

EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO HOST OPEN FORUM ON THE ENVIRONMENT
IN DUBLIN ON TUESDAY 18TH AUGUST

11th August 2009 As part of the *'TalktoEU'* series of local listening events and public discussions, the European Commission has announced a special open forum on the environment - designed to promote greater public understanding of the EU's environmental policies and their impact on Ireland. The event in the Central Hotel in Dublin on 18th August 2009 is one of over 30 public 'listening' events scheduled to take place all over the country during the next six months. Its focus on the environment and climate change will address a major priority for the EU in 2009 and beyond.

The discussion is likely to explore the EU's position on forthcoming international negotiations on climate change, the implementation of EU environmental directives, as well as current EU policy proposals in the field of the environment and sustainable development. The event will be open to the general public and will also be attended by environmental NGOs including Friends of the Earth, Feasta and Grian. Eddie McVeigh from The European Commission Representation in Ireland will also be present to answer questions from the floor.

Research carried out in the aftermath of the Irish referendum in 2008 highlighted a lack of knowledge about the European Union amongst the Irish public. By listening to the concerns and views of Irish citizens with regard to the EU and its policies and explaining how the EU may play a role in addressing those concerns, the Commission believes that it can foster greater mutual understanding and design policies in tune with people's needs.

Talking about the series of 'listening' events, Martin Territt, Director of the European Commission Representation in Ireland, said: "Democracy can only thrive if there is an informed debate. The Commission has a duty to inform people about what it is doing and to encourage active public interest and participation in EU affairs. We are confident that the Irish public will engage actively in this two-way communication initiative and find it of benefit".

TalktoEU's special 'listening' event on the environment will take place at 8pm on Tuesday 18th August 2009 in the Central Hotel, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. Anyone interested in attending can register to attend the event by phoning 01-2845528 or by e-mailing info@talktoeu.ie.