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## **PRESS RELEASE**

June 25<sup>th</sup> 2011

### **EMBARGO – TBA**

#### **EU COMMISSIONER HAHN LAUNCHES PEACE BRIDGE**

EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn today opened the European Union funded ‘Peace Bridge’ in Derry-Londonderry alongside; the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD; First Minister, Peter Robinson MLA; Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP MLA; and Social Development Minister, Nelson McCausland MLA.

The third bridge across the River Foyle, the Peace Bridge has been awarded £14,677,823 from the European Union’s PEACE III Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). This funding represents a contribution from the European Regional Development Fund, the Northern Ireland Executive and from the Irish Government.

The PEACE III Programme (2007-2013) supports a number of capital build development projects, which tackle the problems associated with divided communities through the creation of new shared spaces that maximise the potential for reconciliation and economic renewal.

Welcoming the completion of the bridge, President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, said: **“The European Union’s structural funds have actively provided support to the region over the past 16 years, through the PEACE Programme. This financial assistance has helped drive forward thousands of projects and initiatives in support of the peace process. The Peace Bridge is one of the most significant of these projects and symbolises our shared hope for**

**continued peace and improved prosperity for the citizens of Derry-Londonderry.”**

Officially opening the bridge EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn, said: **“One of the key objectives of the European Union is to bring people together to live in peace, with a common respect both for shared values and for diversity. The European Commission is particularly committed to helping the people of this region as they work towards the goal of lasting peace and prosperity.**

**“I believe that the Peace Bridge will help further this goal for the people of Derry-Londonderry. It will encourage greater levels of cross-community integration and usher in a new period of peace and reconciliation for the city,”** continued the Commissioner.

Commenting on the launch of the bridge, Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the SEUPB, said: **“The Peace Bridge is the largest capital build project, currently supported by the EU’s PEACE III Programme. It reflects the core principles of the programme, which aims to reinforce progress towards a more peaceful and prosperous society. A truly iconic project, the bridge will act as a physical symbol for change, reinforcing long-term community cohesion, peace and reconciliation.”**

Outlining the importance of the Peace Bridge, Chairman of Ilex, Sir Roy McNulty, said: **“This is truly a historic day. The significance of the Peace Bridge goes far beyond the physical connection of both banks of the River Foyle. As an important building block in our ambitious Regeneration Plan, it will bring communities together in a new shared space, help grow tourism and advance the economic agenda of Derry ~ Londonderry. In time, I believe it will become a symbol of the renaissance of the city”.**

Mayor Alderman Maurice Devenney said the opening of the Peace Bridge is a significant occasion for everyone in the city. **“The Peace Bridge will bring our communities together to help develop tourism, regeneration and good relations.**

**The Peace Bridge reflects the positive way in which our city is moving forward as we prepare to celebrate our unique history, culture and heritage in preparation for the UK City of Culture 2013.”**

The contract for the design and construction of the Peace Bridge was awarded to Northern Ireland company, Graham and a high quality design and construction team comprising of Wilkinson Eyre, London (architects), Faber Maunsell, Newcastle (structural engineers) and Rowecord, Wales (steelwork fabrication). Based in Dromore, Co Down, Graham. has built some of the most iconic bridges in Ireland, including Foyle Bridge, Belfast Cross Harbour Road and Rail Bridges and the Dargan Bridge in South Dublin. Bridge architects, Wilkinson Eyre, are best known for the design of the iconic Gateshead Millennium Bridge.

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For further information contact Mo Durkan, Ilex - 028 7126 9226 or 07917 544297. Press release and bridge images are downloadable on [www.illex-urc.com](http://www.illex-urc.com)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **PEACE III Programme**

#### **SEUPB**

The Peace Bridge has been awarded £14,677,823 from the EU's PEACE III Programme.

This award represents a contribution of:

- £9,913,865.57 from the European Regional Development Fund.
- £2,338,904.44 match-funding from the Northern Ireland Executive.
- £2,425,052.99 match-funding from the Irish Government.

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](http://www.seupb.eu)

## **Peace Bridge**

The foot and cycle bridge will physically and symbolically unite both sides of the River Foyle and is conceived as two distinct structural systems that work in harmony, a pair of identical curved suspension structures, each allied to opposing banks, in a fluid “S” shaped alignment. At the middle of the river both structural systems tangibly overlap, boldly interacting to create a single unified crossing – a structural handshake across the Foyle and an embrace in the centre of the river.

The Peace Bridge measures 235 metres bank-to-bank and 312 metres in total and has a gradient of 1/50. Designed for pedestrians and cyclists, the bridge runs from behind Guildhall Square on to the Parade Ground in the former Ebrington Barracks.

## **The regeneration programme**

Ebrington was a military base since 1841 when the army constructed a Star Fort (now listed and still largely intact). The Star Fort walls are currently being restored to their former glory.

Overlooking the River Foyle, the Parade Ground is the centrepiece of the 1841 Star Fort (scheduled ancient monument). The Parade Ground will be redesigned as a piazza.

Owned by the Office of the First and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), 26-acre Ebrington is being re-developed by Ilex as a mixed-use site.

Ilex, Northern Ireland’s only Urban Regeneration Company, was set up in 2003 by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and the Department for Social Development (DSD) to plan, develop and sustain the economic, physical and social regeneration of the Derry City Council area.

Ilex’s strategic objectives are:

- To create and promote the coordinated regeneration of the Derry City Council area generally and to facilitate its implementation in cooperation with DSD, other relevant government departments, Derry City Council, the private sector and other interested parties; and
- To secure the economic, social and physical regeneration of the Ebrington and Fort George sites

## **Bridge building team**

Individually or collectively the companies involved in the design and construction of the Peace Bridge have also been (or are currently) involved in the design and construction of a broad range of bridges including:

Foyle Bridge, Derry ~ Londonderry  
Coleraine Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge  
Dargan Bridge, Dublin  
Westlink, Belfast  
Samuel Beckett Bridge, Dublin  
A71 Irvine Bridge, Scotland  
Crossharbour Road and Rail Bridges, Belfast  
Dunleer – Dundalk Motorway Bridges  
Limavady Bypass  
Comber Bypass  
Living Bridge, University of Limerick  
Gateshead Millennium Bridge, England  
Hulme Arch, Manchester, England  
South Quay Footbridge, London  
Bellmouth Passage Bridges, London  
Great Wharf Road Bridge, London  
Poole Harbour Second Crossing, England  
Medway River Crossing, England  
Butterfly Bridge, Bedford, England  
Lockmeadow Footbridge, Maidstone, England  
Swansea Sail Bridge, Wales  
Forthside Pedestrian Bridge, Stirling, Scotland  
Viaduc de la Savoureuse, France  
Suzhou-Nantong Crossing, China  
Metsovitikos Suspension Bridge, Greece  
Toome Bridge  
Boyne Bridge, Ireland  
River Usk Bridge, England  
Aberfeldy Bridge, England  
Royal Albert Bridge, England  
River Yare Bridge, England  
Dockland Light Railway Bridge, London  
Regents Canal Bridge, England  
Sutong Bridge, China  
Taiwan High Speed Rail Project  
Rion-Antirion Bridge, Greece  
Chamberlain Bridge, Barbados  
My Thuan Bridge, Vietnam  
Tsing Lung Bridge, Hong Kong  
Zwolle Bridge, the Netherlands