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This newsletter is designed to update readers on developments in European funding and policies, and to report on the work being carried out by the Council's European Team in Aberdeenshire and Europe. The European Team is based in the Economic Development Service of Transportation and Infrastructure.

European Team Developments

In this section:

[European Member Officer Working Group](#)
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European Member Officer Working Group

Aberdeenshire Council's European Member Officer Working Group met on 9 February 2011 to discuss a range of matters. The Group agreed to arrange a video conference with Scottish Members of the European Parliament to discuss policy developments in fields such as agriculture, maritime and transport policies. Members also discussed EU 'flagship initiatives' which will guide European policy in the fields of skills, jobs, poverty and social exclusion and developments in reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Policy.

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North Sea Regional Advisory Council

Aberdeenshire Council's European Team formally took over the running of the Secretariat for the North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC). NSRAC brings together representatives from the fisheries industry and other interested organisations to help shape European fisheries policy. The European Team will be supported by other services of the Council including the wider Economic Development team, Corporate Communications and Planning. Further information on NSRAC is available at:

<http://www.nsrac.org/>

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Funding Update

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[Open Calls for Proposals](#)
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Open Calls for Proposals

The table below outlines the current calls and their respective programmes. A link is provided to the fund as well as to the relevant European Team page on Arcadia. If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact [the European Team](#).

FUND	CLOSING DATE	EUROPEAN TEAM SITE
Grundtvig Assistantships	31 March 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects	31 March 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Transversal Programme - Study Visits	31 March 2011	Education, Training & Youth
EU-Canada Programme for Co-operation in Higher Education, Training and Youth - Transatlantic Exchange Partnerships	31 March 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Youth In Action	01 April 2011	Education, Training & Youth
INTERREG IVC	01 April 2011	INTERREG
MEDIA 2007 — Support for the Transnational Distribution of European Films — the 'Selective' scheme 2011	04 April 2011	Audiovisual & Media
LEADER - Round 12	26 April 2011	LEADER

SME Initiative on Digital Content and Languages	28 April 2011	Research
Comenius In-Service Training	29 April 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Gruntvig In-Service Training	29 April 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Erasmus Mundus	29 April 2011	Education, Training & Youth
MEDIA Support for the networking and mobility of students and trainers in Europe	29 April 2011	Audiovisual & Media
MEDIA 2007 - Audiovisual Festivals	30 April 2011	Audiovisual & Media
Intelligent Energy Europe	12 May 2011	Energy
Future and Emerging Technologies Open Scheme	24 May 2011	Research
MEDIA 2007 - Promotion/Access to Markets	01 June 2011	Audiovisual & Media
Youth In Action	01 June 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Europe for Citizens Programme - Town twinning	01 June 2011	
Europe for Citizens Programme - Citizens Projects	01 June 2011	
Europe for Citizens Programme - Support Measures	01 June 2011	
ICT Policy Support Programme	01 June 2011	Information Society
MEDIA 2007 — Development, distribution, promotion and training i2i Audiovisual	06 June 2011	Audiovisual & Media
Media 2007 — Development, distribution, promotion and training - Support for television broadcasting of European audiovisual works	20 June 2011	Audiovisual & Media
MEDIA 2007 — Support for the Transnational Distribution of	01 July 2011	Audiovisual & Media

European Films — the 'Selective' scheme 2011		
Life +	15 July 2011	Environment
LEADER - Round 13	02 August 2011	LEADER
Youth In Action	01 September 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Europe for Citizens Programme - Town twinning	01 September 2011	
Europe for Citizens Programme - Twinned Town Networking	01 September 2011	
FP7 Career Integration Grants	06 September 2011	Research
Comenius In-Service Training	16 September 2011	Education, Training & Youth
Grundtvig In-Service Training	16 September 2011	Education, Training & Youth
INTERREG IVB North Sea Region	03 October 2011	INTERREG
Transversal Programme - Study Visits	14 October 2011	Education, Training & Youth
LEADER - Round 14	25 October 2011	LEADER
Youth In Action	01 November 2011	Education, Training & Youth

European Project Themes

Potential European projects should fit into one or more of the five European themes adopted at Infrastructure Services Committee on 22 June 2006:

- Innovation
- Self-sufficient and Inclusive Communities
- Sustainable Transport
- Recreational tourism
- Sustainable Energy

If you are considering applying for European funding, please contact [the European Team](#).

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INTERREG Project Ideas

The INTERREG programmes have produced information books outlining project ideas that different organisations are working on. Some of these projects are looking for partners. The ideas books can provide links to potential projects that Aberdeenshire Council may have an interest in or help to spark off ideas for other new projects. These idea books for the three INTERREG funds that Aberdeenshire Council is eligible for are available on-line through the following links:

[INTERREG IVB North Sea Region projects idea book](#)
[INTERREG IVB North West Europe projects idea book](#)
[INTERREG IVC projects idea book](#)

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ESF Success

Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership has been awarded a European Social Fund for £270,000 grant to support delivery of the “Work 4 U” project. The project will run for two years and aims to develop a strategic skills pipeline in Aberdeenshire, based on the recently adopted Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership’s Employability Strategy. The project is expected to provide support to over 1000 individuals.

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Life+ Programme

The EU’s Life+ programme aims to support the implementation of European environmental policies. A call for project proposals for the programme has recently been launched with a budget of just under €21m for the UK. Successful applicants can receive grants covering half of their project’s costs. The programme supports projects in the following three thematic areas:

Nature & Biodiversity Projects

Principal objective: to protect, conserve, restore, monitor and facilitate the functioning of natural systems, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna, with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity, including diversity of genetic resources.

Environment Policy & Governance

Principal objectives:

Climate change: to stabilise greenhouse gas concentration at a level that prevents global warming above 2 °C,

Water: to contribute to enhanced water quality by developing cost-effective measures to achieve good ecological status in view of developing river basin management plans under Directive 2000/60/EC (Water Framework Directive),

Air: to achieve levels of air quality that do not give rise to significant negative impacts on and risks to human health and the environment,

Soil: to protect and ensure the sustainable use of soil by preserving soil functions, preventing threats to soil, mitigating their effects and restoring degraded soils,

Urban environment: to contribute to improving the environmental performance of Europe's urban areas,

Noise: to contribute to policy development and implementation on environmental noise,

Chemicals: improve the protection of environment and health from risks posed by chemicals by 2020 by implementing chemicals legislation, in particular Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (REACH) and the Thematic Strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides,

Environment and health: to develop the information base for policy on the environment and health (the Environment and Health Action Plan),

Natural resources and waste: to develop and implement policies designed to ensure sustainable management of natural resources and wastes, and to improve the environmental performances of products, sustainable production and consumption patterns, waste prevention, recovery and recycling; to contribute to the effective implementation of the Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste,

Forests: to provide, especially through an EU coordination network, a concise and comprehensive basis for policy relevant information on forests in relation to climate change (impact on forest ecosystems, mitigation, substitution effects), biodiversity (baseline information and protected forest areas), forest fires, forest conditions and the protective functions of forests (water, soil and infrastructure) as well as contributing to the protection of forests against fires,

Innovation: to contribute to developing and demonstrating innovative policy approaches, technologies, methods and instruments to assist in the implementation of the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP),

Strategic approaches: to promote effective implementation and enforcement of Union environmental legislation and improve the knowledge base for environmental policy; to improve the environmental performance of SMEs.

Information & Communication

Principal objective: to disseminate information and raise awareness on environmental issues, including forest fire prevention; and to provide support for accompanying measures, such as information, communication actions and campaigns, conferences and training, including training on forest fire prevention.

Potential applicants are asked to [contact a member of the EU team](#) as early as possible if they wish to submit an application.

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Policy Update

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Agriculture

Cereal Import Duties Suspended

The European Commission has suspended import duties on certain cereals imported into the EU until the end of June 2011 in order to ease the pressure on the EU market, especially for animal feed. This proposal was backed by Member States on 17 February and relates to existing tariff rate quotas for low & medium quality soft wheat and for feed barley, where the preferential tariffs of 12 €/tonne and 16 €/tonne respectively will be reduced to zero for the volumes permitted under the quota. For further information, please [click here](#).

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Culture

Culture and Creative Industry Studies

A study has been published which aims to provide a better understanding of the operations and needs of companies in the Cultural and creative Industries, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The study aims to focus on existing problems and put forward recommendations to overcome these. To view the study and the executive summary please click [here](#).

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Education, Training and Youth

Study Visits for Education Specialists

Specialists or decision-makers in education or vocational training are invited to submit applications for grants to participate in study visits between September 2011 and February 2012. These visits enable the individuals to engage in discussions on issues such as raising quality of vocational education and training in co-operation with employers, higher education and the role of social partners in developing national qualifications frameworks. Please [contact the European Team](#) for more information on these grants. The deadline for applications is 31 March 2011.

European Commission Proposes Measures to Tackle Early School Leavers

The European Commission has published a communication “Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda”. This communication follows from the Youth on The Move Initiative and further explores how ways in which to reduce early school leaving rates across the EU. Existing sources of EU funds such as ESF, ERDF and Lifelong Learning Programme are highlighted as being able to support this target. The Communication considers some existing examples of good practice and breaks these into three main areas of consideration; Prevention, Intervention, and compensation of early school leavers.

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Employment and Social Affairs

In-Work Poverty

An expert report has found that in-work poverty and labour market segmentation need to be taken into account more strongly in the EU's strategy to tackle poverty and social exclusion in the future.

The report shows important variations in the scale on in-work poverty across the EU and concludes that progress needs to be made in four main areas:

- raising public awareness and political priority;
- enhancing data and analysis;
- improving monitoring and reporting; and
- enhancing the mainstreaming of social inclusion goals in economic and employment policies

For further information, please [click here](#).

Unisex Car Insurance

The European Court of Justice has held that Article 5(2) of Directive 2004/113EC is invalid with effect from 21 December 2012. This decision will prohibit insurance companies from considering gender as part of any risk assessment when calculating premiums. It is expected that this case law will also impact upon life insurance and pension annuities. The decision has been made to ensure that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union are upheld, in particular Article 21 – non-discrimination, and Article 21- Equality between men and women.

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Energy

Renewables Make the Difference

The European Commission has published a booklet which outlines the legally binding target set by the EU to have 20% of energy coming from a renewable source by 2020. The booklet outlines the existing regulatory framework and explains the different technologies which can be used to reach this target. To view the booklet click [here](#).

Progress to date has been positive, according to a [Communication](#) on renewable energy targets which finds that 2020 renewable energy policy goals are likely to be met and exceeded if Member States fully implement their national renewable energy action plans and if financing instruments are improved.

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Enterprise

Eco-Innovation Improving Competitiveness

A recent survey carried out by Eurostat has found that more than half of the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) surveyed said they had introduced technologies to improve materials efficiency in the past five years as a response to rising costs. Eco-innovation is a term used to describe products, processes or other solutions that can contribute to environmental protection or a more efficient use of resources.

The European Commission identifies financial constraints as a barrier for businesses to adopt eco-innovative practices and believes that public authorities have a crucial role to play in helping SMEs to overcome these barriers and adopt eco-innovation. The Commission supports the uptake of eco-innovation by businesses through various tools including financing and is planning to put forward an Eco-innovation Action Plan by this summer that will further help business develop and invest in eco-innovation. For further information, please [click here](#).

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Information Society

More EU Citizens Benefiting From Online Public Services

Europe's 9th e-government benchmark report has been published which outlines that an increasing percentage of public services for businesses and citizens are becoming available online. The increasing availability of public services online helps to cut costs for public administrations and increase accessibility to these services for those who need them. The report can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

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Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Maritime Spatial Planning

The European Commission has published a [Communication entitled "Maritime Spatial Planning in the EU – Achievements and future development"](#). This report reviews developments concerning Maritime Spatial Planning since the 2008 Roadmap, including the results of the public consultation process. By bringing sea-related activities in different sectors together within a common planning framework, Maritime Spatial Planning can be used to prevent conflicts, maximise synergies, and ensure the efficient and sustainable use of scarce maritime space. The report concludes that action is now needed at EU level to ensure that Maritime Spatial Planning is deployed in the most coherent and effective way possible across sea basins to the benefit of both the development of maritime activities and the protection of the marine environment.

Regionalisation of Fisheries Management

In a [speech](#) on 17 March 2011, Commissioner Damanaki set out her vision for a simpler Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The Commissioner stated that the new 'co-decision' procedure for the CFP, whereby the European Parliament and Member States both have to agree on proposals, is not suitable for setting out technical means of implementing the CFP. The Commissioner would like to see more decentralised decision-making, where Member States decide how best to achieve the objectives, principles and standards agreed at EU level. The Commissioner also reiterated that the EU should move towards eliminating the discarding of fish, which had been [agreed in principle](#) by a number of Member States on 1 March.

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Regional Policy

North East Scotland 14th Most Affluent Region

Out of 271 statistical regions, North East Scotland (Aberdeen City and Shire) has the 14th highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per inhabitant in Europe, according to [latest figures from Eurostat](#). The region's GDP per inhabitant is 157% of the EU average and is second only to inner London in UK terms. While this figure can be seen as a positive indication of the economic success of the region, it hides disparities within the region and could impact upon the availability of European support for Aberdeen City and Shire. Aberdeenshire Council's agreed lobbying position on European funding highlights the need to look beyond GDP figures when targeting funding and the positive contribution which successful regions can make to the EU as a whole.

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External Groups

In this section:

[Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions \(CPMR\)](#)
[North Sea Commission \(NSC\)](#)
[East of Scotland European Consortium \(ESEC\)](#)



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Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

Political Bureau



The CPMR Political Bureau met on 11 February. The Bureau adopted a number of positions including ones on Common Fisheries Policy, EU Budget and Cohesion Policy. A [minute](#) of this meeting can be found on the CPMR website.

www.cpmr.org

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North Sea Commission (NSC)

North Sea Region 2020 Conference 9-10 March 2011



Aberdeenshire Council participated in the NSC's North Sea Region 2020 Conference in Middleburg Netherlands. The conference conclusions will help the NSC to develop a common position on its proposed '[North Sea Region 2020](#)' [initiative](#). The initiative aims to identify priorities for the North Sea Region and could help to shape future EU funding programmes such as the INTERREG North Sea Region Programme.

New Head of Economic Development, Belinda Miller, was invited to speak on climate change at one of the conference workshops. Mark Skilling also participated in the event to put forward the Council's transport priorities. Martin Brebner was tasked with producing the conference report, which will be discussed at the next [NSC Executive Committee](#) meeting on 7 and 8 April.

northseacommission.org

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East of Scotland European Consortium

Policy Board

The ESEC Policy board met in Dundee on 25 February 2011. The ongoing issue over changing the legal status of ESEC took a step forward with a draft Articles of association being presented. In addition, the board discussed the proposed response to the Fifth Cohesion report and the position being developed for future cohesion funding after 2013.

www.esec.org.uk

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Current Consultations

THEME	TITLE	CLOSING DATE
Environment	Possible EU legislative criteria and requirements for waste shipment inspections	30 March 2011
Internal Market	Consultation on the Commission Report on the enforcement of intellectual property rights	31 March 2011
Environment	Green Infrastructure	31 March 2011
Environment	Notice of stakeholder meeting on the Final Assessment of the 6th Environment Action Programme	01 April 2011
Environment	The EU position for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development	10 April 2011
Energy	Public consultation on the modification of Congestion Management Procedures in the gas sector	12 April 2011
Information Society	Digital Agenda for Europe: Electronic identification, authentication and signatures in the European digital single market	15 April 2011
Internal Market	Consultation on the modernisation of EU public procurement policy - Towards a more efficient European Procurement Market	18 April 2011
Taxation	Financial Sector Taxation	19 April 2011
Environment	Consultation on a Roadmap to a resource efficient Europe	22 April 2011
Public Health	Stakeholder consultation on health security in the European Union	29 April 2011
Environment	Public consultation on the revision of Decision 280/2004/EC (Monitoring Mechanism Decision)	29 April 2011
Justice & Fundamental Rights	Less red tape for citizens: promoting the free movement of public documents and recognition of the effects of civil status documents	30 April 2011
Competition	Towards a Coherent European Approach on Collective Redress	30 April 2011

Taxation	Taxation problems that arise when dividends are distributed across borders to portfolio and individual investors and possible solutions	30 April 2011
Energy	Permit granting procedures for energy infrastructure projects	30 April 2011
Research & Technology	Public Consultation on the bio-based economy for Europe: state of play and future potential	02 May 2011
Economic & Financial Affairs	Consultation on the Europe 2020 project Bond Initiative	02 May 2011
Energy	Oil and Gas Offshore Safety	11 May 2011
Competition	Future Commission Guidelines for State aid in the context of the amended EU Emissions Trading Scheme	11 May 2011
Public Health	Revision of the "Clinical Trials Directive" 2001/20/EC concept paper submitted for public consultation	13 May 2011
Enterprise	Consultation on an Industrial Policy for the Security Industry	15 May 2011
Research	From challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding	20 May 2011
Culture	Public Consultation on MEDIA Mundus: A broad international cooperation programme for the audiovisual industries	23 May 2011
Enterprise	Public consultation on the registration of cars previously registered in another Member State	26 May 2011
Enterprise	Study on options to fully harmonise EU legislation on fertilising materials including technical feasibility, environmental, social, economic impacts	31 May 2011
Taxation	Green paper on the future of VAT	31 May 2011
Maritime Affairs	Scotland's National Marine Plan: Pre-Consultation Draft	7 June 2011

If you are intending to respond to any of the above consultations please inform the European Team. [Back to Main Index](#)

Training Calendar				
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21	22	23	24	25
28 Transnational Projects Management	29	30	31	

April				
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11 ESF & State Aid rules	12	13	14	15
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Events Calendar				
March				
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	1	2	3	4
7	8 NSC Sustainable Development	9 NSC Conference	10 NSC Conference	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30 MEP Video Conference	31	

April				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5	6	7 NSC Ex Com	8 NSC Ex Com
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

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Contacts and Links for Further Information

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Aberdeenshire Council European Team

Aberdeenshire Council's European Team is based in the Economic Development Service of Transportation and Infrastructure. For further information on any of the issues addressed in this newsletter or on other European please contact us:

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Alternatively, information can be obtained from the [Aberdeenshire Council web pages on European Matters](#) or the [European Team pages on Arcadia](#).

European Institutions & Advisory Bodies

European Commission
European Parliament
Council of the European Union
Committee of the Regions

www.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

www.europarl.europa.eu

www.consilium.europa.eu

www.cor.europa.eu

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