

News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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EU POLICY

Barroso confirmed as next EC President

European leaders have named Portuguese Prime Minister José Manuel Durao Barroso as the next President of the EC for the period from 1 November 2004 to 31 October 2009. The appointment was confirmed at a special summit in Brussels on 29 June 2004. In a vote held by secret ballot on 22 July 2004, MEPs voted to approve the appointment of Barroso as the new President. A number of leading candidates had fallen by the wayside because different EU blocs found them unacceptable. Mr Durao Barroso emerged as a compromise candidate. Correspondents say he is seen as sufficiently pro-European for the French and Germans, but, as a supporter of the war in Iraq, is also acceptable to Britain, Italy and Poland.

A 48-year-old centre-right figure, Barroso leads Portugal's coalition government and has served as foreign minister. At the occasion of EP approval Barroso said he would build bridges between those who wanted to modernise and those who did not, between the pro and anti-EU as well as between himself and the people that did not vote for him today. He underlined his belief in Europe and his strong European convictions. At the Brussels summit, the EU leaders also reappointed Javier Solana as foreign policy "high representative". They said they expected him to become Europe's first foreign minister once all 25 member-countries have ratified the new EU Constitution.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Europa web page on the new President designate, available at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/barroso/index_en.htm

Opening of the new EP

The opening session of the 6th directly elected EP began on 20 July under the chairmanship of the oldest member, Italian Socialist MEP Giovanni Berlinguer. The first week was busy with the election of a new EP President (Spanish Socialist MEP Josep Borrell Fontelles), the approval of Barroso as new EC President, the establishment of the standing committee chairs and members and the passing from the Irish to the Dutch Presidency.

Criticism was made of the EP Presidency vote and power struggle which means that Borrell will stand down half way through his term to make way for a conservative candidate. Parliamentary committees reconvene after the summer recess during the week beginning 30 August to prepare hearings of the new European Commissioners, including UK nominee Mr Peter Mandelson.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EP website with details on committees and MEPs, available at:
http://www.europarl.eu.int/home/default_en.htm

Dutch Presidency of the EU

The Dutch ministers of Economic Affairs, Laurens-Jan Brinkhorst, and of Education, Culture and Science, Maria van der Hoeven, have revealed an early confidence about achieving their goals in the research field. These goals include the promotion of fundamental research with the possible creation of a European Research Council (ERC), the improvement of the human capital base, enhancement of EU co-operation on infrastructures, SMEs and Technology Platforms. Realistic about the work required, the support from ministers at the informal Competitiveness Council meeting on 1 July 2004 for an ERC is encouraging.

Economic growth comes out strongly among the Dutch government's 34-page list of priorities, not least the attention to human capital and the development and application of sustainable technologies. The evaluation of the FP6 New Instruments and the EC response is in progress, but the Dutch Presidency will also be looking at preparations for FP7.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Dutch Presidency website, available at:

<http://www.eu2004.nl>

EC details EU spending proposals for 2007-13

The EC has adopted a detailed package of proposals fleshing out its future budget plans for the period 2007-13. The legislative package follows and complements the Financial Perspectives that were adopted in February 2004. The detailed texts include proposals on cohesion, networks, agriculture, education, culture and social policy. The Council of Ministers and the EP can now start negotiating the future financial perspectives with a view to their adoption before 2007. There is consensus among Member States on new priorities for the future in the EU. The Member States have all agreed on the need to boost competitiveness, to respond to enlargement by encouraging growth in the new Member States, to develop an area of freedom, security and justice, as well as stronger external policies. At the same time national spending over the past seven years has grown more than twice as fast as EU spending. Without sufficient financial resources the promised European added value will remain elusive.

Finally, the Communication also lays out the various instruments which will deliver action under each heading of the budget. The new structure represents a major step in the simplification of EU action. It aims at ensuring that spending programmes operate under principles of good governance which bring efficiency savings, and to make action more accessible and more user-friendly. The package of measures adopted will be complemented with other subsequent proposals in the areas of external relations, research, and freedom, security and justice.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC Press Release IP/04/910 of 14 July 2004, available at:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

Marimon Report findings

The report entitled "Evaluation of the effectiveness of the New Instruments of Framework Programme 6", produced by a High-level Expert Panel chaired by Professor Ramon Marimon. Nine independent experts, from both academia and industry, were involved in the panel. The report's findings were based on information on the first calls for proposal under FP6, as well as a questionnaire sent to co-ordinators of IP and NoE proposals and hearings with proposers.

In light of the high expectations placed against the report, some sections appear very critical. The main conclusion is that the expectations and capacity of the science community must be taken better into account. The 12 recommendations cover a wide range of issues including clarifications of the instruments' goals, more flexibility, critical mass, questions over scale and focus, SMEs and project evaluation. In particular, the panel was concerned about the high costs of FP6 participation. An official response from the EC is due, but changes and clarifications have already been made in some recent calls for proposals.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Final report, available at:

ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/fp6/docs/morimon_final_en.pdf

EC strengthens cohesion policy in the enlarged EU

The EC has adopted the legislative framework for the reform of cohesion policy for the period 2007-13. The new framework proposes a more targeted and simplified approach for the implementation of the next generation of European national and regional development programmes. In accordance with the policy proposals adopted last February, the aim of the programmes will be to boost competitiveness and growth in the enlarged EU, with a proposed allocation totalling €336.3 billion over seven years, around one-third of the budgetary plans for the next period.

The cohesion legislative package consists of a general regulation, together with regulations for each of the funding sources (European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), and Cohesion Fund). The package is completed by an entirely new proposal creating the framework for a cross-border authority to manage cooperation programmes.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC press release IP/04/925 of 15 July 2004, available at:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

Proposal for new regulations, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/intronewregl0713_en.htm

EURAB enters second term

On 15 June 2004, the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) unanimously re-elected its Chair Helga Nowotny and welcomed 22 new members for its second three-year term. The main topics on the agenda of the new Board are the preparation of FP7, the creation of a European Research Council, the mid-term evaluation of FP6 and the relationship between research and innovation.

EURAB 2 will focus its attention on a number of research policy issues, for instance how to increase industry's participation in the framework programmes, to develop a long term perspective for Europe beyond 2025, interaction between innovation and state aids policies; how to make Europe more attractive for the researchers or questions on intellectual property rights.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EURAB website, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/eurab/index_en.html

JRC head appointed as Ireland's Chief Science Advisor

The Irish government has announced the appointment of Dr Barry McSweeney, currently the Director-General of the EU Joint Research Centre (JRC), as Ireland's chief science advisor.

The appointment is one of a series of decisions taken by the government to boost Ireland's potential in science, technology and innovation. Other measures include an investment of €2.48 billion for R&D under the national development plan and the establishment of a cabinet committee to specifically address and co-ordinate science and technology issues. This will be supported by an inter-departmental committee of senior officials with designated responsibility for science and technology in their respective government departments. The government is hoping this approach will guarantee 'a whole of government' approach to R&D.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Joint Research Centre website, available at:

<http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/>

“Researchers in Europe” (RIE) initiative launched

On 30 June 2004, Philippe Busquin also launched the “Researchers in Europe” (RIE) Initiative. The aim of the initiative is to improve and promote public awareness and understanding of the contribution that researchers make to society, encourage young people into research careers and make the EU a more attractive destination for international researchers. The initiative will run from April - November 2005, opening under the Luxembourg Presidency and closing under the UK Presidency. The RIE will include a series of events, such as a Pan-European researcher's night, as well as TV and Radio Programmes.

The idea developed from the initial proposal for a ‘European Year of Researchers’, as outlined in the EC communication “Researchers in the European Research Area: one profession, multiple careers”. The communication also recommended creating a European researchers' charter to help researchers manage their careers, drafting a recruitment code of conduct, as well as establishing a common way of evaluating and recording researchers' skills, qualifications and achievements.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Background on RIE, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/news/headline25_en.html

UK Science & Innovation Investment Framework 2004-14

The UK Government has published a ten-year investment framework for science and innovation alongside the 2004 Spending Review. The framework sets out the Government's ambition for UK science and innovation over the next decade, in particular their contribution to economic growth and public services, and the attributes and funding arrangements of a research system capable of delivering this. The framework also recognises the significant involvement of UK universities in FP5 and raises concerns for a more transparent EU approach to research costing as has been adopted in the UK. The Government will also press for any new basic research fund to pay all of the full economic costs of the research it supports. Furthermore, the Government highlights its own role in ensuring effective promotion of the programme and raising the visibility of the support available.

In FP7 the UK hopes for a larger share of the EU budget to go to a more user-friendly research programme, with a boost to industrial participation and clearer outcome-focused objectives. The forthcoming UK Presidencies of the EU and G8 in 2005 are seen as opportunities to further promote the Lisbon objective for Europe, as well as the agenda of working towards an Innovation Action Plan, which will provide strategic direction and specific recommendations for improving the innovation performance across Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Science and Innovation Investment Framework, available at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/associated_documents/spending_sr04_science.cfm

Report calls for higher salaries for top researchers

A new report by Save British Science (SBS), looking at how UK universities can recruit and retain top class researchers in the face of global competition, has recommended that the government provide an extra £250 million (€370 million) to boost salaries in higher education. The report, published on 5 July 2004, is based on the recommendations of representatives from universities, government, charities and industry to discuss the issue. While the report points out that the problem does not apply to all subjects in all institutions, UK universities are, it says, 'routinely experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining world class researchers in science and engineering.' It quotes the findings of a recent national survey in which 57 per cent of universities reported that they had left scientific posts unfilled because they could not find candidates of the appropriate calibre.

The report highlights studies showing that scientists working in the pharmaceutical industry are paid between 20 and 50 per cent more than their counterparts in universities. However, it identifies three so called crunch points where competition for talent is particularly strong - at the point of entry into academic research, for example as a postdoctoral researcher, the point at which a researcher has proved themselves, and the point when academics take on leadership roles. The solution proposed is a system with more variability, with new funds being used to address the current market imbalance.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

SBS report, available at:

<http://www.savebritishscience.org.uk/texts/documents/2004/SBS0407.pdf>

Towards a global partnership in the Information Society

This new EC communication outlines priorities and proposes actions for the second phase of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), which will flesh out a plan of action agreed in Geneva and is to culminate in a WSIS summit meeting in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005. Future WSIS work should focus on creating the right policy environment for information society technology applications to flourish, accelerating the take-up of proven applications, e.g. for e-government, e-health, and e-learning, and promoting research in this area. Unfinished work from Geneva on internet governance and financing measures to bridge the digital divide must also be completed.

Following two earlier EC communications on the WSIS, this one outlines concrete proposals for the second phase, in particular implementing the WSIS Plan of Action and following up two unresolved issues from the Geneva Summit: internet governance and financing measures to bridge the digital divide. In this Communication, the EC therefore proposes that work to implement the Action Plan be organised around three main axes: an eStrategies-based enabling environment to encourage innovation, demonstration of the effectiveness of eEurope areas and special attention to the research dimension of Information Society.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EU participation to the WSIS, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/ecom/all_about/international_aspects/main_areas_work/wsisis/index_en.htm

WSIS website, available at:

<http://www.itu.int/wsisis/>

Request for further international co-operation in space research

Speaking at the Farnborough Air show on 21 July 2004, Lord Sainsbury, UK Science Minister encouraged the international community to increase co-operation and achieve common space goals such as improved applications and services. Using space's potential, and the diverse approaches of different countries is a shared objective according to the minister, who used the recent EU-US co-operation to ensure compatibility and non-interference between US GPS systems and the EU Galileo navigation system.

Lord Sainsbury cited other examples of success in Earth observation science and exploration with the ESA-NASA collaboration on planetary exploration being taken forward. The Director General of the ESA, Jean-Jacques Dordain, who also spoke at the event, said that the ESA and NASA shared an ambitious programme of space exploration, including a manned landing on Mars within the next century.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

ESA website, available at:

<http://www.esa.int/esaCP/index.html>

Increased agriculture research co-operation

The Dutch Presidency presented an initiative to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 19 July on increasing co-operation in the field of agriculture-related research. Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin and Agriculture and Fisheries Commissioner Franz

Fischler were present to provide information on the existing legislative framework for such research, and on current co-operation between Member States. Both emphasised the particular importance of enhanced co-operation on the sustainable development of agriculture and improving food quality and safety.

The Presidency indicated that it will send out a questionnaire to all delegations, the results of which will be used to further discuss the initiative at the next Council meeting in November. The questionnaire will focus on current agriculture research, the need for co-operation and the areas that should be targeted for further co-operation.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Full conclusions of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, available at:

http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/agricult/81505.pdf

New funding for European Social Fund and social policy

The new European Social Fund (ESF) for 2007-13 will link funding with policies to boost employment and strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Employment Strategy (EES). With less red tape, simpler rules and more decentralisation to the Member States, it will be both easier to manage and better equipped to tackle the new challenges arising from enlargement, the ageing population and globalisation. It will be complemented by a new programme that will rationalise funding for other actions supporting the EC employment and social policy.

The aim of the ESF will continue to be investing in people. Human capital is the key factor in reforming labour markets and enabling economic prosperity. The ESF will cover two of the three objectives for cohesion funding in the new financial framework. It will support key areas for action endorsed by the European Council: making workers and enterprises more adaptable, helping people onto the labour market, preventing unemployment, prolonging working lives, promoting the integration of the marginalised and disadvantaged and combating discrimination. Under the EC proposal, it would account for 20 to 25 per cent of cohesion total funding. The EC is proposing that it is given a budget of just over €600 million, over 7 years. Proposals on "Sustaining social dialogue, free movement of workers and demographic analysis" will be made at a later date.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Decision of the EP and the Council on Employment and Social Solidarity, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2004/jul/com_2004_488_en.pdf

Regulation of the EP and the Council on the ESF, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2004/jul/com_2004_493_en.pdf

Daphne II programme adopted

The EC has adopted the annual work programme for 2004 of the Daphne II programme, set to last from 2004 to 2008. The programme's objectives are the prevention and combat of all forms of violence towards children, young people and women, protecting victims and groups at risk. The programme builds on efforts under Daphne I, which funded 303 projects totalling €33 million between 1997 and 2003.

Each year, two different calls will be published. As per the previous Daphne programme, one call is made for specific projects and one for projects looking at dissemination and using existing results. Usually, calls published in November will be targeting a start date

for projects of July the following year. While the call for specific projects closed on 30 June 2004, the call for dissemination and use projects remains open until 30 July 2004. New aspects of Daphne II include an increased budget with participation of the ten new member states taken into account, a more comprehensive group of activities to be supported and a further opening up of access to EFTA/EEA countries as well as the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. More attention from the EC will be given to impact and indicators, with a new helpdesk available to participate in Daphne II.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details on the Daphne II Programme, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm

Berlaymont back in business

Thirteen years after the last official switched off the lights and locked the door of the Berlaymont, the EC has got back the keys of its flagship building. Early July, the EC took possession of the Berlaymont and, with years of renovation and restoration reaching an end, mid-September should see staff moving back into the building.

The Berlaymont has been the most recognisable and distinctive EC building since the first EC officials moved into its offices in 1967. However, following asbestos problems in the late 1980s, the EC vacated the complex and officials moved into new buildings. The Berlaymont is due to house the EC President and his Cabinet, the Legal Service, staff from the Secretariat General, spokespersons from DG Press, the Security Directorate, and the EC Protocol Service. The building should be fully occupied and operational by November.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Official Berlaymont 2000 website, available at:

<http://www.berlaymont2000.com/>

RESEARCH NEWS

Research finds lack of green incentives for SMEs

It is unlikely that SMEs will adopt environmentally-friendly methods as a result of market forces alone, concludes recent research undertaken in the UK. The results come as a result of surveys undertaken with small business owners and representatives from government, industry and academia. In some cases, market forces even encouraged bad environmental practice. Government policy that 'going green' is good for business, has yet to filter through. The survey is especially significant considering the large contribution to pollution that SMEs make, since eight out of ten pollution accidents are attributed to SMEs.

For many, the situation came down to not risking pushing the environmental agenda, since they feared alienating customers. Others questioned whether 'going green' would ever attract more customers, since at the end of the day consumers themselves were not interested in these aspects. Such comments led to conclusions that the only way to make environmental issues a priority was through regulation; a level playing field ensuring that environmental good practice is no threat to competitiveness.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

More project details, available at:

<http://www.eubusiness.com/topics/Environ/EUNews.2004-06-23.3313>

New insight into climate change

The PROMESS1 EU funded project (PROfiles across Mediterranean Sedimentary Systems) has been collecting and examining 500 000 year-old sediment cores from the sea bed in the Mediterranean. Dating back to pre-historic times, these samples will help rebuild a picture of climate change through the ages, and as a result provide a better understanding of the current climate changes. The consortium includes partners from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The research will also have other applications such as informing policy makers regarding effects on ecosystems in highly populated areas, whilst also helping to identify and monitor gas and oil fields. Journalists were recently invited aboard one of the research vessels in Barcelona's harbour following a drilling expedition in the Mediterranean. The project has been performed in collaboration with the Integrate Ocean Drilling Programme (IODP) which helps provide access for scientists to otherwise prohibitively expensive drilling platforms.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://promess1.wdc-mare.org/>

Project for the advancement of animal health

A new €12 million FP6 funded project EADGENE (European Animal Disease Genomics Network of Excellence) will create a virtual laboratory to study the genomics of host-pathogen interactions. The project seeks to improve animal health, reducing the chances of disease infection, as anti-biotics and anti-worm treatments are becoming less effective since pathogens continue to develop resistance. EADGENE will be trying to develop new control methods to keep animals healthy, and reduce the use of drugs which may enter the food chain.

The project will focus on genomics, since this provides opportunities to breed genetic resistance into animals, improve diagnosis and develop new vaccines. Animal gene identification will mean a better understanding of interactions between a pathogen and an animal's immunity, which may lead to better drug development. The 14 institutes across Europe are involved in this project will be starting joint research and training programmes on major bacterial diseases, which, it is hoped, will also enhance understanding of human welfare.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Project website, currently under construction, available at:

<http://www.eadgene.org>

Lean, mean and clean driving machines

The CLEVER project (Compact Low Emission Vehicle for Urban Transport) is designing a better vehicle for the future which will be quieter, cleaner, leaner and still manage to be

stylish at the same time. The huge benefits of freedom and mobility to consumers make road transport a sensitive policy area. All the same, something has to be done about the pollution levels caused by road transport in terms of greenhouse gases and noise, as well as the negative effects on productivity as a result of congestion. The FP5 funded project takes in nine partners ranging across the automotive supply chain.

The resulting design is a three wheeled, two-seater vehicle, less than one metre wide which will cut current emission levels by half whilst still meeting safety standards for passengers and pedestrians alike. With the average car trip only having 1.5 occupants or less the small size makes a lot of sense, and the aerodynamic three wheel design means more fuel efficiency. Driver acceptability is also a vital factor and the consortium will use surveys and face-to-face interviews across Europe to better understand consumer behaviour.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

CLEVER project website, available at:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/mech-eng/en-proj20/index.html>

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

New education, media, culture and youth programmes for 2007-2013

The EC has adopted proposals for the new generation of programmes in the education, youth, culture and audiovisual fields to succeed the current programmes for the period 2007-13. The EC has adopted its proposals for the four programmes which, at current prices, have a total budget practically three times larger than for the existing programmes. The proposals should now be examined by the Council and the EP, with the aim of adoption at the end of 2005.

A new integrated action education and lifelong learning programme with a budget of €13,600 million over seven years, will comprise four sectoral programmes concentrating on school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational training (Leonardo Da Vinci) and adult education (Grundtvig). "Youth in action", with a budget of €915 million will group together a variety of actions such as youth exchanges (objective: 35,000 projects by 2013), "European Voluntary Service" (objective: 10,000 volunteers/year) and "Youth for the world" aimed at developing projects with third countries. Community action in MEDIA 2007, with a budget of over €1,000 million, will relate to pre-production, including training, and post-production of audiovisual works. Culture 2007 will have a budget of over €400 million and promote transnational mobility, both for artists and works, and encourage intercultural dialogue, by supplementing action by the Member States.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Budget details available in the EC memo MEMO/04/183 of 16 July 2004, available at:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

The full text of the proposals, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/newprog/index_en.html

ERA-MORE network of Mobility Centres launched

EU Research Commissioner, Philippe Busquin, launched the European Network of

Mobility Centres (ERA-MORE) on 30 June in Paris. The network aims to offer a first point of contact for researchers undertaking a mobility experience within the EU. The intention is for centres to help researchers with a variety of issues, such as visas, work permits, childcare and language courses. The services will be free at the point of delivery. Many of the mobility centres are building on existing advice and guidance infrastructures within Member and Associated States, and are therefore at various stages of development. The British Council has been chosen as the UK member of ERA-MORE. The British Council will provide assistance to researchers through a central helpdesk, national website, and a network of regional mobility centres.

The concept of ERA-MORE derives from the commitment of European leaders in March 2000, to identify the remaining obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe and to find solutions for their removal. ERA-MORE is therefore part of a wider EC policy to remove barriers to mobility, and has been developed alongside the Researcher's Mobility Portal and the new European Researchers Initiative. The EC is providing a contribution to the start-up phase of the network. A subvention running for three years was granted to the Ministries of Research (or organisations designated by them) of participating countries, on the basis of presenting a work programme for the organisation of mobility centres at national level, including a "bridge head" to liaise at European level.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

ERAMORE section of Mobility Portal, available at:
http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index_en.cfm?l1=4

Developing joint Masters Programmes for Europe

The European Universities Association (EUA) has recently published its study of Joint Masters Programmes at European level. Looking for some solutions to a range of Bologna Process issues, the project also wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how universities handle joint programmes at Masters Level. It focussed on three themes: quality assurance and recognition, student experience and mobility, and curriculum integration and sustainability.

The report emphasises the need to address many of the fragmentation and coherence problems at an institutional level. At a national/European level, the report demonstrates that funding of programmes is a key issue, and specifically at the level of networking. Most funding opportunities are for specific activities whilst key networking expenses such as travel and accommodation are vital to instigate and maintain strong collaboration between partners. Finally, students face considerable costs. The majority of students participating in joint masters are self-financing and this means that only students with sufficient personal financial means are able to participate in these courses. The report concludes with guidelines, or "golden rules", on how to set up a successful, new joint Masters Programme. This is a valuable report for any institution interested in participating in the new Erasmus Mundus Masters programme.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EUA report, available at:
http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/client/item_view.jsp?type_id=1&item_id=1415

Erasmus Programme wins Prince of Asturias prize

The Erasmus programme has been awarded the Prince of Asturias prize for international co-operation. Both the EC President, Romano Prodi and the EU Commissioner for Education and Culture, Viviane Reding expressed their thanks for the award. They highlighted the fact that the ERASMUS programme is one of the well-known EC programmes. It has already supported over a million students and the EC believe it is well on its way to achieving its target of over three million by the beginning of the next decade.

The Prince of Asturias Foundation, presided by Felipe de Bourbon, heir to the Spanish throne, awards eight prizes of €50,000 each year (Communication and Humanities, Scientific and technological research, social sciences, arts, literature, international co-operation, sports and peace).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC Press release IP/04/868 of 7 July 2004, available at:

<http://europe.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

Culture 2000 - call for projects starting in 2005

Announced on the 6 July 2004, the latest call for Culture 2000 projects has a closing date of 15 September 2004. The budget of €2.14 million allows for approximately five projects to be funded starting in 2005. This call covers European cultural co-operation, and projects must cover at least two of the following topics: firstly, increasing mobility of operators in the cultural sector, secondly increasing the circulation of products and works, and thirdly, developing intercultural dialogue.

The EC will fund up to 70 per cent of the eligible costs of the projects which may run for up to two years between the end of December 2004 and the end of December 2006. Particular attention will be given to those projects bringing together cultural operators from the EU/EEA, the ten new Member States and candidate countries. EUCLID, the UK Cultural Contact Point, will be planning workshops and seminars for Culture 2000 applicants in September.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Call document, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/c_174/c_17420040706en00200020.pdf

Culture 2000 website, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/index_en.html

EUCLID website, available at:

<http://www.euclid.info/uk/seminars/index.htm>

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

EC increases commitment to tackling AIDS at world level

At the 15th World Aids Conference, which took place in Bangkok from the 11th to the 16th July 2004, the EC agreed to increase its contribution to the Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria in developing countries. An additional €42 million brings the total contribution since 2002 to €375 million. It is hoped that this will help the Global Fund to speed up its response to tackling the three diseases.

The EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Poul Nielson, underlined the importance of the efforts, with an estimated figure of above six million people dying every year from these diseases. The Global Fund was established in 2002 as a funding mechanism to attract additional resources to fight these increasingly prevalent diseases in developing countries.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

15th World Aids Conference website, available at:

<http://www.ias.se/bangkok/start.aspx>

Strategic partnership to improve labour conditions

On 19 July 2004 the EC and the International Labour organisation reached agreement on a strategic partnership to reduce poverty and improve labour relations in developing countries. Reinforcing joint efforts, the new strategy will work towards achieving the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), the Decent Work for All agenda and other internationally agreed objectives. Close co-operation since 1958 has been trying to strengthen the social dimension of international development.

EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Stavros Dimas, affirmed that the EC was looking forward to collaboration on development as a first step in integrating the social dimensions of collaboration, as per the recent World Commission report. This agreement continues the development of diverse relations with the United Nations, with EC support now at around €364 million.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

International Labour Organisation website, available at:

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

EVENTS and AWARDS

“Building the Future on Knowledge”

A dissemination conference, “Building the Future on Knowledge: Foresight and the Transition to Regional Knowledge-based Economies”, will take place in Brussels on 23 September 2004, to present the results of an expert group concerned with developing “blueprints” for foresight actions in the European regions.

The event will involve EU Research Commissioner, Philippe Busquin, and DG Research Director General Achilleas Mitsos, as well as representatives from DG Agriculture, DG Enterprise, DG Environment, DG Regional Policy and DG Research. The focus will be on how EU policies and their instruments in different areas can be orchestrated to promote regional economies built on knowledge.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details of the event, available at:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2004/foresight/index_en.html

Energy information and brokerage events

A series of information and brokerage events for the Sustainable Energy Systems part of FP6 will be held in September and October 2004. These events will provide information on Work Programme contents, will address the main challenges faced when preparing proposals, and will give potential proposers the opportunity to present their consortium. Attention will be given to the participation of SMEs, New Member States, candidate countries and third countries.

The events are as follows:

- Hydrogen and Fuel Cells on 23 and 24 September 2004, Brussels, Belgium
- CO₂ Capture and Storage: 28 September, Potsdam, Germany
- Renewable Energies: 29 September (to be confirmed), Brussels, Belgium
- Distributed Energy Resources and Future Electricity Networks: 8 October, Warsaw, Poland.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Hydrogen and Fuel Cells event details, available at:

<http://www.HFPeurope.org>

CO₂ Capture and Storage event details, available at:

<http://www.CO2net.com>

Renewable Energies event details, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/energy/index_en.html

Distributed Energy Resources and Future Electricity Networks event details, available at:

<http://www.dgnet.org>

WREC Event 2005

The World Renewable Energy Conference (WREC) 2005 will be held in Aberdeen, Scotland from 22 to 27 May 2005. The event brings together top international specialists and researchers, industrialists, manufacturers, financiers, policy makers and government officials. Congress participants will share the latest ideas and innovations, establish valuable contacts and develop new collaborations in renewable energy and the environment. The theme for WREC 2005 is "Renewable Energy, Technology, Innovation and the Environment".

The event aims to provide a high level international forum to discuss the very latest thoughts, developments and innovations in renewable energy research and applications from across Europe, and the world. WREC 2005 also aims to deliver an enlightened, intellectually challenging and stimulating technical programme in the diverse fields of renewable energy that is relevant to academic scholars, researchers, members of the business community, and to society at large.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details on the event, including registration, available at:

<http://www.wrec2005aberdeen.co.uk/>

EMBO Award for communication in the life sciences

The European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) is inviting entries for its third award for communication in the life sciences. The award is intended for a life scientist

who has remained active in research, but has also succeeded in making an outstanding contribution to the communication of science to the public. The award will be made to active researchers who have made an outstanding contribution to the public communication of science via any medium or activity, not necessarily written communication.

The deadline for applications is 31 August 2004. Entries will be judged via a multinational jury including non-scientists and the EMBO Science & Society Committee. The winner will receive €5,000 on 5 November 2004 during the EMBO/EMBL joint international conference on Science & Society in Heidelberg.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details on the EMBO award, available at:

http://www.embo.org/projects/scisoc/com_medal04.html

British Academy FP6 “Pump-Priming” Grants

The British Academy is offering a number of small grants intended to help British scholars wishing to make closer contact with colleagues in other countries and develop research plans prior to submitting an application to the EU.

It is expected that most applications will fall within the remit of Thematic Priority 7 (Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society). However, requests in respect of appropriate work in the social sciences and humanities relating to other Priority areas would be considered. The maximum award is £1,500, and the closing date is 31 October 2004.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Details on the grants, available at:

<http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/intl/FP6pp.html>

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES

“Anytime, anywhere” access to mobile broadband services

The EC had published a new communication that aims to ensure that mobile broadband users are able to access data anytime and anywhere in Europe, which it sees as a vital precondition for future competitiveness via productivity gains with increased efficiency of communication. The key challenges that must be overcome are outlined in the communication, and top of the list is research and development (R&D). “The share of GDP that Europe spends on R&D lags well behind that of its main trading partners. A strategic R&D agenda that supports innovation, including basic research, is needed.”

Other requirements include the promotion of interoperability between mobile services; an improved regulatory framework for intellectual property rights in order to facilitate content development; the drawing up of rules on 'e-money' for mobile payments; and a co-ordinated European approach to the availability and usage of the mobile communications spectrum.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC communication, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/ecom/comm/doc/highlights/current_spotlights/mobile_communications/communication300604/com_web_en.pdf

Medium to long-term energy consultation results

Expressions of Interest (Eoi) relating to Sustainable Energy Systems (medium to long-term) have been published. These Eoi are from the consultation held between November 2003 and March 2004, where the EC invited researchers to submit ideas for future revisions of the Work Programme. The Eois submitted will be taken into account, along with wider consultations with stakeholders, when determining topics to be included in future calls. The revised Work Programme is due to be published in September 2004.

The published Eois are searchable by activity area (fuel cells and applications, CO2 capture and sequestration, etc). There is also a free text search option that searches the title, acronym, and non-confidential text from the Eoi (rationale, objectives, approach, relevance, scale of ambition, contribution to the European Research Area). The EC have also produced a report of the Eoi exercise. A total of 419 Eois were analysed, of which just over 300 have been included in the database (others requesting confidentiality). The EC states that the exercise has proved useful in drawing up the new Work Programme. The report identifies topics under each sub-heading of the priority which the Eoi analysis showed to be both relevant and mature, with potential to form the basis of good projects. It also identifies topics that are not as mature, but where promise can be seen.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The Eoi database and the report, available at:
http://www.cordis.lu/sustdev/energy/eoi_srch.htm

Examples of successful EU projects

A new EC brochure entitled "Research for EUROPE: 36 examples of successful EU-funded projects" has been published. These recently-completed projects have been selected to demonstrate how research carried out under the Framework Programme directly addresses social and economic challenges, and how it can have immediate practical impact.

Although the brochure focuses on projects funded under FP5, many of those included exhibit characteristics of projects under FP6; these tend to be large-scale, developing sustainable research networks, involving end users and industry, and with strong focus on exploitation of results.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Publication ISBN 92-894-5168-8, available at:
<http://www.publications.eu.int>

UK research and international opportunities websites

The British Council has established two related websites, GOST contains information on UK research funding, and SISTER on international opportunities for UK researchers.

GOST (Guide to the Organisation of Science and Technology in the UK) is an e-gateway which maps the UK publicly-funded research landscape. As well as offering a

comprehensive picture of the way in which science and technology is organised in the UK, this guide provides links to the websites of all of the organisations listed, to enable you to find out more about opportunities in UK science. The pages also provide information about how devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is influencing UK science, engineering and technology. The site includes the latest developments in UK science, from the UK science media, Government, or from the scientists themselves.

SISTER (Support for International Science, Technology and Engineering Research) is a funding route map for UK researchers, postgraduates and international students who are seeking funding for international collaboration in science and technology. It has been created by British Council Science, the Office of Science and Technology, the Royal Society and UK Trade and Investment to help researchers find sources of funding for international collaborations - whether it is a large sum of money for a project, or just a little financial help to attend a conference abroad.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

GOST website, available at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/science/gost>

SISTER website, available at:

<http://www.sism-uk.com/projects/sister>

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 EU 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 EU 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 EU 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 co-ordination 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 2000/04 (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 co-ordinated. 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, FP7)	The EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The Fifth Framework Programme (FP5) was adopted in 1998 and ran until 2002, with FP6 superseding until 2006, with discussions underway on FP7 beyond 2006. Further information on the thematic and horizontal programme composition of FP6 is available at http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/home.cfm
GBH	Genomics and Biotechnology for Health Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
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.
ITRE	The European Parliament Committee on Industry, External

	Trade, Research and Energy (FP5) http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/en/default.htm
INTAS	International Association for the promotion of co-operation with scientists from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union. http://www.intas.be/mainfs.htm
IST	Information Society Technologies Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
JRC	The EC's Joint Research Centre acting as a scientific and technological laboratory in support of EU policies, with a range of institutes and research activities. http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int
MEDIA	The MEDIA Plus Programme (2001–05) is to be introduced as a follow-up to the Media II programme which ended 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
Mobility	Human Resources and Mobility Programme (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation http://www.nato.int/
NMP	Nanotechnology, Materials and Production Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
PHARE	The Phare Programme is the European Union's instrument for financial and technical co-operation with the countries of central and eastern Europe. http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/index.htm
RTD	Research and Technological Development
SDGC	Sustainable Development and Global Change Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
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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