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## **PRESS RELEASE**

April 8th 2009

### **MINISTERS UNVEIL DESIGN OF THE PEACE BRIDGE**

Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, and Social Development Minister, Margaret Ritchie, today unveiled the designs for Derry ~ Londonderry's new Peace Bridge which will run from former military base, Ebrington to the rear of the Guildhall.

The third bridge across the River Foyle, the Peace Bridge has been given £13,343,476 from the European Union's PEACE III Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). The programme's theme of Creating Shared Public Space aims to support large scale infrastructure developments that will tackle problems of separated communities by creating genuine new shared space or transforming contested space.

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.

Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of SEUPB said **“The Peace Bridge is the most significant project to be funded through the European Union's PEACE III Programme. It symbolises the reconciliation of communities and the building of a shared society which lie at the heart of the programme. The bridge will provide**

**an iconic legacy to the programme, the city and the people of the North West region”.**

Outlining the importance of the new bridge, Brenda Fraser, Ilex’s Director of Development, said: **“The Peace Bridge is the most significant capital project in Derry ~ Londonderry for decades. It is of fundamental importance within the regeneration programme and will unite the city physically and symbolically. As such, it heralds a new era for citizens and visitors alike, and will act as a catalyst for transformation and future growth. The fact that the European Union is providing funding for the bridge under the PEACE III Shared Space theme underlines the Peace Bridge’s contribution to new shared, public space to promote community interaction”.**

The contract for the design and construction of the Peace Bridge has been awarded to Graham, one of the largest engineering contractors in Northern Ireland. The company has brought together 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.

Speaking on behalf of the design and construction team, Alan Bill, Managing Director of Graham said: **“We are very pleased to be continuing our tradition of delivering historic and iconic bridges and have prepared a high quality design for the Peace Bridge. We now look forward to delivering construction to the highest quality”.**

The programme for delivery is well under way and the contractors will lodge the planning application in May. The contractors are aiming to start on site in September 2009 and the estimated completion date is October 2010. A large-scale image of the Peace Bridge will be on public display in the foyer of the City Hotel until 5pm, Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

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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.ilex-urc.com](http://www.ilex-urc.com)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland will benefit from a seven-year €33 million PEACE programme made up of €25 million in additional funding from the European Union along with national contributions of €108 million.

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland, 2007 – 2013 (the PEACE III Programme) is a distinctive European Union Structural Funds Programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promoting reconciliation. It will assist Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland and specifically focus on reconciling communities and contributing towards a shared society.

It will deliver these priorities through measures which will:

- Build positive relations at the local level
- Acknowledge the past
- Create shared public spaces
- Develop key institutional capacity for a shared society

The programme carries forward key aspects of the previous PEACE Programmes (PEACE I and PEACE II) and has a continued and renewed emphasis on reconciliation. The PEACE III Programme continues the earlier programme's cross-border focus on Ireland, North and South.

The purpose of the Creating Shared Public Space theme of the PEACE III programme is to tackle problems of separation of communities by creating genuine new shared space or transforming contested space. The focus is on large scale infrastructural developments that expand opportunities for common use, interaction and engagement, and economic development. It is hoped that this opportunity to interact will affect change in behavioural patterns in relation to shopping, working and socialising.

€2 million has been allocated to this theme.

The Peace Bridge will measure 235 metres and will have a gradient of 1/50. Designed for pedestrians and cyclists, the bridge will run from behind Guildhall Square on to the former Parade Ground in the former Ebrington Barracks.

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 is currently out to tender to be redesigned as a piazza and the listed buildings surrounding it are earmarked for tourism, leisure, arts & culture use.

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 for tourism, arts & culture, commercial, residential and convenience retail.

Northern Ireland's only Urban Regeneration Company Ilex 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

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