

Issue: EI 00:02 – 1 September 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EU POLICY	2
5-Year Assessment of EU Research	2
Publication of EU Foresight Exercise	3
Radical Change of EU Financial Rules	3
Commission Overhauls Staffing	4
Commission President Prodi on G8 Summit	4
Main Findings of Eurobarometer Survey	4
New Technologies - Some Facts and Figures	5
Public Health Programmes Extended to 2002	5
Food Safety White Paper	6
Medicinal Products and Public Health	6
Directive for Cutting Noise Pollution	7
Green Paper on PVC	7
Broadband Communications Network	7
Collaboration Between JRC and Spanish CSIC	8
New Network to Combat Racism	8
UK Regional Aid Map Approved	9
RESEARCH NEWS	9
Finding Your Way Through The Maze of Patents	9
Geographical BSE Risk	10
Innovative Pilot Actions for Combined Transport (PACT)	10
Europe Under Stress	10
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE	11
European Pathways in Work-Linked Training	11
EXTERNAL COLLABORATION	11
Overhaul of European Commission Support Programmes	11
Romania Steps up FP5 Awareness	12
EVENTS and AWARDS	12
Science and Governance in a Knowledge Society	12
NEW PUBLICATIONS and ON-LINE RESOURCES	13
European Observatory for SMEs Report	13
CD ROM on Non-Food Agro-Industrial Research	13
EU and US Co-operate to Improve Worker Safety	14
On-line Sea Bottom Data Archive	14
CORDIS	15
EUR-LEX (Official Journal C and L)	15
EUROPA	15
RAPID	15
GLOSSARY	16

EU POLICY

5-Year Assessment of EU Research

A new evaluation report into research in the European Union warns that there is a danger of Europe falling behind other economic areas and losing its place as a centre of excellence for the creation of knowledge if European leaders do not place research at the right political level. The report states that EU research programmes alone will not be enough to meet the challenges faced by European research and that demographic changes and decreasing research budgets will make a major policy review necessary. The report also assesses programme performance and administration and calls for greater flexibility to meet new challenges such as new diseases and food scares.

If the European Union wants to face the challenges of the new economy set out at the Lisbon European Council a real European research policy is needed, a policy which does not exist today, according to Joan Majó, the chairman of the evaluation panel composed of 11 high-level independent experts. The panel assessed the implementation and achievements of Community Research and Technological Development (RTD) programmes over the period 1995-1999, and covers activities relating to the Third (1990-94), Fourth (1994-98) and Fifth (1998-2002) Framework Programmes. The panel's recommendations are very much in line with the Lisbon approach. It makes a clear plea to European leaders to ensure that RTD policies in the Member States reinforce rather than duplicate each other. Along these lines, the panel recommends:

- Adopting a European RTD strategy "at the highest political level", then delegating the "task of formulating and implementing this strategy to the European Commission, supported by an appropriate advisory structure".
- Providing more support to Central and Eastern European countries for their RTD activities and taking steps to ensure that the transition to a market economy is successful.
- Restructuring and expanding the Framework Programme and making use of all the possibilities allowed by the Treaty of Amsterdam such as "variable geometry" under article 168.
- Encouraging participants to propose "riskier" projects, with a higher probability of failure, but also a higher pay-off if successful.
- "Major review" of the management and administration of the Framework Programme through "re-engineering existing structures and procedures, to delegate responsibility for tasks downward within the Commission, or to externalise them" and to "make procedures much simpler and easier to understand".
- Urgently tackle foreseeable "skill shortages" facing Europe over the next decade (combat brain drain, get young people interested in scientific careers, women in science, etc).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission Press Release IP/00/817 of 20/7/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>.

The full report is available on the following Internet sites:

http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/5yr_reports.htm,

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/area.html> (what's new)

Publication of EU Foresight Exercise

The Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) has completed the first EU-level foresight exercise. It looks forward to a European Union based around high-tech industries, competing on know-how, quality and performance. Foresight is the process of characterising contemporary change so that today's policies are informed by developments anticipated in the next ten to twenty years.

'Futures' has focused specifically on issues of Europe development - especially deregulation, the euro and EU enlargement - alongside the big issues, such as globalisation and the information society, that traditionally occupy foresight exercises. The objective was to work out the implications that the combination of these drivers is likely to have for technology, competitiveness and employment over the next ten years. After a structured 18-month process involving brainstorming, seminars, workshops and a mid-term conference, they have produced 12 substantial reports.

The project has already created a great deal of interest. Requests for follow-up work have come from Commission policy-makers working on early drafts of the next Research Framework Programme, other EU institutions and countries in central and eastern Europe, and even in Latin America, looking for help in designing their own foresight programmes. To build on this success, the Futures team has already started working on a successor project, due for launch within a year. The aim is to reinforce the European foresight perspective, refining more quantitative estimates of cross-impacts, especially in relation to enlargement, and getting to grips with the socio-economic implications of the emerging eEurope.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Ken Ducatel, European Commission,
Joint Research Centre, IPTS,
Tel + 34 95 448 8489
Fax. +34 95 448 8359
Email: ken.ducatel@jrc.es.

The full texts of the Futures panel's final reports are available at:

<http://futures.jrc.es/>

Radical Change of EU Financial Rules

The European Commission has proposed a radical overhaul of the Union's "financial bible", the financial regulation. This sets out the basic rules for the financial management of the Union and includes basic rules on contracts, grants, devolution of external aid management and the Structural Funds. The proposal has two parts:

- Provisions streamlining and modernising the rules and procedures governing budget management, and discharge.
- Provisions reforming the Union's financial management and budget structure.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission press release IP/00/856 of 26/7/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

Commission Overhauls Staffing

A two-year overhaul of Cion staffing has been agreed to bring its human resources more into line with key tasks. This involves around 1,000 new staff, although two-thirds of the extra posts needed for the ambitious internal reforms will come from a 'dividend' released by efficiency gains, redeployment and early retirement. The others will be sought from posts already envisaged in existing financial plans. Staff recruitment will concentrate on financial and personnel management and information technology, and on lawyers. Training will strengthen the skills of existing staff, too.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission press release IP/00/841 of 26/7/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

Commission President Prodi on G8 Summit

The discussions at the G8 Summit in Okinawa reflect concerns expressed by the Commission over recent months on infectious diseases (HIV, malaria, TB), food safety, information technology and world trade. Commission initiatives taken up in Okinawa include:

- Responsibility and action on infectious diseases
- International food safety panel
- Inclusive information society, refusal of the digital divide
- Support for a comprehensive new WTO Round this year with an inclusive agenda
- Reaching out to the rest of the world and civil society.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission Press Release IP/00/826 of 24/7/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

Main Findings of Eurobarometer Survey

According to Eurobarometer Nn 53, public opinion as regards European integration has remained largely unchanged over the last six months: those in Europe who support EU membership and believe that their country benefits from it still greatly outnumber those with opposing views. The lowest levels of support were found in the United Kingdom, Austria and Sweden. There is also strong support for the single currency although the Euro enjoys only 22% support in the United Kingdom. Enlargement is still not a priority for 60% of those surveyed. Only 27% of Europeans regard the accession of new Member States as a priority. Those most in favour of enlargement are the Danes (57%) and the Greeks (53%). For the first time, Eurobarometer surveyed the level of support for a European constitution, which was defined as a "fundamental document combining the various treaties currently in place". Seven out of 10 of those surveyed were in favour, with levels of support ranging from 88% in the Netherlands to 47% in the United Kingdom.

Eurobarometer no 53, which will be published in full in September, involved a survey of more than 16,000 people in April and May of this year. The Eurobarometer was set up in 1973 and carries out surveys twice a year. By

asking the same questions on each occasion, it enables useful comparisons to be made over time, and between the different Member States.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission Press Release IP/00/818 of 24/7/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

The main findings of Eurobarometer no 53 are available at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo>

New Technologies - Some Facts and Figures

- Europe devotes 1.8% of its GDP to research (compared to 2.8 % in the USA and 3% in Japan) and researchers account for 0.25% of the workforce, compared to 0.70% in the USA and 0.60% in Japan.
- More than 2 million new jobs have been created recently in high-tech sectors in the United States. The information and communication technologies sector is short of 500,000 professionals in Europe (15% of current jobs) - a figure that could reach 1.6 million in 2002. Between 1995 and 2005, Europe's workforce is set to increase by 6.9 million, but it will then fall by 2.2 million between 2005 and 2015.
- Between 25% and 50% of economic growth comes from technological progress. When a company adopts an innovation, it sees its workforce increase by 30% in just a few years and its salaries increase by 25% after three years
- The 25% of Europe's population represented by pensioners in 1995 will have increased to 38% by 2025.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The IPTS Futures Project, Research, Technology and Employment - Perspectives towards 2010.

http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/default.asp?sldSz=our_organisation&sldStSz=ipts Select Success Stories, the Futures Project.

Public Health Programmes Extended to 2002

The existing EU Public Health programmes on Health Promotion, Cancer, AIDS and other Communicable Diseases, Prevention of Drug Dependence, Health Monitoring and Pollution-related Diseases, will be extended for a further two years until the end of 2002. The proposal foresees an overall budget of 79 MEuro for the two years. Countries eligible to participate in the Public Health programmes are the 15 EU Member States, EEA countries (Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein), associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. Commission support is in general limited to up to 70% of the total cost of subsidised projects. In 2002 the existing programme will be replaced by the new overall health strategy including an action programme which the European Commission proposed earlier this year.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Midday Express of 31/07/00, available at:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/midday.htm?me=20000731>

Communication from the Commission on the Health Strategy of the European Community COM (2000) 285 final, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph/general/phpolicy_new.htm

Food Safety White Paper

The European Commission has published a series of comments from interested parties on the Food Safety White Paper. The White Paper which was adopted in January this year sets out a major programme of legislative reform to complete the EU's integrated "farm to table" approach to food safety. It also proposed the establishment of a new European Food Authority. In the spirit of greater transparency at all levels of food safety policy making which is a key element of the new approach, the Commission invited all interested parties to comment on the White Paper. Nearly 110 contributions were received. In so far as the authors have agreed to publication, these comments are now available on the Commission's web site. The comments include contributions from other EU institutions, EU Member State authorities, third country governments, food and drink industry, agricultural organisations, retailers and distributors of food products, consumer groups and other stakeholders. They represent a wide variety of different, and sometimes contradictory, positions on the White Paper approach. As far as possible, the Commission is taking both general and specific comments into account in its drafting of the concrete proposals.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The comments on the White Paper on Food Safety are available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/intro/index_en.html

Medicinal Products and Public Health

In the run-up to the forthcoming review of Community legislation on pharmaceuticals, the Council of Ministers has published its conclusions from debates held earlier this year on medicinal products and public health. In the conclusions, the Council underlines the continuing need for regulation of the pharmaceutical sector to reconcile private supply and social objectives. The Council also emphasises the importance of identifying medicines with 'significant added therapeutic value' in order to promote innovation. Strategies against antibiotic resistance are mentioned in particular.

As a general point, the Council is keen to see further promotion of collaboration between the Member States to share experiences and methodologies. The development of databases providing industry-independent information on medicines to health professionals, and where appropriate, to the public is also highlighted, alongside the need for continued promotion of information on generic drugs. Quality, safety and efficacy of drugs used in the veterinary field are also touched on and the Council urges the Commission to consider the safety of animal derived products, the safe use of veterinary products, policies on the eradication of certain infectious diseases, and their possible diffusion in the environment and misuses.

The Council has now called on the Commission to carry forward a broad health strategy to exploit the full potential of the Community action in relation to medicinal products and public health.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Reference: OJ C 218 of 31/07/00, p.10.

<http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/oj/index.html>. Select 31/7/00, C218.

Directive for Cutting Noise Pollution

The Commission has presented a proposal for a Directive on the Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise with the aim of providing a basis for a coherent, integrated EU policy on environmental noise. The proposal introduces measures to classify and understand the problems, as a necessary step to preparing future concrete measures to reduce noise pollution. The Commission is launching the idea of making EU-wide 'noise maps' based on common methods and indicators. These maps should be made available to the public. They should form the basis for development of action plans and strategies at local, national and EU levels to combat noise pollution. The Commission's Proposal, which will now go to the Council of Ministers and to the European Parliament for final adoption, provides a basis for the noise aspects of various other environmental related strategies and policies.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission press release IP/00/870 of 27/7/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

Green Paper on PVC

The European Commission has adopted a new Green Paper, which aims to assess the impact of PVC wastes on the environment. A number of issues relating to the PVC industry and its products, additives, waste management and recycling, among others, are identified and analysed in the Green Paper. The Commission's intention is to have a public consultation on PVC. The Green Paper thus invites all interested parties to discuss and comment on this document before the end of November 2000, with a public hearing to be organised in October 2000. On the basis of the analyses developed in this document and the outcome of this consultation process, the Commission aims to present a Communication setting out a comprehensive Community strategy on the environmental issues of PVC at the beginning of 2001.

Comments should be received before the end of November 2000 at any of the following addresses:

Mr. Ludwig Krämer (Head of Unit, E/03, DG Environment) or
Mr Reinhardt Schulte-Braucks (Head of Unit, E/03, DG Enterprise)

200 rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200,
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Email env-pvc@cec.eu.int

Fax +32 2 299 1068 / +32 2 295 0281

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Waste Management studies:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/facts_en.htm

Full text of the Green Paper (Draft):

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/pvc/green_en.pdf

Broadband Communications Network

If Europe is not quick enough to invest in developing a broadband communication network accessible to its researchers, its scientific and technological potential will be considerably handicapped compared to the formidable strength these new information highways are giving US research. This is the alarm cry sounded by the European Science Foundation and Academia Europaea (an association of 1,850 individual European scientists). These two organisations are making a joint and urgent appeal to the national authorities and the European Union to fund the investment to provide access to such a network, not only for university research institutes but ultimately for the educational system as a whole. They stress the need to extend the funding of the TEN-155 (Trans-European Network at 155 Mbit/sec) network, which ended in May 2000, until the decision is made at the end of the year on its successor, known as the GEANT Network - with a capacity of several gigabits/sec. This objective was included in the communication, Towards a European Research Area.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.esf.org/ftp/pdf/SciencePolicy/ESPB7.pdf>

Collaboration Between JRC and Spanish CSIC

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre has recently signed a collaboration agreement with El Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC) - the Spanish Council for National Research. The agreement sets out a framework for mutually beneficial collaboration through joint projects, sharing facilities and staff exchanges. In particular, the institutions will collaborate on research to identify, control and establish common standards on genetically modified organisms, food technology and quality control, biomaterials and environmental monitoring.

The CSIC and JRC will also work together on socio-economic related research, which would include, for example, studying issues concerned with the candidate countries and the European science and technology observatory. The JRC is keen to promote collaboration between research institutions, in line with initiatives suggested by the European Commission in its communication on a European Research Area (ERA) where emphasis is placed on 'a common system of technical and scientific reference for policy implementation.'

FURTHER INFORMATION: Please contact:

Mr Robin Miège

European Commission, Joint Research Centre

Fax + 32 2 295 0146

Email: robin.miege@cec.eu.int or:

Dr Rafael Rodriguez Clemente

(CSIC delegation in Brussels)

Fax + 32 2 551 0285

Email: raro.csois@sost.be

REFERENCE:

Cordis Press Release no. 15312 of 4/8/00, available at:

<http://dbs.cordis.lu/news/en/home.html>

New Network to Combat Racism

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia has taken a new step in achieving its aims to combat racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, and of promoting the values in the EU Treaties about tolerance and equality. The Centre, which is based in Vienna, has launched a new information network, RAXEN (the European Racism and Xenophobia Information Network). One of the objectives of RAXEN is to establish in the Member States a network of coordinators for the collection and collation of information, data and statistics and the initiation of research in the broad field of racism at the local, regional and national level in the Member States.

The material collected will be available to Member States, the EP, Cion and other European and international organisations and key players in the field.

To strengthen the perspective from outside Europe, the Centre will also establish a small global network, RAREN (Rapid Response and Evaluation Network) with twenty experts from Europe, Asia, the US and Africa.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Available from the Centre's website at <http://www.eumc.eu.int>

UK Regional Aid Map Approved

Approval of the UK regional aid map has cleared the way for financial assistance for business investment in parts of the country. Four areas will be eligible for up to 35% support for large companies' investment projects: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, and West Wales and the Valleys. In Northern Ireland, with special regional aid status, the figure is 40%. Aid of up to 30% will be possible in some sparsely populated areas of Scotland. 28 % of the British population live in areas eligible for aid, along with the whole of Northern Ireland.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission press release IP/00/849 of 26/7/00 available at:
<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

RESEARCH NEWS

Finding Your Way Through The Maze of Patents

Patents are key to technological development, not only because it is vital to protect the innovations that result from a research project, but also because they are themselves a fertile source of new innovations. European and national patent offices are a goldmine of technological literature from which research bodies and companies can draw useful ideas for developing their activities. Thanks to the esp@cenet system, created by the European Patent Office, this wealth of information can now be consulted via the Web. The problem is that for non-specialists it is far from easy to find their way around this vast library. The IPR Helpdesk (Intellectual Property Rights Helpdesk) at the European Commission (Innovation and SMEs programme) has therefore just launched a multimedia 'tutorial' which provides on-line instruction on how to make targeted searches in this huge reservoir of ideas.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/mm/esptut/index.htm>

Geographical BSE Risk

The Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) of the EU has published its final opinion on the geographical BSE risk (GBR) together with detailed assessment reports for 23 countries. In all countries where BSE is already found (United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, France, Portugal, Switzerland and Denmark), the geographical BSE risk has tended to stabilise or decrease since 1994 or 1996. The SSC came to the conclusion that BSE is likely to be present at levels below the detection limits of their surveillance systems in Italy, Spain and Germany and unlikely but not excluded in Austria, Finland and Sweden. It is important to underline that geographical BSE risk is not an indicator of a risk to humans via food consumption, but a qualitative indicator of the risk that live cattle could be infected with the BSE agent.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission press release IP/00/899 of 1/8/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

The full text of the opinion and the related country reports are available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/sc/ssc/outcome_en.html

Innovative Pilot Actions for Combined Transport (PACT)

'Combined transport' is the transport of containers and similar intermodal units using road transport in the initial and final leg of a journey where rail, inland waterway or short sea shipping forms the main part. The PACT programme helps start up innovative commercial services in international combined transport, promoting socially and environmentally sustainable transport. PACT projects must be viable on their own after a maximum of three years' funding.

The Commission has reduced the total number of subsidised projects - from 29 in 1999 to 21 this year - with a consequent increase in funding per project. This will improve the effectiveness of the PACT programme as such and benefit the ultimate viability of each individual action. The budget available for projects this year is 5.6 MEuro and the funding share per mode is as follows:

- Rail-related projects: 33%
- Short sea projects: 30%
- Inland waterway projects: 12%
- Projects involving several modes: 25%

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Further details on the funded actions can be found on the PACT Website at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/themes/land/english/pact/index.htm>

Europe Under Stress

A recent report from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work defines work-related stress as a recognised and increasing health and safety risk for Europe's workforce.

The report, which is based on a wide-ranging review of scientific literature, states that the high level of work-related stress in Europe is a major cause for concern and a challenge for all, in terms of the health effects on individual workers, the costs and economic impact on businesses and the resulting social costs to European countries.

The report also identifies growing evidence on the effectiveness of stress management interventions. Such interventions, especially at the organisational level, are beneficial to both individual and organisational health and should be the subject of further investigation and evaluation. The report also highlights that further research is needed into the methods and common practices of dealing with stress in the workplace. Practical solutions transferable to a wide variety of work environments need to be researched, evaluated and shared at the European level.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

A summary fact sheet as well as the full report are available on-line at:

<http://agency.osha.eu.int/publications>

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

European Pathways in Work-Linked Training

The European Commission has launched a new Community document, EUROPASS Training. The aim of the document is to assist and promote mobility within work-linked training by providing a voluntary Europe-wide means of recording periods of training outside the 'home' Member State. EUROPASS is available to trainees whose placements began after 1 January 2000 and initially it will be operated for a period of five years.

EUROPASS will provide trainees with an individualised record of their training placements outside the Member State where their training programme is based. The period of vocational training in another Member State is known as a *European Pathway* and must be part of a structured vocational training programme leading to a recognised qualification in this country. The EUROPASS documents are issued by the European Commission and delivered to the National Agency in each member state. In the UK, the Department for Education and Employment has appointed the Central Bureau for International Education and Training to administer EUROPASS.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.europass-uk.co.uk/>, or:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/europass/index-en.html>

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

Overhaul of European Commission Support Programmes

The Commission wants to overhaul the management of its support programmes. Ultimately 99 of the 120 existing technical assistance offices (TAOs) are to

disappear. In the field of external action in particular, an agency is to take over much of the work done by the TAOs. Expenditure on the current 120 TAOs totals €133 million a year.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission press release IP/00/855 of 26/7/00 and IP/00/917 of 8/8/00 available at: <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

Romania Steps up FP5 Awareness

The Romanian National Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation, ANSTI, has initiated and is financing CORINT-SUPPORT, a project dedicated to set up an awareness campaign aimed at stimulating Romanian scientific and technological participation in the European Union's Fifth Framework programme.

Romania's complete integration into EU research initiatives (even though it is already an associated state to the Fifth Framework programme as well as a member of European research cooperation frameworks such as COST and EUREKA) requires a thorough understanding of the new problem-solving approach initiated by the European Commission and of the opportunities offered. CORINT-SUPPORT will stimulate projects that correlate European priorities with national ones. Many of the project activities are carried out in close cooperation with the Romanian National FP5 Contact Point at ANSTI.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Please contact

Paul Dan Cristea, Prof. Ph.D.

'Politehnica' University of Bucharest

Director of 'CORINT-SUPPORT'

Tel. + 40 1411 4437, Fax + 40 1 410 4414

E-mail: pcristea@dsp.pub.ro

URL: <http://www.corint-suport.ro>

EVENTS and AWARDS

Science and Governance in a Knowledge Society

The Cion's Joint Research Centre and the DG for Research are jointly organising a conference on the relationship between science and governance. The objective of the event is to tell the public about the role of science in the European decision-making process.

For two days, scientists, academics and decision-makers from all over Europe and from other continents will debate the interaction between science and society. The conference should define their implications for the European reference system proposed in the Cion communication on the European Research Area.

The conference will take place on the 16-17 October in Brussels, under the patronage of Philippe Busquin, European Commissioner for Research.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Available on the conference webpages at: <http://www.jrc.es/sci-gov/>

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ON-LINE RESOURCES

European Observatory for SMEs Report

The European Commission has released the 6th report of the European Observatory for SMEs, a tool for enterprise policy makers, statisticians, researchers and economists. This independent report is a source of comprehensive information and data on the performance of SMEs in the European Economic Area, plus Switzerland. This survey involved 8,000 small and medium companies in all 19 countries covered by the report. Its findings will help shape enterprise policy initiatives to be launched under the Multi-annual Programme for Enterprises and Entrepreneurship (2001-2005).

The report combines aggregate data on Europe's almost 20 million SMEs with an analysis of recent national policy developments and key issues affecting their competitiveness. With a view to harnessing their potential to accelerate job creation, innovation and economic growth, it looks into specific areas of their business environment. These areas include the functioning of the markets for products and services, labour market issues, access to both finance and Community programmes, associations and foundations in the social economy and the impact of electronic commerce on the way SMEs do business.

The sixth report also includes two in-depth studies on themes of particular relevance to SMEs:

- Vocational training, where SMEs do not yet fully benefit from the existing training support infrastructure;
- The role that new services are playing in the evolution of the European economy and that enterprises play in generating and spreading new services across Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Commission press release IP/00/885 of 28/7/00 available at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/questen.ksh>

Summaries of the report can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/analysis/observatory.htm.

The report can be ordered at the price of 53 Euro at any of the sales agents of the EUR-OP, the Commission's publications office. Information on the EUR-OP sales offices and online order form are available at:

<http://eur-op.eu.int/general/en/s-ad.htm>.

Additional statistical information will be available on the CD-ROM version to be available in October 2000.

CD ROM on Non-Food Agro-Industrial Research

Europe's farmers have got so efficient at producing food that they need to find other uses for their crops. The NF-2000 Network (Non-Food Agro-Industrial Research Information Dissemination Network) has been set up to publicise alternative uses on the web, on CD-ROM and on paper. There is a huge range of products that can now be made from renewable plant sources, e.g. fine chemicals, bulk chemicals, liquid fuels, building materials (composites), paper

and card, lubricants, detergents, biodegradable polymers and fabrics. The NF-2000 Network covers the chain from field or forest to end-user for novel products based on crops or trees.

Progress in this area is the result of a series of EU-funded research programmes over the last decade. Initiated by ECLAIR which had a strong biochemical content, research continued under AIR, and was taken up again by FAIR, which covers complete production chains from field to factory, with increased support for scale-up and demonstration projects.

The CD-ROM contains the NF-2000 database as it stood in March 2000, as well as details of national and international research on making renewable biomaterials and biomass from industrial crops, forestry and residues. This disk contains more than 2,500 contacts, 1,100 items of information and over 350 photos. It also contains the complete text of two recent publications: the *AIR Programme Final Project Results and the Report on Commercial Success of ECLAIR Programme 1999*.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Non food agro-industrial research CD-ROM. ISBN 1 872691 27 7. ISSN 1368-6755, EUR 19317, CPL Scientific Publishing Services, Newbury, 2000, English, EUR 70 / £40. URL: http://www.nf-2000.org/the_cd.html.

EU and US Co-operate to Improve Worker Safety

The European Agency for Safety and Health at work and the US Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration have joined forces to create a new internet-based, information resource.

The new web site provides access to a wealth of American and European information on a wide range of occupational safety and health issues.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://osha.eu.int/eu-us>

On-line Sea Bottom Data Archive

A new Internet database of over 200,000 samples of sediment from the seafloor is to be presented at the Eurocean 2000 exhibition in Hamburg.

The EU-SEASED database, jointly co-ordinated by the Southampton Oceanography Centre, includes records of seabed samples and cores gathered since the 19th century and held by different marine geology departments of the European national Geological Surveys, European universities and marine research institutes.

EU-SEASED is designed to be easy to use, and enables on-line entry and editing of metadata by the project partners and data retrieval, including GIS-based user interface and data presentation. After 2001, the national partners will continue to maintain EU-SEASED as a public access facility on the Internet, updating their own countries' datasets from national programmes.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.eu-seased.net>

Project coordinators:
Constantine Perissoratis (EUMARSIN)
Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration
70 Messoghion Street
Athens 11527 Greece
Tel. +301 779 5093 / 770 7942; Fax +30 1777 9467 / 775 2211
E-mail: cprs@mail.ariadne-t.gr

Guy Rothwell (EUROCORE)
Challenge division for seafloor processes
Southampton Oceanography Centre
European Way
Empress Dock
Southampton
SO143ZH, UK
Tel. +44 2380 596 567; Fax +44 2380 596 554
E-mail: R.G.Rothwell@soc.soton.ac.uk

CORDIS

Cordis is the Community Research and Development Information Service. It is a web based service which provides information on EU R&D programmes and related issues.

URL: <http://www.cordis.lu>

EUR-LEX (Official Journal C and L)

This web site provides information on European Union Law. It includes electronic copies of the Treaties and recent Copies of the Official Journal of the European Communities (OJ). The OJ, published daily in 11 languages, consists of two related series, the L series (Legislation) and the C series (Information, notices and preparatory EU legislation), a supplement and an annex. EUR-Lex provides free access to the C and L series of the Official Journal for a period of 45 days following publication. (The OJ issue with the Euro exchange rates (L 359, 31/12/1998) is permanently available in PDF format in EUR-Lex).

URL: EUR-LEX <http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/index.html>

Official Journal C & L <http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/oj/index.html>

Treaty of Amsterdam <http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/index.html>

EUROPA

EUROPA is the official European Union's Server. It contains links to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Commission and other EU institutions and contains information on EU policies listed by subject area.

URL: <http://www.europa.eu.int/index-en.htm>

RAPID

RAPID is a database giving a daily view of the activities of the European Union as presented by the Institutions in their press releases.

Commission Press Release are available at:

GLOSSARY

Cion	<p>The European Commission - made up of 20 Commissioners nominated by the Member States - both initiates proposals for EU legislation and executes EU policies and actions.</p> <p>http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm</p>
COST	<p>European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research is a framework for scientific and technical cooperation, allowing the coordination of national research on a European level.</p> <p>http://www.netmaniacs.com/cost/</p>
'Council'	<p>'Council' refers to the 'Council of Ministers', the principle decision-making body within the European Union. It has both executive and legislative powers, the latter in some cases exercised jointly with the European Parliament (co-decision procedure). The Council is composed of one representative at ministerial level from each Member State. Which Ministers attend each Council meeting varies according to the subject discussed, e.g. In the UK the Minister of Science attends the Research Council.</p> <p>http://ue.eu.int/en/summ.htm</p>
Culture 2000	<p>First European Community Framework Programme in support of culture, which runs from 2000-2004 (inclusive).</p> <p>http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/index_en.html</p>
CVCP	<p>Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (UK)</p> <p>http://www.cvcp.ac.uk/</p>
EESD	<p>Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development (FP5)</p> <p>http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/</p>
eEurope	<p>eEurope</p> <p>A political initiative of the Cion to allow Europe to benefit fully from the Information Society.</p> <p>http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/information_society/eeurope/documentation/index_en.htm</p>
EP	<p>The European Parliament - which is made up of elected representatives (MEPs) from all the Member States. It shares decision-making power with the Council in a number of areas including research and education.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.eu.int/sg/tree/en/default.htm</p>
ERA	<p>European Research Area. On 18 January 2000, the Cion issued a Communication entitled "Towards a European Research Area" which proposed ways in which research in Europe could be more effectively organised and coordinated.</p> <p>http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/area.html</p>
ESC	<p>European Economic and Social Committee is a consultative</p>

body made up of representatives of Europe's employers' organisations, trade unions, farmers, consumer groups and professional associations.

<http://www.ces.eu.int/>

Press Releases:

http://www.ces.eu.int/en/acs/fr_acs_press_rels.htm

ESF	European Science Foundation. http://www.esf.org/
ESF	The European Social Fund http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/esf/en/index.htm
Eureka	Eureka is a Europe-wide network for Industrial Research and Development. http://www3.eureka.be/Home/
FP (FP5, FP6)	<p>The EU's Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The Fifth Framework Programme (FP5) was adopted in 1998 and will run until 2002, when the next framework programme FP6, is expected to supersede it.</p> <p>FP5 is composed of four thematic programmes (see QoL, IST, Growth, EESD) and three horizontal programmes (see INCO II, Innovation and SMEs, and IHP). http://www.cordis.lu/fp5</p>
Green Paper	Green Papers are communications published by the European Commission on a specific policy area. Primarily they are documents addressed to interested parties who are invited to participate in a process of consultation and debate. In some cases they provide an impetus for subsequent legislation.
Growth	Competitive and Sustainable Growth (FP5) http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/
IHP	Improving Human Potential Programme (FP5) http://www.cordis.lu/improving/home.html
INCO II	Confirming the International Role of Community Research (FP5) http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/
INDU	The European Parliament Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (FP5) http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/en/default.htm
INNOVATION and SME	Promoting of Innovation and Encouragement of SME Participation (FP5) http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/
INTAS	International Association for the promotion of cooperation with scientists from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union. http://www.intas.be/mainfs.htm

IST	Information Society Technologies Programme (FP5) http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/
MEDIA	The MEDIA Plus Programme (2001 - 2005) is to be introduced as a follow-up to the Media II programme which ends in December 2000. The programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry. Http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/avpolicy/media/index_en.html
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation http://www.nato.int/
PHARE	The Phare Programme is the European Union's instrument for financial and technical cooperation with the countries of central and eastern Europe. http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/index.htm
QoL	Quality of Life Programme (FP5) http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/
RTD	Research and Technological Development
TACIS	The Tacis Programme aims to forge closer economic and political links with the former republics of the Soviet Union and Mongolia (also known as New Independent States (NIS)) http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/tacis/index.htm
Treaty of Amsterdam	The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999. http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/index.html
White Paper	White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. They often follow a Green Paper (see entry in glossary).

Produced by the United Kingdom Research Office (UKRO)
for the British Council.

UKRO
Rue de la Loi 83
1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 230 5275 / 1535
Fax: +32 2 230 4803
Email: ukro@bbsrc.ac.uk
URL: <http://www.ukro.ac.uk>
