

# eurobulletin

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## The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme



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**The new EU Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) is the latest programme designed to drive forward economic growth in the EU.**

Through a series of consultation events held over the last two years in London by the ALG European Service, the boroughs have helped to shape the content of this programme.

CIP will come into force in 2007 and run until 2013, replacing the current Multi-Annual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. CIP will have a larger remit than the previous programme, embracing the triple objectives of promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, ensuring the best use of information and communication technologies, and promoting intelligent use of energy.

In the field of entrepreneurship and innovation, CIP's objectives will include promoting access to finance for small and medium

sized enterprises (SMEs), helping SMEs to work together, stimulating innovation (including eco-innovation), promoting a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, and encouraging economic and administrative reform to favour enterprise and innovation.

So, what are the practical implications of this programme for the London boroughs?

Although opportunities for boroughs to gain direct funding through CIP will be limited, the programme will provide financial instruments to encourage banks across the EU to develop their SME lending capacity. This should facilitate access to finance across Europe, giving more entrepreneurs in London the opportunity to start-up and grow their businesses. In addition, CIP will fund a Euro Info Centre at the London Chamber of Commerce, which will advise the capital's SMEs on how

to access finance from a wide range of EU funding streams, such as the Seventh Framework Programme, LIFE+ and Leonardo Da Vinci.

Under new Government agendas, such as Local Area Agreements and Local Enterprise Growth Initiatives, the London boroughs have a greater responsibility than ever for promoting enterprise and innovation. In this context, the European Commission has called upon local government bodies to help with the co-ordination of its objectives in this field, stating that "the local and regional dimension is essential to improving European competitiveness and innovation". Economic development teams in the boroughs are asked to reflect EU priorities in their strategies, programmes and action plans, to ensure the promotion of innovation and competitiveness across London.

**OPEN DAYS is the biggest annual conference in the EU regional policy calendar, with 80 seminars attended by over 3,000 policy makers and practitioners from across the EU.**

The ALG European Service is lead partner of the Capital Cities/Regions and Cities for Cohesion consortium and will be playing a key role in OPEN DAYS. We will be running two seminars, a networking lunch and participating in the official exhibition.

This year's theme is *Public and Private Partners for Growth and Jobs*, providing an excellent opportunity for London boroughs to present their work on promoting enterprise and innovation.

This edition of the **eurobulletin** showcases examples of initiatives from London and elsewhere in the EU to promote local enterprise and employment.



delivered by Greater London Enterprise

# London's LEGI experience

**The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) is a UK Government scheme boosting entrepreneurial activity, sustainable growth and inward investment in deprived areas.**

LEGI's core goals directly reflect key EU priorities. It echoes the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme by encouraging local authorities to drive forward entrepreneurial activity and competitiveness and complements the Structural Fund agenda.

Two London boroughs – Croydon and Barking & Dagenham – were successful in winning funding under the first round of LEGI. Representatives from these boroughs will speak at the OPEN DAYS seminar *Seizing New Business Opportunities in EU Urban Areas* on 10th October at London House in Brussels, to share their ideas with policy makers and practitioners from across the EU on how best to

boost enterprise and innovation.

With little entrepreneurial culture, Barking & Dagenham has the lowest business start-up rate per head of population of any London borough. It is hoped that LEGI will change this through an intensive outreach programme, improving support for existing businesses and addressing the lack of suitable business premises.

In Croydon, LEGI will provide an opportunity to redress the declining business base in the borough's deprived areas. Croydon's goals include increasing entrepreneurial activity through outreach, mentoring and education initiatives, promoting sustainable business growth, reducing the failure rate of local businesses and attracting inward investment to use local labour.

For more details contact [emma.d@gle.co.uk](mailto:emma.d@gle.co.uk)



**Two London boroughs, Croydon and Barking & Dagenham, were successful in winning LEGI funds, and will present their experiences at OPEN DAYS 2006**



North West Croydon's healthy resource centre

## Inspiring small businesses to Think Big



The Think Big team at a mid-term reception in central London

**A new era of business development has arrived in the Thames Gateway. For the past 18 months, Think Big's team of innovation experts has been offering a programme of intense support for businesses to develop promising ideas and products.**

The programme is supported by

the ERDF, the London Development Agency (LDA), Bexley Council and the Cambridge-MIT Institute.

The Think Big team works with SMEs to improve their productivity, increase profits and create sustainable jobs. Expert advice is provided by entrepreneurs and innovation practitioners who have practical experience in running businesses and applying technology to generate profit.

Universities and networks, including Knowledge East and the Association of Research and Technology Organisations, are providing access to technology. Its funders and sponsors enable Think Big to offer these opportunities free of charge.

The programme is actively contributing to the long-term vision of developing, accelerating and diversifying business growth in the Thames Gateway. The team will be based at the Thames Innovation Centre when it opens in February 2007. The Centre will also offer 50 small scale workshops for new businesses.

Think Big is pleased to contribute to the innovation theme of this year's Open Days, which provides a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas with other countries on how to make the EU a truly competitive knowledge-based economy.

For further information, visit [www.bexley.gov.uk/business/innovation](http://www.bexley.gov.uk/business/innovation)

**"Expert advice is provided by entrepreneurs and innovation practitioners who have practical experience in running businesses and applying technology to generate profit"**

# New tools for entrepreneurship and innovation

**The European Learning Network (LNet) is a partnership of five cities sharing good practice on promoting social enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation in deprived urban areas.**

The project, funded by INTERREG IIIC, runs from July 2004 to February 2007 and is led by Greater London Enterprise, which also delivers the ALG European Service.

LNet's partners – London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Milan and Prague – exchange information on methods that have worked to promote enterprise in deprived urban areas. These case studies describe the practical ways in which barriers to enterprise have been tackled effectively (*see below*). Case studies are analysed in detail to assess whether they could be adapted to work in the other cities.

Lessons learned from the case studies are disseminated at conferences, seminars and

photo: channel hamburg e.v.



**Improving infrastructure and attracting inward investment, Hamburg**

**“LNet’s most valuable output will be an online toolkit which will present the case studies in an accessible format”**

workshops. Policy bulletins, newsletters and reports are also circulated regularly, and partners maintain an informative website: [www.thelearningnetwork.net](http://www.thelearningnetwork.net)

However, LNet’s most valuable output will be an online toolkit which will present the case studies in an accessible format and give practical advice relating to their transferability.

London boroughs and local

authorities across the EU will be able to use the toolkit for inspiration and useful tips on the policies and activities that can promote enterprise in deprived urban areas. The case studies presented in the toolkit could also stimulate ideas for projects funded under the next round of the EU Structural Funds, which will begin in 2007, or national funding programmes related to enterprise.

## Inspiring young entrepreneurs, Amsterdam

The V(MBO) Business School Project enables Amsterdam’s 14 and 15 year old students to create their own company, producing, promoting and selling their products in and around the school for a six-week period. Any profit made by the young people is theirs to keep – a huge incentive for participation! The project has engaged employees of large banks as business mentors, helping the young people to develop their organisation, marketing and team work skills. Older students play a supporting role in the project.

## Improving infrastructure and attracting inward investment, Hamburg

Channel Hamburg e.V. is a strong partnership that engages local businesses to help regenerate the Inner Harbour area in Hamburg-Harburg. The area has traditionally had a negative image, acting as a disincentive to inward investment. The partnership tackles barriers to innovation by promoting a positive brand for the area and through physical regeneration projects including a new technology centre which has attracted high-quality businesses to the area.

## Empowering migrant workers, Milan

This project worked to promote entrepreneurship among immigrants living in Milan, a group which faces exceptional barriers to enterprise including racial discrimination, poor knowledge of Italian language and culture and lack of recognition of their qualifications. Free training was given to migrant entrepreneurs on the Italian economy, business management, access to finance and developing relationships with suppliers, customers and banks. The project also provided an opportunity for ethnic minority entrepreneurs to network.

# Dagenham Dock SIP

**Huge changes are under way at Dagenham Dock, a large area of brownfield land in London's Thames Gateway.**

In 2001, a vision for Dagenham Dock was created by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the LDA. The aim is to develop a modern Sustainable Industrial Park (SIP) with a distinct environmental and regeneration identity, dealing with resource management, recycling, energy efficiency, "green links" between businesses and waste minimisation.

The SIP will explore the growth potential of the environmental business sector resulting from national and EU legislation and

targets, which require the adoption of new practices and technologies. Dagenham Dock's infrastructure improvement programme has been funded through the UK's Sustainable Communities Fund and the ERDF to create a home for London's forward-thinking green businesses.

Options for site-wide energy needs are currently being explored and the latest sustainable development features are central to building design. A major milestone in the development of the SIP will be a flagship innovative plastics recycling facility, due to be on site next year.

For more information visit: [www.lbbd.gov.uk/dagenham-dock](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/dagenham-dock)



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## Update from London's MEPs

**John Bowis** discussed food labelling, nutrition and health claims regulations with major supermarket chains. He hosted a press conference with WaterAid to highlight the 21,000 postcards from British campaigners who feel the EU is not doing enough to deliver access to water and sanitation in the developing world.

**Robert Evans** launched a written declaration calling for an end to scientific testing on primates across the EU, to coincide with International Primate Day on 1st September. He met Peter Hendy, Transport for London Commissioner, to discuss London and European transport issues.

**Mary Honeyball** addressed the London Cypriot community in Trafalgar Square on seeking a settlement on the island. She attended the Royal Society of Arts and the Guardian's *Free Our Data* campaign meeting on access to

public sector information.

**Syed Kamall** submitted amendments to the Television Without Frontiers Directive in support of new media services, and has sought compensation for the British fashion industry following a temporary EU ban on clothing imports. He met Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO, to discuss the Commission's rulings against the company.

**Jean Lambert** wrote to the EU President urging for a ceasefire in the Israel-Lebanon crisis. She supported RISE, London's anti-racism festival, and drafted an EP report on the Canaries, calling for development issues and "push factors" to be put at the centre of migration policy.

**Sarah Ludford** pressed the Council to approve EU legislation outlawing race, religious and homophobic hate crime in the EU. She participated in Mass Lone Demo

protests against legislation restricting demonstrations close to Parliament Square, and helped Sutton celebrate its decade of accreditation to the EU's environmental standard EMAS.

**Claude Moraes** met EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson to discuss London businesses' concerns on tariffs. He co-authored a resolution on racist and homophobic violence which was approved by the EP in June, and met FIFA and UEFA officials after helping to secure a change in FIFA rules on racism in football.

**Charles Tannock** spoke at a House of Lords hearing on EU Health policy and gave evidence to the House of Lords EU Select Committee visiting Brussels. He addressed the annual Cypriot invasion day rally in Trafalgar Square, and was made a Knight of the Order for Merits of Ukraine by President Yushchenko.

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