

European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci)

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Steve Worrall, Assistant Chief Fire Officer on 01743 260204.

1 Purpose of Report

This paper acts as an interim summary report regarding the Leonardo Staff Exchange Programme 2008, and seeks Member endorsement of proposals for a further submission for European Commission (EC) funding to support a new programme for 2009.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note progress to date with the current Exchange Programme, and
- b) Endorse the submission of a further application(s) for funding for 2009.

3 Background

The European Commission (EC) has created¹ the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme² that provides funds for the exchange of European citizens between member states, for personal development.

The Leonardo da Vinci Programme, initially launched in 1995, is part of the EC's new Lifelong Learning Programme and is designed to build a skilled workforce through European partnerships. Leonardo funds trans-national work placements, exchanges and the development of training materials with

¹ Council Decision of the European Union (1999/382/EC), Article 2

² Call For Proposals (Directorate-General For Education And Culture) Under The Second Phase of The Leonardo Da Vinci Programme - (EAC/11/04)2

the objective of improving the provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) across Europe.

Leonardo focuses on raising the quality and relevance of VET, and provides an opportunity for organisations involved in VET to build European partnerships, exchange best practice, increase the expertise of their staff and develop the skills of learners. The Programme is open to the entire spectrum of subjects covered by vocational education and training.

Proposals may be submitted by public and private bodies and companies, which are involved in training or concerned by vocational training issues, brought within an international partnership. This covers: vocational training establishments, centres and bodies at all levels, including universities; research centres and institutions; the business sector, non-profit making organisations, and voluntary bodies etc.

Since 2006, the EC has funded the placement of over 80 elected Members and staff from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to nine European countries.

4 Leonardo Staff Exchange Programme 2008

The Leonardo Staff Exchange Programme 2008 has enabled a total of 37 elected Members and staff (including five staff from other fire and rescue services in the West Midlands region) to undertake one-week international exchanges to fire and civil protection organisations operating in several European countries.

The programme, now in its third year, has proven to be highly successful and beneficial to the personal development of those who have participated. As in previous years, the programme is open to all staff and has promoted and operated on the basis of cross-departmental working groups. During 2008 the following exchange visits took place:

- **Falck, Denmark**
In September, three elected Members, accompanied by an officer, visited the Falck organisation in Denmark. The group undertook a comparative analysis of arrangements for integrated risk management planning within Denmark and the measures undertaken by Falck (the world's largest private provider of fire, rescue, medical and security services).

A second group of five members of staff visited Falck in November and underwent a week's specialist training in the fire-fighting technique known as 'positive pressure ventilation' (PPV). PPV is a complex technique which employs the use of portable high pressure fan units that when placed at the entry points to building involved in fire, create a positive pressure within the property. PPV, if performed correctly, vents the building of smoke and thus aids fire fighting and reduces

damage. SFRS plan to introduce PPV during 2009 and the techniques and lessons learned at Falck will support strategy development.

- **Regensburg Fire Service, Bavaria, Germany**
Two groups of four members of staff visited Regensburg Fire Service in September and October. Regensburg is one of Europe's oldest cities dating back to 500BC. Situated on the Danube River, the city has a wealth of historic buildings with the city's skyline dominated by St Peter's Cathedral. The two visiting groups reviewed the approaches adopted by the Germans, both in terms of prevention and intervention, to the protection of the city's heritage.
- **Córdoba Fire Service**
In October a group of six members of staff, accompanied by four colleagues from South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, visited Córdoba Fire Service in Andalusia, southern Spain. The group undertook a detailed comparative analysis of the approach and strategies adopted in Spain to the training and development of Spanish firefighters.
- **Helsinki University, Finland**
In 2004 Finland regionalised all of its fire and rescue services. The Finnish Government commissioned Helsinki University in 2006 to undertake a review of the regionalisation exercise, a review that identified several learning points, particularly in respect of creation of regional control centres (RCCs). In November a group of eight staff (three from SFRS and five staff from the region) visited Finland to study the regionalisation of RCCs, with the objective of transferring the lessons learned to the FiReControl project within the West Midlands region.
- **Pilisvörösvár Volunteer Fire Department, Hungary**
Hungary has the highest recorded levels of fire death in Europe,³ twice that of the UK. To support the reduction of deaths and injuries from fire in Hungary a group of six staff, including the Chair of the Fire Authority, travelled 1,300 miles to Pilisvörösvár and upon arrival, donated a redundant fire engine to the local community. The group, on route to Hungary, stayed fire services in Germany and Austria, before spending a week with the Hungarians and training them in the use of the donated equipment and fire engine.

Reciprocal to the programme have been visits to SFRS by several staff from Falck and also Budapest Fire Service. In early 2009 the Service looks forward to hosting visiting staff from Córdoba Fire Service.

³ Source: World Fire Statistics 2008 (<http://www.genevaassociation.org/PDF/WFSC/GA2008-FIRE24.pdf>)

The 2008 programme is now in the process of a formal evaluation and closedown. A 'Leonardo Celebration of Success' event is planned for January/February 2009, whereupon each group will deliver a summary presentation, supplemented by a full written report of their findings and recommendations. The event will be attended by Mr Kursat Levent Egriboz, managing director of ECOTEC, the UK national agency responsible for the management and administration of Leonardo. Mr Egriboz will present each participant with a certificate and commemorative gift marking their achievements. Members will be notified of this event and are invited to attend to receive more informative details regarding the 2008 exchange visits.

5 Proposals: Leonardo Staff Exchange Programme 2009

With only a few months to the closing date (6 February 2009) for 2009 applications for Leonardo funding, initial preparations have commenced to assess the viability of developing a new and varied exchange programme for 2009.

Subject to the endorsement of the Fire Authority, it is proposed to seek EC approval to deliver the programme summarised in Table 1 below:

Country	Organisation	Subject	Placements
Poland	Lodz Fire Service	Community Fire Safety	4
Germany	Regensburg Fire Service	Firefighting with volunteers	4
Austria	Amstetten Fire Service	Firefighting with volunteers	4
Hungary	Hungarian Fire-fighters Association	Fire Engine Donation	6

Table 1 Proposals: Leonardo Staff Exchange Programme 2009

As a departure from Leonardo programme, Falck have proposed that a tri-nation project be established between Falck, SFRS and a Dutch fire service to review and consider the provision of specialist appliances. This proposed project, would fall within the framework of the EC's Lifelong Learning Programme, but if successful, would draw upon funding from an alternative source to that utilised to deliver the existing Leonardo staff exchange programmes.

6 Financial Implications

The European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme has an overall budget of €6.97 billion; of which 25 percent is allocated to Leonardo based projects.

Organisations who secure funding are entitled to up to 75 percent of the respective placement costs from the EC; with the organisation contributing the remaining 25 percent. Management and administration time incurred in delivering the programme may form part or all of the 25 percent contribution made by the organisation.

The 2006, 2007 and 2008 Staff Exchange Programmes have operated on a cost-neutral basis, with management and administration time factored to account for 25 percent of the programme's overall budget. The proposals set out above for 2009 programme will operate on a similar basis, with no expected additional budgetary implications.

7 Further Information

Further details regarding the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme may be accessed at:

Lifelong Learning Programme:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index_en.html#call

Leonardo Programme:

<http://www.leonardo.org.uk/>

8 Legal Comment

The Decision (No 1720/2006/EC) establishing a new Lifelong Learning Programme, was signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament and of the Council on 15 November and was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 24 November. It came into force on 14 December 2006.

The Fire Authority is eligible to apply for funding through the provisions of Decision No 1720/2006/EC.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed previously.

10 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

11 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

10 May 2006, Paper 22 - Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service – Falck Staff Exchange Programme

10 May 2006, Paper 22 - Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service – Falck Staff Exchange Programme

20 December 2006, Paper 18 - Falck Exchange Programme

14 February 2007, Paper 20 - Falck - Shropshire

25 April 2007, Paper 3 - Minutes of 14 February 2007 meeting

18 July 2007, Paper 19 - Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme 2007

19 December 2007, Paper 18b - European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci) Update on Progress and Proposals

15 June 2008, Paper 15 - European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci).

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity	*	Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial		Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	*
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*