

High level group formed to push to make Dublin the European City of Science in 2012

Chief Scientific Adviser chairs bid to follow Munich, Barcelona and Turin

Thursday March 13th: The Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government Prof Patrick Cunningham was chosen today to chair a high-powered steering group to prepare a bid to make Dublin the European City of Science in 2012. The 45-member group held its first meeting today.

The group, comprising senior figures from industry, third level institutions, enterprise and research promotion agencies, and senior civil servants will work to prepare an application by Dublin to receive the prestigious designation.

A European City of Science is selected every two years by Euroscience, the premier international representative body for European scientists. The objective of this prestige event is to engage and stimulate the interests of both the scientific community and the public in cutting edge science and technology developments. Munich was so designated in 2006, Barcelona this year and Turin in 2010.

“Ireland has substantially increased its commitment to science and to developing a knowledge economy in recent years” said Prof Cunningham yesterday. “It is appropriate that we would seek this designation to reflect this. In 2012 we will be nearing the completion of the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (SSTI) 2006-2013 and the event would allow the city to showcase the best of Irish science and research.”

He said he hoped a successful bid would increase the international reputation of Ireland as a centre for scientific and research excellence. This would in turn support the activities of IDA Ireland in marketing of Ireland as a location for foreign investment, and R&D facilities in particular, and also support Enterprise Ireland in promoting indigenous, Irish firms in the international marketplace.

Fáilte Ireland, Dublin Tourism, Dublin Chamber of Commerce and Dublin City Council are represented on the steering group, reflecting the potential tourism benefits to Ireland. The centrepiece of the year would be a 5-day extravaganza of science in Dublin in July 2012, involving both the general public and scientists, and which would be expected to attract over 4,000 international delegates, bringing benefits to the economy of Dublin as well as the national economy. Should the bid be successful, there would be further opportunities for professional scientific organisations to hold their recurring specialist events in Dublin or other cities in Ireland during the year.

The closing date for receipt of bids is September 2008. The successful applicant will be announced in January 2009.

Members of the group include Dr. Frank Gannon, Director General of Science Foundation Ireland, Tom Boland, Chief Executive of the Higher Education Authority, Senator Feargal Quinn; Martin Murphy, Managing Director of Hewlett-Packard Ireland; Professor David McConnell, Head of the School of Genetics and Microbiology in Trinity College Dublin; Professor Brian Norton, President of Dublin Institute of Technology; and Dr Reg Shaw, chairman of the Health Research Board. A full list of those who have agreed to participate is attached.

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