

News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

Issue: EI 06:04 – 1 April 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EU POLICY.....	2
EDA considers new funding scheme for defence research	2
Launch of the ARTMIS Strategic Research Agenda.....	2
Creating equality between men and women	3
ID'ing the world!	3
European energy policy	4
Launch of the Intelligent Car Initiative	4
Cleaning up the Mediterranean Sea	5
Europe's cultural heritage – now online	5
European Business Summit.....	6
Innovation and research support from European Investment Bank.....	6
Report on costs of EU funding to UK HEIs	7
Supporting research into biofuels.....	7
Public consultation on Biofuels in the EU.....	8
Potočník reflects on European rail research	8
RESEARCH NEWS	9
Robots – now the size of lego men!.....	9
Network launched to combat antibiotic resistance	10
New alternatives to animal testing approved	10
Improving access to safe drinking water.....	11
EC showcases social sciences and humanities research.....	11
Generating hydrogen in your own garden?.....	12
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE	12
Publication of 'Making Bologna Work'	12
Awards for cultural heritage	13
European Capitals of Culture 2010.....	13
Success of Erasmus in new Member States.....	14
EXTERNAL COLLABORATION	14
EU – Japan agreement on peaceful uses of nuclear energy	14
EC and UN agreement on sustainable urban research	14
EU – Russia co-operation on energy and space.....	15
Croatia to participate in the 'Intelligent Energy – Europe' programme.....	15
EVENTS and AWARDS.....	16
Information Society Technologies annual conference	16
Pharmainformatics challenges.....	17
A researchers' labour market: Europe a pole of attraction?.....	17
EURATEX's first annual public conference.....	17
NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES	18
New website for agricultural research	18
Bringing together women scientists across Europe	18
New website on steel	19
New Cordis service for Ireland.....	19
CORDIS	20
IGLO Project Search	20
EUR-LEX (Official Journal C and L).....	20

EUROPA.....	20
RAPID	20
GLOSSARY	21

EU POLICY

EDA considers new funding scheme for defence research

The Steering Board of the European Defence Agency (EDA) met on 7 March in Innsbruck, Austria, to discuss ideas for increasing European spending in defence research and technology. At the meeting, European Defence Ministers asked the EDA to prepare a detailed proposal on the idea of setting up a special EDA programme for research in defence. The current discussions follow on from the Hampton Court Summit held during the UK Presidency of the Council, and will be presented at the next EDA meeting in May.

At the meeting, the Steering Board was asked to consider the following three options: more ad-hoc projects between groups of EU countries; increasing the EDA’s budget for research and technology; and establishing an EDA programme for joint spending on research and technology in defence. The Steering Board was interested in finding out more about the possible implementation of a new EDA programme for defence research. It is understood that contributions to the fund would be made on a voluntary basis, with countries being able to opt out. The European Defence Agency was established by the Council in 2004, and is aimed at supporting the Council and Member States in efforts to improve European defence capabilities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

on the EDA can be found at: <http://www.eda.eu.int>

Launch of the ARTMIS Strategic Research Agenda

The Technology Platform (TP) Artemis launched its Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) on 6 March this year. The Artemis Platform brings together key industrial players from a range of fields, as well as universities, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and research centres. The Artemis Technology Platform has been proposed as a Joint Technology Initiative (JETI) under FP7. The estimated budget for the JETI is €2.6 billion in the first four years, where half of the budget is expected to come from the EC and Member States, with industry contributing the other half. At the launch event of the SRA, the Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Ms Viviane Reding, emphasised that Technology Platforms continue to be her priority in light of a reduced budget for the Framework Programme.

The Artemis SRA outlines future priorities in the field. These include research designs and architecture; seamless connectivity and middleware; and design methods and tools. Future activities of Artemis include an Artemis Orchestra competition, aimed at changing musical instruments to incorporate embedded technologies. The competition will be

formally launched in May, with a closing deadline the following year. At the launch conference, Ms Viviane Reding accepted an invitation to be on the jury panel for the competition.

FURTHER INFORMATION

the Artemis website can be found at: <http://www.artemis-office.org/dotnetnuke/>

Creating equality between men and women

In the run-up to International Women's Day on 8 March, the EC adopted a 'Roadmap for Equality between Men and Women 2006-10'. The roadmap was issued shortly after an EC report found that women in the EU earn 15 per cent less than men, and that progress has been slow in closing gender gaps. The report calls on EU Member States to provide better ways to help women deal with home and work pressures. The report was submitted to the European leaders at the Spring European Council on 23-24 March. The roadmap announces 21 specific activities to be undertaken over the next five years. This includes helping to establish a new €50 million European institute for gender equality to review existing EU equality law, to increase awareness of gender inequality, to ensure that gender equality is considered in all policies and to obtain better statistics on related issues. It is hoped that this institute would be operation by 1 January 2007.

The roadmap sets out six priority areas for action in the 2006-2010 period as follows: Achieving equal economic independence for women and men; enhancing reconciliation of work, private and family life; promoting equal participation of men and women in decision-making; eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking; eliminating gender stereotypes in society and promoting gender equality outside the EU.

FURTHER INFORMATION

the EC roadmap can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social
EC press release IP/06/263 of 03/03/06 available at:
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/setLanguage.do?language=en>

ID'ing the world!

The EC has launched a public consultation on Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID). RFID tags are set to replace bar codes in the near future. They contain a range of information and have raised concerns about privacy and security issues. RFID technology has the potential to greatly enhance economic prosperity, and is expected to improve produce quality, reduce labour costs and fixed asset costs. The number of tags used is growing year-on-year; 20 per cent of the 2.4 billion tags sold over the last sixty years were sold in 2005 alone. As well as having great potential, the new technology also throws up a range of concerns. The aim of the EC's initiative is to address these concerns and to ensure that all stakeholders are consulted in the process.

A series of workshops will take place in Brussels between March and June this year. The workshops will form the background for an EC working document on RFID, which is due to be published in September as an online consultation. The public consultation was launched at a high-level conference on RFID, held in Hannover, Germany on 9 March. At the conference, Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Ms Viviane Reding, stressed the potential of the new technology and argued that 'we need to build a society-

wide consensus on the future of RFID and the need for credible safeguards. We must harness the technology and create the right opportunities for its use for the wider public good.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/289 of 09/03/2006 available from

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

the consultation can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/rfid/index_en.htm

European energy policy

On 8 March this year, the EC published a Green Paper on developing a common, coherent European Energy Policy. The Green Paper outlines how a European Energy Policy could meet the three core objectives of energy policy: sustainable development, competitiveness, and security of supply. Six main priority areas have been identified, including Internal energy market regulation and security of the internal energy market; global warming and a strategic energy technology plan, and the development of a more sustainable, efficient and diverse energy mix.

The results from the EC consultation on the Energy Efficiency Green Paper will feed into the EC action plan on energy efficiency and the EC Energy Policy. This will be used to identify the measures necessary for the EU to save 20 per cent of the energy that it would otherwise consume by 2020. The EC will hold an extensive consultation on the Green Paper before making concrete proposals to the Council of Ministers for future action. The Heads of States and Government will discuss the Green Paper at their Spring Summit on 23-24 March 2006, and it will be discussed by ministers from energy and related policy areas in the Council of Ministers throughout the first half of 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press release Reference: IP/06/282 of 08/03/2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?>

full details on the European Energy Policy Green Paper and Energy Efficiency Green Paper is available on the following websites http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/green-paper-energy/index_en.htm ; http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/efficiency/index_en.htm

Launch of the Intelligent Car Initiative

The EC recently published a Communication on the 'Intelligent Car Initiative'. The initiative is one of the three flagship projects under the EC's i2010 initiative which was launched last year. The launch of the new initiative follows the adoption of a new Communication on the Intelligent Car Initiative; 'Raising Awareness of ICT for Smarter, Safer and Cleaner Vehicles.' The new Communication outlines how intelligent cars could contribute towards changing some of the current transportation problems that Europe faces, including traffic accidents; increased road congestion; impact on the environment, and health problems caused by pollution. However, most intelligent transportation systems have not yet reached the market. Key reasons for this include legal barriers, high competition and low rates of return on investment.

With the Intelligent Car Initiative, the EC hopes to solve some of the problems facing

intelligent car systems. In particular, the following three objectives are outlined in the Communication: to co-ordinate and support the work of relevant stakeholders (including Member States, industry and citizens); to support research into smarter, cleaner and safer vehicles, and to facilitate the take-up of new research results; to create awareness of ICT-based solutions to stimulate user demand and create acceptance. The communication outlines a range of actions to meet these objectives.

FURTHER INFORMATION

including the communication on intelligent cars is available at
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/esafety/index_en.htm

Cleaning up the Mediterranean Sea

The EC recently opened up a consultation on the '2020 Horizon initiative', which plans to de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea. The initiative sets out to 'endorse a feasible timetable to de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by 2020, while providing appropriate financial resources and technical support to implement it, using the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and exploring possible areas for co-operation in this regard with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'.

Participation in the initiative is open to a broad range of institutions from research organisations and government through to industry. A draft 'roadmap' has also been published for the initiative. The roadmap has been drafted on the basis of previous consultations, and the draft document is now open for consultation as well. The paper contains specific sections on building infrastructure and on research. The roadmap outlines how the initiative links to the EC's proposal for the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and suggests ways in which research funded under the thematic priorities in FP7 could feed into the 2020 Horizon Initiative.

FURTHER INFORMATION

the Horizon 2020 website is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/enlarg/med/horizon_2020_en.htm

consultation paper available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/enlarg/pdf/horizon2020_roadmap_en.pdf

Europe's cultural heritage – now online

The EC recently published the results of the online consultation on the European Digital Library, which show strong support for the idea. Overall, the EC received 225 replies to its online consultation. Almost 50 per cent of these were received from cultural institutions, with universities and academics contributing another 14 per cent of the responses. The new library will build on the platform established by The European Library (TEL), a project originally funded through the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5), and is expected to have 6 million works uploaded by 2010. The aim is not to create a new database, but rather to ensure integrated access to a number of collections through a single, multilingual entry point.

The digital library initiative is one of the flagship projects under the EC's i2010 initiative, led by DG Information Society and Media (DG INFSO). The EC will outline its strategy for digital libraries based on scientific information later this year. It will also present a

Communication on 'Content Online' this year, addressing the issues of IPR issues presented by advances in technology. Finally, a High Level Group on the European Digital Library held its first meeting on 27 March this year, bringing together a variety of stakeholders to address issues related to digitisation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

information on the European Library can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/consultation/replies/index_en.htm

EC Press Release IP/06/256 of 02/03/06 available at:

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

European Business Summit

The fourth European Business Summit was held on 16 - 17 March this year. Commissioner Neelie Kroes, who is in charge of Competition Policy, presented a key-note speech entitled 'State aid reform: the case for research and innovation'. She described the role of competition in promoting research and innovation and urged Industry to continue to invest in this area to prevent losing business to competitors. Ms Kroes has targeted State aid reform as her top priority. In June 2005, the State Aid Action Plan was launched; revising the rules for research and development and introducing new rules on innovation are key parts of the programme.

Community research policy will encourage companies to collaborate with public research organisations. At the event, Ms Kroes stated that 'new rules should clarify this and enable both contractual and not-for-profit research to flourish on a level playing field'. Appropriate provisions should be integrated into the revised rules for research and development and innovation. For example, to allow Member States to grant some support to innovative start-ups given the funding gap they face during their first few years. It is hoped will promote a knowledge transfer between universities, large companies and SMEs.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press releases SPEECH/06/181 of 17/03/2006 and IP/06/308 of 14/03/2006

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

Innovation and research support from European Investment Bank

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has published details of its lending activities during 2005, which included €10.7 billion for innovation and research. Through the 'Innovation 2010 Initiative' (i2i), the EIB supports the Lisbon Strategy of creating an information and knowledge-based economy. In order to boost the EU's innovative capacity, and therefore increase its long term competitiveness, a target has been set to mobilise €50 billion by 2010. In 2005, €10.7 billion was invested in i2i, bringing the total invested since 2000 to €34.8 billion. The EIB therefore believes that it is well on track to meet its target of €50 billion by 2010.

The loans support three main objectives: research, development and innovation undertaken by universities and businesses; education and training; and development of information and communication technologies and networks. Financing research, development and innovation involves different risks to those encountered in investing in

physical assets. Therefore, the EIB has expanded its capacity to grant loans that entail a higher lending risk by increasing the provisioning reserve of its structured finance facility. The EIB also plans to assist with the financing of some Seventh Framework Programme projects through the proposed Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF).

FURTHER INFORMATION

is available from EIB projects and loans website <http://www.eib.org/projects/> and EIB i2i website <http://www.eib.eu.int/site/index.asp?designation=i2i>

Report on costs of EU funding to UK HEIs

Universities UK and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), with the support of the Office of Science and Technology (OST), recently published a report entitled 'Study to identify the costs of EU framework programme projects to UK higher education institutions'. The report investigated the costs and benefits to UK Higher Education Institutes of undertaking research projects in the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) and in particular compared cost recoveries under the Additional Cost (AC) and Full Cost (FC) models across a range of project types.

Overall, the study concludes that there is no material difference between the AC and FC cost models in terms of cost recovery for institutions; and that with an amended version of the Transparent Approach to Costing software (TRAC), it could be feasible for UK HEIs to follow an FC-type model in the Seventh Framework Programme. The report also outlines the benefits and issues of participating in EU projects to UK research community, highlighting the EC's support for a different type of project that enables researchers to experience and benefit from a broader perspective on their research while providing the opportunity to access up-to-date knowledge and techniques.

FURTHER INFORMATION

the report 'Study to identify the costs of EU framework programme projects to UK higher education institutions' is available from:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/research/downloads/EUFrameworkProgrammes.pdf>

Supporting research into biofuels

The European Council of Ministers and the Agriculture and Fisheries Council have endorsed the EC's proposal to continue to support research and development of biofuels in the Seventh Framework Programme. EC research aims to improve the biofuel industries competitiveness. High priority has been given to the 'biorefinery' concept and second-generation biofuels. The EC are also encouraging the development of an industry-led Biofuel Technology Platform.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council invited the EC to highlight the importance of the specific contribution biomass can make to energy supply, when the EC draws up its Green Paper on energy. The EC were also encouraged to remove the existing technical and non-technical barriers to the wider use of biofuels in the EU, whilst also safeguarding environmental objectives. The Agriculture and Fisheries Council are also supportive of the EC's plan to review the Fuel Quality Directive in 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

European Council Press Release is available at:

http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/agricult/88457.pdf

Public consultation on Biofuels in the EU

The Biofuels Research Advisory Council (BIOFRAC), a high-level group on biofuels established by the European Commission, has delivered its draft Vision report 'Biofuels in the European Union – A Vision for 2030 and beyond' This report outlines the current situation of biofuels and presents a long-term view on how to overcome the technical and non-technical barriers for biofuel deployment in the European Union and worldwide.

BIOFRAC have invited all interested European organisations, especially organisations which represent groups of relevant research or market actors, to contribute to the consultation process by submitting their views to the Commission before 21 April 2006. All comments must be sent by e-mail to rtd-renewables-biofuels@cec.eu.int

FURTHER INFORMATION

the vision paper is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/energy/pdf/draft_vision_report_en.pdf

Potočnik reflects on European rail research

Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Science and Research, recently spoke on 'Using Research to create a dynamic European rail sector'. He highlighted Europe's leading role, with Europe producing 70 per cent of the world's railway equipment. Potočnik stressed the importance of railway research for competitiveness and sustainability. He highlighted that this business must also raise its share of R&D spending, in order to meet the European target for investment in R&D to reach three per cent of GDP by 2010. He noted that it is encouraging that members of the Association of Railway Supply Industries are now investing 500 million euros per year in research and innovation.

Potočnik stressed the key role of the European Rail Research Advisory Council (ERRAC), one of the most mature Technology Platforms, whose Strategic Rail Research Agenda defined a set of research priorities and critical technologies which fed into the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). He also welcomed the recent ERRAC 'Rail 21' vision. The vision paper states that the biggest current issue facing the industry is the need to increase the attractiveness of rail transport by reducing costs. Potočnik commented that research for driving down costs fits well with the underlying aim of enhancing the competitiveness of European industry. Potočnik also urged the ERRAC to link with other transport related Technology Platforms to create an integrated approach for all modes of European transport and logistics.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release SPEECH/06/154 of 08/03/2006 available at:

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

RESEARCH NEWS

Robots – now the size of lego men!

The 'Miniaturised Co-operative Robots advancing towards the Nano range' (MICRON) project funded under the EC's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) has developed a small robot that can move and work in medical and micro-assembly experiments. The robot that has been developed has the ability to grip and complete different tasks. Future robots are expected to measure 1.5 - 3 cm, and would be controlled by a special positioning system using an infrared control system. The successfully developed robot was used in a series of tests, demonstrating that cell injection and micro soldering are now both feasible and could eventually be performed on a mass scale by robots. The MICRON project is currently at the reporting and evaluation stage, with many of the technologies that have been developed being used in another EC-funded project, the I-Swarm project. I-Swarm builds on the work carried out by MICRON, and seeks to build robots with 'swarm' intelligence, which are able to communicate with each other.

The project was led by the Institute for Process Control (IPR) at the Karlsruhe Institute in Germany, and brought together expertise from partners in seven different countries.

FURTHER INFORMATION

available from the MICRON project website at

<http://www.ipr.ira.uka.de/~micron/index.html>

World's largest CO₂ capture pilot plant launched

The world's largest pilot plant for the capture of the greenhouse gas Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) from conventional power stations has been set up in Denmark, as the result of research funded by FP6. Carbon capture and storage works by capturing CO₂ emissions as they are produced by power stations and then storing them underground (either as CO₂ gas or converted to limestone), so that they cannot produce the greenhouse effect in the atmosphere. This new technology, alongside the hydrogen based strategy, offers a bridge from our current fossil fuel-based energy system to one that has near-zero carbon emissions. The pilot plant involves 30 industrial, research and university partners from 11 European countries, and is an important step towards developing better and cheaper processes for carbon capture.

Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Science and Research, highlighted the important contribution this research will make to future energy policies as well as the EU Kyoto Protocol commitments to reduce CO₂ emissions. Since fossil fuels will continue to provide about 85 per cent of our energy for the foreseeable future, it will be difficult to achieve these reductions through switching to other forms of energy, such as renewable (solar, wind, wave, biomass) or nuclear alone. Therefore, by developing technologies for carbon capture and storage, emissions can be reduced in the medium-term as we move to large scale use of renewable, carbon-free energy sources.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release IP/06/309 of 14/03/2006 available at:

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

The Project website is available at: <http://www.co2-castor.com>

Network launched to combat antibiotic resistance

The EC have funded a Network of Excellence under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) to tackle the increasing problem of resistance to antibiotics when dealing with lower respiratory tract infections. The network, entitled GRACE (Genomics to Combat Resistance against Antibiotics in Community-acquired LRTI in Europe), was launched on 17 March this year and will bring together 17 academic groups from nine EU Member States. Although it is widely accepted that antibiotic use is one of the most important factors of antibiotic resistance, the scientific evidence currently available cannot support the existing variation in antibiotic resistance and antibiotic use within Europe.

The network will seek to provide better information for doctors and patients about antibiotic use. The network also aims to develop a genomic laboratory network in eight countries and a primary care research network in 11 countries. Such a comprehensive network will cement Europe's position as an international leader in the field of research into respiratory infections. GRACE will also have an important communication task in which it will be assisted by two leading European scientific societies: the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and the Infectious Diseases and European Respiratory Society. GRACE will also organise professional education and provide information materials to keep the professionals, public and policy makers abreast of developments

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/323 of 17/03/06

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

project website <http://www.grace-lrti.org/>

New alternatives to animal testing approved

The Scientific Advisory Committee of the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) has approved six new alternative testing methods which will reduce the need for certain drugs and chemicals to be tested on animals. The role of ECVAM, which is based at the EC's Joint Research Centre, is to replace, refine and reduce methods of animal testing for cosmetics, drugs and chemicals. Tests validated by ECVAM must be approved by its Scientific Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of the 25 member states, academia, industry and animal welfare organisations, before they can be used in labs across Europe.

One of the tests is designed to assist the dosage of some highly toxic drugs used in chemotherapy for cancer. The test will use bone marrow culture from mice and cord blood cells from humans, to decrease the risk of an overdose in the first cohort of patients treated. Five of the new tests address the issue of bacteria. A drug may be sterilised, but not necessarily free from all traces of bacteria and this can lead to side-effects such as fever, pain and shock. The new method uses human immune cells grown in the laboratory, which can detect bacteria just as the human immune system does. The work of ECVAM is funded from the EU's Research Framework Programme, with support from Member States, industry and animal welfare organisations.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release IP/06/347 of 21/03/06
available at <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

Improving access to safe drinking water

Representatives from around the globe gathered at World Water Forum in Mexico from 16-22 March 2006 to discuss global water policy. The EC presented a review of past and ongoing projects dedicated to improving the management of water funded by the Framework Programme. European Commissioner for Research, Janez Potočnik, said 'Good policy is based on good science. This review shows that the research we have done in water management so far has helped put better policy in place'. The EC will provide continued support through a new Call for Proposals to provide a further €178 million to improve access to safe drinking water.

The EU's Water Facility has €500 million to allocate to projects that implement the Millennium Development Goals on access to clean, safe water, in addition to the €475 million of funding already earmarked in the European Development Fund. This development work is supported by research into better ways to manage water resources, connecting traditional knowledge and modern science is a promising way to achieve socially acceptable solutions to water management. Since 1994, about €50 million has been made available for such research. About 90 per cent of the funding so far has gone to projects in Africa, where over a third of the population currently have no access to safe drinking water

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press release IP/06/324 of 17/03/06
available at <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>
information on the Water Facility is available at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/water/index_en.htm
full details on EC international water management research
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/water-initiative/>
World Water Day and the World Water Forum:
www.unesco.org/water/water_celebrations

EC showcases social sciences and humanities research

The EC has showcased the latest research funded under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH), with topics ranging from options for developing a knowledge-based society to new forms of citizenship and cultural identities in Europe. With a collective budget of €61 million and more than 450 researchers involved, the projects demonstrate the EC's capacity to support fundamental research by better understanding how the dynamics of society contribute to Europe's knowledge and growth.

The funded activities are grouped into seven research areas: Improving the generation, distribution and use of knowledge and its impact on economic and social development; options and choices for the development of a knowledge-based society; the paths towards knowledge society; the implications of European integration and enlargement for governance and the citizen; articulation of areas of responsibility and new forms of governance; resolution of conflicts and restoration of peace and justice; and new forms of

citizenship and cultural identities. These projects will be used as a stepping stone towards defining the research priorities in the Seventh Framework Programme under the theme Social Sciences and the Humanities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

is available from http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/headlines/pdf/cit_synopse_en.pdf

Generating hydrogen in your own garden?

Hydrogen is a desirable alternative to using fossil fuels to generate energy. Hydrogen can be burnt and has only water as a by-product. However, finding cheap sources of hydrogen, and storing the fuel safely, are two challenges that researchers are yet to overcome. The Hyvolution project, funded under the EC's Sixth Framework Programme, aims to produce hydrogen from biomass in an experimental plant. The project will use bacteria to digest organic matter, releasing hydrogen. The plant will be developed in Wageningen, the Netherlands, with input from 11 EU countries, Turkey and Russia.

At the moment, hydrogen tends to be 'cracked' from fossil fuels, which separates into solid carbon and hydrogen, however, it is believed that this process is unsustainable. The biomass approach will make use of materials currently considered 'waste', such as crop residues or food industry by-products, thereby reducing landfill. The plant could also use specially grown crops. The process would work by introducing the organic material to a type of fermenting vat. Inside, special bacteria would digest the living matter, releasing hydrogen and carbon dioxide in a two-stage process. The researchers hope to be able to produce small-scale biomass plants, reducing the need for the risky transport of the gas.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC news article of 17/03/06 from DG Research available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/headlines/news/article_06_03_17_en.html

full project details are available from the project website

<http://www.biohydrogen.nl/hyvolution>

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

Publication of 'Making Bologna Work'

The European University Association, in co-operation with Raabe academic publishers in Berlin, has published the first edition of the 'Bologna Handbook'. The handbook intends to provide a practical approach to addressing the Bologna Process from an institutional perspective. The handbook focuses on several key elements of the process, including its history and development. It introduces the objectives of the Bologna process, and outlines the tools in practice, such as promoting new approaches to learning, defining degree structures and identifying their characteristics and developing different types of mobility and ensuring recognition. It provides guidance on implementing Bologna in an institution by, amongst other things, highlighting the benefits of a strategic plan, planning and implementing three cycles as well as adapting the roles and functions of personnel. The handbook is aimed at both academics and administrators and is published in a loose-leaf folder which will be followed by regular updates.

The Bologna Process is an inter-governmental initiative which aims to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010 through 10 action lines, including the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, and promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area. It has been signed by 45 countries across Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION

is available from http://www.eua.be/eua/en/Bologna_Handbook.jsp

Awards for cultural heritage

On 13 March 2006, the top five awards were announced for the annual EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra. Launched in 2002, and run jointly by the EC and Europa Nostra, the prizes recognise best practice in cultural heritage conservation in the framework of the Culture 2000 programme. A ceremony will be held in June 2006 in Madrid to award the prizes of €10,000 each. The awards will be presented as per the following categories: Conservation of Architectural Heritage: to the 16th century Omeriye Ottoman Baths, Nicosia (Cyprus); Conservation of Cultural Landscapes: to the Vía de la Plata, Extremadura (Spain); Conservation of Works of Art: to the Edward Chambré Hardman Photographic Collection, Liverpool (United Kingdom); Outstanding Studies: to Dr Anna Sulimowska-Ociepka and the Technical University of Silesia; Dedicated Service to Heritage Conservation: to the Maisons Paysannes de France. The awards were made from among 214 applications and nominations. Nine medals and seventeen diplomas were also awarded.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

further details of the awards, available at the Europa Nostra website:

http://www.europanostra.org/awards_2006.html

EC Culture Portal, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/portal/index_en.htm

European Capitals of Culture 2010

On 14 and 15 March this year, the selection panel met to assess the nominations for the European Capitals of Culture 2010. A Spring report will then be forwarded to the Parliament, Council and the Committee of the Regions. A final decision is due under the Finnish Presidency in the second half of 2006.

In 2010, Germany and Hungary will each have a Capital of Culture. Two German cities have put themselves forward: Essen and Görlitz, whilst only one application has been submitted by Hungary, for the city of Pecz. One city outside the EU may also be designated a European Capital of Culture; Istanbul and Kiev have submitted applications. From 2009 onwards, two Capitals of Culture will be selected each year from given countries as per a rota system. Previously, one country per year had been eligible.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC pages on Capitals of Culture, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/other_actions/cap_europ/cap_eu_fr.html

Success of Erasmus in new Member States

In 2004-2005, student exchanges in the new Member States rose by an impressive 36 per cent, while growth in teacher mobility was even more dramatic with an average rise of almost 77 per cent. Ján Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture, and Multilingualism said 'These figures reveal that the new Member States are fully taking part in the benefits of the EU.'

The overall participation figures are also on the increase. In total, 144,037 Erasmus students benefited from the programme in 2004-2005, which is 6 per cent more than the previous year. The number of university teachers exchanged grew by almost 13 per cent. Business studies remained the most popular area for student exchanges, followed by languages/philosophy and social sciences. The profile was slightly different for teacher exchanges, where the most popular subject area is languages/philosophy, followed by engineering/technology and business studies. Spain remains the most popular destination for students, followed by France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

FURTHER INFORMATION

on the Erasmus Programme can be found at:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/erasmus_en.html.

EC Press release IP/06/319 of 16/03/2006.

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

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

EU – Japan agreement on peaceful uses of nuclear energy

The EU and Japan have signed an Agreement for Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, which will initially run over 30 years, to facilitate co-operation and to provide a stable framework for the development of nuclear trade between the two parties. A separate agreement will be concluded to cover nuclear research at a later stage.

The initiative for agreement follows from the EU-Japan Summit in 1998. The agreement includes collaboration on nuclear technology, nuclear reactors, nuclear safety and radiation protection, the nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear safeguards. The agreement also includes a strong commercial component estimated at tens of billions of euros over the 30 years.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/236 of 27/02/2006 available at:

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

EC and UN agreement on sustainable urban research

The EC recently signed an agreement with the United Nations (UN) to jointly develop research activities into issues such as urban planning and governance, housing, water management, sanitation and land use. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed

with the UN's human settlement programme, UN-HABITAT. It will enable policy makers and scientists to access the research results and recommendations of more than 250 urban sustainability projects financed by the EU and UN-HABITAT from mid 2006. Work has recently started on the new web-based 'Susta-Info' database and portal project and a project will also be launched to identify best practice in urban environmental research.

Currently, nearly 80 per cent of EU citizens live in cities and by 2050 it is expected that six billion people around the world will inhabit urban areas. The sustainable development of towns and cities is therefore seen as a key challenge, which can be addressed through this international collaboration.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC news article, available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/environment/themes/article_2322_en.htm

the research database can be found at:

<http://www.susta-info.net>

EU – Russia co-operation on energy and space

In March, the President of the EC, Jose Barroso, met with Russian President Vladimir Putin to 'step up' the EU-Russia strategic partnership ahead of the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg. The discussions ranged from global issues to the future of EU-Russia relations once the existing EU-Russia Co-operation agreement reaches the end of its initial period in 2007. Barroso hoped to build on the existing strong partnership between Russia and the EU in international affairs, by exploring options for greater and more effective co-operation. A key element of the talks was energy security, a priority of both the Russian G8 Presidency and also the European Council, who recently discussed the EC's Energy Green Paper. Barroso is particularly keen to maximise co-operation in this area since Europe and Russia are energy interdependent and therefore have common interests.

Recently the EC, European Space Agency, and Federal Space Agency of the Russian Federation also signed a joint agreement to enhance co-operation in space. This encompasses space applications (satellite navigation, earth observation and satellite communications), access to space (launchers and future space transportation systems), space exploration and the use of the International Space Station (ISS) and space technologies development.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release IP/06/291 of 09/03/2006 and IP/06/297 of 10/03/2006 available at:

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

Croatia to participate in the 'Intelligent Energy – Europe' programme

The Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, and Croatian Vice Prime Minister, Damir Polančec have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which will enable Croatia to participate in 'Intelligent Energy – Europe' (IEE), the EU's programme to promote energy efficiency and the wider use of renewable energy sources. Croatian organisations will be

able to take part in EC-funded projects and events financially supported by the programme. Commissioner Piebalgs welcomed this as a 'positive step towards stronger co-operation between Croatia and the EU in the field of Energy'.

IEE has a budget of €250 million and co-finances European projects, large-scale events, and the creation of local or regional energy management agencies. EU Member States, plus Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Bulgaria and Romania, and now Croatia, are able to apply for financial support under the programme. The EC has proposed an ambitious Intelligent Energy - Europe II programme under the 'Competitiveness and Innovation' Programme 2007-2013. The EC's 'Green Paper on Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy' underlines the need to develop a pan-European Energy Community. The EU has widened its energy market to include its neighbours and to bring them progressively closer to the EU's internal market. Croatia is one of the members of the Energy Community, which extends the Internal Market for Energy into South – East Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION

on the IEE programme and on the IEEA is available from
http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/intelligent/index_en.html
EC Press release IP/06/328 of 17/03/06
available at: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do>

EVENTS and AWARDS

Information Society Technologies annual conference

The EC has launched a website for the annual conference in Information Society Technologies (IST). The conference is a key event in the IST calendar. This year, the conference takes place in Helsinki on 21 – 23 November, organised by the Finnish presidency of the European Council in collaboration with the EC. Key-note speeches will be given by the Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Ms Viviane Reding, as well as the Director General for Information Society and Media, Mr Fabio Colasanti. The conference will focus on the thematic priority for information communication technologies (ICT) in the Seventh Framework Programme, other areas of the Framework Programme that are relevant to ICT and the importance of ICT to European innovation.

There are now two open calls for applications in connection with the conference: a call for exhibits, which should include strong visual aspects and should be based on objects, artefacts and applied technologies. The deadline for applications is 21 April 2006. The second call is for networking sessions and workshop sessions aiming to bring together key stakeholders. Topics should be relevant to the ICT priority under the Seventh Framework Programme. The deadline for applications is 15 June 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

full details on the conference, including the calls for proposals, can be found at:
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/istevent/2006/index_en.htm

Pharmainformatics challenges

The second INFOBIOMED Training Challenge is set to take place in Barcelona from 29 May to 2 June. The event brings together students from five different academic backgrounds to work on case studies where an integrative approach is considered useful. The aim of the workshop is to promote dialogue between different disciplines on the theme of 'Pharmainformatics'.

Students wishing to take part in the training challenge should submit a short case study, and the selection committee will choose the case studies to be used in the workshop.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

available from

http://www.infobiomed.net/paginas_en/training_challenge_information_frame.htm

A researchers' labour market: Europe a pole of attraction?

A conference will be held under the Austrian Presidency in Vienna on 1 – 2 June 2006 on 'The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment'. There is a growing need to create the necessary conditions to attract and retain well trained and highly motivated researchers from all over the world, with a special emphasis on early stage researchers and doctoral candidates. With the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, the European Commission has adopted new instruments to enhance the development, the attractiveness and the competitiveness of a European labour market for researchers.

The conference will examine the conditions under which the European researchers' labour market can be a pole of attraction for well trained and highly motivated researchers at all levels from all over the world. It will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress made in the implementation of these instruments, to identify models of implementation according to different organisations, e.g. industry and academia, to see how such experience can serve as an example to be followed, and to see where there are bottlenecks which hamper a successful application at national, regional, institutional and intersectoral level.

FURTHER INFORMATION

is available from the conference website

<http://www.eracareersaustria.at/conference/>

EURATEX's first annual public conference

The European Technology Platform for the future of textiles and clothing, EURATEX, was officially launched in 2004. Its vision paper describes the overall objective of the Technology platform 'to define the innovation targets and research topics needed to address Europe's textile problems'. The platform brings together industry and research experts to develop specific research and innovation targets in three areas: new textile applications, the transition from mass production to customisation, and that from commodity to speciality products.

The first annual public conference will be held on 7 – 8 June 2006 in Brussels. The first day will be dedicated to reflecting on current experience and will showcase the latest research projects. The Second day will focus on the future of the European textile and clothing research in the Seventh Framework Programme and the programme will include key-note speeches from the Commission outlining opportunities for textiles and clothing research in the Seventh Framework Programme. EURATEX's Strategic Research agenda will also be formally presented.

FURTHER INFORMATION

on EURATEX and the conference is available from www.euratex.org

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES

New website for agricultural research

The EU Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) has launched a new website. SCAR was first established in 1974 and acted as a programme committee for DG Agriculture when it was responsible for managing the agricultural research programmes of the first EU framework programmes. In 2004, when SCAR was transferred to DG Research, it was charged with improving the co-ordination of agricultural research efforts across Europe. Now SCAR members represent 32 countries in Europe (the 25 EU Member States as full members and also, as observers, the Candidate Countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) and Associated Countries (Iceland, Israel, Norway and Switzerland). Croatia will also be invited to become an observer. Each country nominates two high-level national representatives in charge of the public agricultural research portfolio to SCAR.

The new SCAR website defines a common research agenda for Europe that looks beyond the narrow definition of agricultural production to encompass the 'farm-to-fork' concept. The website provides an overview of the co-ordination and co-operation of agricultural research at EU level, including projects funded under the Sixth Framework Programme, Technology Platforms and COST actions. National agricultural research systems are explained and links are given to the major agricultural research portals.

FURTHER INFORMATION

the new SCAR website is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/agriculture/scar/index_en.cfm

Bringing together women scientists across Europe

A new European Platform for Women Scientists (EPWS) has been provided with funding under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The platform aims to ensure that women scientist are heard at a European level by providing a structural link between policy makers and women scientists. The platform will bring together European organisations that support women working in science.

The mandate of the EPWS includes co-ordinating support activities for women scientists at a European level; representing women scientists in dialogue with policy makers, and

promoting the gender dimension in science. The EPWS will also provide a forum for women scientists to network. The platform will begin its work by establishing what organisations already exist and what their activities are. The initial funding is for a two-year period and will hopefully act as 'seed money' to ensure that the EPWS is established permanently. The organisation is currently based in Brussels and is set up as a non-profit organisation under Belgian law.

FURTHER INFORMATION

on the European Platform of Women Scientists can be found at:

<http://www.epws.org>

New website on steel

The European steel Technology Platform (ESTEP) has launched a new website on research policy in the steel sector. The website is a comprehensive guide to research in steel and includes information on the main objectives and latest developments of the ESTEP as well as updates on the implementation of the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for steel. It also includes information on the communications strategy for ESTEP, as well as a calendar of events related to the technology platform.

FURTHER INFORMATION

the new European steel Technology Platform website is available at:

http://cordis.europa.eu.int/estep/about_en.html

New Cordis service for Ireland

A new Cordis Member State service for Ireland was recently launched. The service replaces the previous Cordis page, which focused mainly on the Irish presidency of the EU. The new service focuses on national and regional research activities and innovation programmes in Ireland. The website aims to support knowledge of research in Ireland, and to enhance communication between the EU and Ireland.

The website includes information on upcoming events and research news, as well as providing information on Ireland's participation in the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). This includes a database which can be searched for information on projects, results and technology considered relevant to Ireland.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

the new Irish Cordis website can be accessed at:

http://cordis.europa.eu.int/ireland/home_en.html

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) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
C&G	Citizens and Governance Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
COST	European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research is a framework for scientific and technical co-operation, allowing the coordination of national research on a European level. http://www.netmaniacs.com/cost
'Council'	'Council' refers to the 'Council of Ministers', the principle decision-making body within the European Union. It has both executive and legislative powers, the latter in some cases exercised jointly with the European Parliament (co-decision procedure). The Council is composed of one representative at ministerial level from each Member State. Which Ministers attend each Council meeting varies according to the subject discussed, e.g. The Minister of Science in the UK attends the Research Council. http://ue.eu.int/en/summ.htm
Culture 2000	First European Community Framework Programme in support of culture, which runs from 2000/04 (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 - made up of elected representatives (MEPs) from all the Member States. It shares decision-making power with the Council in a number of areas including research and education. http://www.europarl.eu.int/sg/tree/en/default.htm
ERA	European Research Area. On 18 January 2000, the EC issued a Communication entitled "Towards a European Research Area" which proposed ways in which research in Europe could be more effectively organised and co-ordinated. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/area.html
ESC	European Economic and Social Committee is a consultative

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

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

Press Releases:

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

ESF	European Science Foundation http://www.esf.org
ESF	The European Social Fund http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05/esf/en/index.htm
Eureka	Eureka is a Europe-wide network for Industrial Research and Development. http://www3.eureka.be/Home
FQS	Food Quality and Safety Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
FP (FP5, FP6, FP7)	The EU'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) 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 ECs 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 ends in December 2000. The programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry. http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/avpolicy/media/index_en.html
Mobility	Human Resources and Mobility Programme (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation http://www.nato.int/
NMP	Nanotechnology, Materials and Production Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
PHARE	The Phare Programme is the European Union's instrument for financial and technical co-operation with the countries of central and eastern Europe. http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/index.htm
RTD	Research and Technological Development
SDGC	Sustainable Development and Global Change Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm
TACIS	The Tacis Programme aims to forge closer economic and political links with the former republics of the Soviet Union and Mongolia (also known as New Independent States (NIS)) http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/tacis/index.htm
Treaty of Amsterdam	The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999. http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/index.html
UUK	Universities UK (formerly the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals) http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk
White Paper	White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. They often follow a Green Paper.

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

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