



Welcome to our Summer edition of Education Service News. This year is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and there are many ways in which you and your school can participate: projects, professional development opportunities and networks are just some of the options available through the various programmes we manage.



In this edition we highlight some of the activities taking place within Comenius, eTwinning and the Study Visit programmes, and celebrate the winners of the 2009 European Day of Languages competitions and the European Language Label 2009.

### European In-Service Opportunities

Comenius In-Service Training enables teachers and other education staff to attend training courses of up to six weeks for their professional development. The training can take the form of:

- a structured course for education staff lasting at least five full working days
- job shadowing or a placement in a school or organisation involved in education
- a European conference or seminar organised by a Comenius Network, Comenius Multilateral Project, National Agency (i.e. Léargas) or reputable European association active in school education.

In all cases, the training must take place in another eligible European country.

The next deadline for this activity is **15 September 2010** for training activities that start on or after 01 January 2011.

Note: all training events must start by 30 April 2011 at the latest.

[www.leargas.ie/comenius](http://www.leargas.ie/comenius)

### Happy Birthday eTwinning!



Yes, it's hard to believe eTwinning is celebrating its 5th birthday this year! The programme, which enables collaboration between schools across Europe using Information and Communication Technology (ICT), already has almost 90,000 schools involved.

There have been many exciting changes over the last five years. eTwinning initiated online Learning Events (simple one-week online workshops on various themes), new features have been added to the eTwinning Desktop and the TwinSpace has been completely revamped!

At European level, a series of Professional Development Workshops continue to be organised every school year. These include presentations by relevant experts, hands-on workshops related to eTwinning tools and various pedagogical approaches.

Léargas is the National Support Service (NSS) for eTwinning in Ireland. If you have any questions about eTwinning, please contact [etwinning@leargas.ie](mailto:etwinning@leargas.ie) or 01 887 1206. Check out our website at [www.etwinning.ie](http://www.etwinning.ie)

### Gaining a European Dimension on Equality Initiatives in Education: Study Visits

Siobhán Magee, Support Officer with the FESS (Further Education Support Service), participated in a Study Visit entitled *Intercultural Education and Social Inclusion: The New European House*, in Taranto, Italy in December 2009. She describes her experience below:

*I chose this particular course to complement a resource development process that FESS had undertaken to support Further Education Providers in implementing Equality requirements for Quality Assurance. Over the course of the five-day visit, participants engaged in beneficial group discussions and each participant had an opportunity to present on educational and intercultural initiatives in their country.*

*The group comprised 11 participants from 11 member states. Participants had diverse professional backgrounds*

*including National Educational Authorities, National Quality Assurance Agencies, Universities, Colleges of Further Education, and Agencies dealing with Interculturalism and Minority Groups. Areas of particular interest included Language Integration, Social Inclusion and Special Education.*

*Our Italian hosts were wonderfully hospitable and we were warmly welcomed by the Schools/Colleges and Education Centres we visited. We met with tutors and learners from further education, second level and primary level and attended a formal conference on Intercultural Education and Social Inclusion.*

*It was a fantastic opportunity to learn about the systems of equality in place in other EU member states and the insights I gained will inform future activities of FESS.*

The objective of the Study Visits Programme is to support policy development and cooperation at European level in lifelong learning. Participants can spend up to one week in another European country learning about new practices and approaches in education. For more information contact [studyvisits@leargas.ie](mailto:studyvisits@leargas.ie) or Ivanna D'Arcy at 01 887 1258.

[www.leargas.ie/studyvisits](http://www.leargas.ie/studyvisits)




Education and Culture DG  
Lifelong Learning Programme



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# EDUCATION SERVICE NEWS

## German Christmas Market comes to Carna!

Gráinne Coyne, German-language teacher at Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara, Carna, Co. Galway, feels strongly that time spent in the relevant country is hugely beneficial for students of foreign languages. Through their participation in a Comenius School Partnership, students from her school were able to improve their German-language skills through communication and project work with their German partner-school. The partnership had an exchange element enabling the students to be immersed in the target language for ten days. Through the project, the students became more aware of the benefits of learning a foreign language as well as appreciating the customs and traditions of their partner country.

The partnership with the Goethe-Gymnasium in Germany came about following a teacher exchange between the two schools. The principals and staff in both schools were keen to get involved in a longer-term project. Gráinne describes the project activities:

*The first thing we set up was an email exchange so that the students would get to know each other better. We did projects on the German and Irish school systems, Hallowe'en traditions in both countries and the German students put together some information on German Unity Day. The German students and two teachers came to Carna for 10 days at the beginning of December 2009. We organised an intensive programme of classes and events and held a Weihnachtsmarkt (a traditional German Christmas market) in the school. The students exchanged Christmas cards and did a project on Christmas in Ireland and in Germany. The students from Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara travelled to Germany in March 2010 and a similar programme of classes and events was arranged. St. Patrick's Day was celebrated in the school in Germany, where traditional Irish food was served. The school was decorated in green and our students put on a display of Irish music, song and dance. The German students also learned a few Irish songs and a little bit*

*of sean-nós dancing for the occasion. The students researched Easter customs and traditions in both countries and we have also compiled a folder with German and Irish recipes.*

Gráinne says that the project is having a very positive impact on students, staff and indeed the local community with whom the *Weihnachtsmarkt* was a big hit! She suggests that good organisation and communication is the key to a successful partnership. The partnership plans to continue the project work and arrange further visits by students and teachers to both countries in the coming school year. They also hope to produce a small publication describing their experience.



## Upcoming Comenius Contact Seminars 2010

Date	Theme	Location	Who should attend?
30 September - 03 October	Comenius Regio Seminar	Tallinn, Estonia	Representatives of local or regional authorities with a role in school education
14-17 October	"MINT" - Mathematics, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Techniques	Herrsching, Germany	Teachers from upper primary and secondary schools
27-31 October	Education for the Environment	Portoroz, Slovenia	Teachers from pre-primary and primary schools
01-05 December	International cooperation between schools for children and youngsters with special needs	Alden Biesen, Belgium	Teachers from schools with special needs

## 2009 European Day of Languages



The European Day of Languages is a Council of Europe initiative and has been celebrated on 26 September since 2001. In 2009, Léargas held two competitions to celebrate the Day: a Poster & Slogan competition and a Video-clip competition. There was a great response from schools and an independent jury chose three winning videos and one winning poster all of which can be seen on our website [www.leargas.ie/edl](http://www.leargas.ie/edl). We're already

preparing for the 2010 European Day of Languages next September so keep an eye on our website for upcoming competitions.

The awards ceremony for the European Award for Languages is held on the European Day of Languages each year. This award is given to projects where participants have found creative ways to improve the quality of language teaching, motivate students, and make the best of available resources. Last year, the ceremony took place in the beautiful surroundings of Farmleigh in Dublin. It

was attended by those involved in language education, teaching and training at all levels, representatives from embassies and of course the winners and their guests. The keynote address was given by Professor David Crystal and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr Emer Costello, presented the awards. For further details see [www.leargas.ie/ell](http://www.leargas.ie/ell)



For further information email [languages@leargas.ie](mailto:languages@leargas.ie).