
News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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EU POLICY

EU budgets for 2007-13

The European Council reached an agreement on the financial budget of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) recently, pending the EP's Opinion, meaning that the overall budget for FP7 will be €54.5 billion for 2007-13. Broken down, this will equate to around €32 billion for the Co-operation strand, €7.5 billion for the Ideas strand, €4.2 billion for Capacities and €5 billion for People. The Euratom programme will get an allocation of €2.7 billion over five years. The European Council also reached a general agreement on the Rules of Participation for FP7. The EP is likely to deliver its opinion on the Rules of Participation in July or September this year.

The EC has also formally adopted revised budgets for the next generation of funding programmes following the agreement last year of the overall budget of the EU for 2007-13. The Lifelong Learning budget, which includes Socrates, Leonardo and Erasmus actions, will be €6.9 billion. The budget for the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme will be €3.6 billion. The eContentplus programme will have a budget of €149 million. The Structural Funds will have a budget of €277 billion, with a lot of this going to the New Member States. The Public Health Programme will be €365 million and the Consumer Protection programme €156 million. The Culture, Media and Dapne programmes will have €400 million, €756 million and €117 million respectively.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release MEMO/06/216 of 24 May 2006 available at:

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

European Research Council peer review plans

The Scientific Council (ScC) of the European Research Council (ERC) has agreed a strategy for peer review of its first calls for proposals 'starting independent research

grants'. Peer review will be two-stage, by panels of independent high level scientists, supported by referees. The ScC will oversee the identification of Chairs and panel members, and later on referees. It has sent letters to the main representative organisations of the scientific community in Europe, organisations engaged in research funding activities in the Member States and Associated Countries, to identify possible panel members and Chairs. Other representative organisations and funding bodies are also welcome to nominate, according to the requirements outlined in the consultation letter. Self nominations by individuals will not be considered. Nominations for referees will be at a later stage.

Panels, which serve for two years, will evaluate proposals with the aid accredited referees who will be acting remotely. Panel Chairs are expected to be internationally recognised, senior scientists in their fields, to guarantee high credibility. Panel members should be senior scientists in their fields, actively pursuing research, with wide experience as they will review proposals on panels covering a large spectrum of topics. There will be approximately 18 panel Chairs, 180 panel members and 1,000–2,000 referees.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further details, including the letter about nominating panel members and chairs, is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/erc/index_en.cfm?p=5_peer-review

The future of our seas and oceans

The EC recently published its Green Paper entitled 'Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European vision for the oceans and seas'. The consultation on this, one of the largest in EU history, will be open until June 2007. Issues to be debated include: how to preserve European leadership in sustainable maritime development; how to maximise quality of life in coastal regions; which instruments can be used to manage our relation to the sea, including data collection, spatial planning and financial instruments; how to establish a better governance in maritime affairs at national, European and global level; and how to sustain European maritime heritage and strengthen the maritime identity of Europe. The consultation seeks to address these challenges in a holistic, cross-sectoral way, whilst maximising the benefits in terms of growth and employment.

The Green Paper highlights the interdependence of maritime sectors such as transport, shipping, trade, coastal and port-based industries, off-shore, traditional and alternative energies, fisheries, aquaculture, marine research, and tourism, which currently often operate independently, yet all depend on the same resource. The Green Paper also suggests looking at research programmes at the European and Member State levels to ensure that they cover maritime activities appropriately, and to promote the exchange and dissemination of information. Seven EU Commissioners have collaborated with stakeholders to prepare the Green Paper: the Commissioners for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Enterprise and Industry, Transport, Environment, Regional Policy, Energy and Research. The issues raised in the Green paper will be debated at events across Europe and will help the EC to define a new vision for an integrated maritime policy.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Releases: SPEECH/06/336 of 1 June 2006; COR/06/65 of 6 June 2006; IP/06/739, MEMO/06/230, SPEECH/06/348 and SPEECH/06/351 of 7 June 2006; SPEECH/06/354 and SPEECH/06/359 of 8 June 2006; COR/06/70 of 9 June 2006 available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Further details of the public events and how to contribute to the debate at:
<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs>

Joint Research Centre's annual report

The 2005 annual report for the Joint Research Centre (DG JRC), which sets out their areas of activity and achievements, has recently been published. The mission of the JRC is to 'provide customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of EU policies'. It comprises seven research centres and provides strategic policy support to the EC as well as undertaking specific scientific activities in co-operation with business and research partners.

The focus of the JRC's work in 2005 was preparing for FP7, although it was also active in the debate on REACH, the new chemicals directive. Some of its achievements of the last year include: the opening of two hydrogen and fuel cell testing facilities based at the JRC Institute for Energy in the Netherlands, which will contribute to the development of standardised test procedures; the support given to the African Observatory for Sustainable Development, which will assist the JRC's policy support to African Governments, the EC and other bodies; and the launch of the first Soil Atlas of Europe, developed out of high-quality soil maps from the EU and bordering countries.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The annual report of the JRC is available at:
<http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int>

Road transport policy in the FP7

The EC's thoughts on the area of road transport research in FP7 have been highlighted by Janez Potočnik, the EU Commissioner for Research. At the recent 'Transport Research Arena – Europe' conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, Potočnik encouraged all stakeholders in the sector to increase their spending on research over the coming years in order to help the EU become the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. The EU has spent over €250 million on road transport research throughout FP6, with the majority of the funding looking at ways of reducing fuel consumption, decreasing emissions and noise and improving safety.

In FP7, this figure is anticipated to increase to €4 billion during 2007-2013. For the first time, transport is likely to have its own dedicated priority theme. A lot of the focus of transport research in FP7 will be on developing greener, safer and more secure transport systems to ensure a more sustainable future and to maintain the industry's strong position in an increasingly global economy. The transport industry, which includes the automotive sector, is Europe's largest investor in R&D. It is also envisaged that there will be opportunities for the sector to engage in other thematic areas of FP7, including energy and ICT.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Conference website available at: <http://www.traconference.com>

New plan for forests

The EC recently adopted a new EU Forest Action Plan, aimed at enhancing sustainable forest management. Specifically, the action plan focuses on the following four objectives: to improve long-term competitiveness; to improve and protect the environment; to contribute to quality of life; and to foster co-ordination and communication. The action plan builds on a report from last year on the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy, and outlines 18 key actions to be implemented with Member States in the period 2007–2011.

The action plan is accompanied by a report on forests and forestry in the EU. The plan emphasises the importance of innovation and research, as well as training for forest-owners and workers, to ensure the long-term competitiveness of Europe's forest sector. It also includes specific steps to contribute to environmental objectives on climate change and biodiversity in the EU. The action plan encourages environmental education, highlighting the protective role of forests, and urging that urban or peri-urban forests be explored. Currently, forests cover 37.8 per cent of the EU's land area, with great variations in different member States, with the EU supplying 20 per cent of the world's industrial roundwood, as the biggest producer after the US.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release IP/06/785 of 15 June 2006 available from:

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

Further information on the forest action plan can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/agriculture/fore/action_plan/index_en.htm

New task force on ICT established

A new Information Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force has been launched by the EC. The Task Force, chaired jointly by Fabio Colasanti, Director General for DG Information Society and Heinz Zourek, Director General for DG Enterprise, met for the first time recently. Membership of the Task Force comprises representatives of industry and society. It will meet several times over the coming five months and present its findings to the EC on the challenges and opportunities to the ICT industry by the end of the year.

The Task Force was originally mentioned in the EC's Communication on industrial policy, published in October 2005 and should also be seen in the context of the new i2010 initiative. It will be looking in detail at the following areas: ICT uptake; IPR for competitiveness and innovation; Innovation in R&D, manufacturing and services; SMEs and entrepreneurship; skills and employability; and achieving a truly single market.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/731 of 6 June 2006 and SPEECH/06/347 of 7 June 2006

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

Improving ICT security in Europe

The EC recently adopted a new policy document aimed at promoting greater network and information security in Europe. The initiative includes an open stakeholder dialogue on a new IT Security Strategy for Europe. At the launch of the strategy, the Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Ms Viviane Reding, stressed the changing nature of network threats and the need to develop new responses to such threats. The initiative

should be seen in the context of the i2010 initiative, on the further development of an inclusive European information society.

Proposals from the EC include benchmarking national policies on network and information security (NIS), identifying best practices raising awareness of end users, and for Member States and the private sector to take a more pro-active role in enhancing NIS. Under the initiative, the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA), established in Greece, will be asked to develop data collection frameworks on security and consumer confidence. The feasibility of developing a multi-lingual alert system will also be explored. Alongside the current initiative, the EC is also carrying out a public consultation on Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and its security and privacy implications.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press releases MEMO/06/223 of 31 May 2006 and IP/06/650 of 18 May 2006 available at: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid>

EC's communication on the Galileo Programme

The EC has recently launched a communication on the Galileo Programme, outlining the project and including an implementation timetable, which has been sent to the EP, the European Council, the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) for their views. The aim of Galileo is to create a large-scale satellite radio navigation system, which can accurately pin-point the space and time of any object. A constellation of 30 satellites and ground stations will be continuously emitting and receiving signals.

It is not yet known what the total budget for Galileo will be over the next 20 years, as it will in part depend on the outcome of contract negotiations. Galileo, however, is still the largest Europe-wide industrial project and the first European public-private partnership. At present, eight firms are in negotiation for the Galileo system concession contract. The EC is expected to publish a Green Paper on Galileo applications at the end of the year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/744 of 07 June 2006 available at: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid>

Where coal fits in the EU energy mix

Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, recently spoke about: 'Future EU Energy Mix - will coal play an important role?', and said we stand at an energy crossroads, with no turning back – choices made now could determine whether Europe can guarantee sustainable and affordable energy supply in the future. Coal, if it is secure, competitive and sustainable could have a future in European energy; however, emissions must be reduced. New technologies need developing - research envisaged in FP7 includes clean coal technologies and zero-emission coal fired power generation. Piebalgs intends to propose an EC communication on clean coal to support the search for new policies.

He said that the role of coal should not be undermined; coal could 'provide the flexibility needed to complement other energy sources. Coal already complements the use of renewable biomass through co-combustion and combustion with waste. It already provides responsive power generation as back-up capacity for wind power. Both of these uses can serve to reinforce the European energy mix, and there are other opportunities to be explored. These include the use of coal combustion plants to pioneer carbon dioxide

storage techniques that could dramatically reduce our CO₂ emissions; the conversion of coal-to-liquid fuels and chemical products so that future oil price spikes are reduced; and the use of coal to kick-start hydrogen production for transport.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press release SPEECH/06/328 of 29 May 2006 available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Common European research vision needed for agriculture

Joseph Pröll, Austria's Agricultural Minister, has reported on the EU Agricultural Ministers' informal meeting in Austria, saying there was a clear mandate for common EU agricultural research in the EU. He highlighted the insufficient co-ordination and co-operation between Member States in agricultural research and development, and that innovation is the key to generating income. In FP7, the 'Farm to Fork' area will be under the broader 'Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology' theme. Ministers called on research to deliver 'appropriate conditions' to equip farmers for the additional pressure that lies ahead in relation to the World Trade Organisation rounds.

To deliver this, four areas were identified for additional work: research and development, where the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research will draw up a common research strategy; education - a common strategy proposed to improve co-ordination between countries and between training institutions, and to increase and ease agricultural exchanges between Member States; advisory services - a cross-border platform for consultancy; innovation - a monitoring and benchmarking system to boost innovation for rural development. These actions would allow European farmers more opportunities to compete in the future. Pröll aims to co-ordinate future work more closely in research, consultancy and enhancing innovation, and said 'we have taken important steps towards this goal'.

FURTHER INFORMATION

From the Austrian Presidency website, under section on R&D news, at: <http://cordis.europa.eu/austria>

Accession update on Croatia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania

On 12 June 2006, Turkey and Croatia both reached agreement with the EU in the area of science and research policy at the first accession conference. This is the first of 35 agreements that will be needed in order for the countries to fully accede to Europe. The science and research policy area is the simplest body of EU law to incorporate into the national legislations, and is relatively easy to handle. Turkey will have to overcome a number of challenges, the first is to fulfil the commitments under the additional protocol to the customs union agreement between the EU and Turkey, which extends the customs union to all new EU member states, including Cyprus. At the conference Croatia was described as an important role model for other Western Balkan countries.

On 14 June, the EP voted almost unanimously in favour of the early accession of Bulgaria and Romania. The joint resolution on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania is a result of the EC's monitoring of the two countries' efforts to meet the conditions for entering the EU on the scheduled date of 1 January 2007. The EC will now need to provide Bulgaria and Romania with clear guidance to ensure that the maximum resources are targeted on these areas in order to help produce tangible improvements. The EC will work in co-operation with the Bulgarian and Romanian authorities to define the nature of, and

procedures for any possible post-accession monitoring measures and the circumstances under which they might be necessary.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Enlargement newsletter at:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/enlargement/docs/newsletter/latest_weekly.htm

Further information on Turkey and Croatia respectively at:

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/Press_Releases/June/1306BeitrittskonferenzTuerkei.html

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/Press_Releases/June/1306PlassnikCroatia.html

Green week 2006 plans to stop biodiversity loss by 2010

Now in its sixth year, Green Week provides a unique opportunity for the exchange of best practice between around 4000 representatives from different levels of government, business, international institutions, non-governmental organisations, scientific and academic communities. Called 'Biodiversity is life!', it aimed to increase action to stop the rapid loss of biological diversity - the wealth of species, ecosystems and genes that constitute the web of life. Stavros Dimas, Environment Commissioner, opened the conference by talking about why nature matters, why we are losing it, and what we in Europe can do about it. A recent EC Communication sets out a policy approach to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010. It includes an EU Action Plan specifying concrete actions and the responsibility of community institutions and Member States. It identifies four key policy areas: biodiversity in the EU, the EU and global biodiversity, biodiversity and climate change, and the knowledge base. Suggestions for supporting measures include adequate financing, strengthening EU decision-making, building partnerships and promoting public education, and awareness and participation.

A highlight of Green Week was the presentation of EC environmental awards for businesses, cities and schools. The European Investment Bank and four other European multilateral development banks also signed a declaration of environmental principles for their investments.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press releases IP/06/667 and MEMO/06/612 of 22 May 2006, IP/06/680 of 24 May 2006, SPEECH/06/333 of 30 May 2006, and IP/06/718 of 2 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Green Week programme:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/conference.html>

European Business Awards for the Environment:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/environment/awards/pressroom_en.htm

Green Week School Competition:

http://greenweek2006.eun.org/ww/en/pub/greenweek_2006/home.htm

The EC Communication 'Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond – sustaining ecosystems for human well-being' and impact assessment can all be downloaded from:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/current_biodiversity_policy/biodiversity_com_2006/index_en.htm

Go-ahead for new European polar research vessel

The German Science Council has given the green light for the development and construction of the European Research Icebreaker Vessel, Aurora Borealis. Construction is estimated at €355 million, of which Germany is expected to contribute over 30 per cent.

The European Polar Board, a committee of the European Science Foundation (ESF), who originally proposed by the project, said 'We now hope that this research vessel will be implemented by a group of countries under the guidance of the ESF European Polar Board and the new European Polar Consortium, and that the facility will support the European Polar Research community for the next few decades.' The vessel, equipped with state-of-the-art technology, including a drilling platform, will be the first of its kind capable of working in the Central Arctic Ocean during winter. It will be able to retrieve sediments down to 4000 metres, even from below a continuous ice cover. These sediment deposits from deep below the Arctic Ocean seafloor, currently unexplored, provide a key to the understanding of the region's climate history and its effects on the global environment over millions of years.

It is hoped that the research vessel, already identified on the EC's ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) list of possible European Infrastructure for development under FP7, will be endorsed on the EC ESFRI Roadmap recommendations later this year to secure partial financing from the EC.

FURTHER INFORMATION

ESF News Release of 23 May 2006 available at:

http://www.esf.org/esf_pressarea_home.php

European Solar Thermal Technology Platform launched

The European Solar Thermal Technology Platform (ESTTP) was launched in June and aims to develop a comprehensive strategy for research and market deployment of solar thermal technologies in Europe by providing a platform for exchanging expertise and knowledge. The EU is currently the world leader in solar thermal technology, which produces heat from the sun's radiation that can subsequently be used, for example, for heating domestic water, heating rooms or drying. The ESTTP 'Solar Thermal Vision 2030' outlines the future vision of the use of solar thermal energy, including the supply of up to 50 per cent of the low-temperature energy demand of Europe by 2030. For example, the building sector (responsible for 40 per cent of Europe's energy supply) presented the concept of the 'Active Solar building', entirely heated and cooled by solar thermal energy, expected to be the building standard by 2030. Key research topics suggested include advanced heat stores, medium-temperature collectors, solar cooling systems and system technology.

The Technology Platform, whose secretariat is supported under FP6, will feed into the development of future FP7 research areas. Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, said 'the solar thermal sector can play an important role in the future and contribute to the development of a sustainable EU energy scheme.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press releases IP/06/696 and SPEECH/06/334 of 30 May 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

European Solar Thermal Technology Platform (ESTTP) website and press release:

http://www.esttp.org/cms/front_content.php

European Biofuels Technology Platform launched

The EC's ambitious, co-ordinated approach to promote the use of biomass and biofuels includes a Biomass Action Plan, an EU strategy for Biofuels, and the support for the establishment of a European Biofuels Technology Platform. On 8 June 2006, this Biofuels Technology Platform was launched. It aims to develop cost-competitive, world class biofuel technology, contributing to the creation of a European biofuels industry and accelerating the deployment of biofuels. To establish the Technology Platform, a high-level advisory council called the Biofuels Research Advisory Council (BIOFRAC) was set up. At the launch, BIOFRAC presented its draft Vision report 'Biofuels in the EU - A Vision for 2030 and beyond' which 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 EU and worldwide.

At a separate event, Environment Commissioner, Stavros Dimas, also made a speech about a sustainable biofuels policy for the EU. As well as outlining the benefits of biofuels, namely that they are a relatively cheap form of renewable energy and have the advantage that they can be stored just like gas and coal, he also highlighted that the intensive production and use of biomass can have serious negative environmental impacts such as pollution, loss of biodiversity, loss of nutrients and emissions into the atmosphere when the biomass is used. He stressed that the EC should and is ensuring it looks at the precise picture of possible environmental impacts of a non-controlled use of biomass.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Biofuels Technology Platform launch conference website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/gp/gp_events/etpbiofuels/article_3765_en.htm

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/350 of 7 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

European Smart System Integration Technology Platform launch

A new European Technology Platform (ETP) on Smart Systems Integration, named EPoSS, will be launched in Brussels on 5 July. This, the 30th Technology Platform to be launched, focuses on promoting research into smart systems in relation to automotives, aerospace, telecommunication, medical technologies, logistics, and underlying technologies. The platform brings together private and public stakeholders in order to define common visions in this field of research. In the ETP landscape, EPoSS is positioned between the ETP for 'Advanced Research and Technology for Embedded Intelligence and Systems' (ARTEMIS) and the ETP for Nanoelectronics (ENIAC). Both ENIAC and ARTEMIS are proposed as Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs) under FP7.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Smart Systems Integration (EPoSS) launch event, including registration at:

<http://www.smart-systems-integration.org/public>

European Textiles Technology Platform strategic research agenda

In June, the European Technology Platform (ETP) for the Future of Textiles and Clothing launched its strategic research agenda. This is the result of the work of 400 individual experts organised in nine thematic expert groups from November 2005 to May 2006. The document describes major innovation and growth areas for the European textile and

clothing industry, strategic research priorities to overcome technological bottlenecks to unlock future innovation and growth potential, and briefly outlines resources and procedures for the implementation of the strategic research agenda. The publication is composed of a core document and a number of annexes including more detailed thematic research agendas for the nine thematic expert groups.

FURTHER INFORMATION

'Future of Textiles and Clothing' strategic research agenda at:

<http://www.textile-platform.org/keydocuments.php>

Update on EU consultations

DG Information Society has launched an online stakeholder consultation on collaborative working environments for industry and business in FP7, following on from previous events on working environments.

DG Environment has launched a public consultation on the revision of Directive 86/609/EEC on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes, to provide the Commission with views about the public's attitude towards the use of animals in experiments and ways to improve their welfare; and to comment on the preliminary findings of the impact assessment for the revision of the existing legislation for the protection of animals used in experiments. This consultation is addressed to interested citizens and experts in the field of animal experimentation, therefore it contains two questionnaires, one for citizens and one for experts in the area of animal welfare, animal testing, animal science, natural sciences (especially biology, medicine, pharmacology and toxicology) and legal and economic affairs related to these areas.

Under the framework of the European Climate Change Programme, the EC will present a Communication to the EP and European Council in mid-2006 on a revised Community strategy to reduce CO₂ emissions from light-duty vehicles, including cars. As well as a stakeholder working group, the public is being consulted on passenger road transport's contributions to climate change and possible future ways to reduce it, via an online questionnaire. There is also an online stakeholder consultation on the midterm review of the Sixth Environment Action Programme.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Collaborative working environments stakeholder consultation online form (closes 7 July 2006) at:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/atwork/fp7consultation/index_en.htm

Public consultation on the revision of Directive 86/609/EEC on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes (closes 18 August 2006) at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/ia_info_en.htm

Consultation on reducing CO₂ emissions from light-duty vehicles (closes 21 August 2006) at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/co2/co2_home.htm#review

Review of the sixth Environment Action Programme (closes 14 July 2006) at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations_en.htm

'You control climate change' campaign launched

The EC's 'You control climate change' awareness raising campaign challenges individuals to make small changes to their daily routine in order significantly reduce

greenhouse gas emissions. The slogan is 'Turn down. Switch off. Recycle. Walk. Change'. A website aims to give people a sense of personal responsibility and empower them to contribute to the fight against climate change, since EU households are responsible for 16 per cent of the total EU greenhouse gas emissions. It gives 50 easy, practical tips on reducing emissions, ranging from turning down the heating by one per cent (up to ten per cent of the energy used for heating saved), to avoiding the stand-by mode on TV sets, stereos and computers (ten per cent of the energy they use saved), and printing double-sided (up to 50 per cent of paper saved). Environment Commissioner, Stavros Dimas, launched the €4.7 million campaign, saying 'Our campaign will provide citizens with information about climate change and their role in combating it. Doing the right thing is not as difficult as it seems.'

In the UK, DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) also recently launched a national climate change initiative, called 'Tomorrow's Climate, Today's Challenge', which aims to explain climate change in order to help people tackle the problem.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press releases IP/06/684 and MEMO/06/218 of 29 May 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Campaign website for 'You control climate change':

<http://www.climatechange.eu.com>

EC website on climate change:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/home_en.htm

UK website 'Tomorrow's Climate, Today's Challenge':

<http://www.climatechallenge.gov.uk>

ESF task force for clean solar energy

At an interdisciplinary task force meeting sponsored by the European Science Foundation (ESF), leading scientists urged the EU to make a multi million Euro commitment to solar driven production of environmentally clean electricity, hydrogen and other fuels, as the only sustainable long-term solution for global energy needs. Solar energy is plentiful and substantial progress has been made recently in understanding and mimicking natural photosynthesis processes, so scientists are confident that they could use them to produce fuels on a commercial scale.

The ESF task force recommend three areas of solar energy research: extending and adapting current photovoltaic technology to generate clean fuels directly from solar radiation; constructing artificial chemical and biomimetic devices mimicking photosynthesis to collect, direct, and apply solar radiation, for example to split water, convert atmospheric carbon dioxide and thus produce various forms of environmentally clean fuels; tuning natural systems to produce fuels such as hydrogen and methanol directly rather than carbohydrates that are converted into fuels in an indirect and inefficient process. There are considerable challenges, but by mimicking natural photosynthetic systems, scientists hope to be able to produce unlimited energy whilst also removing CO₂ from the atmosphere to reduce global warming. Participants at the brainstorming conference described the project as the quest for building the 'artificial leaf'.

FURTHER INFORMATION

ESF News Release of 13 June 2006 available at:

http://www.esf.org/esf_pressarea_home.php

The importance of hydrogen research

Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, recently spoke at the World Hydrogen Energy Conference. He outlined why hydrogen is so important in Europe, namely because energy demand is high, which has a big impact on climate change and the environment. Therefore, it is important to clean up conventional fossil fuel-based energy systems, but also to introduce new ones, which could ultimately create wealth, stabilise the world, and improve our health and environment.

Potočnik outlined energy research priorities in FP7. He also spoke about overcoming fragmentation and duplication of research by working successfully with key European stakeholders through the Technology Platforms. The European Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technology Platform will soon publish their proposed implementation plan, containing targets and priorities for research and demonstration needed to take hydrogen and fuel cells to market readiness in the next five to ten years. This implementation plan would feed into FP7 as well as the activities of the proposed hydrogen Joint Technology Initiative (JTI), a dedicated public-private partnership. The public side would provide the initial funds for research whilst industry develops products and invests in production. The decision on the hydrogen JTI will be made once the implementation plan is published. Potočnik believes hydrogen will play a major role in our future energy systems.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/372 of 13 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technology Platform website at:

<http://www.hfpeurope.org>

World Hydrogen Energy Conference website at:

<http://www.whec2006.com>

RESEARCH NEWS

‘Clean Sky’ Joint Technology Initiative set for take-off in FP7

The European Aerospace industry has signalled its intention to develop one of the six proposed Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI) in FP7. The ‘Clean Sky’ project, as it is known, would aim to strengthen Europe’s competitiveness in this industry whilst similarly lessening its environmental impact. In concrete terms, the project would aim to develop the knowledge and technology to reduce fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions by 50 per cent, NO_x emissions by 80 per cent, and external aircraft noise by 50 per cent. The sector hopes to formally launch the Clean Sky JTI in 2007, with activities beginning in the second quarter of FP7.

JTIs are intended to bring together leading industrial players, SMEs, research establishments and academia to work in specific areas of science where the EU has lagged behind other global players. The EC is likely to part-fund six JTIs under FP7. They have been identified as: aeronautics and air transport; innovative medicine; nanoelectronics; embedded systems; hydrogen and fuel cells for a sustainable energy future, and global monitoring for environment and security.

FURTHER INFORMATION

on the 'clear sky JTI can be found at: <http://www.asd-europe.org>

Energy efficient car race

The Shell Eco-marathon car race took place recently in Nogaro in the South West of France. The aim of the competition is to travel as far as possible with one litre of fuel. Last year's record of 3,836km, set by the Swiss ETH Zurich team was not threatened in this year's event due to the challenging weather conditions. When the competition began in 1985 the record was 680km and this rose to just under 4,000 km in last year's race. The competition was opened by Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Energy, and is seen as an excellent opportunity for young researchers to develop original solutions to saving energy in transport. The leading teams in this year's event were able to clock-up distances of around 2,600-2,700 km by using hydrogen powered vehicles.

Before starting the race, Andris Piebalgs began a dialogue on energy efficiency with key decision makers, academia, the public and the media. The EC adopted 'A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy' Green Paper earlier in the year, which identified energy efficiency as one of the main priorities in fighting climate change, decreasing the EU's dependency on energy and boosting competitiveness. According to EC figures, the EU could save up to 20 per cent of its energy consumption, which would equate to €60 billion a year. The EC will be launching an Energy Efficiency Action Plan after the summer, which will set out specific measures to increase European energy efficiency.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Shell Eco-marathon website available at:

<http://www.shell.com/home/Framework?siteId=eco-marathon-en>

Funding for British-Italian scientific co-operation

Proposals for scientific co-operation between research bodies and universities in the UK and Italy are invited under the British Council's British-Italian Partnership Programme. The programme invites proposals in four specific subject areas: Food, Nutrition and Health, which includes obesity, diabetes and the role of physical education; Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, which includes molecular evolution and ecosystem ecology; Medical Imaging; and Nanotechnology, specifically in the biomedical field. The aim of the programme is to assist young researchers and build upon newly established collaboration links. A preference will be given to projects that offer research-training opportunities in the other country.

The grant itself cannot be used for technical and research purposes such as equipment, consumables, running costs and other related fees. Instead, it is to be used primarily for travel and subsistence. Projects will be funded for a maximum of one year and applicants will need to show a breakdown of expenses in the proposal. The deadline for proposals is the end of July and a jury will sit to decide on projects in November. The programme has been running since 1990 and is jointly financed and managed by the British Council and the Italian Ministry for Education, Universities and Research.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Web site available at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/italy-science-partnership-programme.htm>

Second European research and innovation exhibition

Held in June 2006, the exhibition, supported by the French Government, sought to bring together researchers, administrators, students, policy makers and members of the public to engage in a debate on key issues facing research in France and Europe today. Issues discussed included researcher careers, environmental research, research and business, and scientific communication.

A televised debate, held on 10 June, brought together a panel of experts to share experiences of the EU Framework Programmes and offer some thoughts on the future. Several members of the panel, themselves senior researchers on projects funded under FP6, discussed the advantages that this level and type of co-operation offered. However, the panel also discussed the perceived lack of co-ordination between European-level and National-level programmes. An EC panellist was quick to address this, outlining the ERA-NET scheme, intended to provide targeted support for the co-ordination and mutual opening up of national and regional research programmes, as well as less visible co-operation, such as in defining research themes at European level and common strategies to improve researcher mobility.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

European Research and Innovation Exhibition website, available at:

<http://www.european-research-exhibition.com/index.php>

Schools competition launched to find new name for GMES

The EC has launched a new competition for schools to find a new name for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security system (GMES). With the support of the Committee of the Regions, the competition has already begun, with invitations sent out to a large number of schools across Europe. Aimed at students in their last two years at school before going to university, the competition will offer winners a hot-air balloon trip over their home region.

According to the EC Vice President, Günter Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry policy, the GMES acronym does not do justice to the scale of the ambition of the monitoring project, which will have a wide range of applications to improve the quality of life of EU citizens.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

GMES competition website, available at:

<http://www.gmes-competition.info>

GMES website, available at:

<http://www.gmes.info>

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

European Institute of Technology

At a recent summit, the European Council reaffirmed its view that the European Institute of Technology (EIT) will play an important role in filling the gap between higher education,

research and innovation in Europe. Furthermore, the European Council asked that it, along with the European Research Council, Member States and other stakeholders, be consulted on the EC's first proposal on EIT. The EC is currently developing a full impact assessment and plans to begin work on the draft legislation to establish the EIT. It is hoped that the full impact assessment will be completed in the autumn of 2006 and this, along with draft legislation, will be presented to the European Council in December 2006.

The EC has also recently published a Communication on the EIT, entitled 'The European Technology Institute: further steps towards its creation'. It includes the proposed structure of the EIT and issues that need to be considered such as the legal status, the composition of a Governing Board, incentives for partner's participation, the involvement of business, the type of degrees it might issue, financial aspects and relations with other EU institutions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Releases MEMO/06/233 and IP/06/751 of 8 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

European Council 15-16th June 2006, preliminary Conclusions available at:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/90111.pdf

Erasmus Mundus 2006 – 2007

The EC has recently announced figures on participation in the Erasmus Mundus programme for 2006–2007. It selected 1377 students and 231 scholars from all over the world to receive funding for academic year 2006–2007. The students will attend one of 57 Erasmus Mundus master courses across Europe. They will study for one to two years in at least two different universities in different European countries. 741 of the 2006–2007 group of students come from 92 different countries, with many coming from 7 countries: China (81), Brazil (43), Russia (36), India (31), USA (28), Malaysia (25) and Mexico (24).

The remaining 636 students are funded under the Erasmus Mundus Asia window and come from India (288), China (99), Thailand (953), Pakistan (42), Malaysia (32) and Vietnam (29). The Erasmus Mundus programme also supports university teachers to spend time in European universities, and the 2006–2007 group sees 231 scholars in total. 32 come from China under the 'China Window'. The remaining 199 come from 45 different countries, including USA (42), Russia (14), Indian (12), Canada (11) and Brazil (10).

The year is the third year of the Erasmus Mundus programme, which runs from 2004-8. The programme is included in the new Integrated Programme for Lifelong Learning and should run from 2009–2013.

FURTHER INFORMATION

DG Education and Culture's Erasmus Mundus website available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html

Conference on Charter and Code for Researchers

The issue of introducing a 'label' for institutions that aligned themselves with the standard European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers was recently discussed at a conference entitled 'A researcher's labour market: Europe – a pole of attraction?' held in Austria. Also debated was the issue of the

Charter and Code acting as an instrument of change in the management of researchers and their careers. Speakers hoped that the Charter and Code would help improve working conditions and the opening of the labour market for researchers.

The EC stressed that alignment with the Charter and Code would not be used as eligibility criterion for Seventh Framework Programme funding. Participants suggested that the 'label' may be too top-down, bureaucratic and not conducive to stimulating the change in implementing policy in an institution, which it should be about. It was also suggested that the approach should focus on trying to assist institutions in implementing the Charter and Code and also help identify actions for the areas that institutions need more support in. The conference proceedings are expected to be published shortly. The results of a Universities UK and Research Councils UK mapping exercise on the impact of the Charter and Code in terms of UK institutions and legislation is expected in late summer or autumn.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Charter and Code conference web site at:
<http://www.eracareersaustria.at/conference>

KidsCorner energy website

The ManagEnergy KidsCorner website, an initiative of the EC's Directorate General for Energy and Transport, is now available in all 20 EU languages. The KidCorner webpages for school children feature animations, e-cards, a photo gallery, picture downloads, information and links to other websites, games and videos on energy saving, renewable energy and transport. The website is split into two areas for those aged 7-11 and 11-15 year olds.

The website also has a teacher database, which is a quick and easy way for teachers and energy actors across Europe to find online lesson plans, information and multimedia resources on everything from solar energy, to biofuels, to energy efficient light bulbs and safer routes to school. It provides direct links to over 280 online energy education websites in 30 languages.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Intelligent Energy Europe Newsletter of June 2006 available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/library/publications_en.htm
KidsCorner website at:
<http://managenergy.net/kidscorner>

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

EU-Canada bilateral relations

The EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, Ján Figel', recently visited Canada to reinforce and renew Europe-Canada co-operation in higher education and vocational training agreement. This follows the first co-operation agreement of 1995, and builds on past experiences as well as introducing co-operation in the area of youth. So far, more than 200 institutions have been involved in transnational

study programmes, with over 2000 students participating in exchanges. The co-operation has involved a wide range of areas, including international education development, engineering and international business. The visit to Canada also included discussion on the Bologna process and developments in the Canadian education system, and reflects the key role of higher education in the Lisbon strategy, as well the importance of EU-Canada relations.

FURTHER INFORMATION

is available from http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu-canada/index_en.html

EU-US research task force on biotechnology set to continue

Following the recent signature of a renewal agreement, the EC-US Task Force on Biotechnology research will continue. The agreement, renewed on behalf of the EU by Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Research, originally dates back to the 1990s. The Task Force brings together officials and early-stage scientists and researchers to establish better links with each other and to work together to forecast research challenges. It has a mandate to 'anticipate the needs of tomorrow's science, today' and primarily uses a series of activities and workshops to achieve this.

The task force will focus on life sciences and biotechnology research, with an emphasis on obesity, avian flu, SARs, plant science and bio products, and synthetic genomics. An annual workshop entitled 'The Future of Livestock Genomics' will be held by the task force on 17-18 July 2006 in Brussels. Two working groups set up by the task force are currently looking at environmental biotechnology and the applications of molecular biology to bio-based products and biofuel respectively. A third working group is being set up to look at the emerging and re-emerging diseases in humans and animals.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.ec.europa.eu/research/biotechnology/ec-us

New EU-US higher education agreement and new strategy for IPR

The Competitiveness Council approved an EU-US agreement to boost co-operation on higher education and vocational training. It was formally signed at the EU-US summit and initially lasts for eight years, replacing the 2000 co-operation programme. Commissioner for Education and Training, Ján Figel, said it 'illustrates the determination of the EU and US to build on the positive results of the past programme and to enhance our co-operation.' The EC plans to allocate €45 million to the co-operation programme during 2006-2013 with a target of 6,000 people participating in mobility activities during this time.

Actions foreseen are: Joint consortia projects, supporting multilateral partnerships of EU-US institutions for setting up joint study programmes - including joint/double degrees – and transatlantic mobility of students and faculty; Excellence mobility projects, providing follow-up financial support for student mobility to joint consortia that have a proven track record of excellence in transatlantic cooperation; Policy-oriented measures, addressing comparative higher education and vocational training issues, and promoting dialogue on recognition of qualifications and accreditations; Schuman-Fulbright Programme providing scholarships to highly qualified professionals for undertaking studies or training on the opposite side of the Atlantic in areas of specific relevance to the EU/US relations. The EU and USA have run joint higher education and vocational training programmes since 1995.

Trade leaders on both sides of the Atlantic also launched a ground-breaking joint EU-Action Strategy on the global enforcement of intellectual property rights. The agreement should allow closer customs co-operation, including more data-sharing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC press releases MEMO IP/06/795 of 19 June 2006 and IP/06/812 of 21 June 2006 at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Further Information about the EU-US summit at:

http://www.eu2006.at/en/The_Council_Presidency/EU-USSummit/index.html

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/us/sum06_06/index.htm

http://useu.usmission.gov/Dossiers/US_EU_Summits/Jun2106_Vienna_Summit.asp

The EU-US education programme website is at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu-usa/call_en.html

ERA-link website launched - Potočnik meets European researchers in US

The ERA-Link website was recently launched by CORDIS to help the 100,000 or so EU researchers working in the US communicate with each other and to stay informed on European research policies. The online networking and information tool enables the expatriate research community to share information, ideas, organise events and find out about career opportunities. Information about research in Europe, EU research policy and funding opportunities are provided. ERA-Link aims to foster co-operation and collaboration between its members and to eventually attract high level researchers back to Europe.

At the beginning of June, Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik spoke to over 300 European researchers in the US. The meeting was organised by the EC ERA-Link and embassies of EU countries in the US. The importance of fostering closer ties with European researchers in the US as Europe takes forward its Lisbon objective of creating a more dynamic, knowledge-based society is crucial. Commissioner Potočnik said: 'Europe cannot afford to turn its back on its thousands of expatriate researchers. They represent a patrimony of talent, skills and expertise that Europe wants to nurture'. There was a frank, open discussion on current actions to support transatlantic collaboration and to make research careers in Europe more attractive.

FURTHER INFORMATION

ERA-link website, including how to join, available at:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/eralink>

Further information about the Potočnik meeting with researchers at:

http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.simplifieddocument&N_RCN=25796

Working with South East Asia in the ICT sector

At the recent EU-South East Asia Forum on the Information Society, in Singapore, the Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Ms Viviane Reding, gave a speech highlighting the need for research and dialogue on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Ms Reding drew attention to the EC's i2010 initiative, and the focus on creating a single European information space; investing in ICT research and development; and creating an inclusive and sustainable European information society.

Ms Reding also congratulated South East Asian organisations for their strong participation in the European research programmes, emphasising the high quality and success rates of the proposals submitted by South East Asian organisations. In the context of the current Framework Programme, FP6, there has been successful collaboration on grid technologies. The increased focus on international collaboration in FP7 should result in further collaboration. There is continued dialogue between the two regions on regulatory frameworks for electronic communication. Finally, Ms Reding condemned cyber repression as 'a current practice in too many countries'. She drew attention to the importance of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in addressing the digital divide, and in focusing on Internet governance.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/385 of 20 June 2006 available at:

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

EC collaboration with Romania

The EC Joint Research Centre and Romanian representatives recently held a high-level conference that presented the recent and potential research collaborations under FP6 and FP7. The focus was on two research areas: 'Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)' and 'Nuclear Research and Development'. It was noted that there has been a significant increase in the level of collaboration in recent years, with 32 partnerships covering a wide range of scientific areas, from responses to natural hazards (floods) to nuclear research. Specific projects include: the work in the area of flood warnings, as part of the European Flood Alert System, providing several days' warning of actual flood events; the JRC's first Soil Atlas of Europe, which was created with the help of Romanian partners; and collaboration in the area of research on nuclear data, modelling nuclear fuels, combating nuclear proliferation and illicit trafficking, and use of nuclear isotopes in new cancer therapies.

39 Romanian researchers and experts are currently working at the JRC, and over 320 Romanian experts have participated each year in JRC workshops on scientific and technical aspects of EU legislation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Is available from: http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/default.asp@sidsz=more_information.htm

Seventeenth EU-Russia summit discusses research

Leaders from Russia and the EU recently met for the seventeenth EU-Russia summit. Their talks focused on the practical implementation of the four Common Space Road Maps that were agreed in May 2005. They also discussed energy co-operation, climate change, trade issues and broader strategic issues such as Iran and the Middle East peace process. The leaders took note of the progress made in the Common Space on research, education and culture, in particular the new impetus given to the Science and Technology Agreement and the start of the commonly funded European Institute in Moscow where doors will open for the first students in the autumn.

Security and justice agreements on visa facilitation and on readmission were signed, opening the way for easier contacts across the continent. The Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) of 1997 expires in 2007 though it will remain valid until a new agreement enters into force. Negotiations for a comprehensive and durable framework for

the EU-Russia strategic partnership that reflects today's strategic partnership will begin shortly.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Releases MEMO IP/06/678 of 24 May 2006 and PRES/06/157 of 25 May 2006:
<http://europa.eu/rapid>

EVENTS and AWARDS

Political launch event for FP7

The EC has scheduled a political launch event for the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7), which is set to take place in Brussels during the German Presidency of the EU on 7 March 2007. A smaller-scale launch event for National Contact Points (NCPs) is expected to take place earlier on 8-9 February. Heads of State and Government, Ministers and the media will be invited to attend the political launch event in March. It will comprise speeches from senior representatives of the EU and German Presidency as well as the award ceremony for the Descartes prize for collaborative research and science communication.

An exhibition on research in the context of FP7 called 'Today is the Future' will begin at the same time as the political launch event, running from 7-18 March. The aim of the exhibition, which will be open to the public, especially young children and schools, is to showcase the importance of science in today's society, highlighting several successful European projects. As part of the exhibition, a series of public lectures by scientists, presentations on FP7, media briefings and a 'research classroom' providing hands-on demonstrations for children will be taking place.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Brochure on the FP7 launch event available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/conferences/index_en.cfm

Conferences on renewable energy and on energy and environment

With over 1000 participants, the World Renewable Energy Congress (WREC) 2006 on the 19-25 August 2006 in Italy, is the largest world event triggering scientific, technical and economic entrepreneurship among energy stakeholders. Suppliers, consumers, governments, industry, academia and financial institutions must address the crucial matters of energy sources, security of supply, and environmental impacts. The WREC allows these sectors to network by gathering together all stakeholders involved in the supply, distribution, consumption and development of energy sources targeting, sustainable, accessible and economically viable strategies. The conference is supported by the EU Intelligent Energy Europe programme.

A separate conference, the International Conference on Energy and Environment (ICEE) 2006, will be held in Kuala Lumpur from 28-30 August 2006. It offers an opportunity for researchers, engineers and industrial practitioners to share research results and discuss new technologies and issues in energy and environment. The conference aims to build collaboration between scientists and industry and covers: conventional energy technology; power generation and energy utilisation; energy efficiencies and recovery;

renewable energy technology; energy economics, management and policy; environmental issues; plant life assessment and maintenance; power generation, transmission and distribution; combustion technology; and heating, ventilation and air-conditioning.

FURTHER INFORMATION

WREC conference website at:

<http://www.wrec2006.com>

Intelligent Energy Europe website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/index_en.html

ICEE conference website at:

<http://www.medept.com/ICEE2006>

Achieving an inclusive society through ICT

On 11–13 June this year, the Latvian capital of Riga hosted a ministerial conference entitled 'ICT for an inclusive society'. The conference, organised by the Austrian Presidency of EU, was attended by ministers from EU Member State, accession and candidate countries, and other countries. The EC was represented by the Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Ms Viviane Reding. The conference should be seen in the context of the EC's i2010 agenda, where eInclusion is one of the main priorities, and in the light of the growing importance of Information Communication Technologies (ICT).

At the conference, ministers agreed on key priorities and how these should be addressed. Priorities include: addressing the needs of older workers and elderly people; reducing geographical digital divides; enhancing eAccessibility and usability; improving digital literacy; promoting cultural diversity in relation to inclusion; and promoting inclusive eGovernment. Specific targets and time-frames were also agreed upon, which include increasing broadband infrastructure to reach 90 per cent of the EU by 2010, and to put in place actions concerning digital literacy by 2008. It was stressed that goals need to be addressed at all levels, and that Member States have an important role in ensuring that specific targets are met.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC Press Release IP/06/769 of 12 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Further information on the Riga conference can be found at

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/events/ict_riga_2006/index_en.htm

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES

UKRO launches new website

The UK Research Office launched its new website on 5 June. The web address will remain the same, but the website now has updated content, a more easily navigable structure and contains several new sections. There is continuity in the overall structure of the site and new features aid navigation. In the subscriber areas, the content of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) section has been updated and a new Frequently Asked Questions page on Participation has been added. Similarly, a new Frequently Asked Question section on Participation in FP6 has been added. There is also a new

structure for the contracts and finance section under FP6 and a section on non-Framework funding opportunities.

As UKRO is the national contact point for mobility in FP6, the website also has a dedicated section for Marie Curie actions open to non-subscribers. This includes information on the Marie Curie calls still open in FP6, copies of all relevant handbooks, guides for proposers and other documentation, as well as a useful section for researchers on coming to the UK. Similarly, non-subscribers can also get access to the UKRO events page, where details of the latest training courses and conferences are posted.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Web site available at:

<http://www.ukro.ac.uk>

Finnish EU presidency website launched

The website and visual image for Finland's EU Presidency was recently unveiled. The website, in English and French, will be the main communication channel when Finland takes over the EU Presidency from Austria in July 2006. It includes Presidency press releases, declarations, a meeting calendar, news, e-mail and SMS news alert services. Webcasts will also be available, particularly for briefings on the outcome of meetings. The website also has a picture archive of print quality photos of important meetings, Finnish government ministers, and Finland in general. A separate website for the ASEM (Asia-Europe) 6 Summit contains summit news, media events, speeches and conclusions.

An open competition was held to design the logo and look for the Finnish Presidency. The logo draws inspiration from the lines and colours of the Nordic landscape, suggesting the green of a burgeoning forest, the sweep of the horizon and the blue of water shimmering in the sun.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Finnish EU presidency website at:

www.eu2006.fi

The site for the ASEM 6 Summit is at:

www.asem6.fi

Potočnik's new blog includes article on stem cell research

Commissioner for Research, Janez Potočnik, has started a weekly website blog. This has included discussions on women in science, ITER fusion research, science in schools, and a review of the current debate on human embryonic stem cell research. He clearly explained current FP6 regulations for funding human embryonic stem cell research (which the EC propose to continue for FP7): 'The cells can only come from embryos which were already created for in-vitro fertilisation purposes, but not used, and where explicit consent has been given for their use for research. In this way, we avoid creating any sort of pressure for the donation of eggs. The team must justify their use scientifically, and show that other types of stem cells, such as those from umbilical cords, are not appropriate. The project must then undergo an ethical review at European level and in every country where the research will be carried out. Nothing will be financed in a country that does not allow such research nationally. Finally, each project must be approved by a committee of all 25 Member States'. He stressed the importance of having a rigorous regularity system in place and supports stem cell research with a 'responsibility to those who can be helped

by this type of research to pursue the therapies and cures for or even just better understanding of some of the major diseases of our time.'

The European Consortium for Stem Cell Research (EuroStemCell), along with the International Society for Stem Cell Research, have also endorsed the decision of the Italian Minister of Research and Universities and the new Italian government on the removal of Italy's signature from a 'Declaration of Ethics' objecting to the use of EU funds for human embryonic stem cell research.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Janez Potočnik blog is available on his website:

<http://weblog.jrc.ec.europa.eu/page/potocnik>

Open Letter to President Romano Prodi and Ministers of the Italian Republic available on the EuroStemCell website at:

http://www.eurostemcell.org/AboutUs/about_press.htm#lsscr

New portal provides help in finding partners for IST Projects

Funded under the Information Society and Technologies (IST) priority of the EU's Sixth Framework Programme for research, the 'IST World' project helps stimulate the collaboration between researchers, projects and institutions by providing a portal for project and partner searches. It is envisaged that this facility, as it develops, will be particularly useful for those relatively new to the EU research scene.

IST World has partners from 15 different countries, mainly from the new Member States, and is hosted by the German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence. It uses new techniques to improve partner, organisation, expert and project-searches, and allows partners to feed information into the system. Until now, this information has often been difficult to find. The project has funding until 2007 and is looking to secure further funding sources to continue after then.

FURTHER INFORMATION

IST World website available at:

<http://www.ist-world.org>

EC Publishes 'communicating science - a scientists' survival kit'

The EC has published an English version of a 'Survival Kit', originally presented by the Italian journalist Giovanni Carrada to Italy's National Permanent Conference of Deans from the faculties of science and technology. The kit might well be used to help with communication activities of FP6 projects. The kit covers many areas familiar to the debate around 'Science and Society' with sections on 'Leaving the Ivory Tower' as well as planning, communication with the public, using journalists and understanding the media. It is suggested that the greatest secret to successful communication is to cultivate the habit of putting yourself in the audience's shoes, and that communication is about establishing a relationship.

The EC event 'Communicating European Research' held in November 2005, helped to highlight the need for scientists and researchers to communicate effectively with the public through a variety of media. The publication of the 'Survival Kit' highlights that the skills necessary may well need to be improved by many scientists and researchers, and

that communicating science is important for many reasons, not least for science itself. It is also important to explain such principles and offer guidance in clear language.

FURTHER INFORMATION

"Communicating Science - A Scientists' Survival Kit" available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/science-communication/index_en.htm

European cultural co-operation website

The European Cultural Foundation, in collaboration with partners, has developed a new website that acts as an online information and knowledge platform for European cultural co-operation. The LabforCulture website is aimed at researchers and policy makers as well as cultural practitioners. It aims to improve access to other European cultural websites, to offer information on current collaborations, sources of potential funding and studies, and to act as a platform for new debates, exchanges of views and research. The website also includes a section to allow users to submit publications, and add new online resources and studies.

FURTHER INFORMATION

LabforCulture website available at:

<http://www.labforculture.org/en>

New website on Indonesian earthquake emergency

The JRC has just finished the creation of a new emergency website collating information related to the follow-up activities performed by JRC or other international institutions, in the aftermath of the 26 May 2006 earthquake in Indonesia. It includes a map detailing the most recent seismic events in the Indonesia area and provides information in support of situation awareness, assessment and reconstruction. The website will also be a valuable resource for those responsible for monitoring the relief effort following the Indonesian Earthquake.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Available at the JRC website:

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

<http://disasters.jrc.it/Indonesia2006>

CORDIS

CORDIS is the official **C**ommunity **R**esearch and **D**evelopment **I**nformation **S**ervice for science, research and innovation provided by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. The interactive website offers daily news and detailed information on the EU research programmes.

URL: <http://cordis.europa.eu>

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 25 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
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprises
TACIS	The Tacis Programme aims to forge closer economic and political links with the former republics of the Soviet Union and Mongolia (also known as New Independent States (NIS)) http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/tacis/index.htm
Treaty of Amsterdam	The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999. http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/index.html
UUK	Universities UK (formerly the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals) http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk
White Paper	White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. They often follow a Green Paper.

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