



PRESS RELEASE

A snapshot of peace

The bigger picture behind peace efforts in Belfast will be on display at the City Hall next week when the 'PEACE III – Celebrate & Collaborate' exhibition and conference takes place on Tuesday, 21 June.

The Mayor, Councillor Niall Ó Donnghaile, who will welcome people to the event on Tuesday morning, said that over 12,000 people have taken part in PEACE III funded programmes in Belfast since 2009.

Groups working on projects which have tackled sectarianism, challenged stereotypes, and encouraged use of cross community shared space will be showcasing their work to attract even more people to take part in new projects over the next two years.

The event has been organised by Belfast City Council's Good Relations Partnership and the Special European Union Programmes Body.

Councillor Ó Donnghaile said: "Good relations are at the heart of the council's policy-making process and our vision is for a stable, tolerant, fair and inclusive society, where individuality is respected and diversity is celebrated in an inclusive manner."

"The focus for us is to build positive relations at local level and each one of the projects taking part in this event has played a vital role in achieving this aim."

"Issues such as trust, prejudice and intolerance are still too common for many of us as we work in our communities. The support secured from the European Regional Development

Fund, amounting to almost £6 million over the last three years, has assisted us in transforming our capital to a city of shared space where all communities have a sense of belonging.”

Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body, welcomed the exhibition saying: “Local authorities have a key role to play and are ideally positioned to promote the PEACE Programme within local communities.

“I am pleased to see that Belfast City Council is more committed than ever to working with local groups to promote peace and that the many people who have made such an important contribution to our society will have the opportunity to share their stories with the city and the wider public.”

“I am confident that their experience will inspire others to get engaged in the Local Action Peace Plan as it enters its second phase.”

The Council’s Good Relations Partnership manages and administers the funding available to Belfast through the PEACE III Programme.

Councillor Maire Hendron, Chair of the partnership said the aim of the event is to maximise the effectiveness of further PEACE III funding by encouraging collaborative working across new projects for 2011-2013.

“This first phase of the Belfast Peace & Reconciliation Action Plan has tackled the legacy of conflict by providing support to front line organisations that are creating shared spaces in our city - spaces that are welcoming to everyone, accessible to everyone, of good quality and safe for all to enjoy.”

“We want to continue to improve the quality of life in the city by making Belfast a better place and we look forward to the continued support of the PEACE III programme to continue to build positive relations in Belfast,” added Councillor Hendron

ENDS

For further information, please refer media enquiries to:
Anne Donegan, Media Relations Officer, Belfast City Council
Tel: (028) 9027 0646

The event begins at 11am on Tuesday morning you are welcome to send a reporter/photographer/film crew.

Notes to the Editor

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 IVA designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society. The programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG IVA, Western Scotland.

The PEACE III Programme, funded through the European Regional Development Fund, is worth €333 million and is aimed primarily at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promoting reconciliation. It focuses on helping Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland to reconcile communities and contribute towards a shared society.

For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu