



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	European Day of Languages- 26 September 2012 & Opportunity Europe – 16 & 17 October 2012
Date:	22 May 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware, that since 2004 the European Unit has been engaged in a high profile event to promote languages, called Opportunity Europe. Typically this two day fair and exhibition is launched annually on the European Day of Languages (EDL) on 26 September. Whilst this particular event does attract media attention, it has been agreed by the Project Steering Committee to adapt the approach taken towards this date and to mark it in its own right. The new event is detailed in the following section.
1.2	In respect to the Opportunity Europe exhibition and fair, this will take place in St George's Market on 16 and 17 October 2012. The format for this event will remain the same with a wide variety of interactive workshops focussed on languages, volunteering, and citizenship and to mark 2012 as the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity Between the Generations. The official opening of the fair will involve a welcome speech by an elected member.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<u>European Day of Languages (EDL)</u> In order to raise awareness of the European Day of Languages it is intended to hold a cultural event in the Great Hall on Wednesday 26 September 2012. The project is being developed in partnership with the European Commission Office in Northern Ireland, The British Council and the Northern Ireland Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (NICILT).

	At present the partnership is liaising with schools to ensure there is a geographic, gender and sectoral balance to the schools involved.
2.2	The programme for the day will centre on a number of schools performing in European Languages through song, dance, poem or drama. Nine Belfast schools will be involved with each performance lasting 10 minutes. In addition the event will incorporate the contribution of two Londonderry/Derry city schools for two reasons - St Patrick's Primary school is a finalist in the BBC Songs of Praise Schools Choir of the Year and secondly, the conclusion of the event will mark the fact that in 2013 Londonderry/Derry city will be the UK Capital of Culture.
2.3	In parallel, attendees will have the opportunity to view a language exhibition which involves Council's Community Centres working on an intergenerational basis to depict the word "welcome" in each of the 23 European Languages as well as the languages of the city's ethnic minorities. An evening event is being arranged on Wednesday 26 September so that the participants can view their work, should they not be available during the schools' celebration
2.4	Based on estimated schools' representation and a draft invite list, it is anticipated that 700 people will attend the day long event.
2.5	The format of the day will include keynote speeches from the project steering group and hence the Chair/Deputy Chair or nominee will be invited to open the event.
	<u>Opportunity Europe</u>
2.6	Project planning for this renown and award winning event is underway. It will build on the success of previous years whilst taking on board participant feedback from the 2011 event. Unlike previous years, Belfast City Council will not be making a financial contribution but staff will be involved in the project steering group and Council continues to offer the use of St George's Market.
2.7	In recognition of Council's support the official opening of the two day fair and exhibition on 16 October 2012 will include a keynote speech by an elected member.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Staff implications within European Unit to develop and partner both initiatives
3.2	£7,500 from within the EU Unit Business Plan to finance the European Day of Languages Celebration

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members note the content of the report and agree, as an approved duty, the attendance of the Chair, Vice-Chair or nominee at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Day of Languages City Hall event on Wednesday 26 September 2012. - The official opening of Opportunity Europe in St George's Market on 16 October 2012

6	Decision Tracking
There is no decision tracking attached to this report.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
<p>EDL - European Day of Languages NICILT - Northern Ireland Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research</p>	