



## Report on the implementation of the 'Polish voters' project

Integration funding for Forum Polonia



The project is aimed at members of the Polish community in Ireland who are eligible to vote in the local elections.

### Project outcomes:

- raising awareness and educating Polish people about the political system in Ireland with a focus on the local elections
- promoting the idea of active citizenship and engagement in the life of the local community
- increasing the numbers of Poles on the Electoral register for the Local Elections in Ireland in June 2009
- facilitating dialogue between local activists and politicians and members of the Polish community

## Implemented

- Sep/Oct 2008 - five people affiliated to Forum Polonia took part in the 'Active Citizenship' training for trainers organised by Dublin City Council and conducted by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice.  
About 400 voter registration forms were given out to Polish people and 90 people were registered.
- Oct/Nov 2008 - Several information sessions were organised including those for Forum Polonia members, the Polish Social & Cultural Association (POSK), Thursday Dinners, at Siptu members meetings.
- Oct 2008 - Forum Polonia in conjunction with the Polish Ambassador to Ireland, Dr Tadeusz Szumowski, organised a press conference for the national and regional media.
- Oct 2008 - 250 leaflets were distributed at the Polish weekend school on High Street, Dublin.

- 'Register now' - 23 November, 2008.  
The 'Register now' registration drive was held after all the Sunday masses in four churches in Dublin: the Polish Chaplaincy on High Street, the Dominicans (Dominic St. and in Tallaght), and the Jesuit Order. As a result, 700 voter-registration forms were distributed by twelve volunteers who also helped approximately 200 people to register.



This drive was advertised through posters as well as announcements at mass. Information also appeared on various websites including: the

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Polish Embassy in Ireland, Polish web portal, POSK, Interia, Toastmasters, and nietylkodlaorłów.com.

- In Jan 2009, Forum Polonia joined the Steering Committee of the Dublin City Council Migrants Voters Projects.

- January – A Local Elections Registration Point was organised during the Great Christmas Charity Event which was organized by Polski Express and attended by approximately 1,000 people. 150 flyers (version 2), flyers from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and registration forms (RFA2) were handed out. Posters were also put up in the venue. 6,000 polskiexpress.ie web user also received information.



- In April 2009, Forum Polonia launched the second part of the campaign 'Register & Vote. To Ciebie dotyczy'.



- Video Viral Campaign – short videos promoting voting have been produced. They feature, among others, Poles active in the community, and Cormac O'Donnell from the Dublin City Council Integration Office. Available e.g on: [forumpolonia.org](http://forumpolonia.org), [youtube](http://youtube), [ltve.pl](http://ltve.pl), [naszglos.eu](http://naszglos.eu))

- 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 – Forum Polonia as co-organiser of 'Magic illustrations' exhibition in the Ilac library.
- 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009 – conference and round table discussion, "Poles in the local elections – Ireland 2009" hosting representatives, candidates and activists from different parties, Polish



organizations, people actively involved in the Polish community in Ireland as well as MEPs Eoin Ryan and Gay Mitchell.

Speakers included: Bryan Fanning, Co-Director of the Migration and Citizenship Research Initiative, University College Dublin, Cormac O'Donnell, Dublin City Council, and Emilia Marchelewska, coordinator of 'Polish Voters – Vote in



the Local Elections' campaign with Forum Polonia.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2009 – Elections Information Point at the Polish–Lithuanian friendly match (Polish and Lithuanian Ambassadors' Cup).

#### **In progress**

- 10,000 flyers (version 3) are being distributed after Polish masses, at Polish medical centres, Polish schools, the Polish consulate, etc.
- Email campaign via registered members of affiliated organisations and the media, and informal networks.
- 6<sup>th</sup> June 2009 - Elections Information Point at Mother & Child Health Day, how to cast our vote - (organised by Forum Polonia in partnership with Polski Express).

## Communication and publicity

### Website

- voting webpage – [www.forumpolonia.org/wybory](http://www.forumpolonia.org/wybory) – online since Oct 2008 - 2,000 hits per month on the voter-registration information displayed on [www.forumpolonia.org/wybory](http://www.forumpolonia.org/wybory).



- [www.ivote.ie](http://www.ivote.ie)

#### Leaflets & posters

- 3 versions of flyers have been designed, produced and distributed – Total number: 10,600.
- Forum Polonia has also distributed flyers from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- Posters (by Dublin City Council and Forum Polonia) were distributed in Autumn, January and May in all Polish shops around Dublin, in Polish community centres, and where service for immigrants is provided including Cross Care, Threshold, and Fás.

#### Media

The media were utilised to educate and inform others about the election process as well as to provide information about Forum Polonia initiatives

- Every month since Sep 2008 there has been information about Local Elections in Ireland in the Polish media.
- On average, Forum Polonia has reached up to 100,000 Polish people in Ireland per month
- The media which covered the subject of local elections included:
  - In Ireland: Evening Herald (Polski), Nasz Głos, Polski Express, Kurier Polski Zielona, Irlandia TV, madeinireland, itv, nadajemy.ie, ireland.pl, nietylkodlaorlow.ie
  - Polish in Poland: Onet, wp.polonia, interia, Praca i życie za granicą, Panorama, Polskie Radio, Wyborcza Gazeta
  - Irish in Ireland: Irish Times, RTE TV news, Newstalk, Today FM, Independent press and radio, Metro Éireann, Galway radio.

