

€30 Billion Rescue Package for small and medium-sized businesses

In Ireland, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) account for 98% of all businesses and employ over 55% of the workforce. Furthermore, 80% of new jobs created in the EU in recent years have been in SMEs.

SMEs, like many other sectors, have been hard hit by the financial crisis. Encouraging entrepreneurship and maintaining SME competitiveness has become more important than ever before. To support and encourage the SME sector the EU has introduced several measures, which include:

- €15bn from the European Investment Bank over the period 2008-2009 for loans to small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe granted via commercial banks, as part of an overall package of €30bn by 2011, which is an increase of €10bn over its usual lending in this sector.
- The European Investment Bank signed off a series of loan deals with three Irish banks worth €300 million at the end of March.
- The European Commission has set a target of 25% reduction in the level of red tape from the EU by 2012. The administrative burden reduction measures already presented or foreseen, represent savings in excess of €30bn.
- A reduction of 75% in fees for patent applications and maintenance and halve the costs for an EU trademark.

The EIB will also reinforce its lending to mid-sized corporations by €1bn a year.

Liam Aylward MEP and An Taoiseach Brian Cowen TD



Aylward meets with Intel to discuss future

Liam Aylward MEP met with Craig Barrett, head of Intel Corporation in the European Parliament in Brussels to discuss the future of Intel in Ireland.

The Intel Global Corporation launched a new initiative called 'Intel Labs Europe' in the European Parliament in Brussels. The objective of the 'Intel Labs Europe' initiative is to ensure that Intel will continue to be a global force in technology, research and innovation issues. The 'Intel Labs Initiative' will prepare a platform for potential investment and advanced innovation activity.

Intel is establishing two open labs in Europe, which will act as the focal point and portal for this new initiative. One focal point and portal for this Intel Labs Europe programme will be in Leixlip, Co. Kildare.

Craig Barrett, the global head of Intel was a guest speaker at a conference that Fianna Fáil organised for Irish and European technology companies on the issue of how best can Europe use Research and Technology programmes to stimulate job creation.

Liam Aylward MEP and Dr. Craig Barrett, Chairman of Intel Corporation



An Ghaeilge san Aontas Eorpach

I 2006 bhain an Ghaeilge amach stádas oifigiúil agus oibre san Aontas Eorpach. Ciallaíonn sé seo go bhfuil príomhrilacháin an Aontais Eorpaigh le fáil as Gaeilge. Faoi láthair tá maolú ann, rud a chiallaíonn gur aistriúchán ar reachtaíocht amháin atá i gceist ach. Déanfar athbhreithniú ar an bhféidearthacht go leathnófaí amach réimse na gcáipéisí a n-aistreofaí go Gaeilge faoi dheireadh na bliana 2010 ar a dhéanaí. Braitheann sé seo ar na áiseanna cuí, e.g. aistritheoirí agus dlítheangeolaithe cáilithe, a bheith ar fáil.

Tugann bronnadh an stádais oifigiúil aitheantas don tábhacht a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge sa stair, sa chultúr agus i saol laethúil na tíre. Cuireann stádas nua na Gaeilge go mór le poist a chruthú do Ghaeilgeoirí na hÉireann, ní hamháin i rannóg an aistriúcháin ach i réimsí eile chomh maith. Bíonn ar iarratasóirí le haghaidh post san Aontas Eorpach dhá theanga oifigiúla a bheith acu, agus bíonn orthu siúd atá ag lorg ardú céime laistigh d'institiúidí an Aontais Eorpaigh trí theanga oifigiúla a bheith ar a gcumas acu. Is mór an buntáiste é an stádas oifigiúil do lucht labhartha na Gaeilge sa mhéid seo.

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If you have any questions or comments regarding any issues on this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact Liam.

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Minister for State Dept. Agriculture, Food & Forestry 2002-2004.



Liam Aylward

M.E.P.

Europe - Supporting Irish Economic Recovery

The importance of Sport in the EU

In 2007 the European Union produced a key document - the White Paper on Sport - on the importance of sport in the EU. Sport has enormous potential to bring together citizens of the European Union, reaching out to all, regardless of age or social origin. Approximately 60% of Europeans participate in sporting activities on a regular basis and there are over 700,000 sporting clubs in the EU.

The European Commission supports grassroots sport through the Europe for Citizens programme and encourages young people's volunteering in sport through the Youth in Action programme. For the first time, the EU budget of 2009 contains provisions for funding of sports networks and projects.



Liam Aylward M.E.P. twice minister for sport with neighbours and Kilkenny All Ireland Captains Henry Shefflin and James (Cha) Fitzpatrick.

Liam Aylward receives Agriculture honour from French Government

At a ceremony in Paris earlier this year, Liam Aylward MEP received the award 'Commandeur Mérite Agricole' from the French Government in recognition of his political efforts to support the European food and agricultural sectors.

French Agriculture Minister Michel Barnier presented Liam Aylward with the highest honour that the French Government can bestow on a non French national at the headquarters of the French Department of Agriculture in Paris and described him as "one of the most highly respected EU legislators in the field of agricultural matters".

Liam Aylward has played a key role in Europe since becoming an MEP in the year 2004 on a number of key issues including the following:

- He led the political campaign within the EU institutions to ban Brazilian beef products coming into Europe, on the basis that the same rules, standards and procedures which apply to the European beef processing sector should apply to beef imports as well.
- He played a central role in protecting European beef exports to the Russian market in 2006, when EU - Russian relations had deteriorated.
- He carried out a key report for the European Parliament, on the issue of reforming the sheep farming and lamb processing sectors. This much acclaimed report is seen as the EU wide blueprint for reforming these sectors in Europe.
- As a member of the Environment Committee of the European Parliament, he has been a very strong supporter of legislation which fully protects the EU food chain

Liam Aylward MEP and French Minister for Agriculture, Michel Barnier at the presentation of Agriculture Award at the Department of Agriculture, Paris



Liam Aylward visits Irish troops in Chad

On a recent trip to Chad, Liam Aylward MEP visited the Irish members of the EUFOR force in Chad. The EUFOR force is an EU authorised mission in Chad, the aim of which is to bring peace and stability to Chad, particularly to secure food, water and medical supplies to the people trapped in refugee camps in the Eastern part of Chad. Irish troops are responsible for defending the area around these camps in an effort to ensure that humanitarian aid is safely distributed to refugees and to protect them from attack.

EUFOR's mandate has expired since March 15th and the overall command of the EU mission has been transferred to the United Nations.

Liam Aylward MEP and Eoin Ryan MEP visit a hospital at EUFOR base in Chad



A reception was organised by Fianna Fáil to honour Fr. Aidan Troy, Parish Priest of St. Josephs in Paris and former Rector of Holy Cross School in Ardoyne, Belfast, for his strong commitment to community development, peace and reconciliation in Ireland.

Fr Aidan Troy and Liam Aylward MEP in the European Parliament



Texting and Roaming charges to be slashed by the EU

The European Parliament and the European Commission have agreed recently to significantly cut the cost of mobile phone, which will result in a considerable difference to Irish consumers. Texting from abroad will cost 11 cent, down from 39cent, from July 1st 2009. Receiving texts will still be free. This is a decrease of 66% in the cost of texting from abroad. Irish people send on average 160 texts a month. This move will save Irish business people and holidaymakers millions of Euro in the cost of their mobile phone bills.

The cost of roaming charges will be capped at 40 cent per minute from the middle of 2010 and charges for accessing voicemail from abroad will be abolished.



EU Drugs Action Plan 2009 - 2012

The EU launched a Drugs Action Plan 2009-2012 to combat drug abuse in Europe.

The European Union is putting in place a multi-faceted approach to deal with these issues by putting in place the following measures:

- A consultation process with all EU member states and civil society to work towards the acceptance of a European Citizens Alliance on Drugs, which would aim at raising awareness on the risks of drug taking and support best practices in this field.
- Improving the effectiveness of drug prevention and drug treatment programmes.
- Strengthening the effectiveness of law enforcement in the EU to counter drug production and trafficking by improving the operation of Europol, the European Police Agency.
- Improving international co-operation by promoting alternative solutions to drug cultivation.
- Improving our knowledge of all aspects of drug use through more and better co-ordinated research and data, including data on drug related crime and on the way the illicit drug market operates.

Broadband Access to be increased in rural areas

The European Commission has promised €40 million for the development of broadband access in rural Ireland this year. This money will ensure that high speed internet access is available in rural communities to allow businesses to set up easily, to secure new investment into rural communities and for future job creation opportunities.

The availability of high speed internet services is a vital reason why companies locate in an area and inward

investment is sustained. It is important for high speed broadband to be made available in all secondary schools. This project is a step in the right direction and is a great cross-border initiative.

Digital Ireland must be for all of Ireland and that must include all rural areas. Access to broadband promotes entrepreneurship and economic progress.

Tackling Child Labour at EU level

Liam Aylward is the co-author of a key report on combating child labour in his capacity as a member of the joint Parliamentary Assembly of African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) and EU states in the European Parliament. The report identifies core recommendations aimed at eliminating child labour practices.

There are in the region of 200 million children worldwide who are being exploited for labour purposes, child soldiers, prostitution and drug trafficking, robbing them of a right to a childhood, and education and exposing them to huge physical and mental health risks. The causes of child labour are rooted in poverty, social inequality, conflict, political instability and health concerns, and the economic crisis is exacerbating the situation. As incomes are affected

throughout the world, developing-world families on poverty-line incomes are forced to withdraw children from school and send them working.

The main proposals of the report include ensuring that all companies operating in the EU are child labour free at all levels of the supply chain, ensuring that public procurement contracts and systems of preference are clearly linked to good labour practices, and improving targeting of expenditure on education. The report highlights that particular attention needs to be paid to vulnerable groupings, especially girls and children in the "hidden" labour sectors of domestic and agricultural work.

For more information on child labour: www.stopchildlabour.eu



Dairy farmers need urgent EU assistance

Liam Aylward MEP, Member of the Agriculture Committee in the European Parliament called on the European Commission to increase its level of support measures to help Irish dairy farmers.

There has been a dramatic fall in milk prices because of falling global demands. Irish dairy farmers need the European Commission to increase the level of export refunds available to Irish farmers as well as providing more intervention capacity to arrest the fall in milk prices and to ensure that dairy farmers secure viable and competitive prices for their milk products.

The dairy sector is of critical importance to the Irish economy. It is worth €2.5 billion worth of exports. There are over 20,000 dairy farmers with a further 30,000 jobs dependent of this sector.



EU Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel and Liam Aylward MEP in the European Commission

Time to tap into our ocean energy potential

Liam Aylward, Vice President of the Climate Change Committee in the European Parliament believes that the time has come for Ireland to use its potential as the world's leading provider of ocean energy.

It is paramount in the midst of a massive economic downturn that Ireland concentrates on results for green energy technology. We can become world leaders in our diverse renewable energy fields in Ireland. In the area of ocean wave technology, we have the undisputed potential due to weather and location

in the Atlantic, we have the technology patented, we have the expertise and we have the legal target framework. It is a great opportunity for job creation, electricity price reduction and energy security. This will also significantly help to reduce Ireland's carbon emissions and to improve our energy security.