

# eurobulletin

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## Cutting back on waste

**In December the European Commission adopted a new EU Strategy on Waste Prevention and Recycling to change current attitudes and approaches to waste.**

The Strategy backs a life-cycle approach to waste, to look beyond pollution and consider the environmental impact of resources and products throughout their life-span. The Commission intends to publish life-cycle tools in 2007 for relevant authorities to apply to their waste policy-making.

The Strategy foresees the simplification and modernisation of existing EU waste legislation, to make it easier for public authorities to implement. A revision of the Waste Framework Directive, last updated 10 years ago, has already been tabled.

2006 should see a report on implementation of the Packaging Waste Directive and a review of

the End-of-Life Vehicles Directive's targets. In 2007, the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive will be revised, notably to set ambitious thresholds to improve energy recovery from municipal incinerators. The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive's targets will be reviewed in 2008.

While the Strategy stops short of setting specific recycling and waste prevention targets, the Waste Framework Directive revision will require the development of national waste prevention programmes targeting individuals and businesses who generate waste. The Commission is also keen to encourage wider use of national disposal taxes, such as the UK's landfill tax.

New environmental standards will be set for recycling to promote a solid market for



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quality recycled materials. The national implementation strategies for the EU's Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP) will provide support for this.

The Commission also appreciates the need for better knowledge and information, and will begin in 2006 by attempting

to improve knowledge on the impact of resource use, waste generation and waste management. The Commission also pledges to support the sharing of best practice on awareness, education and incentives for waste prevention and recycling at the national, regional and local levels.

## ALG ES hosts LVSTC



Delegates from LVSTC visit London House

The ALG ES and GLE Brussels office recently hosted a study visit of thirty representatives from London voluntary and community organisations, organised by the umbrella organisation the London Voluntary Sector Training Consortium (LVSTC).

Brussels office staff met the delegation to discuss the work of the office and the links between

EU policy and funding activities and the voluntary sector in London.

The ALG ES welcomes and helps to organise study visits by the London boroughs to its Brussels offices and there are also opportunities to visit GLE's Prague office.

For more information please email [emma.w@gle.co.uk](mailto:emma.w@gle.co.uk).

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.



# Shaping up for London's structural funds

**The newly-proposed EU budget includes €308 billion for regional and cohesion policy for 2007–2013, but it must now be agreed by the European Parliament, Council and Commission. The Council and Parliament must also finalise the ERDF and ESF regulations, and if this goes ahead as planned the Community Strategic Guidelines which set the priorities for new**

**EU programmes should be adopted in March.**

The UK will receive approximately €9.4 billion for 2007–2013, compared with €16.6 billion for 2000–2006. The programme provides funding for three objectives: convergence funding, regional competitiveness and territorial cooperation. London's interests lie in the €6.2 billion available nationally to support regional competitiveness

and employment and the €0.6 billion for cooperation activities.

The next step is the development of the National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) which will set out the priorities for each member state. The UK NSRF will include a SWOT analysis of the UK regions, define thematic and territorial priorities and provide a list of Operational Programmes. It will also indicate how Government will coordinate EU, national, sectoral and regional policy initiatives and funding streams, and propose methodologies to allocate the significantly reduced funds.

The draft UK NSRF should go out for consultation by the end of February. In this context, the ALG, GLE and GOL are organising a conference on 20th March for London stakeholders to discuss the draft NSRF's impact on London. For more information, contact [delphine.m@gle.co.uk](mailto:delphine.m@gle.co.uk)

**“The programme provides funding for three objectives: convergence funding, regional competitiveness and territorial cooperation”**



## Improving the urban environment

**In January the European Commission published its long-awaited Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment, which aims to provide a framework to help improve the environmental quality of the EU's urban areas.**

The Commission had previously consulted stakeholders on the Strategy, and several of the views presented in the ALG ES's comments to the Commission are recognised in the final document. Notably, the Strategy clearly acknowledges the crucial role and existing efforts of local authorities in improving the urban environment.

The ALG ES also called for any obligations imposed on local authorities as a result of the Strategy not to duplicate existing

responsibilities. Our lobbying on these issues, together with other local authorities, helped convince the Commission to drop proposals for legislation requiring all large cities to implement integrated environmental management and sustainable urban transport plans. The Commission will instead publish technical guidance in 2006 for local authorities on these topics.

Other measures suggested in the Strategy include a possible EU-wide exchange programme on urban development and an internet portal for local authorities on the urban environment, to provide access to information from relevant Commission departments and improve information exchange between EU institutions and local



authorities. The Commission also encourages local authorities to exploit the new LIFE+ programme, the Structural Funds and the 7th Framework Programme for research to support their urban environment projects.

# The secrets of Islington's EU success

Following a November study visit to Brussels by a group of London Borough of Islington officers, [eurobulletin](#) spoke to Tony Swash, Islington's Principal Regeneration Officer, to learn more about the borough's EU work.

Tony explained that Islington has been very active in EU programmes since the early 1990s, receiving around £25 million in EU funding – reflecting the importance of the EU to the borough. Much of the funding has been used for innovative projects that learn from partners in other countries. The Council also endeavours to draw a range of local partners into EU projects to ensure that local organisations gain the knowledge and skills to fully benefit from EU funding programmes.

For Tony, sourcing funding to try new things is one of the highlights of his job, and he enjoys travelling

to other EU countries to work with partners to learn from local projects and ideas. He explains that taking delegations abroad is a real chance for colleagues to step outside their daily activities and meet people who approach the same work in different circumstances. He adds that the Islington participants always return enthusiastic and energised by the experience.

So what is the key to a successful transnational partnership? According to Tony, it is simply to relax and understand that everyone everywhere is addressing the same issues and has similar failures and successes to UK local authorities. He is particularly proud of a series of projects between Islington and Budapest's District 7 in the 1990s, when they were able to help Hungarian politicians learn how to work within their new democratic institutions.



Tony Swash, Islington Regeneration Officer

**“Sourcing funding to try new things is one of the highlights of the job”**

Tony advocates making use of the ALG ES, finding the opportunities for off the record briefings, help in identifying transnational partners for projects and study visits to Brussels particularly useful.

And we're more than happy to help Tony and others like him.

## ALG European Service Priorities for 2006

In light of the Commission's work programme for 2006, here is a short summary of ALG ES policy priorities for this year:

- **Regional Policy** With a Council decision on the Strategic Community Guidelines on Cohesion (economic, social and territorial) due, 2006 will be a critical year for European regional policy. The Guidelines will set out Structural Funds spending for the next seven years and are of key interest to the London boroughs.
- **Environment** The ALG ES will monitor the adoption of the LIFE+ funding programme. A European Commission Action Plan on energy efficiency is set to be launched in 2006. This document will take on board responses to a 2005 consultation, in which the London

boroughs participated.

- **Enterprise and Research & Development** The Commission will finalise proposals for its Enterprise and R&D programmes in 2006. The ALG ES will keep the boroughs up to date on developments in this area. A communication on access to finance for SMEs should also be published this year.
- **Employment and Social Affairs** A communication on the demographic future of Europe will be launched. This should incorporate key ALG priorities, such as fighting child poverty and promoting the integration of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups. Moreover, negotiations will continue over the Service Directive, with the Commission set to clarify the framework within



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which social services operate in the EU.

- **Youth and Culture** 2006 will see full details emerging of the Commission's plans to make 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. New programmes to replace the current YOUTH and Culture 2000 programmes will also be launched.

# Update on ALG ES and GLE events

The ALG ES and GLE organised a half day seminar on **interregional cooperation** on 9th February. The seminar was held in the context of the current EU and national negotiations on the next 2007–2013 EU programming period, examining the current state of play and other, non-EU opportunities available for interregional cooperation activities.

Some successful examples of cooperation were presented and the issues of using outputs and finding exit strategies for ending projects were discussed. Thanks to existing links between the ALG ES and other European cities, London delegates also had the opportunity to liaise with their counterparts from Prague and Vienna.

GLE, lead partner for the

## European Learning Network (LNet)

project to promote enterprise in deprived urban areas, also hosted a local project event in London on 31st January. The aim was to involve London social and economic stakeholders in the development of two toolkits, on social enterprise and innovation, currently being prepared by the European partners.

These toolkits are designed to support local policy makers and practitioners working towards the promotion of social enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship in deprived urban areas, as a route out of economic and social disadvantage and to achieve positive and sustainable local development.

Participants were encouraged to comment on each toolkit to



GLE social enterprise expert Clare Sharpen speaking at the LNet workshop

contribute their own experiences to the work developed by the LNet partners.

Presentations are available to download from the website: [www.thelearningnetwork.net](http://www.thelearningnetwork.net)  
For more information, contact [amana.f@gle.co.uk](mailto:amana.f@gle.co.uk)

## Update from London's MEPs

**John Bowis** is calling for an EU Flu Pandemic stockpile, was heavily involved in the first reading of the new chemicals policy (REACH), and hosted a visit from LSE students. He will be writing the European Parliament's report on Mental Health.

**Robert Evans'** report on improved rights for disabled air passengers was adopted in December. He spoke at a White Pigeon event remembering the Tsunami disaster. He visited Tate and Lyle to discuss the EU sugar regime changes with management and unions.

**Mary Honeyball** is working on the revision of the Television without Frontiers Directive; it would require broadcasters to show mainly European works and reserve 10% transmission time for independent productions. She chaired a discussion on the

protection of minors at a UK Presidency conference on the Directive.

**Syed Kamall** put a question to the Commission on current EU proposals for the Sugar Regime which may threaten the economic viability of raw sugar cane refiners in London. He co-hosted a visit by a group of London constituents to the EP with **Charles Tannock** and **John Bowis**.

**Jean Lambert** met Sri Lankan charity White Pigeon and spoke at their Tsunami remembrance event. The Commission confirmed her concern about London's air quality breaching EU standards and that infringement action may follow.

**Sarah Ludford** is Vice-President of the new EP committee to investigate "extraordinary renditions" by the US. She discussed criminal justice standards

with Fair Trials Abroad and EU Commissioner Frattini, and hosted a visit of City and Islington College students to the EP.

**Claude Moraes** spoke on community cohesion at the LGA's "Realising Cohesion" conference and addressed the LVSTC AGM on structural and social funds. He met the EU's Pakistani ambassador to discuss earthquake aid, met faith leaders in the EP, and co-authored a Written Declaration on Tackling Racism in Football.

**Charles Tannock's** European Neighbourhood Policy report was discussed in the January EP Plenary. On human rights, he has co-authored Resolutions on Russia and Ethiopia, and chaired seminars on former IndoChina and Kazakhstan. He has been active on the issue of transnational adoptions of Romanian orphans.

For more information on London's nine MEPs visit [www.alg-europe.gov.uk/euparlament.htm](http://www.alg-europe.gov.uk/euparlament.htm)