

Recent Brussels Office activities

Below are some key Brussels Office activities since the last forum meeting in March.

Brexit

Continued monitoring of the Brexit debate at EU and national level

- Actively participating on behalf of LCR in numerous events, network meetings (notably of the UK Brussels offices), other meetings and discussions in order to gather intelligence
- Providing regular information updates, and organising and participating in information/discussion sessions with LCR partners
- Continued discussions with University of Liverpool around their Brexit activity, and promotion of this to LCR partners
- Support for coordinated LCR activity on Brexit, notably:
 - Assistance to the working group that organises the LCR Brexit Task Force
 - Production of a database of other key networks' and bodies positions on Brexit (see item 2)
 - Contribution to CA report on this issue

Policy

- Continued monitoring of development of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)
- Ongoing support for MRWA and the other Joint Waste Disposal Authorities on following and influencing the Circular Economy Package of legislation currently going through the EU institutions. This has included supporting lobbying activity around allowing recycled incinerator bottom ash to count toward general recycling targets.
- For UTG, production of the latest regular:
 - Briefing to the UTG members' Directors General on EU transport policy, funding and partnership developments
 - Brexit monitor and *Urban Transport International* publication.

Funding

- On Interreg:
 - Participation in the Interreg Project Ideas lab in Luxembourg; subsequent dissemination to LCR partnership of 40+ Interreg bid ideas being promoted by organisations across Europe.
 - Discussion with the NCPs for both NW Europe and Atlantic Area regarding the timings of upcoming calls and the possibility of holding forthcoming official UK info days in Liverpool.
- Supporting LCR in optimising EU funding for 'Motorways of the Sea'; this has included:
 - Participation in meeting of the Atlantis partnership (LCR, Brest and Lisbon) with the European Commission Executive Agency around closure of Atlantis 1 (current funded project)
 - Hosting of partnership discussions in Brussels around plans for Atlantis 2 (future bid); support for later follow-up meetings with European Commission around Atlantis 2
 - Liaison with Merseytravel around LCR freight and logistics projects that may be eligible for inclusion in Atlantis 2
- Confirmation that the Interreg Atlantic Area 'Blue Ports' bid has secured funding. This will be for a project around innovative and sustainable treatment of ballast water in ports. The bid is led by Brest and LCR involvement (LEP, LJMU, Vision) was brokered by the Brussels Office.
- Various support to LCR on a submitted food waste project bid under the latest Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) call.
- Obtaining leaks of key Horizon 2020 work programmes for the final three years of the project. The WPs for maritime, environment, energy, health and transport will be circulated to LEIF members after the meeting.
- Liaison with Innovate UK around potential UK local involvement in and urban mobility KIC (Knowledge and Innovation Community) in 2018, which will represent a unique and major funding opportunity for this theme.
- Planning meetings of two of the LCR Trans-national Funding Engagement Plan groups (Blue group and Green Group), to be held on 15 June. All are welcome to attend.

Partnership/promotion

- Confirmation of LCR participation in the 2017 European Week of Regions and Cities, which will take place in Brussels in October. Our involvement will be around work LJMU is doing to help to green local SMEs by pairing them up with relevant academic expertise.
- Early discussions with Liverpool Vision around the potential European dimension of IFB 2018