

News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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EU POLICY

EP response to EC communication on 'Science and Technology - the key to Europe's future'

The EP recently adopted the report of rapporteur Mrs Pia Locatelli MEP (PSE, Italy) on the EC June 2004 communication. This acceptance of some of the main priorities for the future comes just a few weeks before the EC is due to make its official proposal on the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) finances and priority areas. Mrs Locatelli's report considered some key questions such as how to best finance EU research, priorities for future research and how competitiveness in Europe can be enhanced through research.

MEPs consider that to make Europe more competitive (and thus meet the Lisbon objectives), research and innovation requires a sizeable budget and that at least double the budget seen for Framework Programme 6 (FP6) should be requested for FP7. Continuity between FP6 and FP7 instruments and thematic priorities which reflect the Lisbon Agenda were also considered highly important. The EP also hopes that the programme will lead to real debate at the heart of European and National institutions, with input from scientists, society and the private sector. The EP approved the integration of Space and Security research themes, as well as support for life sciences, nanotechnologies, chemistry, ICT and sustainable and clean energy resources. MEPs were also supportive of development of research into natural catastrophes and diseases afflicting developing countries. Finally, MEPs supported a rapid establishment of a European Research Council (ERC) amid fears that lack of support for basic and long term research will progressively damage competitiveness.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EP website at: <http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+DN-20050310-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S#SECTION7>

Cohesion and the Lisbon agenda: the role of the regions

The EC held a conference entitled 'Cohesion and the Lisbon Agenda: The role of the Regions' earlier this month. The aim of the conference was to discuss the role of regions in making Lisbon work. It was opened by the President of the EC, José Manuel Barroso, and concluded by Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner responsible for Regional Policy. Mr Barroso outlined the proposals for Lisbon, to be presented at the Spring Council. Ms Hübner emphasised the fundamental role European Regional Policy has to play in ensuring the success of the Lisbon Agenda. In particular, the creation of new jobs and development of long term competitiveness occurs at a local and regional level.

Using three recommendations from the Kok report: the need for resources to implement the objectives; lack of ownership at national level and the need for national action plans, the Commissioner argued that the regions can help Europe achieve the Lisbon objectives. The

partnerships, programmes and financial instruments that have evolved during the implementation of European Regional Policy over the years can be used to support action on the ground. In conclusion, recognition of the importance of Cohesion policy and the practitioners that implement it, means that any reduction in resource allocation would have a destructive impact on the regions ability to support the Lisbon agenda, and therefore the EU as a whole.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC Regional Policy DG at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docconf/lisbon/index_en.htm

EQUAL programme: helping the EU get into work

A conference entitled 'Free movement of good ideas' held by the EC and co-hosted by the Polish government was held recently in Warsaw. The conference was brought about to present the results of the EQUAL programme, a €5.5 billion programme which aims to find new ways of getting people into work by challenging existing obstacles. The conference was used as a platform for unveiling the results of 1,300 innovation partnerships.

The EQUAL programme involves co-financing of projects in specific thematic areas (EU and Member state Governments support projects on a co-finance basis). The nine thematic fields covered in EQUAL are: access and return to the labour market; combating racism; business creation; social economy; lifelong learning; adaptation to change; reconciling family and working life; reducing gender gaps and integration of asylum seekers. Results unveiled at the conference were drawn from the first group of projects funded under the scheme which started in 2001.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

additional information on the conference is available from the EC Employment and Social Affairs DG website at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/activities/20050225-warsaw-conf_en.cfm.

further information on EQUAL can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/index_en.cfm.

Increased EU research and development expenditure

One of the perceived explanations for differences between the EU 25 (25 EU Member States) and the US and Japan (in terms of economic prosperity) is the percentage of research and development financing by the business sector. This represented only 55 percent of the total EU25 expenditure in 2001, while in the US in 2001 this was 67 per cent and in Japan in 2002 this was 74 percent. Specifically in the EU, Sweden (4.27 percent in 2001) and Finland (3.51 percent in 2003) were the only countries to be above the EC 3 percent target for 2010. Similarly the business sector's share of research and development expenditure was also very high, both around 70 percent in 2001/2.

A report recently published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Communities has subsequently shown that spend within the EU 25 currently stands at 1.93 percent for

2002, compared to 1.82 percent in 1998. The report also shows that even though research and development expenditure has been rising faster in the EU 25 (at 4 percent in real terms), it is still significantly short of levels of intensity of US (2.76 percent in 2003) and Japan (3.12 percent in 2002).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

the Eurostat report is available from the Eurostat website at:

http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NS-05-002/EN/KS-NS-05-002-EN.PDF

further information on Eurostat is available at:

http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1073,1135281,1073_1135295&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=KS-NS-05-002

REACH and the trade unions

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) held a recent conference to explain concerns regarding the proposed EU policy on chemicals termed 'REACH' (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals). The regulation applies to the 30,000 chemical substances produced or imported the EU in quantities exceeding 1 tonne per annum.

The conference was attended by MEPs, the EC and large numbers of additional interested parties e.g. different user groups. The conference was initiated with a number of presentations explaining what REACH is and how it is expected to work. The ETUC then took the opportunity to present a number of concerns which it is hoped will be fully considered by both the EC and EP. The concerns were numerable and included issues such as compliance checks and the effects of the regulations on downstream users and SMEs.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

General information on REACH is available from the EC DG Environment webpage at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/index.htm>

full details of the ETUC views on REACH are available from the ETUC website at:

<http://www.oekoline.net/fileadmin/oekoline/dokumente/20-Decl-REACH-gb.pdf>

European group on ethics: opinion on ethical aspects of ICT implants in the human body

On 16 March 2005, the European Group on Ethics (EGE) adopted Opinion No. 20 on the ethical aspects of information and communication technologies (ICT) implants in the human body and presented it to the EC. Ethical issues can arise if ICT implants are accessible via digital networks where there is the potential for manipulation and surveillance or where devices are implanted for the purpose of individual or social control. The EGE stresses that the inviolability of the human body should not be used as a principle to inhibit advances in science and technology but rather prevent possible misuses. The Opinion also makes the general point that non-medical applications of implants present the greatest threat to human dignity and the democracy.

It points out that the principles of data protection need to be applied to the whole area of ICT implants, that implants could be used to enhance physical and mental capabilities as long as this does not lead to a two-tier society and that surveillance applications of ICT implants may only be permitted in extreme circumstances by the legislature where no other methods exists. Finally, the Opinion calls for a wide-ranging public debate on the acceptable application of ICT implants and states that regulation is urgently needed in the field of medical and non-medical implants. It calls on the EC to launch legislative initiatives in this area.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC website at:

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

E-health in the EU

The Health Information Network Europe (HINE) has finished what is claimed to be the largest ever survey of hospitals in Europe. The results are due to be presented at the third European e-Health conference, which will take place in Tromsø, Norway, 23-24 May 2005. The aim of the survey is to determine the current status of the EUs hospitals and use this to help determine future e-Health opportunities. 900 hospitals in 15 countries took part in the survey. Véronique Lessens, HINE project manager has explained that ‘the hospital census provides a unique benchmark of how sophisticated hospitals are today in terms of e-health usage’ and that the results give a clear indication on the status of e-health in each country e.g. through study of implementation, barriers, infrastructure, spend on Information technology.

Results from the survey show that the EU has similar levels of decision support and e-prescribing when compared to the US. However, Europe was found to have a relatively low level of hospital IT spending, an under-developed infrastructure, lack of information for decision making at all levels, overall reluctance to use external skills and general lack of understanding of the strategic value of information communication technology (ICT).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the HINE website at: <http://www.hineurope.com/Content/Default.asp>.

details on the e-health conference are available from the e-health website at:

<http://www.ehealth2005.no/>

New EU platform for action – diet, physical activity and health

In order to help tackle the rising problem of obesity throughout Europe, a ‘Platform on diet, physical activity and health’ was launched on 15 March 2005. The Platforms intention is to include all main actors (industry associations, consumer groups, health NGOs, political leaders) in order to take a co-operative and action-oriented approach to the problem and to ensure complementarity with other European initiatives.

Fields for action identified by the Platform so far are: consumer information, including labelling; education; promotion of physical activity; marketing and advertising; and composition of food, availability of healthy food options and portion sizes. Participants have agreed to create a baseline by reporting on activities carried out in 2004 and already

decided for 2005, and agree a EU-Level commitment after consultation with stakeholders at local, regional and national level. In 2006, participants have agreed to commit a greater level of resources and effort to tackle obesity beyond the baseline level and to work towards defining benchmarks and indicators of action and outcome.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC website at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/launch_en.htm

Launch of EU new anti-smoking campaign: 'HELP – for a life without tobacco'

On 1 March 2005, Markos Kyprianou, the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, launched a new €72 million EU anti-smoking campaign. 'HELP' is the second EU-wide anti-smoking campaign, building on the success of the previous campaign which ran between 2002 and 2004 and has been devised by a consortium of health experts and media companies.

'HELP' comprises a roadshow and public relations campaign, an advertising campaign and website containing advice on how to stop smoking. A European Tobacco Media Observatory will collect and analyse anti-tobacco communications in the media. The strategy has been developed in conjunction with an expert advisory group chaired by Professor Gerard Hastings of the Centre for Tobacco Control research at the University of Stirling.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC website at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/Tobacco/help_en.htm

European Institute for gender equality

On 8 March 2005, Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, announced the establishment of a new EU Institute for Gender Equality. The announcement co-incided with International Women's Day and the institute will aim to assist both EU institutions and Member States with expertise and policy development to promote gender equality and combat sex discrimination.

As an independent centre of excellence at European level, the institute will gather, analyse and disseminate reliable and comparable research data and required information and will include a publically accessible documentation centre and a library. Campaigns and seminars will be part of efforts to stimulate research and communication between policy-makers, experts and stakeholders and should raise awareness. As requested by the European Council in June 2004 and by the EP, the legal process will be initiated, and the institute should be running in 2007, with a budget of € 52.5 million from 2007-13.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities website at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2005/mar/genderinstitute_en.html

Science in society open forum 2005

Over 1000 participants were welcomed to the Open Forum event from 9 to 11 March 2005. The event took advantage of a variety of meetings and exhibitions stands to allow scientists, policy makers, civil society groups and other stakeholders to review progress of the Science and Society debate, its impact, the work of different actors and to suggest best practice and ways of looking ahead to the future.

The context of the revitalised Lisbon Agenda underlined the importance of this event which attracted talks from two current European Commissioners Janez Potocnik (Research) and Jan Figel (Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism), as well as Philippe Busquin MEP, and former Research Commissioner. The conference also saw the launch of SINAPSE, a new EC e-network to work as a scientific knowledge platform for better communication between scientists and policy makers. The platform offers new tools such as a library, consultations, early warning of key issues, a forum for discussions, yellow pages and a web search facility.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the Open Forum webpage on the EC website at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2005/forum2005/index_en.htm

RESEARCH NEWS

Hydrogen and fuel cell technology platform

The European Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technology Platform (HFP) held its second annual General Assembly on 17 and 18 March. The Technology Platform facilitates and accelerates the development and deployment of cost-competitive, world-class European hydrogen and fuel cell-based energy systems and component technologies for applications in transport, stationary and portable power. The aim of the meeting was to bring stakeholders together to assess proposals for the medium-term and long-term development of hydrogen and fuel cells for carrying and converting energy cleanly. To this end, two documents were discussed at the meeting: a Strategic Research Agenda and a Deployment Strategy.

The Strategic Research Agenda sets out a ten-year research, development and demonstration programme, with budget allocations for each of the main research areas. These include hydrogen production, storage, and distribution. The Deployment Strategy, suggests initial action needed in order to ensure market penetration applications by 2020; milestones for this action are also included. It also stresses the fact that strong public-private partnerships will be required for the move from the R&D stage, which is where things currently stand, to mass-market introduction of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies. The meeting also included discussion on the inclusion of hydrogen and fuel cell research in the FP7.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

full details on the platform can be found on the HFP website, available at:
<https://www.hfpeurope.org/>

Producing hydrogen through artificial photosynthesis

An EU-funded project is studying plant photosynthesis in order to produce hydrogen from renewable sources. The project, called SOLAR-H, is funded through FP6 and brings together a multidisciplinary network of scientists from six countries. Its aim is to develop novel ways of producing hydrogen from solar energy and water. Hydrogen is considered to be of crucial importance for the future of energy in Europe, and there is huge potential for producing it through artificial photosynthesis, even if research into this is in the early stages.

One of the research teams in the network is looking at living cyanobacteria (an alga) and is altering their metabolism at the genetic level so that they produce hydrogen without absorbing it at the same time. Another research team is looking at mechanisms of natural photosynthesis at the biochemical level. Another is working on synthesizing the molecule complexes necessary to imitate the natural process. Yet another is studying rapid and complex reactions using a series of different physical methods of measurement. This approach, involving scientists from many different fields, is intended to utilise the critical mass of research expertise needed for breakthrough achievements in this area.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

general information on fuel cells can be found from the Fuel Cell Today website at:
<http://www.fuelcelltoday.com/index/>

E-Care: remote monitoring of patients

A recently completed IST project, E-Care, has brought us closer to efficient, effective and reliable remote healthcare monitoring, allowing doctors, carers and family members to communicate vital health data in a low cost solution. The consortium, co-ordinated by Italy, has nine other partners from Italy, Greece, the UK, Germany and Cyprus. E-Care has developed a remote healthcare monitoring system allowing for real-time health-monitoring of patients with chronic, or long-term, illnesses and patients who are in post-surgery state or serious medical crises. This system takes vital data from patients, automatically adds the data to the patient's chart and renders the information accessible via computer for analysis at a hospital or to doctors and family, automatically tailoring the data for the person accessing it. Any disturbing changes in the patients status or a lack of data, is flagged up to the physician automatically. The system also allows for communication with a real-time synchronous message, audio conferencing or videoconference.

Pilot programmes have confirmed that: 'The final validation results for E-Care showed a general satisfaction among doctors and medical staff, system and medical administrators, patients and their family,' says co-ordinator Devoti from Italy. With the project validation complete the partners will fine tune the system and search for commercial opportunities , with certain groups such as Diabetes specialists already finding the system to have many advantages.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

E-Care project website, available at: <http://www.e-care-ist.net/>

Cordis project factsheet, including contact details, available at:

<http://dbs.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&CALLER=PROJ IST&QM EP RCN A=60998>

E-Mobility technology platform launched

The Mobile and Wireless Communications Technology Platform (e-Mobility) was launched by 15 companies on 18 March 2005. The participating companies took the opportunity to call for actions which would promote industry investment in mobile and wireless technologies. The Information Society and Media Commissioner Viviane Reding gave her support to the establishment of the platform, saying that 'Looking to the future, it is clearly essential that we strengthen Europe's global competitive advantage in mobile and wireless communications. We must enhance our R&D investment and retain skilled R&D personnel and facilities in Europe. Technology platforms set up by industry are one of the tools that may help to retain critical mass expertise and facilities in Europe'.

The significance of the mobile and wireless communication technologies sector to EU objectives of growth and competitiveness is underlined by the 2.8 million jobs in Europe which currently depend directly or indirectly on the mobile services industry in the EU Member States. In its plans for FP7, the EC has been keen to make the case for doubling the current level of R&D expenditure, and underlines that increases in funding for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) research should reflect the sector's ability to stimulate overall economic growth and employment.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Ericsson Press Release, available at: <http://www.ericsson.com/press/20050318-085727.html>

eMobility website, available at: <http://www.emobility.eu.org/>

A new battle in the war against cancer: could teabags take victory?

A recent study published in Cancer Research shows that polyphenol EGCG taken from green tea leaves inhibits the growth of cancer cells, and that this effect even occurs at low concentrations, equivalent to 2-3 cups of tea a day. Previous research had suggested a link, but now Professor Roger Thorneley from the John Innes Centre in Norwich and Dr Jose Neptuno Rodriguez-Lopez from the University of Murcia in Spain have elucidated the mechanism.

EGCG works in a similar way to established anti-cancer drugs by binding to the enzyme dihydrofolate reductase (DHFR), which normally triggers the manufacture of DNA in new tumour cells. A new generation of anti-cancer drugs based on EGCG is likely to have fewer side effects than conventional cancer therapies. Previous studies have also indicated that high levels of green tea consumption around conception and during pregnancy is associated with an increased incidence of those neural tube defects which are associated with folic acid deficiency. Professor Thorneley and Dr Rodriguez-Lopez confirm that EGCG

would be expected to cause a significant drop in folic acid levels and that this is probably responsible for this effect.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

BBC website at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4348059.stm>

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

Securing the future of Europe's universities

The EC held an event this month to discuss key issues in University-based research and how to secure the future of Europe's universities. The meeting was convened to report, in part, on the progress of the Forum on University-based research which is made up of high level experts across EU research and is chaired by the EC. The meeting also aimed at widening the debate around several key issues and to propose concrete actions.

Participants at the meeting came from a variety of backgrounds, including senior university representatives, Member State governments, pan-European interest groups and organisations such as the EU Committee of the Regions, ESF, EUROHORCS, EUROSCIENCE, EIRMA, EUA, EURAB and Academia Europaea. For many of the participants, the recent revitalisation of the Lisbon agenda had brought new focus to the problems facing universities and the need for action. The meeting was introduced by the EC and chaired by Professor Eduardo Grilo, former Portuguese Minister for Education. Professor Grilo said that he was convinced that universities were only partially governed, organised and prepared for the new challenges of the current climate of change, and that to do so would require careful analysis of appropriate measure at regional, national and European levels.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

a full report to summarise the findings of the Forum is expected to be published in May 2005. General information on the Forum can be found from the EC website at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2004/univ/followup_en.html

Adult learning – on the road to Europe

The EC has recently published a summary of thematic trends in Socrates-Grundtvig European Co-operation projects and networks. The Grundtvig programme is the adult education element of the Socrates programme, the purpose of which is to support a strong commitment across Europe to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of adult learning and teaching, concentrating on adult education for personal development, democratic citizenship and social inclusion. The publication provides an outline of the themes and issues addressed by projects and networks supported under the centralised actions, managed directly by the EC.

Much of the work under Grundtvig is to try and recognise the importance of non-formal and informal learning, often the hardest type to acknowledge. Several projects address this, including the Grundtvig network for Adult Learning Weeks and Adult Learning Festivals.

There are projects addressing marketing methods to reach non-traditional learners and networks looking at best practice in prison education. A significant number of Grundtvig projects are looking at the needs of migrant or minority groups, travellers and refugees. For example, there are several projects looking at developing new approaches to teaching and learning with adult Roma, working closely with the Roma community itself across Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC website at:

http://europe.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/socrates/grundtvig/brochure2004_en.pdf

Publication of European charter for researchers and code of conduct

The EC has recently published recommendations on a European charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment. Both documents have been developed to support researchers key role in the generation, transfer and sharing of knowledge, essential for the achievement of the Lisbon and Barcelona objectives. The European Charter and Code are a result of nearly 2 years of work at Member State level, co-ordinated by the EC using the open method of co-ordination. They were first proposed in the EC communication 'Researchers in the European Area: one profession, multiple careers', with the aim of providing a set of general principles and requirements that would specify the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers, employers and funders with regards to research careers.

Both documents are based on the idea that enhanced career prospects provide an incentive for individuals to remain within research careers and stay in Europe; a more content and motivated workforce that incurs economic benefits to employing organisations and to Europe more widely; and a positive public attitude towards the researchers' profession, and therefore encourages more young people to embark on careers in research. The specific aim of the Charter is to set out the role and responsibilities of researchers, whilst that of the Code of Conduct for Recruitment is to support open and transparent recruitment processes, that allows a variety of ways of judging performance and potential.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC website at:

http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/Recommendation_code_charter_EN_final.pdf

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

ERA-LINK - US-based researchers networks

In response to a recent EC survey, US-based EU researchers have asked for the creation of a network both for them and about them. More than 90 percent of the 2000 respondents to the Commission's survey replied saying that they wanted to build closer relationships with Europe.

In reply to this request, the EC has agreed to develop ERA-LINK, a networking and information tool designed to enable European researchers working in the US to access information regarding EU career and research funding opportunities. ERA-LINK will also detail possibilities for collaborative work with EU research groups, student exchanges and visiting professorships.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC press release on ERA-LINK available from the EC website at:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/200&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Road maps for EU-Russia co-operation

It has been announced that a package of road maps for the development of four 'Common Spaces' should be adopted at the next EU-Russia summit, which will take place in Moscow in May. These Common Spaces were originally agreed in May 2003, with a view to strengthening co-operation in areas of shared interest. The four Common Spaces are: the Common Economic Space; the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice; the Common Space of Co-operation in the Field of External Security; and the Common Space on Research, Education and Culture.

The space for research, education and culture is intended to intensify links in these fields in order to share best practices. The EU and Russia already have good co-operation on research, with a Science and Technology Co-operation Agreement and an Action Plan to enhance Science and Technology co-operation. Also, FP6 has allowed for increased participation from Russian research organisations. It is expected that May will see the completion of ground work to found a European Studies Institute in Moscow, co-funded by Russia and the EU. This is intended to recruit 50 students for September 2006 and a further 200 students for September 2007. It will be managed by an independent entity, but with the involvement of both Russian official bodies and EU institutions (the EC and College of Europe). All four road maps will set out both shared objectives and the concrete actions needed to make these objectives a reality, determining a medium-term agenda for EU-Russia co-operation.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the EC External Relations DG at:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/russia/intro/memo05_103.htm

South Africa and EU food-related research

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) in South Africa (SA) has put in place a series of initiatives to support the SA Science and Technology community in the EU Research & Development Framework Programmes. These actions include project proposal seed funding and the beginnings of a National Contact Point (NCP) network.

As part of strengthening the relationships between the EU, SA and other countries the EU will sign the ESASTAP (European-South Africa Science and Technology Advancement Programme) in April of this year. This is an agreement between SAs DST and the EU to increase the exposure of the different science communities to each other's capacity and

expertise. The project will run for two years and will involve workshops, conferences, the development of web sites, promotional material etc... SA has been relatively successful since FP4 and is second only to Russia in the number of successful projects it is involved in (SA currently has about 30-40 in FP6).

FURTHER INFORMATION:

For further information please contact::

Dr Geoff Meese, Manager: Strategic Initiatives

CSIR-Food, Biological and Chemical Technologies EC FP6/SA National Contact Point:)

Email address: gmeese@csir.co.za

EVENTS and AWARDS

L'Oréal-UNESCO women and science awards 2005

On 3 March 2005 in Paris, the seventh L'Oreal-UNESCO awards took place, to recognise achievements and bring international recognition to exceptional women scientists. 5 Laureates and 15 Fellows were recognised for their achievements from 5 continents (Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Pacific, Arab States, Europe and North America)

The 2005 Awards coincide with the World Year of Physics and are devoted to material sciences. The awards were presented by Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director-General and Lindsay Owen-Jones, Chairman and CEO of L'Oréal. The awards were initiated in 1998 and the agreement between L'Oreal and UNESCO was extended in 2004 for another five years. While the laureates were recognised for their achievements in Material Sciences, as a theme for 2005, the Fellowship programme was founded to encourage young women researchers in Life Sciences. The 15 fellows selected in 2005 included several from emerging countries such as Jordan, Cuba, Algeria and Burkina Faso.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

details on the Laureates and Fellows, available at:

<http://www.loreal.com/en/ww/loreal-women-in-science/focus-women-in-science.aspx>

International Conference: the other side of mobility

The Academic Co-operation Association (ACA) is holding a conference together with the International Programme Office, the Högskoleverket and the Swedish Institute, in Stockholm on Stockholm 12-14 June 2005. The event will be hosted by Stockholm's Royal Institute of Technology (KTH). The aim of the event is the look at the impact of mobility on the person involved, both personally and professionally. The target audience includes academics, policy-makers and other professionals working in the area of international education.

The conference will be focused around plenary sessions covering themes such as 'Different approaches to mobility'; 'Mobility and development co-operation'; 'Intercultural impacts of mobility' and 'Mobility, research, and knowledge transfer'.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the ACA website at: <http://www.aca-secretariat.be/08events/Stockholm/introduction.htm>

First international food and nutrition congress: food safety and quality through the food chain

An international food and nutrition congress will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 15 to 18 June 2005. The congress is co-ordinated by TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Centre Food Institute. Congress topics will include: new trends in food processing and preservation technologies; food safety; food biotechnology; organic and low input foods; food additives, contaminants and residues; functional foods; nutrition, food and health; food regulations and standards and new trends in methods of food analysis, detection and control.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from the TÜBİTAK website at: <http://www.tubitakcongress2005.org>

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES

ESF policy briefing on nanomedicine

The European Science Foundation (ESF) has recently published a scientific 'Forward Look' report on Nanomedicine. The study involved leading European experts, in Nanomedicine in 2004 and was conducted through a Steering Committee, a series of five specialised workshops involving small groups of experts from academia and industry and a final Consensus Conference which was held in November 2004 and attended by representatives from academia, industry, private foundations and governmental agencies supporting scientific research.

The recently published policy briefing summarises recommendations from the 'Forward Look' in preparation for the full report which is to be released at a later date. The report focuses on scientific trends and the directions EU science should be taking in this area, the tools and techniques needed to develop nanoscience, required developments specifically in the field of medical research and the clinical and regulatory issues surrounding this research topic.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The report can be found on the ESF website at:
http://www.esf.org/esf_activity_home.php?language=0&domain=0&activity=8

New report on climate change and water

The ECs Joint Research Centre (JRC) has published a report on 'Climate Change and the European Water Dimension'. This report was published to co-incide with World Water Day on 22 March.

The report states that climate change can lead to rises in the sea level. This can lead to coastal erosion, affecting nutrients and sediment and causing a loss of marine organisms. Such alterations in the biological, chemical and physical characteristics of European water bodies are fully described in the new report. The report also looks at the risk of weather-related natural hazards in Europe, related to climate change, and predicts a rise in these in coming years. It is clear from the report that there is need for solutions to be found to these problems, and the authors call for the application of new climate change scenarios; this would allow prediction of the impact on land and water systems at local level, thus allowing assessment of mitigation strategies and their associated costs.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The 'Climate Change and the European Water Dimension' report is available from the JRC website at: <http://ies.jrc.cec.eu.int>

IPR helpdesk

The FP6 IPR helpdesk is to be re-launched with a new look and additional facilities featuring 6 different work packages and with all information accessible in 6 different languages (English, German, Spanish, Polish, French, Italian). The workpackages with services on offer include:

1. Helpline: Offering expert and personalised advice within a 3 day turnaround period. This service is free of charge and features a checking service (i.e. all answers to queries will be checked prior to sending).
2. Content generation: containing updated (graphics) website which is updated daily and , eNewsletter, and bulletin.
3. Dissemination: capacity to disseminate posters, leaflets etc.....
4. Training: Free of charge training for multipliers of information, NCPs, Chambers of Commerce, research associations and technology networks.
5. Co-operation with IRCs and NPOs
6. Representation office (based in Brussels)

The new partners in the IPR helpdesk include Alicante University (for RTD expertise), Jagellonian University (for legal expertise) and Eurice GmbH (for dissemination expertise)

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The helpdesk can be found at: <http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/index.htm>

'Women and science: excellence and innovation - gender equality in science'

The EC published a staff working document on 11 March 2005 entitled 'Women and Science: Excellence and Innovation - gender equality in science'. The report gives an overview of women and science actions implemented at European level since June 2001, in response to the Resolution issued by Research Council at that time.

Trained women scientists are currently leaving their careers in disproportionate numbers to their male colleagues, and unless this trend can be reversed, the Barcelona target of R&D investment reaching 3 percent EU GDP by 2010 will be unattainable. The report reviews action by the EC and at national level to improve the participation of women in science and collect sex-disaggregated data on R&D staff for more effective monitoring and comparison. Although considerable progress has been made, improvements have been slow and there is wide variation across Member States. The report concludes that future priorities need be to more narrowly focused concentrating on: promoting gender awareness and fairness in assessing scientific excellence; boosting the number of women in senior positions; strengthening gender research as an interdisciplinary field of study in its own right and the gender dimension in research; and enhancing the role of women in engineering and innovation

FURTHER INFORMATION:

The report can be found from the EC website at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/pdf/documents_women_sec_en.pdf

Social sciences in Europe.

The Standing Committee for Social Sciences (SCSS) has published a report entitled 'Social Sciences in Europe'. The report is targeted at a wide audience to demonstrate the usefulness of a range of social science disciplines, and of support to this broad field from both the European Science Foundation (ESF) and Member organisations.

The report highlights that whilst some social science disciplines are well established with their contribution recognised, others, especially in interdisciplinary areas, are newer but just as solid in terms of valuable findings.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

the report can be found in the ESF website at:

http://www.esf.org/esf_genericpage.php?language=0§ion=2&domain=5&genericpage=647

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/guesten.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/sq/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](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/R&D	Research and Technological Development/Research and 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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