

*News on EU Research Policy and Programmes*

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## **EU POLICY**

### **Communicating with Europe**

From 1 February 2006 until July 2006, the EC is seeking contributions on its white paper on European communication policy. The white paper is a call for action to close the gap between the EU and its citizens. The paper comes at a time when Eurobarometer and other opinion polls show that many people know little about the EU and feel they have no say in its decision-making processes. A reconnection and two-way dialogue is essential for a healthy democracy. The white paper follows on from the action plan on communication that was launched by the EC last year. The action plan contained a detailed list of specific measures the EC will take to improve the way it communicates with citizens, including the reinforcement of the EC representation offices; better internal co-ordination and planning; work on language and presentation, and more access points for citizens. The EC also launched 'Plan D for democracy, dialogue and debate', which is intended to involve citizens in a wide-ranging discussion on the EU – what it is for, where it is going and what it should be doing.

The white paper has a more limited scope than the previous action plan. It proposes five areas where joint action should be taken: defining common principles to guide communication activities on European issues; empowering citizens; working with the media and new technologies; understanding European public opinion and doing the job together. A special web-based citizens' forum to seek views on a European Charter or Code of Conduct will be launched on 1 March 2006. Comments on the white paper can be submitted electronically at the website listed below.

#### **FURHTER INFORMATION:**

further information on the white paper can be found at:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/communication\\_white\\_paper/question\\_answer/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/communication_white_paper/question_answer/index_en.htm)

comments can be submitted electronically from the following website:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/communication\\_white\\_paper/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/communication_white_paper/index_en.htm)

### **How did the EU do in research in 2004?**

The EC recently published its Annual Report on the Community's RTD activities. The report offers an overview of the developments and activities of 2004, the second year in the implementation of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The main report is accompanied by a staff working document which includes further details of activities and a statistical annex. The implementation of FP6 was judged a success as indicated by almost 16,000 proposals received with more than 84,400 participants. Altogether nearly 2,100 contracts were signed in 2004 with a total EC contribution of more than €4,200 million. 2004 also saw the impact of the Marimon mid-term review of FP6 instruments, with corrective measures being taken and an action plan for rationalisation and acceleration of FP6 implementation. Other work related to FP6 included: setting up 25 Technology Platforms, the adoption of a Communication entitled 'Towards a European Strategy for Nanotechnology', a consensus on the location of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project at the Cadarache (France) site, and the launch of a new preparatory action on security research.

2004 also saw the publication of the 'Europe and Basic Research' Communication, marking the first step towards establishing a European Research Council (ERC), while the Communication 'Science and technology, the key to Europe's future' started a political debate on the guidelines for future European research policy and activities, and on the development of the EC's proposal on FP7, presented in April 2005. Several specific initiatives were undertaken with a view to attracting the best researchers in Europe, including entry and residence of third-country researchers, the Researcher's Mobility Portal, the ERA-link network with European researchers in the US, and the ERA-MORE network of mobility centres for European researchers.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

COM(2005)517 – Annual report on research and technological development activities of the European Union in 2004, available from: [http://europa.eu.int/documents/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/documents/index_en.htm)

### **Into the future with biofuels**

The EC has published a new strategy on biofuels with the aim of promoting biofuels in the EU and developing countries; preparing for the large-scale use of biofuels by improving their cost-competitiveness and increasing research into second generation fuels; and providing support to developing countries where biofuel production could stimulate sustainable economic growth. The EU supports biofuel research with the objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, boosting the decarbonisation of transport fuels, diversifying fuel supply sources and developing long term replacements for fossil fuels.

The new EC strategy has seven key policy areas, including support to research and development. This aims to continue to support the development of an industry-led Biofuel Technology Platform, which will formulate recommendations for research in this sector. Major European biofuels stakeholders are represented in the platform, including the agricultural and forestry sectors, food industry, biofuels industry, oil companies and fuel distributors, car manufacturers and research institutes. Actions at a European level in the field of biomass should further increase the cost effectiveness and co-ordination of activities. The EC has also confirmed that biofuels will be a priority in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The other policy areas included in the strategy are: stimulating demand for biofuels; capturing environmental benefits; developing production and distribution opportunities; extending supplies of feedstock; enhancing trade opportunities and supporting developing countries.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/biomass/biofuel/com2006\\_34\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/biomass/biofuel/com2006_34_en.pdf)

### **Mechanical engineering – the way to boost Europe's growth**

The EC has established a new discussion group on mechanical engineering to analyse the challenges facing Europe's mechanical engineering industry, and look at how mechanical engineering can develop its potential further. The discussion group will address future conditions to the industry, and propose measures aimed at improving Europe's performance in this area. The group, named 'EnginEurope', consists of representatives from industry, Member States, trade unions and research organisations. 'EnginEurope' is chaired by Professor Fritz Klocke, Head of the mechanical engineering

department of Aachen Technical University. It met for the first time in February 2006 and is expected to present a report with its findings to the EC in early 2007.

The establishment of 'EnginEurope' follows a previous Communication on industrial policy from October last year. In the previous Communication, the EC outlined the challenges to the enabling industry, in terms of increased international competition, low investment and reduced expenditure on research and development.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

EC press release IP/06/147 of 10 February 2006 available at:  
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

### **Philanthropy in research**

An expert group set up by the EC has published a report called 'Giving More for Research in Europe' in which they studied the important role of philanthropy in research funding. The group reviewed the extent of research supported by philanthropic means across the EU, such as funding from foundations, trusts and charities. They found that the situation was very diverse, with many differences in organisation, governance, operating conditions and legal status from one Member State to another. A few major players dominate and these usually concentrate on specific sectors such as medical research.

The experts concluded that although philanthropy played an important role in raising research funds, the potential has not been examined or used properly at European level. The expert group has issued recommendations as to how philanthropic activities could be increased in research in the future. Suggestions included targeting national and international donation campaigns, simplifying the tax and regulatory environment, and encouraging 'philanthropic venture capital' at European level. Boosting philanthropic funding for research is particularly important in light of the Lisbon objective to boost research investment and innovation in Europe.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

EC press release IP/06/123 of 6 February 2006 available at:  
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

### **Reducing emissions of fluorinated greenhouse gases**

The EP and Council of Ministers for Research recently reached a conciliation agreement to reduce emissions of fluorinated greenhouse gases. The legislation is based on an EC proposal and includes a regulation tackling emissions from stationary applications using these gases, as well as banning some products and equipment containing them. It also includes a Directive to phase out the use of fluorinated gases currently used in vehicle air conditioning systems from 1 January 2011. Reducing fluorinated gas emissions is a requirement under the Kyoto Protocol and the new directive on fluorinated gases will help the EU and its Member States meet their emission targets under the Protocol.

Fluorinated gases are extremely powerful and long-lived greenhouse gases used in refrigeration, air conditioning, fire-fighting, electrical transmission systems and various industry processes. These gases currently account for 2% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions. If no measures are taken, the EC estimates that emissions of fluorinated

gases will be 50% above 1995 levels in 2010. The final adoption of these legislative acts by EP and Council is expected by mid-2006. Member States will then have 18 months to abide by the Directive. This will be followed by a period of monitoring and evaluation.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release IP/06/106 of 1 February 2006 available at:

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

background information can be found from DG Environment website

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/eccpl.htm#fluorinatedgases>

### **Energy, environment and competitiveness**

The EC has launched a new high-level group on energy, environment and competitiveness. The group aims to develop closer co-ordination between policy and legislative initiatives and to contribute to creating a more stable and predictable regulatory framework. The links between industrial, energy and environmental policies will be examined to make sure the initiatives in each area are mutually compatible.

The group's main objective will be to provide advice and to develop an integrated approach for industrial policy. Climate change in particular EU emissions trading scheme, energy efficiency and the functioning of the energy markets will be discussed. The implementation of the DG Environment's thematic strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste and the improvement of resource efficiency will be addressed. The group will provide concrete implementation of better regulation and address the international aspects of regulation.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release IP/06/226 of 24 February 2006 available at:

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

### **Managing chemicals worldwide**

A global agreement on a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was reached on 6 February in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, under the auspices of the UN. This is the first global process promoting the sound management of all types of chemicals and not just specific groups of substances, as is the case in the Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances.

A global approach is of increasing importance with the increasing trend in moving production of high volume basic chemicals from industrialised countries towards developing countries. The SAICM Global Plan of Action sets out nearly 300 different activities that will help countries reach the goal. Strong emphasis has been placed on capacity-building and technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in order to help them manage chemicals safely. This will help to close the gap that exists between developing and developed nations in relation to sound chemicals. The EU chemicals regulation, REACH, will also help the EU to fulfil the objectives of SAICM.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC press release IP/06/129 of 7 February 2006 available at:

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

## RESEARCH NEWS

### Contributing to the European Innovation Scoreboard

The EC has called upon young researchers and masters level students to help explore innovation statistics in Europe. The European Innovation Scoreboard is used by the EC to evaluate innovation performance in Europe. The EC is looking to develop correlation analyses, to understand new dimensions of innovation and to find links with a range of socio-economic indicators to further understanding of innovation in Europe.

For further information, interested parties are asked to contact the Innovation Policy Development unit in the EC's DG Enterprise and Industry. It is envisaged that the three best papers (up to 20 pages in length) will be published on the TrendChart website, alongside the Innovation Scoreboard and accompanying papers. Some authors may also be invited to present their work in a specific section of the Scoreboard and at Commission workshops. The 2006 edition of the European Innovation Scoreboard was published on 12 January 2006, and revealed some diverse performances across the EU.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

further details can be obtained on request at:

[entr-innovation-policy-development@cec.eu.int](mailto:entr-innovation-policy-development@cec.eu.int)

further information on the European Innovation Scoreboard is available from

<http://trendchart.cordis.lu/>

### Talking life sciences to both sexes

On 9 February 2006, the EC held a workshop to investigate the different ways that can be employed to communicate science to men and women. A multidisciplinary group of experts from the EU and around the world was assembled to discuss theoretical and empirical data. The first event of its kind represented a chance to review specific scientific and communication issues from a variety of approaches. Topics discussed included: are there differences between the male and female brain?; do women and men perceive health risks differently?; do women and men process scientific information differently?; should there be a difference when teaching girls or boys science in school?

The event highlighted some areas in urgent need of work and provided examples where communication of science needs improvement. One example presented was the subject of obesity. It was argued that this is an area where the traditional approaches of communicating health messages and identifying treatment to men and women has been inconsistent. Further contributions looked at the importance of scientific education and how girls and boys reacted differently in schools, highlighting some methods that had been used to address imbalances. The EC has as its objective to improve the dialogue between science and society, and to recruit a further 700,000 researchers by 2010.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

on the event is available from <http://www.cordis.lu/food/home.html>

## **Promising recycling technology for recycling lithium-ion batteries**

The EC funded project 'Recycling of Primary and Secondary Lithium Batteries' (VALIBAT) set out to identify economic and effective alternatives to current processes for disposing of lithium-based batteries. Lithium-ion batteries are the most largely used rechargeable batteries for portable electronic devices. However, since the chemicals used in the batteries are highly reactive and polluting, it is no longer acceptable to dispose of these batteries by conventional methods such as landfill or incineration.

The technology developed by the VALIBAT project carries out the recycling process at ambient temperature and only 50mbar above atmospheric pressure and therefore, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and avoids acid rain. The VALIBAT project aimed to develop processes which enable the recycling of 95% of magnetic metallic compounds, 90% of lithium, 90% of metal oxides and 70% of lithium salt. A startup company, Recupyl, has been set up by the University of Grenoble, and as a follow up to this project, a pre-industrial demonstration step has also been funded under the EUREKA programme.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

available from the DG Research website:

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

and on the EU Environmental and Technology Action Plan website:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/etap/pdfs/newsletter\\_etap\\_3.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/etap/pdfs/newsletter_etap_3.pdf)

information about Recupyl available at

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

## **Protecting children's health**

A new project entitled 'NewGeneris' ('Newborns and Genotoxic Exposure Risks') funded under the EC's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) will investigate exposure to chemicals in food and the environment, and their connection with childhood cancer and immune disorders including asthma, rhinitis, eczema and dermatitis. Cancer incidence in European children has shown clear evidence of acceleration during recent decades, as has the worldwide prevalence of childhood immune disorders.

The project will involve 25 institutions, including three SMEs from across six European countries. The project will study maternal exposure during pregnancy to carcinogenic and immunotoxic chemicals and its effects on the fetus and in later childhood. The effects of chemicals from processed food, polluted air, tobacco smoke and alcohol will all be examined as part of the study. This research supports the EU's Environment and Health Strategy (SCALE, 2003) and Action Plan (2004).

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

on the EU's Environment and Health Strategy (SCALE, 2003) and Action Plan:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/health/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/health/index_en.htm)

university press release of 22 February 2006:

<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/admin/pr/pressreleases/2006/newgeneris.php>

## **Cruising the skies in 2050?**

A recent Swedish project explored different scenarios of sustainable air travel in 2050. This will help inform policies for curbing the growth of carbon dioxide emissions from aviation. Within the EU greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft account for about 3% of overall emissions, but the fast growth of air transport means that emissions from aircraft are currently growing faster than any other sector. This increase in emissions from aeroplanes risks undermining the progress which had been made in cutting emissions in other sectors.

The results of the project suggest that if aircraft cruised more slowly and at lower altitudes, carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced by 56% compared to 2000. If this technology is also coupled with a shift to a weakened emphasis on economic growth and less hectic lifestyles, air travel could significantly increase in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

available from DG Environment website at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/integration/newsalert/pdf/10na3.pdf>

## **EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE**

### **Conference for Marie Curie Early Stage Researchers**

On 10–12 April this year, the University of Manchester will host an international conference dedicated to Marie Curie Fellows from across Europe. This event will provide an opportunity for 250 of the best early stage researchers in Europe to a wide variety of multi-disciplinary lectures, seminars and workshops. Expected key speakers include Dr Tim Hunt on 'How to win a Nobel Prize' and Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Science and Research.

The conference will provide a rich combination of high profile, world class speakers, known not only for expertise in their own research areas but their skills in communicating science to a broad audience along with a 'bottom up' approach facilitating young researchers in presenting their work to multidisciplinary groups. In addition to this, a series of training workshops and seminars will run across the event with opportunities to learn, and ask questions about, current policy movements in Europe, which will change the research and employment landscape for the delegates. It will provide an ideal opportunity for early stage researchers to network with their peers within as well as across disciplines.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

further information, including registration, is available on the conference website at:

[www.manchester.ac.uk/mc2](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/mc2)

## **The EC proposes European Institute of Technology**

The EC has published its Communication on the European Institute of Technology (EIT) entitled: 'Implementing the renewed partnership for growth and jobs. Developing a knowledge flagship: the European Institute of Technology'. The Communication outlines the proposed mission of the EIT, how it will add value and when the EC hopes it will be operational by. The EC proposes that the EIT would cover the three elements of the knowledge triangle; education, research and innovation. It also proposes that it should be designed to: integrate teams from universities, research centres and companies in its structure; have resources seconded (not just networked) from existing organisations so that they become legally part of the EIT; and have an independent and self-renewing Governing Board drawn from the scientific and business communities.

The Communication is to be discussed by the Spring Council. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, the EC will propose the EIT's legal structure by the end of 2006 for adoption in 2008, with the earliest substantial expenditure foreseen in 2009/10. The idea of the EIT was originally proposed at the Spring Council 2005 in the context of the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy. The Communication is based upon the initial proposal and a public consultation that took place last year.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

further information is available from the Education and Culture website  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/news/what/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/news/what/index_en.html)

## **EC plan to promote business spirit in schools and universities**

The EC has published a communication entitled 'Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning', which includes recommendations aimed at enhancing the role of education in creating a more entrepreneurial culture in Europe. The recommendations are jointly supported by EC Vice-President Gunter Verheugen, responsible for industry and enterprise policy, and Jan Figel, Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism. It highlights how there should be a systematic approach to entrepreneurship education at all levels, from primary school to university. In addition, entrepreneurship is one of eight key competences that the EC believes all citizens should have in a modern, knowledge-based economy.

The recommendations are aimed at national and regional authorities, especially emphasising the need for cross-departmental working. With respect to fostering entrepreneurship in higher education, it recommends: integrating entrepreneurship across different courses, especially in scientific and technological disciplines; public funding agencies to offer training for teachers and develop good practice networks; and finally to support teacher mobility between university and business work. All these recommendations are based on examples of existing successful entrepreneurship education initiatives.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

further information is available from the DG Enterprise website at:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support\\_measures/training\\_education/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/index.htm)

## **EXTERNAL COLLABORATION**

### **EC recommends opening talks with Croatia and Turkey on S&T**

The EU has recommended opening negotiations proper with Croatia and Turkey in the area of science and research. This is the first subject area of 35 to be tackled in the context of EU membership negotiations, and talks will begin once all EU Member States have agreed with the EU recommendation to open negotiations. Once negotiations begin, the candidate countries will each be asked to prepare a negotiating position, whilst the European Commission draws up a 'draft common position' for the EU side. An EC recommendation to start talks on education and culture is also expected soon.

The EC found in its recent report on science and research that Croatia and Turkey had both 'reached a good level of alignment with and capacity to implement' the EU legislation on science and research, but noted that Turkey would need to 'ensure freedom regarding all relevant scientific institutions'. Both Croatia and Turkey would need to make adequate budgetary resources available and improve capacity building in terms of participation in EU-funded research programmes. The EC also welcomed Croatia and Turkey's action plans to work towards the 'Lisbon' economic goal of raising investment in research and development to 3% of the GDP by 2010. Currently Croatia's gross expenditure on R&D is around 1% of GDP and Turkey's is about 0.67% of GDP.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

on the enlargement process available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/>

### **Clean coal in China**

The Commissioner for Energy, Andris Piebalgs, will attend the 6th EU-China Energy conference in Shanghai, which brings together policy makers and energy industrialists. A wide range of issues are to be addressed, such as reinforcing the security of energy supplies and increasing energy efficiency; promoting renewable energy; strengthening nuclear safety, and looking at the interaction between energy, research and environmental policies. Commissioner Piebalgs will also meet Chinese energy policy leaders, attend conferences on electricity and natural gas and visit plants which are already applying energy efficient or clean coal technology.

During the visit Commissioner Piebalgs will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese Government on near-zero emissions power generation technology. This will encourage the development of technology for the capture and underground storage of carbon dioxide emitted from coal powered fire stations. This is potentially significant in the fight against climate change, since China is heavily dependent on coal, which accounts for 70% of its energy consumption. The agreement builds on past discussions and strengthens scientific co-operation between China and the EU. There are already more than 100 joint research projects carried out by Chinese and European teams, worth about €300 million and China is also a partner in the Galileo satellite system and the ITER fusion project.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

EC Press release IP/06/190 of 20 February 2006 available at:  
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

## **EC and African states discuss cooperation in science**

Representatives of African science academies, ministries and embassies recently met with the EC to discuss how to establish closer co-operation in science and technology. The debate addressed the challenges of participation in EU programmes, capacity-building in Africa and ethical aspects of research in developing countries, as well as the opportunities represented by the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) call of 15 February for organisations to join ongoing projects.

The role of science and technology in addressing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Africa is increasingly being emphasised, as demonstrated by the 2005 Communication on a new 'EU Strategy for Africa', which was endorsed by the African Union. During the meeting Mr Andras Siegler, Director for International Science in the EC's DG Research, outlined some of the opportunities open to Africa in the FP7 proposal, under all four pillars of the programme. Representatives from DG Development and EuropeAid introduced other EU policy initiatives that aim to bring development and research policy into closer coherence, particularly in terms of capacity building. The EDULINK3 programme was highlighted, as was EuropeAid's intention of launching a programme for science and technology innovations and capacity-building, expected in the second half of 2007.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

on the European Union Strategy for Africa:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/communications/docs/eu\\_strategy\\_for\\_africa\\_12\\_10\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/communications/docs/eu_strategy_for_africa_12_10_2005_en.pdf)

## **Improving health in Zimbabwe**

On 24 February 2006 the EC and the Government of Zimbabwe signed an agreement for a new EU funded health programme. The EC have allocated €15.8 million to the three-year initiative, entitled 'Vital Health Services Support Programme' (VHSSP), which will be implemented in both urban and rural areas. The programme will provide essential drugs, including vaccines, medical supplies, and training for human resources and measurements aimed to retain staff in remote rural public and mission health facilities.

Zimbabwe currently faces a critical health situation. Over the last five years, life expectancy has dropped, combined with an increase in maternal mortality. Recently there has been a slight decline in HIV, however, HIV still infects around 20 per cent of the adult population. There is also a severe shortage of essential medical work with 50 per cent of positions for doctors and 90 per cent of pharmacists remaining unfilled. The new programme builds on the 2000-2006 EU Health Programme. It also aims to work in close co-ordination with other support provided by EU Member States, international donors and other non-governmental organisations. The activities of the Programme work in harmony with the National Policy of Zimbabwe and will directly contribute to the fulfilment of three of the eight Millennium Development Goals; HIV and AIDS and other diseases, child mortality and maternal health.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

EC Press release IP/06/299 of 24 February 2006 available at:

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

## **Funding African infrastructure**

The EC and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have signed an agreement to launch a Trust Fund to finance infrastructure in Africa as part of the new EU Strategy for Africa. The partnership of the EC and EU Member States as grant donors, on the one hand, and the EIB and financial development institutions, on the other, will allow the leveraging of funds that will result in a substantial increase of finance devoted to infrastructure. Preliminary studies show that this arrangement could increase funds by a factor of four to five times. Financing infrastructure will aid sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, invited all Member States to channel a substantial amount of money into this ambitious project. African partners are also closely involved in the process and are keen to prioritise funding of trans-African networks for transport, energy, water and communication.

In the start-up phase (2006-2007), the EC intends to mobilise up to €60 million in grants and the EIB up to €260 million in loans for the operation of the Fund. Participation in the Trust Fund is open to EU Member States, their Development agencies and financial institutions. The selection of projects will be done with consideration to the priorities listed by the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

EC press release IP/06/146 of 9 February 2006 available at:

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

## **Creating sustainable towns**

On 16 February the EC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UN-HABITAT, the UN's human settlement programme. The agreement is aimed at jointly developing research activities into areas relevant to urban sustainability, including urban planning, governance, water management, housing and sanitation. The aim is to inform policy-making at all levels, and the results of the research will therefore be made available to experts and policy makers in relevant fields. Further details on the 250 projects, including recommendations, will be available from mid-2006. The EC Commissioner for Research, Mr Janez Potocnik, welcomed the agreement, highlighting the importance of research to solving urban problems.

With six billion people expected to live in urban areas by 2050, sustainability of cities will be a key issue.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

available from <http://www.unhabitat.org>

## **EVENTS and AWARDS**

### **Discussing forestry's future**

The Forest Based Sector Technology Platform is holding a two-day conference on 2-3 May 2006 in Indning, Austria, to mark the start of the official implementation of its Strategic Research Agenda (SRA). The European Technology Platforms were a concept established by the EC to promote an integrated research approach based on private-public partnerships. The Forest Based Sector presented their vision for 2030 in February 2005. Following an open consultation, the final SRA was prepared and launched on 13 February 2006.

The SRA has been designed to encompass the full range of complexity and variety within the sector from paper to packaging, from building with wood to bio-energy from wood, from trees to new trends. The first day of the conference will explore the research and development activities required to implement the SRA. The programme has dedicated the second day to industrial excursions to woodworking industries, forestry, pulp and paper and bio-energy operations in the region of Admont.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

further information on the conference, including registration forms and the preliminary programme is available from: [www.forestplatform.org](http://www.forestplatform.org)

### **Organic farming and European rural development**

The Danish Research Centre for Organic Food and Farming are hosting a European Joint Organic Congress in collaboration with the Danish Consumer Council. The conference will be held in Odense, Denmark, on 30-31 May 2006 and will bring together researchers from research projects in organic food and farming funded under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). Their research results will be presented to organic producers and policy-makers from across Europe.

The conference will explore the issues surrounding research and commercialisation, and how to meet societal and consumer demands. The conference will address all aspects of organic farming, including sustainability within Europe, and responding to the economic, social and consumer issues and policy development. Current progress and future objectives for crop production will also be debated, including the quality of crops, soil and environment. Animal husbandry is of increasing socio-economic interest and discussions in this area will include the development of livestock production, animal disease management and the quality and safety of animal food products.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

further information on the conference, including registration forms and the preliminary programme is available from: [www.organic-congress.org](http://www.organic-congress.org)

## **'NanoBio-Europe 2006'**

An international conference on nanobiotechnology in Europe, 'NanoBio-Europe 2006', will be held from 14-16 June 2006 in Grenoble, France. The programme will address recent nanotechnological results, European and international developments, and applications in the field of increasingly efficient, more targeted and less invasive analysis and therapeutic systems for health care.

There will be dedicated sessions focusing on innovation and the biotechnological and pharmaceutical industries, and the event will include an industrial exhibition and technical visits. There will also be a prize for the best presentation by a young scientist.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

further information on the conference, including registration forms and the preliminary programme is available from: <http://www.minatec.com/nanobio2006/>

## **Ethics, law and regulation in European science**

Property Regulation in European Science, Ethics and Law (PropEur) are holding their final conference on 21-22 September 2006 in Birmingham. PropEur is funded under the ECs Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The aim of PropEur is to compile and analyse new approaches in law and ethics in relation to tangible and intangible property in the human genome; human tissue; plant and animal genomes in relation to biodiversity, sustainable development and food technologies; and copyright and the information society.

Interested parties have been invited to submit papers on topics related to the project, including: governance, philosophical and ethic critiques of conceptions of property; property in the human genome, information society, plant and animal genomes and human tissues and the relationships of ethics and law and governance. Participants from all relevant disciplines, including philosophy, law, science, politics, sociology, economics and medicine, and from activists and policy-makers will be invited to attend the conference.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

for further information on the project PropEuro and the final conference is available from: <http://www.propeur.bham.ac.uk/>

## **European Technology Platform conference in Vienna**

The Austrian EU Presidency is organising a major conference on European Technology Platforms in Vienna on 4-5 May 2006. The European Technology Platforms (ETPs) bring together key stakeholders led by industry to focus on strategically important issues and define medium to long term research and technological development objectives. The Austrian EU Presidency is organising this event to bring together a wide range of stakeholders in European Technology Platforms; industry, including SMEs, the research

community, public bodies, the financial world, regulators, consumer organisations, other end users and representatives of civil society.

The conference will raise awareness and provide a forum to discuss the horizontal issues, which are relevant to all of the ETPs. The two-day programme will provide plenty of opportunity for cross-platform networking and for exchanging experiences and best practice. The ETPs' role in the European Research Area of globalisation and European industrial competitiveness will be discussed, including an examination of the role of national and regional authorities in this context. The issue of openness and transparency of the ETPs will be challenged. The participants will examine the social, human and environmental dimension of ETPs. The long term implementation, management and financing of the ETPs will also be explored. In parallel to the conference, an exhibition will be held at which individual ETPs will communicate their achievements to date and their future plans.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

further information on the conference, including registration forms and the preliminary programme is available from: [www.eu2006-technologyplatforms.at](http://www.eu2006-technologyplatforms.at)

## **NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES**

### **Online Consultation - 'Science in Society' in FP7**

The Directorate General for Science and Society, (DG Research) has invited stakeholders and potential participants in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) to take part in a web-based consultation. The Science and Society broad topics for FP7 are outlined in the Specific Programme proposal for 'Capacities', where 'Science and Society' will be addressed through three action lines: A more dynamic governance of the science and society relationship; Strengthening potential, broadening horizons; Science and society communicate. Researchers working in these areas and anyone with an interest in 'Science in Society' are invited to register on the SINAPSE e-network to voice their opinion on this area of the Specific Programme.

The SINAPSE e-network will be used as an open forum for the EC consultation on Science and Society. In order to participate it is necessary to register on SINAPSE either as an individual or at an organisational level. The overall objective of SINAPSE is to make better use of scientific knowledge in policy making.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

available from <http://europa.eu.int/sinapse/sinapse/index.cfm>

### **30 years of education in Europe**

The Commission has launched a new publication entitled 'The history of European cooperation in education and training' to mark 30 years of co-operation at European level in the field of education and training. The book highlights all the work that has been carried out at European level since the adoption of the first co-operation programme in February 1976. It was not until the late 1980s that the first action programmes were

launched (Comett, Erasmus, Petra, Lingua, Force, and Tempus). Education did not appear in the Treaties until the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht. The 1990s saw education and training becoming more visible as a major area of European policy, reflected by the European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996.

The last decade, like all most of European Union policy, has been influenced by the Lisbon Agenda and the Europe of Knowledge. Education was formally included in the Lisbon Agenda following the Barcelona Spring Council, resulting in the Education and Training 2010 work programme. The Bologna Process as a major European-wide initiative going beyond the EU is also having an impact on its policy agenda. The book highlights the highly collaborative method of working between Member States and the Commission that has evolved over the 30 years.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

the book is currently on sale, in French only (<http://publications.eu.int>). The English version will be available in April/May 2006 and a German one later on this year.

### **Accessing EU research information from the Mediterranean**

An EU-funded project has enabled information points about European Research to be established in seven Mediterranean countries outside the EU (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia). This will allow the Mediterranean scientific community to participate more effectively in the EU Framework Programmes and will open up the European Research Area to the Mediterranean countries.

These Information Points for European research operate as national structures in support of research organisations wishing to participate in the European research programmes, and enables them to become more familiar with the institutions and the procedures of the EU. In a sense, the Information Points are similar to the National Contact Points (NCPs) for the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) that exists within each EU Member State. Within each of the seven Mediterranean countries, organisations that are interested in participating in the Framework Programmes have been recorded and a series of awareness campaigns has been organised. Every Information Point has also developed its own web site to promote FP6, according to the needs of the local scientific community.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from <http://wire.cordis.lu>

details for the Mediterranean contact points at:

<http://www.euromedanet.gr/content/display?prnbr=66911>

### **Better information on health in Europe**

On 2 February 2006 the EC officially launched the 'European Health Information Platform – Health in Europe' project. This programme co-financed using €1.4 million from the EU Public Health Programme and managed by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Health in Europe will be based on an ongoing exchange of reports on health and medicine produced by TV broadcasters and the bank of items will be renewed continuously.

Television is the favoured media tool to access the widest ordinance and the project will include TV documentaries produced by a consortium of public services broadcasters around Europe and also a series of radio documentaries. European broadcasters will be

encouraged to produce magazines and there will be a series of animations for publication on websites or participating organisations and a network of professionals working on health magazines. The main public service broadcasters from 10 European countries already participating in the project including; ARD (Germany), CT (Czech Republic), France2 (France), RTBF (Belgium), YLE (Finland), TVP (Poland), ERT (Greece), RAI (Italy), ORF (Austria), Radio Prague (Czech Republic), Radio Netherlands, Radio France International. All other members of the European Broadcasting Union are invited to join the project.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

further information is available from the EC public health website:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_projects/2004/action1/action1\\_2004\\_11\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2004/action1/action1_2004_11_en.htm)

#### **EC publication profiling the activities of 2005**

In accordance with its obligation under the Treaties, the EC has published the General Report on the Activities of the European Union in 2005. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the work of the European Institutions, including financial and budgetary issues, main legislative activities, and the key achievements from the last year. The key activities are described under four basic strategic objectives: prosperity, solidarity, security and the presence of Europe in the world, set by the EC for its term in office up to 2009 and for its annual work programme.

In 2005 the Heads of State or Government decided that it was vital to re-launch the Lisbon Objective following the mid-term review to refocus priorities on growth and employment. The proposal for a new structure for economic and social cohesion policy after 2006 was further developed in line with the development of a new regulatory framework. In 2005 it was agreed to implement the Hague programme, which will run from 2005 to 2009 and cover all aspects of the policies in the area of freedom, security and justice. The continued enlargement of the European Union is also addressed through the assessment of the current status of acceding countries.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

the report can be purchased from: <http://publications.eu.int> or can be consulted online at: <http://europa.eu.int/abc/doc/off/rq/en/2005/index.htm>

#### **CORDIS**

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

URL: <http://www.cordis.eu.int>

#### **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 45 days following publication. (The OJ issue with the Euro exchange rates (L 359, 31/12/1998) is permanently available in PDF format in EUR-Lex).

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

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

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

## EUROPA

EUROPA is the official 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) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
C&G	Citizens and Governance Priority (FP6) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
COST	European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research is a framework for scientific and technical co-operation, allowing the coordination of national research on a European level. <a href="http://www.netmaniacs.com/cost">http://www.netmaniacs.com/cost</a>
'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). <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/index_en.htm</a>
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. <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm</a>
eEurope	eEurope A political initiative of the EC to allow Europe to benefit fully from the Information Society. <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/information_society/eeurope/documentation/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/information_society/eeurope/documentation/index_en.htm</a>
EP	The European Parliament - 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. <a href="http://www.europarl.eu.int/sg/tree/en/default.htm">http://www.europarl.eu.int/sg/tree/en/default.htm</a>
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. <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/area.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/area.htm</a>
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. <a href="http://www.ces.eu.int">http://www.ces.eu.int</a> Press Releases: <a href="http://www.ces.eu.int/en/acs/fr_acs_press_rels.htm">http://www.ces.eu.int/en/acs/fr_acs_press_rels.htm</a>
ESF	European Science Foundation <a href="http://www.esf.org">http://www.esf.org</a>
ESF	The European Social Fund <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/esf/en/index.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/esf/en/index.htm</a>
Eureka	Eureka is a Europe-wide network for Industrial Research and Development. <a href="http://www3.eureka.be/Home">http://www3.eureka.be/Home</a>
FQS	Food Quality and Safety Priority (FP6) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
FP (FP5, FP6, FP7)	The EU's 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) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
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) <a href="http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/en/default.htm">http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/en/default.htm</a>
INTAS	International Association for the promotion of co-operation with scientists from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union. <a href="http://www.intas.be/mainfs.htm">http://www.intas.be/mainfs.htm</a>
IST	Information Society Technologies Priority (FP6) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
JRC	The ECs Joint Research Centre acting as a scientific and technological laboratory in support of EU policies, with a range of institutes and research activities. <a href="http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int">http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int</a>
MEDIA	The MEDIA Plus Programme (2001–05) is to be introduced as a follow-up to the Media II programme which ends in December 2000. The programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry. <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/avpolicy/media/index_en.htm">http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/avpolicy/media/index_en.htm</a>
Mobility	Human Resources and Mobility Programme (FP6) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation <a href="http://www.nato.int/">http://www.nato.int/</a>
NMP	Nanotechnology, Materials and Production Priority (FP6) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
PHARE	The Phare Programme is the European Union's instrument for financial and technical co-operation with the countries of central and eastern Europe. <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/index.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/index.htm</a>
RTD	Research and Technological Development

SDGC	Sustainable Development and Global Change Priority (FP6) <a href="http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm">http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</a>
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)) <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/tacis/index.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/tacis/index.htm</a>
Treaty of Amsterdam	The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999. <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/index.html">http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/index.html</a>
UUK	Universities UK (formerly the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals) <a href="http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk">http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk</a>
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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