

PRESS RELEASE

To all Editors:

Cross Border Conference – Best Practice and Future Opportunities from across the European Union.

East Border Region Ltd in conjunction with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) recently hosted a Conference in Trim, County Meath to look at Best Practice and Future Opportunities from across the European Union. The conference which was part funded by the European Union's INTERREG IVA Programme was attended by over 150 delegates, 50 of which were from border regions across Europe. There was a high profile audience in attendance including a number of senior Politicians from both sides of the border.

The theme of the conference was “Cross Border Co-Operation – Best Practice and Future Opportunities from across the European Union” and delegates were considering a number of key themes all of which are particularly topical at the moment including; Future Opportunities in EU Funding. This session was chaired by Mr Wolfgang Streitenberger, Senior Advisor, Directorate-General for Regional Policy and Urban Development, European Commission and other speakers included the Committee of the Regions, AEBR and the Special EU Programmes Body who are the Managing Authority for INTERREG and Peace funding.

The Vice-Chairman of East Border Region, Cllr Alan McDowell stated “As Vice-Chairman of East Border Region I am delighted to be hosting this event in our region and I would particularly like to welcome delegates from other border regions across Europe. It is great to hear examples of cross border co-operation from other regions, but it is also great to share our experiences and success stories with our European neighbours. We have many good stories to share in the Ireland/Northern Ireland region, some of which were showcased at the Conference and many of these have been made possible due to funding from the European Commission for which we are grateful.”

The second session was themed Promoting Cross Border Economic Development which was chaired by Mr Aidan Gough, IntertradeIreland and this session heard case studies of collaboration between Sweden and Norway and from Germany and the Netherlands. There was also a presentation on the iconic Narrow Water Bridge Project which will form the first physical link between Ireland and Northern Ireland and provides a perfect example of a genuinely cross border project.

The final session which was moderated by Mr Declan Meally, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland examined how the INTERREG Programme is addressing the issue of low carbon solutions for a new cross border environment. There were a number of case studies presented from the Ireland/Northern Ireland border region as well as from the rest of Europe which highlighted that environmental issues are common in all parts of Europe.

The Conference was followed by the AEBR Executive Committee meeting. AEBR was formed in 1971 and since that time it has been the main forum for learning and the exchange of experience between border regions in a European Union which has expanded very considerably in recent years. Equally AEBR plays an important role in influencing the European Commission in respect of cross

border co-operation and EU policy. East Border Region has been an active member of AEBC since 1991 and is delighted to be hosting this year's Executive Committee.

ENDS

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Notes to Editor:

About EBR:

The East Border Region (EBR) is a Local Authority led organisation which comprises ten Local Authorities namely; Newry and Mourne, Down and Banbridge District Councils, Armagh City and District Council, Craigavon, Ards and North Down Borough Councils in Northern Ireland and Louth, Monaghan and Meath County Councils in the Republic Of Ireland.

EBR was established in 1976 to promote innovative, cross border economic development in the areas of agriculture, Industry, Commerce and Tourism and to improve the living conditions and employment prospects of those living in the region. The EBRC was awarded the role of Implementing Body in the Ireland/Northern Ireland INTERREG IIIA Programme 2000-2006 and as a result successfully implemented approximately €25 million to genuine cross border projects across the region. At present the EBRC has been successful in securing approximately €15 million from the INTERREG IVA Programme.

EBR is a truly democratic, representative, transparent, multi skilled cross border organisation.

About SEUPB / INTERREG IVA:

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes PEACE III and INTERREG IV designed to enhance cross border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society. The Programmes operate within clearly defined areas including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG IVA 2007-2013 Programme is worth €256 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders. It has two distinct priority measures to create co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable cross border region.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu



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