turkey in 2005.

It was also all change for the EU institutions. Following June elections for the newly enlarged European Parliament, the Conservatives replaced the Socialists as the largest group. London now has nine MEPs:

three Labour, three Conservative, one Lib-Dem, one Green and one UKIP. A new European Commission also took office in November, after a minor reshuffle by the new Commission President José Manuel Barroso. UK Commissioner Peter Mandelson was handed the influential Trade portfolio.

Another key development was the signing of the draft EU Constitution by EU leaders in October. The text now awaits ratification – 11 countries, including the UK, will hold a referendum, with the other 14 approving the Constitution in their Parliaments. Lithuania was the first to approve it in this way.

2004 was a crucial year in the discussions over the shape of things to come in the next programming period for EU funding (2007–2013). The

Commission issued ambitious proposals for EU regional policy, setting out the potential strategic policy framework and financial allocations under the Structural Funds, taking into account enlargement and the new economic and social profile of the EU. These proposals will be hotly debated by the member states and the European Parliament during 2005. The ALG European Service will continue to fight for the needs of large urban areas to be duly considered and for intra-regional disparities, particularly acute in London, to be fully recognised. It will also push for inter-regional cooperation such as Interreg IIIC to continue, to allow regions and local authorities across the EU to carry on working together and learning from one another.

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Eurobulletin*. Published bi-monthly, *Eurobulletin* includes up-to-date articles and information on how the ALG's European Service supports the London Boroughs' European work and is making a case for London in Brussels.

### Forthcoming events

- **28th January, London**  
GLE round table to help shape a response to the EU consultation on the future of EU Competitiveness and Innovation Policy.  
Contact Emma Drever, [emma.d@gle.co.uk](mailto:emma.d@gle.co.uk)
- **Late February/early March, London** (date tbc)  
ALG ES seminar on transnational projects.  
Contact Ben Whitehouse, [ben.w@gle.co.uk](mailto:ben.w@gle.co.uk)
- **Mid-April, Brussels**  
ALG ES/GLE seminar during EU Employment Week 2005. Topic will tie in with the overall Employment Week theme (still tbc).  
Contact Cristina Sosa, [cristina.s@gle.co.uk](mailto:cristina.s@gle.co.uk)



# Coming up in 2005...

This year will see many key EU policy developments. Here we highlight some of the most interesting.

Agreement should be reached on the **EU budget** for the next programming period (2007–2013) as well as on detailed financial proposals covering the main policy areas. The debate of the future of **EU regional policy** will continue throughout the year.

New **Employment Guidelines**

will be elaborated, along with recommendations to individual member states. Agreement will be sought on a new EU programme for **employment and social solidarity** (PROGRESS).

An EU handbook will be prepared on best practice in **integrating third-country nationals**.

Several **environmental 'thematic strategies'** will be issued, including those on waste prevention and recycling and the

urban environment. Agreement should be reached on the **LIFE+ programme** for future funding of environmental projects.

New programmes should be agreed for **lifelong learning, culture and youth**.

The ratification process for the **Constitutional Treaty** will begin in earnest, with referenda due to be held in 11 countries. **EU accession negotiations** will begin with Croatia and Turkey.



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## Successful launch of LNet



John Healey MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, opening the debate

**The European Learning Network (LNet) on enterprise in deprived urban areas attracted almost 200 senior policy makers and politicians to its London launch in November.**

GLE leads the €1.1 million EU-funded INTERREG IIIC project with the London Development Agency and partners in Amsterdam, Hamburg, Milan and Prague. Debate at the event focused on the project's three key themes: entrepreneurship, innovation and social enterprise and on the evaluation and learning method

being developed by the partners.

The Learning Network aims to assess what works best in promoting enterprise in deprived neighbourhoods and to develop practical local tools to support new initiatives in enterprise promotion. Keynote speaker John Healey MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, welcomed the innovative approach to enterprise promotion and invited the network to the Treasury to discuss how findings can feed into the development of Government enterprise support. City managers from the five partner cities then

showcased their experiences, followed by Kurt Chilcott, leading US expert on community development and financing the inner city, who presented the American urban revitalisation agenda.

During a successful experts' workshop the following day partners developed the LNet common Quality Assurance Framework to evaluate and test the success of initiatives and to support the exchange of transferable and practitioner-friendly best practice. Experts and practitioners drew up flexible definitions for the three key themes and clarified the different national contexts in which they were working. They focused on the challenges faced by each city and identified common barriers to enterprise promotion, the need to develop effective intermediary bodies and to achieve sustainable and transferable policies and mechanisms.

There are many opportunities to become involved in the network and events in early 2005 include a workshop on social enterprise in Milan and a dissemination seminar in Prague.

For details please visit [www.thelearningnetwork.net](http://www.thelearningnetwork.net)



**"LNet aims to assess what works best in promoting enterprise in deprived neighbourhoods"**

# Borough EU projects showcased

*Closing the Gap* is an ESF project co-financed by the LDA and managed by LB Enfield. It provides opportunities for SME employees in the Upper Lee Valley to improve their basic skills and lower level vocational skills, through training courses tailored to employers' strategic objectives and employees' individual needs. The key to its success is flexibility and customisation. Participants particularly value the variety of training delivery options on offer. To date, beneficiaries from over 100 SMEs have participated in the project and over 170 individual training programmes have been initiated, with over 60% from BME backgrounds. For more details contact Sue Potter, [sue.potter@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:sue.potter@enfield.gov.uk)



A web design class under the Closing the Gap project

"The key to its success is flexibility and customisation"



The *POSEIDON* project (Partnership on socio-economic and integrated development of

deprived neighbourhoods), co-financed under INTERREG IIIC, comprises six European urban areas and aims to exchange experiences and promote strategic reflection on local neighbourhood management policies. Under the leadership of Vienna, LB Haringey is one of the project partners along with Amsterdam, Genoa, North Kent and Stockholm. In their

pilot POSEIDON project Haringey will focus on the deprived areas of White Hart Lane, Seven Sisters Ward and Tottenham Central and will use the Local Support Platform and community consultation in a range of local activities.

For more details contact Robert Chedzoy, [robert.chedzoy@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:robert.chedzoy@haringey.gov.uk) or visit [www.poseidon-partnership.net](http://www.poseidon-partnership.net)

If you would like one of your borough's EU-funded projects to be included in a future *euobulletin*, please contact Emma Watkins: [emma.w@gle.co.uk](mailto:emma.w@gle.co.uk)

## Building bridges with Central and Eastern Europe



Mostar Old Bridge

Forging links in central and Eastern Europe has been a key objective for GLE's Programme Management and Consulting (PMC) Team, which also provides the ALG European Service, in recent weeks.

Consultant Nathalie Guri took part in the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South Eastern Europe's (NALAS) international workshop, *The development of an effective local democracy in South Eastern Europe*, in Mostar, Bosnia. NALAS has more than 4,000 members in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey, working together to promote local democracy and self-

government. The network supports twinning and transnational partnerships with local authorities in South Eastern Europe and can offer opportunities for the London boroughs to work with partners in the Balkan region.

The team also attended the Czech Day conference organised in London by the LGIB and the Czech Embassy in London, which offered an excellent opportunity for local and regional governments to share their experiences and promote UK-Czech

partnerships. Representatives from local authorities in both countries described their experiences of working in partnership, giving a flavour of what can be gained from joint working. Again, there are many opportunities for London boroughs to establish partnerships that can help develop higher quality services, add value, and improve the quality of life of their citizens.

For more information please contact Nathalie Guri on 020 7940 1546 or [nathalie.g@gle.co.uk](mailto:nathalie.g@gle.co.uk)

# Take a trip to Brussels!

There is more to see in Brussels than the Grand'Place and you can bring back more than chocolates. A study visit to Brussels can give you an invaluable insight into the workings of the EU as a law-making centre, whilst building contacts and lobbying for your borough's interests.

The ALG European Service's Brussels office is situated in London House at the heart of the EU district, in close proximity to the European Parliament. We can help you plan your visit, from basic practicalities to arranging an agenda. You can utilise our knowledge and contacts to arrange meetings with EU officials and other organisations. Our policy experts will ensure you are fully briefed on the latest European



London House, the ALG European Service's office in Brussels

"Meeting and reception rooms and office facilities, including hot desks"

developments and they can accompany you during your visit.

In addition, we offer meeting and reception rooms for 2-100

attendees and office facilities, including PC hot desks. Of course, we can also recommend the best chocolates!

## How can we help you?

As the New Year begins, here is a reminder of the key support activities the ALG European Service offers the London boroughs.

For more details on our services and publications, please contact Emma Watkins on [emma.w@gle.co.uk](mailto:emma.w@gle.co.uk)

### Information services and publications

- **ALG ES website**, [www.alg-europe.gov.uk](http://www.alg-europe.gov.uk) – updated weekly with EU policy, funding and partnership news, and featuring more detailed sections on EU policy and funding.
- Monthly **policy newsletters** – on education & culture, employment & social affairs, enterprise & information society, environment, health & consumer affairs, justice & home affairs, regional & urban policy, and transport & energy.
- Bi-monthly **eurobulletin** – European issues and activities of key interest to the boroughs.
- **Euro InfoBank** – your own folder to act as your first reference for EU policy and funding information.
- Quarterly **MEP News** – highlighting the activities of London's nine MEPs.

### Other services

- **Visits to Brussels** – we can assist with fact-finding trips, lobbying delegations or project partnership meetings.
- **Lobbying** – we liaise with the European Parliament and Commission on issues of key interest to the boroughs.
- **Networking** – we work with regions and cities across the EU to influence European policy, and support the development of partnerships with the London boroughs.
- **Specific policy or funding queries** – we aim to respond to specific queries from boroughs within 48 hours.
- **Tailored briefings** – we can provide briefings on specific issues on request.

