

News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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EU POLICY

Consultation on the Draft EU Constitutional Treaty

The Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) will take place on 4th October 2003, with Member States attending to discuss a new Treaty for the EU. The starting point for the negotiations will be the draft Constitutional Treaty drawn up by the Convention on the Future of Europe. The IGC will take the final decisions on reform of the EU, to make its institutions more transparent; more accountable; and more effective and efficient, and thus better able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

As concerns research, the draft Constitution states that 'the Union shall encourage undertakings, including small and medium-sized undertakings, research centres and universities in their research and technological development activities of high quality; it shall support their efforts to cooperate with one another, aiming, notably, at enabling researchers to cooperate freely across borders and undertakings to exploit the internal market potential, in particular through the opening-up of national public contracts, the definition of common standards and the removal of legal and fiscal obstacles to that cooperation.' In pursuit of these objectives the EU will implement research, technological development and demonstration programmes, promote cooperation in this field with third countries and international organisations, disseminate and optimise the results of activities and stimulate the training and mobility of researchers in the EU.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1060854374530&a=Page>

The Draft Treaty is available at:

<http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/Treaty/cv00850.en03.pdf>

Britain Defines Negotiating Position on EU Constitution

In a White Paper published on 9th September 2003, the British government has laid out its terms for the upcoming intergovernmental council on the EU Constitution. Announcing the publication of the UK government's White Paper that sets out Britain's response to the draft treaty, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told the UK Parliament the text 'largely met Britain's interests'. In his foreword to the White Paper, Prime Minister Tony Blair acknowledged that the existing text was not perfect but said the treaty would be 'good for Britain and good for Europe'. Mr Straw advised that the final decision would wait until after negotiations with other EU Members and that the government would continue its refusal to call a referendum on the EU Constitution, insisting the right place to vote on it was in Parliament.

Key issues for approval include Britain wanting to keep Common Security and Foreign Policy separate from representation on international organisations, Britain opposing moves that would challenge NATO's role in a mutual EU defence pact, Britain welcoming the use of qualified majority voting (QMV) as a general rule with certain exceptions (including treaty change, tax, social security and defence issues), changes to EU's economic management and accountability to Member States of a proposed 'EU foreign minister'.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391629&a=KArticle&aid=1062158184153>

Sapir Report on an Agenda for a Growing Europe

The EC has made public a report commissioned by Romano Prodi from a High-Level Group of independent experts, to analyse the consequences of the two strategic economic goals set by the European Union for 2010 (the Lisbon Agenda and Eastern Enlargement). The focus is on where EU policies and their economic management can make the greatest contribution to achieving the declared objectives of sustainable growth with more and better jobs, continuing price stability and greater economic and social cohesion in the enlarged European Union.

Among other objectives, the report demands that the EU boost investment in knowledge; by increasing government and EU spending in research and post-graduate education, allocating research grants according to the highest scientific standards, creating an independent European Agency for Science and Research, and encouraging private-sector R&D via tax credits. The report suggests that Member States and the European Union as a whole need to raise more effective investment in higher education and research. Neither Member State governments nor the EU should try to pick winners and adopt too much of a top-down approach. Public support for industrial R&D should be based on clearly-articulated public needs and avoid covert subsidisation of individual enterprises.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/pdf/sapir_report_en.pdf

Greenhouse Gases Emission Legislation

The EC proposed legislation marks the first phase of the EU's climate change programme. It proposes legislation to reduce emissions of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs are used in refrigerants and cleaning solvents), perfluorocarbons (PFCs are used in semiconductor manufacture and also cleaning solvents) and sulphur hexafluoride (used in magnesium production and high voltage switch gear). All of these are powerful greenhouse gases covered by the Kyoto Protocol, whose emissions are set to rise if no action is taken.

The legislation will have an impact on component and systems suppliers, which include small and medium sized enterprises, as well as car manufacturers. The effects will be more positive for those with a strong innovative base, claims the proposal: 'Many EU companies are global leaders in alternative refrigerant technologies. For these companies the proposal will have a positive effect as they can concentrate their research and development effort on new technologies. For less innovative companies, the proposal is likely to imply additional cost as they need to step up their research and development activities.'

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2003/com2003_0492en01.pdf

New Ozone Directive

A new EU Directive entered into force on the 9th September 2003 which aims to ensure a better protection from ground level ozone of both the population and plant life. This year's hot summer in Europe resulted in record-high ground level ozone levels in many parts of the EU. Ground level ozone is a pollutant which can cause severe health problems, in particular in vulnerable groups like elderly people and children.

The new Directive obliges Member States to inform and alert the population when ozone concentrations in the air are above certain thresholds. It also defines long-term objectives to protect human health and vegetation from ozone to be attained across the EU as far as possible by 2010.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/air/ambient.htm#2>

EC to Fuel Hydrogen Economy

On the 10th September 2003, the EC presented a roadmap towards a European Partnership for a sustainable hydrogen economy in an effort to decrease the EU's dependence on fossil fuels. The partnership would involve all major private and public hydrogen stakeholders at EU level and aim to promote hydrogen research in Europe, which is seen to be a future alternative source of energy. This was seen as a response to the US 'Freedom Car' initiative, which promotes the development of hydrogen as an alternate fuel in an effort to reduce American dependence on foreign oil.

The production of hydrogen remains a critical challenge. The current reliance on conventional fossil fuels and gas undermines the much praised potential of hydrogen to contribute to the security of energy supply, and the reduction of greenhouse gases. It does not yet represent a diversification away from fossil fuels as the primary energy sources. Some critics claim that the US-EU strategy for hydrogen is no more than 'hype' while others insist that any future action needs to be built on production of hydrogen from renewable sources.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/energy/nn/nn_rt_hlg1_en.html

Genetic Testing in the Workplace

The European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) has produced a report of their opinion on 'the use of genetics testing in the workplace'. Available in both English and French, the document outlines the legal, ethical, technological and practical issues concerning the use of such technology, and defines the constraints under which genetic testing – whether screening or monitoring – might be used.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/european_group_ethics/docs/avis18EN.pdf

http://europa.eu.int/comm/european_group_ethics/index_en.htm

EP Calls for Europe to Match US Space Spending

The EP ITRE has adopted an 'own-initiative' report calling on the EU to close the investment gap in space between Europe and the US. The report, by Italian MEP Guido Bodrato, welcomes the pending agreement between the EU and ESA as a major step towards cooperation, which should minimise duplication of effort in Europe.

The report also highlights the growing gap between public spending on space in Europe and the US in both the civil and military spheres and raises concerns that the US monopoly on many strategic technologies may lead to a dependence on these American technologies.

MEPs also called on industry to develop specific services for the use of the Galileo satellite navigation programme and support the swift implementation of the global monitoring of environment and security (GMES) initiative in the context of growing international interest.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/itre/20030908/ITRE20030908.htm>

EC to Promotes Gender Equality on Development Co-operation

The EC has proposed a new Regulation to promote gender equality in all areas of development co-operation. In spite of recent policy developments in this area much remains to be done to deliver concrete results such as the improvement of conditions for women in developing countries. The regulation therefore aims to strengthen the implementation of measures with a more active approach to promote gender equality in EU development co-operation policies, strategies and actions. This includes specific measures in favour of women in developing countries. A total of €9 million are available for this purpose from 2004-2006.

Two complementary actions are foreseen: (i) priorities and needs of women and men of all ages should actively be taken into account in all the key development and co-operation policies; and (ii) specific measures will be undertaken aimed at improving the situation of women in developing countries, including promotion of participation in national and local politics; support for women's organisations; provision of women's access to basic social services; access to productive resources, especially to land, credit and the labour market; and taking specific account of women in emergency aid and rehabilitation operations. Other activities include dissemination of information on gender equality through guidelines, best practices etc. awareness raising and strengthening and capacity building among key players in the development process.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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

RESEARCH NEWS

ERC Expert Group Interim Paper

The European Research Council Expert Group (ERCEG) was established during the Danish EU presidency to further debate on the purpose, scope and possible options for creating an ERC. An interim paper has been prepared to present the current discussions within the group. The ERCEG will submit its report to the EU research ministers in December 2003. As a background to the debate the ERCEG strongly supported the points of view of the Lisbon and Barcelona declarations, and also the recent Sapir report (see above). The ERCEG has found strong reasons for a European Research Fund for basic, strategic and investigator-driven research, which would be led and managed by a European Research Council.

According to the paper, other main tasks for an ERC would include increasing scientific excellence on all levels across Europe, adopting specific European programmes for research training and mobility, supporting better access to international large-scale research programmes and facilities, furthering collaboration between national research councils and guide the development of competitive research in weaker areas, geographically or by theme. In a series of defined stage, the ERC must be established by the EU heads of state, approved by the EP, be politically accountable to the EU but operate in scientific autonomy. The ERC should not be funded by the EU at the cost of existing and well established national or European research programmes. The ERC should be led by the scientific community in Europe, in a light organisational form and use international peer review in a competitive system to fund internationally excellent research in all disciplines.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.ercexpertgroup.org>

Report Calls for Overhaul of EU's Structural Policy

The EU should replace its inefficient structural policy with a new cohesion policy focusing on trans-national measures with a clear European value added, according to research undertaken by the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies. The study, 'Reinventing Cohesion - The Future of European Structural Policy', questions three key assumptions underlying the European structural policy: the regional disparities in EU are much smaller than they are normally reported to be, the structural policy interventions have a very limited impact on convergence, convergence has a very limited impact on cohesion.

The study calls for a thorough policy review in preparation of the next budgetary period starting in 2007. It proposes three options for replacing the current structural and cohesion funds with new policies: re-nationalisation, letting Member States take care of their own regional problems, reallocation within the EU budget in favour of currently under funded policy areas and radical reform of structural policy, discarding the intermediate objective of convergence but giving greater emphasis to the ultimate goal of cohesion. One proposal to come from the report is that support would no longer be channelled to projects with local effects only. The principal criterion of eligibility would instead be the trans-national dimension, with EU resources reserved for investments and activities containing a clear European value added.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://www.sieps.se/_pdf/Publikationer/200317.pdf

<http://www.euractiv.com/ndbtext/innovation/sapirreport.pdf>

World Heart Day – New EC Projects Launched

Coinciding with World Heart Day on the 28th September this year, the EC announced its support for heart disease research. Under FP5 the EC contributed €35.5 million towards 24 projects. Now, under FP6, the EC released information on two new, large scale projects, with EC contributions of €17 million, which are currently under negotiation. Both projects aim to achieve better prevention, diagnosis and treatment of patients with heart disease.

The first is an Integrated Project, which concerns the genomics of atherothrombosis in coronary heart disease. Genetic factors will be analysed in large patient populations and the research will seek to develop markers to identify patients at risk, and develop medicines to help prevent or treat inadequate thrombosis. The second project, a Network of Excellence, will seek to pool and integrate in a lasting way, excellent vascular research teams across Europe around a joint research programme. Main topics for this programme are defects in the lining of blood vessels, looking into the instability of assemblies of cholesterol, lipids and cells in blood vessels which can lead to thrombosis and therapy for growth of new blood vessels.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.worldheartday.org>

<http://www.cordis.lu/lifscihealth/home.html>

European Brain Research Area

Brain specialists gathered in Brussels on 18th September to discuss how funding for European brain research could be better co-ordinated. The Conference on 'Brain Research in Europe: Structuring European Neuroscience', gathered representatives of public administrations, research funding bodies, patients' organisations and industry to discuss the creation of a European Research Area for brain research.

'The brain and neurosciences are a field where Europe can do much more by working better together', said EU Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin. The investment in European neuroscience research is fragmented and this area of research is still under-funded. On the occasion of the conference, the EC announced that it was negotiating €45 million worth of new projects for brain research, to be launched in 2004. This funding will be allocated from FP6.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2003/brain/index_en.html

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

New Research on Indoor Air Pollution

The EC Joint Research Centre (JRC) have carried out two studies into indoor air pollution, and have found that there may be greater health risks than was previously thought to be the case. It is estimated that European citizens spend up to 90 per cent of their life indoors; consequently, the findings of the studies are seen to be cause for concern, with Research Commissioner, Philippe Busquin, stressing the need to upgrade indoor pollution monitoring and response capabilities, and encouraging European policymakers and public authorities to address these issues.

Under the two studies – ‘EXPOLIS’ and ‘Macbeth’ – results were compared in various European cities between indoor and outdoor levels. High levels of pollutants were found such as tobacco smoke, asbestos, benzene and radon in people's houses. These pollutants can be responsible for causing asthma and other allergic related illnesses, as well as significantly increasing incidence of cancer. Reasons put forward for the pollution levels include reductions in ventilation rates, aimed at limiting energy consumption, and the use of new materials, which are resulting in unknown toxic substances being released into indoor environments. The JRC is also creating a new network for European scientists in this field, called ‘INDEX’, which aims to identify priorities and assess the need for an EU strategy and action plan.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://ihcp.jrc.cec.eu.int/PCE/facilities/indoortron_facilities_index.html

ICT Report

For all the difficulties plaguing Europe's economies, the deployment of information and communication technologies (ICT) continues to show dynamic development, a new report by the EC reveals. The e-Business W@tch report examines the overall deployment of ICT within 15 sectors across Europe and carries some promising findings.

The report identifies an incipient migration to broadband among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with digital subscriber line (DSL) connections increasing from 25 to 31 per cent. However, mindful of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan's ambitious goal of achieving widespread availability of broadband access at competitive prices, the report suggests continued monitoring of its development, particularly among SMEs. The report also suggests that the IT skills gap has narrowed since 2002 and is even lower than in 2000, one of the boom years of the Internet and IT industry. The report also speculates that while the gap has not totally disappeared, it should decrease again significantly once the economy starts to recover.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/marketwatch/resources/resources.htm>

EC Consultation on Legal Barriers in e-Business

The EC has launched an Internet consultation to research legal barriers hindering e-business. The consultation will run until 7 November 2003. The results will be presented at a conference in March/April 2004 in Brussels.

The EC invites enterprises to take part in an eight-week online consultation on the remaining legal barriers in e-business. ‘The EU legal framework for e-business is well and widely established. It's now time to take stock of remaining barriers and decide how to remove them,’ said EU Enterprise Commissioner Erkki Liikanen in a EC press release.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Stakeholders are invited to consult the questionnaire at the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm

EC Press Release number IP/03/1254 of 16 September 2003, available at:

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

ESA to Assess Pan-European Road Toll System

The European Space Agency (ESA) is undertaking a feasibility study to look into the possibility of implementing a pan-European road tolling system. The research aims to establish whether satellite technology can be used to calculate the cost of motoring. The research follows a Commission proposal, published in April 2003, recommending that all vehicle owners should pay road tolls electronically by 2010. The proposal foresees all vehicles carrying a black box, which would be tracked by satellites relaying information on the distance travelled, the class of road used, and the time at which the journey was made.

Proponents of the 'pay for use' system believe that it would result in reduced congestion and lower infrastructure costs. Ideally, a pan-European tolling system would make use of Galileo, Europe's satellite navigation system, which is expected to be operational by 2008.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://www.esa.int/export/esaSA/SEMBC5ZO4HD_index_0.html

International Evaluation of the Academy of Finland

10 years after the first international evaluation, a high profile panel of experts is looking into the changes that have taken place in Academy operations and organisation, research funding and the working environment at national and international level. The international aspect is increasingly significant, as are updates of funding instruments, a new national centre of excellence, restructuring of research programmes and the Academy's role as a funding body and expert in science policy.

The panel will examine the Academy's strategy, operations and funding programmes and make firm recommendations on development. The panel includes Professor Michael Gibbons as panel chairman (Secretary General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities for Great Britain), Professor Patrick Dowling (Vice Chancellor at the University of Surrey), Professor Gretty Mirdal (University of Copenhagen and a board member of the Danish National Research Foundation) and Professor Ralf Petterson (Member of the Nobel Committee and Director of the Branch Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.aka.fi>

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

'Realising the European Higher Education Area' – Berlin Conference

The Conference of all the Ministers responsible for Higher Education from Bologna Member States, met in Berlin on 18-19 September 2003. They discussed the Bologna Process' progress so far and set its objectives for the future. The meeting was attended by ministers from 33 European Countries. The next meeting is to be held in Bergen, Norway in May 2005, where the Bologna Process Follow-Up group will present its analysis or progress.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the social dimension of the Bologna process by agreeing to work to remove of any legal obstacles to rewarding joint degrees, to further develop quality assurance at institutional, national and European level, to start the implementation of the two cycle system by 2005 and to establish the link between the ERA and the European Higher Education Area by including PhD degrees as the third cycle in the Bologna Process. New members have been accepted to the Bologna process, increasing the total number to 40 countries. The new members are Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro.

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.unige.ch/eua/>

<http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de>

EU Investment in Education – Eurostat Survey

A new Eurostat survey shows large variations among countries in investment in education and training in the EU 25. The Eurostat report on public expenditure on education shows that EU Member States devote an average of 5 per cent of their GDP on education, based on data from 1999. This follows repeated emphasis from the EC on issue of under-investment in education and training.

There is a large variation between the countries, ranging from 3.6 per cent in Greece, to 7.5 per cent in Sweden and 8.1 per cent in Denmark. On average in the Member States, the public sector spent 10.4 per cent of its budget for education. Denmark, Ireland, Portugal and Sweden all spent more than 12 per cent of their public budget on education while Germany, Greece and Italy spent less than 10 per cent. In the EU, 5,222 euros were spent on average per pupil/student. In the future Member States, the figure goes from a high of 4,266 euros in Cyprus and 2,835 euros in the Czech Republic to a low of 1,875 euros in Poland and 1,716 euro in Latvia.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=KS-NK-03-022--N-EN&mode=download>

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=KS-NK-03-023--N-EN&mode=download>

MEPs Support Motion to Protect Minority Languages

MEPs gave majority support on 4th September 2003 to a motion that would give greater attention to minority languages on the eve of the EU's enlargement and aims to secure funding for the promotion of linguistic diversity. In the 1980s, Parliament earmarked a budget for supporting regional and minority languages throughout the Union. However, the funds were eventually frozen by a 1998 ruling by the Court of Justice that there is no appropriate legal basis for the policy.

To overcome this problem, MEPs now call on the Intergovernmental Conference to include a reference to the promotion of linguistic diversity, including regional and minority languages as an expression of cultural diversity in the draft

constitution. In addition, MEPs call on the EC to compile a feasibility study on the creation of a European Agency for Linguistic Diversity and Language Learning and a multi-annual programme drawn up on linguistic diversity (including regional, minority and sign languages), together with financial measures to promote acceptance of multilingualism, including co-existence between official and 'co-official' languages.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+DN-20030904-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION4>

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

Busquin calls for African support for EDCTP

Speaking at the World Health Organisation regional conference, Research Commissioner, Phillipe Busquin, stressed the need for strong governmental commitment from the developing countries involved in the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Platform (EDCTP). The EDCTP initiative is an inter-governmental programme launched as part of FP6 under Article 169, and aims to speed up the development of affordable drugs to treat AIDS, HIV, malaria and tuberculosis by supporting a partnership between Europe and developing countries. The 600 million euro budget for the five-year programme will be provided as three equal parts from the EC, national funding agencies and the private sector.

Mr Busquin suggested that by making the major poverty-related diseases a national priority, African countries would open up the potential to access European structural funds. By using such funds to develop infrastructure in existing clinical research centres, such centres could then be used as reference laboratories for regional health institutes, thus building national and regional capacity in research. Mr Busquin stated that the development of specialised national scientific training programmes to provide doctors, pharmacists and laboratory technicians with the skills necessary for working in clinical research 'would help build capacity and avoid brain drain'. The programme could therefore fulfil its goals of 'clinical research in Africa, for Africans and with African scientists'.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/press/2003/pr0109en.html>

China to Participate in GALILEO

Under a new agreement, EU funding of Chinese-European co-operative research and development of GALILEO-related technologies and applications will be possible. This also paves the way for China to invest financially in the GALILEO Joint Undertaking. For Europe, bringing China into GALILEO means securing a potentially massive market. Once operational, the GALILEO system will pass into the hands of private management and will be run as a purely commercial venture. A China equipped in accordance with GALILEO standards could, therefore, become an important economic partner for Europe.

The new agreement provides for co-operative activities on satellite navigation and timing in a wide range of sectors, notably science and technology, industrial manufacturing, service and market development, as well as standardisation, frequency and certification. The newly inaugurated 'China-Europe Global Navigation Satellite System Technical Training and Co-operation Centre' (CENC), in Beijing's Zhongguancun Hi-Tech Zone, will serve as a focal point for GALILEO activities. International experts will lecture on the technical and commercial aspects of satellite navigation, with special attention to the development of applications. The training centre is the result of a joint effort by the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, the Chinese Remote Sensing Centre, the EC and the European Space Agency.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/space/articles/news/news65_en.html

EC Supports Co-operation between the Newly Independent States

The EC has adopted the TACIS Regional Action Programme 2003 with a total budget of € 36.5 million. In 2003, TACIS regional priorities are three key cross border themes: protecting the environment (€ 8 million), promoting investment in infrastructure networks (€ 17.5 million, and fighting crime (€ 11 million). The TACIS Regional Programme is the main EC instrument for promoting co-operation between NIS countries, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Under the 'Investing in Infrastructure' theme, the EU will provide assistance to facilitate investment in three key sectors: transport, energy and information technologies. The 'Environment' section's principal focus is the water management sector. The 'Fighting Crime' theme will focus on effective border management, with combating the trafficking of human beings as a major concern. The EU will also help with the management of asylum and refugee issues.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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

EVENTS and AWARDS

European Union's Award for Young Scientists 2003

Europe's most promising young scientists met in Budapest from 20-26 September, to participate in the 15th European Union Contest for Young Scientists. The Contest was organised by the Hungarian Association for Innovation. The 2003 Award went to two young Germans (Biology and Physics) and a Hungarian (Physics). They were presented with the prizes in a ceremony at the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest. Contestants from several other countries (the Czech Republic, Poland, the Netherlands, Russia and Switzerland) won second and third prizes in areas as diverse as computing, biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics.

Held for the first time in an accession country, the European Union's Contest for Young Scientists aims to encourage young people to pursue their interest in science and to motivate them to embark on a scientific career. The contest is part of the EU's FP6

Science and Society activities, managed by the EC Directorate-General for Research. The event lasted for one week, and was attended by 110 young people (15-20 years) representing 39 countries across Europe and the world. They showcased their prize-winning projects from national competitions – and competed for the EU contest's nine prizes, worth a total of €28 500 (including a ticket for the Nobel prize ceremony).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.eucontest.hu/>

CINEDAYS Festival 2003

The second CINEDAYS festival will take place from 10 to 24 October 2003. The EC has unveiled an initial list of participants in CINEDAYS 2003, including no less than 300 partners, cinemas and television stations. In 2002, this European film festival mobilised almost 50 television channels, hundreds of cinemas and film archives and allowed 100,000 young people to attend screenings of both modern and vintage European films or to work at school on the theme of education in the visual image. Several European television channels have undertaken to focus on European filmmaking, by broadcasting films and/or studio productions, including Pro Sieben/SAT 1 in Germany, ARTE, BBC 4 in the UK, TVE in Spain and the RAI and MEDIASET channels in Italy.

CINEDAYS 2003 is being supported by two cinema networks: UGC and Europa Cinemas, a network of cinemas supported by the MEDIA programme for favouring European films. A number of cinemas have already planned a feast of European films on their screens. Various cultural institutes of the Member States are offering a programme of European films to celebrate CINEDAYS, in conjunction with debates and a short film competition for film students.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.cineuropa.org/>

Life on Mars – European Workshop

A workshop from the 18th to 20th November 2003 will take place in Madrid, Spain and will jointly look at the latest knowledge in this area, co-operation between scientists and research groups, planning for future Mars missions and relate benefits to the general public of this research.

The workshop is jointly organised by the European Exo/Astrobiology network and the Spanish Astrobiological Centre.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.cab.inta.es>

Seminar: The Meaning of Genomics

The UK's Economic and Social Research Council's Centre for Genomics in Society is to host an event on 'The meaning of genomics' from 20 to 22 November in Exeter, UK.

The underpinning aim of the seminar will be to consider how genomic knowledge is produced, perceived and modified in science and society. Sessions will address the

understanding of genomics by scientists themselves, the flow of genomic knowledge from scientists to the public, and the application and regulation of genomic technologies and information.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details of the seminar are available at: <http://www.ex.ac.uk/egenis/events/meanings.htm>

European Young Investigator Awards (EURYI)

Europe has entered the competition to hire the best young scientists in the world. The European Young Investigator award (EURYI) offers to 25 young and outstanding scientists who have between 2 and 10 years of postdoctoral experience, from any country in the world, the possibility to create their own team in Europe for the benefit of the development of European science and the building up of the next generation of leading European researchers. The first deadline for applications is the 15 December 2003. The first selected projects will be implemented in October 2004.

EURYI is proposed directly by the Heads of the European Research Organisations (EUROHORCS) in collaboration with the European Science Foundation (ESF). The EURYI Awards shall foster innovative research, novel scientific problems and/or novel methodologies. 15 countries participate in the scheme: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. 25 awards of an amount up to 250k€/year, will be offered for up to 5 five year projects. The awardees will create their own team, and manage it themselves in a European research centre of their choice.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.esf.org>

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/WebSite/default.aspx?ZoneID=3&MenuID=1705>

<http://www.pparc.ac.uk/Rs/Fs/Fw/Lettr/EURYIFell.asp>

Geological Environment Conference

An international conference on the monitoring, simulation and remediation of the geological environment will take place in Segovia, Spain, from 5 to 7 July 2004.

The event will be multi-disciplinary, incorporating civil engineering, forest and agricultural engineering, geography, biology, ecology and hydrology. It will be aimed at researchers, practitioners and government employees from these areas

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2004/geoenvironment04/index.html>

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES

New EU Job Portal

The EC has launched an innovative new website and information campaign to help EU citizens find work in another Member State.

The European Job Mobility Portal will be an electronic gateway to information on living

and working conditions, labour market conditions and job vacancies in all Member States of the European Union. It will give those looking for jobs the opportunity to post their CVs online. And it will provide information on education and training throughout the EU, further underlining the EC commitment to lifelong learning and skills development. The recently Council-adopted Employment Guidelines advise that by 2005, jobseekers should be able to access all member states' employment service job vacancy systems, which adds emphasis to the new portal as a European-wide measure to support job mobility.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The new portal is available at: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/guidelines_en.htm
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/skills_mobility/index_en.htm

Eurostat **Yearbook** **2003**

Eurostat has published the 8th edition of its yearbook, a comprehensive statistical survey of the period 1991 to 2001, focussing on significant social and economic changes. There are modifications to the format and structure of the publication; the book is now supplemented by a CD-Rom with further statistical tables and charts, complemented by links to the Eurostat website for further information. Some highlighted findings include a reduction of greenhouse emissions, comparisons and trends in household expenditure, tax rates on low wage earners, vocational training, modes of transport and patent applications.

The publication is composed of four chapters:

- An overview of Eurostat, the EU's world positioning and a focus also on Candidate countries;
- People in Europe - major social aspects and demographic trends;
- Economy and Ecology - main developments in the Member States;
- Entrepreneurial Activities - specific sectoral analysis including business, science and technology and agriculture.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>

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>

IGLO Project Search

The IGLO Project Service offers a forum for publishing and disseminating details of proposed FP6 project and/or research skills offered. Using the service will enable researchers to find contacts and partners within the international research community as well as contributing to the mobilisation of a critical mass of researchers in a specific research area.

URL: <http://www.iglortd.org/>

EUR-LEX (Official Journal C and L)

This website 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 eleven 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 forty-five 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 EP, the European Council, the EC 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.

EC Press Releases are available at:

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

GLOSSARY

A&S	Aeronautics and Space Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
C&G	Citizens and Governance Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
COST	European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research is a framework for scientific and technical co-operation, allowing the coordination of national research on a European level. http://www.netmaniacs.com/cost/
'Council'	'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. The Minister of Science in the UK attends the Research Council.

<http://ue.eu.int/en/summ.htm>

Culture 2000	First European Community Framework Programme in support of culture, which runs from 2000-2004 (inclusive). http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/index_en.html
EC	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. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm
eEurope	eEurope A political initiative of the EC to allow Europe to benefit fully from the Information Society. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/information_society/eeurope/documentation/index_en.htm
EP	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. http://www.europarl.eu.int/sg/tree/en/default.htm
ERA	European Research Area. On 18 January 2000, the EC issued a Communication entitled 'Towards a European Research Area' which proposed ways in which research in Europe could be more effectively organised and coordinated. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/area.html
ESC	European Economic and Social Committee is a consultative 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/
FQS	Food Quality and Safety Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
FP (FP5, FP6)	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>FP5 is composed of four thematic programmes (see QoL, IST, Growth, EESD) and three horizontal programmes (see INCO II, Innovation and SMEs, and IHP).</p> <p>http://www.cordis.lu/fp5</p>
GBH	<p>Genomics and Biotechnology for Health Priority (FP6)</p> <p>http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</p>
Green Paper	<p>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.</p>
ITRE	<p>The European Parliament Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (FP5)</p> <p>http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/en/default.htm</p>
INTAS	<p>International Association for the promotion of co-operation with scientists from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union.</p> <p>http://www.intas.be/mainfs.htm</p>
IST	<p>Information Society Technologies Priority (FP6)</p> <p>http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</p>
MEDIA	<p>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.</p> <p>http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dq10/avpolicy/media/index_en.html</p>
Mobility	<p>Human Resources and Mobility Programme (FP6)</p> <p>http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</p>
NATO	<p>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</p> <p>http://www.nato.int/</p>
NMP	<p>Nanotechnology, Materials and Production Priority (FP6)</p> <p>http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</p>
PHARE	<p>The Phare Programme is the European Union's instrument for financial and technical co-operation with the countries of central and eastern Europe.</p> <p>http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/index.htm</p>
RTD	<p>Research and Technological Development</p>
SDGC	<p>Sustainable Development and Global Change Priority (FP6)</p> <p>http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</p>

- 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>
- UUK Universities UK
 (formerly the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals)
<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk>
- White Paper White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. They often follow a Green Paper.

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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>
