

News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| EU POLICY..... | 2 |
| Finnish EU Presidency sets priorities..... | 2 |
| Competitiveness Council reaches political agreement on FP7 and Euratom | 3 |
| European Research Council outline panel structure..... | 3 |
| The future of LIFE | 4 |
| Structural funds approved for 2007-13..... | 4 |
| 'Lead markets' and European Technology Platforms..... | 5 |
| Challenges for European innovation policy..... | 5 |
| The importance of SMEs in Europe | 6 |
| New COST domain structure now operational..... | 7 |
| Alternatives to animal testing sought | 7 |
| Europe's aeronautics industry and FP7 | 8 |
| Political priorities in environmental policy..... | 8 |
| Review of the 6th Environment Action Plan | 9 |
| Consultation on strategy for life sciences and biotechnology 2002-10 | 9 |
| Consultation on hydrogen powered motor vehicles | 10 |
| Online consultation and conference on radio frequency identification | 10 |
| One in two Europeans believe biotechnology improves quality of life | 11 |
| Innovation through regional policy | 11 |
| New proposals for democracy and human rights..... | 12 |
| Progress in Hague Programme on freedom, security and justice..... | 12 |
| RESEARCH NEWS | 13 |
| Mapping science in society research in Europe..... | 13 |
| Three-dimensional recognition of faces | 13 |
| Kaleidoscope solutions for technology enhanced learning | 14 |
| Platon initiative will foster SME participation in EU projects | 14 |
| EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE | 15 |
| Update on next generation of education and training programmes | 15 |
| Next steps for the EIT | 15 |
| European Research Advisory Board publishes its second opinion on EIT | 16 |
| Figel's 'vision for European student mobility in the next decade' | 16 |
| EC supports university reforms in neighbouring countries..... | 17 |
| Lindau meeting of Nobel laureates and young scientists..... | 17 |
| The future of European universities: renaissance or decay? | 18 |
| Eurodata: student mobility in European higher education..... | 18 |
| EXTERNAL COLLABORATION | 19 |
| British Council's new Researcher Exchange Programme..... | 19 |
| Making FRENZ with researchers in New Zealand | 19 |
| European Research Advisory Board on international research collaboration | 20 |
| Monaco Prince creates foundation to support environmental research | 20 |
| EU-Egypt joint science and technology action plan | 21 |
| EU-Japan agree new collaborative research priorities..... | 21 |
| China to support international research in traditional medicine | 22 |
| InterAcademy Council call for action to improve gender balance in science | 22 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Overcoming Africa's brain drain | 23 |
| Increased collaboration with the Western Balkans | 23 |
| EVENTS and AWARDS | 24 |
| EU celebrates birthday with logo competition | 24 |
| UKRO conference helps prepare for FP7 | 24 |
| Where do humanities fit in the Descartes Prize? | 24 |
| Committee of the Regions to hold 'open days' | 25 |
| EC/ESF launch EuroBioFund and EuroBioForum conferences | 25 |
| ICT for bio-medical sciences conference 2006 | 26 |
| European Sustainable Chemistry Technology Platform stakeholder meeting | 27 |
| ESF to hold nanomedicine conference | 27 |
| European forum for arts and humanities: islands and bridges conference | 28 |
| Intelligent transport systems congress | 28 |
| Europe INNOVA conference | 28 |
| NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES | 29 |
| CORDIS website for Finnish EU Presidency launched | 29 |
| Europe on your doorstep | 29 |
| UN funded 'Green TV' launched | 30 |
| New guidance for EC project managers | 30 |
| CORDIS | 31 |
| IGLO Project Search | 31 |
| EUR-LEX (Official Journal C and L) | 31 |
| EUROPA | 31 |
| RAPID | 32 |
| GLOSSARY | 33 |

EU POLICY

Finnish EU Presidency sets priorities

When Finland took over the EU Presidency from Austria in July they announced that two of their priorities would be to boost innovation in the EU and to secure an agreement on Framework Programme Seven (FP7). In July, a background paper on innovation was presented to the informal Competitiveness Council. The overall approach that the Finnish Presidency will take on innovation is based on the Aho Group report entitled 'Creating an Innovative Europe'. The group was chaired by the former Finnish Prime Minister, Esko Aho, who was tasked by the EC to look at European research and innovation performance following the Hampton Court summit under the UK EU Presidency

The key focus for the Finnish Presidency will be on developing demand for innovation by creating new markets. Some of the factors that contribute to achieving this include: the mobility of research resources; closer co-operation between academia and the private sector; public procurements; and raising standards and increasing the efficiency of the market. The formal Competitiveness Council will be taking place on 25 September 2006, and the Finnish Presidency aims to conclude negotiations on FP7 during its Presidency so that the programme is ready for 1 January 2007.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information on the Finnish Presidency priorities at:

http://www.eu2006.fi/the_presidency/en_GB/presidency_agenda

Aho Group website including the report on 'Creating an Innovative Europe':

http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/action/2006_ahogroup_en.htm

Competitiveness Council reaches political agreement on FP7 and Euratom

On 24 July, an extraordinary meeting of the Competitiveness Council reached a political agreement on FP7 and Euratom. During the discussions, there were two particularly contentious issues: research ethics (in FP7), and research on new nuclear fission reactor technologies (in Euratom). In the end, the Council voted as Parliament did in June this year, for a continuation of the FP6 ethical rules. This means that FP7 will be able to fund stem cell research, subject to strict ethical principles, regulations and methods. The dispute concerning nuclear research has also been solved to the satisfaction of all Member States – the EU's Joint Research Centre's (JRC) role in the Generation IV International Forum will be limited to cover safety and safeguard aspects of innovative fuel cycles.

In a press conference after the meeting, Research Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, said there had been much goodwill in the discussions. The European Council's Common Position on FP7 will be forwarded to the EP for its second reading in early autumn. This is certainly a positive step to the completion of the FP7 political decision-making process in time for a 1 January 2007 start.

The EP's Committee for Industry, Energy and Research (ITRE) has also almost completed its vote on the Commission's proposals for the 'Rules of Participation' for FP7. The Committee's final vote is likely to take place in September, with a vote in the EP plenary session in September or October to complete Parliament's first reading

FURTHER INFORMATION

Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council at:

http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/en_GB/news_and_documents

Video of the Press Conference after the extraordinary Competitiveness Council at:

http://www.eu2006.fi/media_services/webcasts/en_GB/archive_july

European Research Council outline panel structure

The Scientific Council (ScC) of the European Research Council (ERC) has published a new strategy note outlining the ERC peer review panel structure to be used for the starting grants. The ScC has proposed 20 panels, divided into three broad categories: the social sciences and humanities, SH, (five panels); the physical sciences and engineering, PE, (eight panels); and the life science panels, LS, (seven panels). The ScC has stressed that panels should be viewed in a 'flexible and inclusive manner, and allowing for cross-panel and interdisciplinary proposals'. Panels will also be adapted to take account of experiences during the evaluation process.

The 20 panels are as follows: SH1 - individuals and organisations; SH2 - institutions, behaviour, values and beliefs; SH3 - the human mind and its complexity; SH4 - cultures and cultural diversity; SH5 - the study of the past and of cultural artefacts; PE1 - mathematical foundations; PE2 - fundamental constituents of matter; PE3 - structures and reactions; PE4 - material sciences and methods; PE5 - information and communication; PE6 - engineering sciences; PE7 - universe sciences; PE8 - earth system science; LS1 - molecular, cellular and developmental biology; LS2 - genetics, genomics, bioinformatics

and systems biology; LS3 - organismic physiology, including infection and immunity; LS4 - neurosciences; LS5 - evolutionary, population and environmental biology; LS6 - applied medical and health sciences; LS7 - applied biology and bioengineering, including agricultural sciences and biotechnology.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More details on exactly what the 20 ERC peer review panels will cover is available in the 'strategy note' at:

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

ERC Scientific Council press release is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/erc/index_en.cfm?p=4_statements

The future of LIFE

The Environment Council recently reached a common position on the new LIFE+ financial instrument for the environment, which will run from 2007-13. This will replace a broad range of existing environmental programmes/instruments, creating a single simplified framework. It replaces the current LIFE programme, the Forest Focus and Urban programmes, DG Environment's funding programme for environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and a general fund for policy development and implementation. Over 2007-13, the budget for LIFE+ is expected to be €2.1 billion, with 40 per cent of this reserved for the 'nature and biodiversity' section. LIFE+ will address all four priority areas (climate change, nature and biodiversity, health and quality of life, natural resources and waste) and the seven thematic strategies of the Sixth Environment Action Programme (2002-2012). LIFE+ itself will have three strands: LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity; LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance; and LIFE+ Information and Communication.

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said 'LIFE+ will become a single, modern and flexible instrument for funding and programming many EU environmental activities. The programme's focus on concrete measures will contribute to improving Europe's environment. In addition, strengthening networking, communication and environmental governance will help ensure that good practice is shared throughout Europe and feeds into policy making.' He added that the proportion of EU funding foreseen for nature and biodiversity is broadly unchanged from the current LIFE programme.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Releases MEMO/06/250 of 26 June 2006, IP/06/856 of 27 June 2006 at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Website about the future of the LIFE programme at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/futureoflife.htm>

LIFE newsletter website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news>

The Sixth Environment Action Programme of the European Community 2002-2012:

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

Structural funds approved for 2007-13

The EU Structural Funds package for 2007-13 has been approved by the EP's Regional Development Committee. The programme is expected to come into force on 1 January 2007 with a budget of €308 billion, which equates to 36 per cent of the EU's total budget. The Structural Funds are one of the EU's main instruments for removing economic

disparities between Europe's regions. They are there to develop the economy, infrastructure and workforce of European regions.

The Structural Funds package principally comprises of: the Convergence and Cohesion Funds, which are the largest funds and are open to European regions with a GDP of below 75 per cent of the EU average; the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which is mainly used for infrastructure projects; the European Social Fund (ESF), which is used to train and up-skill the workforce and get the unemployed back into work; and the new European Territorial Co-operation fund, which will allow for more inter-regional, transnational and cross-border co-operation.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://europa.eu/pol/reg/index_en.htm

'Lead markets' and European Technology Platforms

The fourth 'seminar with industrial leaders of Technology Platforms and Mirror Group representatives' brought together senior EC officials and European Technology Platform (ETP) representatives to explore the potential for 'lead markets' and the role of ETPs. High on the agenda was just how changes to framework conditions (regulation, standardisation, public procurement, intellectual property) could be made to improve the development and take-up of new technologies in Europe. ETPs could play key roles in identifying major bottlenecks and obstacles to innovation.

Isi Saragossi, Director of 'investment in research and links with other policies' in DG Research, described 'lead markets' as areas that have the greatest potential for adding value to the European economy. Lead markets are: driven by innovation, requiring stronger mobilisation of public and private research efforts; markets with a high growth potential in Europe and globally; markets nurturing future world-leading products and companies; and markets where public authorities have a critical role as regulator, customer, and/or facilitator. The EC suggested potential actions aimed at: stimulating and facilitating timely development of standards by stakeholders; using public procurement in markets where public authorities can act as launching customers of innovative solutions; developing an anticipatory approach to product market regulation; and improving and optimising Intellectual Property Right (IPR) regimes. Research Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, called for help from stakeholders, such as ETPs, to anticipate future market needs and to determine what needs to be done to realise lead markets in key areas.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/435 of 5 July 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Saragossi presentation, participants list and summary report available at:

http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/seminar_en.html

Challenges for European innovation policy

The challenges for European innovation policy were recently discussed by ministers, including Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for science and research, at the informal Competitiveness Council. Europe lags behind its main competitors in innovation - the EU invests about a third less in research than the US, and the EU/US innovation gap is not narrowing. Emerging countries, such as China and India, are also rapidly becoming world-class centres of research and innovation. To achieve sustainable global competitiveness,

the EU must become a vibrant knowledge economy. Therefore, the renewed Lisbon partnership for growth and jobs singled out knowledge and innovation for growth as a priority area for action.

In October 2005, the EC integrated innovation/research action plan called for major upgrades for research and innovation conditions in Europe. This includes ambitious initiatives to promote innovation and research, such as: redeployment of state aid; improved efficiency of intellectual property protection; mobilisation of additional funds for research; creation of innovation poles; and improving university-industry partnerships. This aims to stimulate innovation and research, so all firms - no matter what size - can capitalise on their entrepreneurial flair and know-how. Current EC support mechanisms include the Framework Programmes, European Structural Funds, access to finance for SMEs, Innovation Relay Centres and the Innovating Regions in Europe network. However, the Commission still wants to do more.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release MEMO/06/270 of 7 July 2006 (includes a link to the EC integrated innovation/research action plan) available at:

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

The importance of SMEs in Europe

Several events and recent communications from the EC have shown that it will place a continued emphasis on the importance of SMEs in Europe over the coming years. For example, the EC-hosted 'Europe is good for SMEs, SMEs are good for Europe' event was held recently to discuss what had been done and what still needed to be done to help European SMEs thrive. The EC's two priorities in relation to SMEs are cutting the cost of administration and reducing bureaucracy. At the same time, the new €3.6 billion Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), the EU's main instrument for supporting SMEs financially, is being developed ready for 2007. It is hoped that 400,000 European SMEs will benefit from this fund.

The importance of providing effective financial assistance to European SMEs can not be underestimated. A recent Eurobarometer poll showed that SMEs find it more difficult to get a loan now than in the past. Furthermore, studies have shown that the risk capital market in Europe is still too small. Therefore, improving SME access to finance could make a key contribution to economic growth in the EU. The EC has responded by setting the objective of tripling the early-stage investment in the EU from €2 billion to €6 billion by 2013. At the same time, the key focus of the forthcoming Finnish Presidency will be innovation, meaning that it will remain high on the agenda from 1 July 2006 onwards. Günther Verheugen, the European Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, indicated that an EC communication would be issued later in the year with the aim of informing SMEs of the opportunities for them in all EU funding programmes.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

For further information on the EU's SME activities:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/smes/index_en.htm

For more information on the new CIP programme:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm

New COST domain structure now operational

COST is an intergovernmental European framework for international co-operation between nationally founded research activities created in 1971. It was governed by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and supported by the EU Framework Programme. COST supports the co-ordination of scientific networks (actions) and dissemination of their results, thus enabling scientists to collaborate in a wide spectrum of activities in research and technology. COST will continue to receive financial support under the Seventh Framework Programme with a budget of € 280 million.

The COST CSO took two major decisions to advance the reform process of COST during its 163rd meeting on 23-24 November 2005 and these are now operational. The scientific and technical 'domains' in COST have been restructured with 9 'domain committees' instead of the former 12 'technical committees'. The COST committees will continue to focus on specific measures to stimulate a policy enabling more involvement of young researchers within existing COST Actions. 23 new COST actions have been launched in the areas of: information and communication technologies; transport and urban development; materials, physical and nanosciences; earth systems science and environmental management; food and agriculture; chemistry and molecular sciences and technologies; and forests, their products and services.

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.cost.esf.org>

Alternatives to animal testing sought

The 'European partnership on alternative approaches to animal testing' launched its first 'action programme' to accelerate research to enable Europe to make significant progress in refining, reducing and replacing animal use (the '3Rs') in the areas of regulatory testing. It will apply advanced methodologies from biosciences and medicine to develop novel approaches to assessing safety. The partnership was established in 2005 when the EC and seven industrial trade associations agreed on a '3Rs Declaration'. Since then, many major companies have endorsed the declaration and joined the partnership, whose underlying principle is a voluntary, bilateral and co-operative relationship between the EC and industry.

The action programme includes 21 key activities over five years ranging from collating best practice across industry sectors, to the evaluation of the regulatory drivers for animal testing, and ultimately the validation and acceptance of alternative approaches to safety testing. It is divided into five interlinked themes, to: evaluate the regulatory drivers for animal use; map and evaluate past and current 3R activities; prioritise and implement research base on 3Rs; validate new and alternative test methods and strategies; and to identify, disseminate and implement 3R best practice across the EU. The partnership will report on the implementation and impact of the action programme in December 2006. The EC has also recently launched an internet consultation of citizens and experts to hear their views on how to increase the welfare of animals used in experiments which is open until 18 August 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing website, including the 3R's Declaration and 3R's Action Programme at:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/epaa/index_en.htm

EC Consultation on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes at:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/ia_info_en.htm
EC Press Releases IP/06/798 of 16 June 2006 and SPEECH/06/814 of 21 June 2006 at:
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid>

Europe's aeronautics industry and FP7

Aerospace is likely to play a major role in the Seventh Framework Programme with the EU Commissioner for Research, Janez Potočnik, recently signalling the importance of this sector to Europe, its industry and citizens. A total of €4.2 billion has been earmarked for research into transport, which includes aeronautics, in FP7. The importance of the sector to Europe cannot be underestimated; a billion passengers are transported by plane in Europe each year and demand is set to rise.

Much of the future policy direction of the research agenda is set by the Advisory Council for Aeronautical Research in Europe (ACARE), which was the first active European Technology Platform launched in 2001. ACARE's list of priorities for research in this field is as follows: 'green air transport' and the aim to reduce emissions; enabling the industry to cope with increased demand; improving the cost efficiency of the sector; improving time efficiency of aircraft; increasing consumer satisfaction; reducing the number of accidents by five-fold; and assessing the future of air transport.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

For more information on European aeronautics research:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/aeronautics/index_en.html

For more information on ACARE and their Strategic Research Agenda:

<http://www.acare4europe.org>

Political priorities in environmental policy

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas recently gave a speech to the Environment Committee at the EP. He summarised achievements over the last year: the budget agreement for the next 7 years, including increased amounts dedicated to the protection of nature; the new EU regulatory framework for the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of CHemicals (REACH); the development of energy policy; the 7th Framework Programme for Research; and the adoption of the revised 'Strategy for Sustainable Development' by the European Council in June.

Dimas then presented the EC's Annual Policy Statement for 2007, highlighting that strategic policies, as set out in the 6th Environment Action Plan, remain the same: tackling climate change; stopping biodiversity loss; protecting human health; and the sustainable use of natural resources. He was pleased that climate change, the most urgent priority, was at the top of the international political agenda. He again noted that the EU is keen to include aviation emissions into the Emissions Trading Scheme. Later this year he also plans to propose that the EC sets up a 'Global Renewable Energy Fund of Funds' to encourage the deployment of renewable energy in developing countries. He finished by emphasising how EU environmental policies directly benefit citizens.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/393 of 20 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

More details on REACH at:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach_intro.htm

More details on the revised EU strategy for sustainable development at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd>

6th Environment Action plan available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm>

Review of the 6th Environment Action Plan

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas recently spoke at the meeting of the Environment Council about the review of the 6th Environment Action Plan. He highlighted the impressive results achieved in Europe over the last 30 years. However, it is clear that Europe is still very far from development that is anywhere near sustainable. He said 'for all the EU's efforts on climate change, the global emission of greenhouse gasses is accelerating. Air pollution kills hundreds of thousands of Europeans every year. Many of Europe's species and habitats are under threat. If we are to even begin addressing these issues then we will need to increase our levels of ambition.'

Dimas continued, 'We will need to be entirely clear about the scale and the nature of the environmental challenges that we are facing.' The EC's review of the 6th Environment Action Programme will start with a scientific assessment of the current situation for the priority areas of climate change, biodiversity, health and resources. The Commissioner said that if we are serious, we will need to step up our levels of ambition, as well as improve the way in which we make environmental policy. Dimas also congratulated the current Finnish EU Presidency for their level of ambition in the environmental area.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/461 of 15 July 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

6th Environment Action plan available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm>

Consultation on strategy for life sciences and biotechnology 2002-10

The EC is conducting a mid-term review of the 'European Strategy on Life Sciences and Biotechnology 2002-2010'. As part of this review, they have launched a consultation, open until the end of September, inviting comments assessing the implementation and the way forward of the 30 actions included in the 2002 Life Sciences and Biotechnology Strategy Action Plan. If needed, workshops may also be organised.. The views expressed by respondents will be analysed by the EC, published on their website, and will provide an important input to the mid-term review of the Life Sciences and Biotechnology Strategy.

In addition, the EC are also carrying out an independent study to provide a comprehensive assessment and cost-benefit analysis of the consequences, opportunities and challenges that applications of modern biotechnology present for Europe (in terms of economic, social and environmental aspects). This independent study will provide valuable factual elements for the mid-term review, and should be finalised by the EC's Joint Research Centre in April 2007. Finally, the EC is also preparing a report on the competitiveness of the European industrial and research sectors in the field of biotechnology, which will also be an important contribution to the review.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The consultation on the mid-term review of the life-science and biotechnology strategy 2002-2010 is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/biotechnology/index_en.htm

Consultation on hydrogen powered motor vehicles

The EC has launched a public consultation on the future technological development and manufacturing of hydrogen powered motor vehicles. Stakeholders are invited to provide comments on the EC's preliminary draft proposal for a regulation on hydrogen powered motor vehicles, to ensure that hydrogen storage systems can operate safely in vehicles. Hydrogen for transport is most commonly stored in gas cylinders, known as hydrogen fuel cells. These hydrogen fuel cells, which do not produce any carbon emissions, are considered as viable alternatives to diesel and petrol engines, so car manufacturers are investing heavily in developing hydrogen propulsion technologies and are keen to commercialise these vehicles.

However, more research is needed into both the environmental and safety aspects of hydrogen fuel cell technology. Research is needed to ensure that the production of the hydrogen for the fuel cells does not itself create lots of pollution which would offset its low carbon emissions – electricity could be created from renewable energy then used to produce hydrogen. Hydrogen is also highly flammable and can explode when mixed with oxygen and ignited. Given these risks, the EC's draft proposal outlines requirements for the manufacturing of hydrogen powered vehicles and covers the installation of hydrogen components or systems in hydrogen powered vehicles.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/984 of 13 July 2006 at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Preliminary draft for regulation on hydrogen powered motor vehicles and consultation at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/automotive/pagesbackground/hydrogen/consultation/call.htm>

The European Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technology Platform

<http://www.hfpeurope.org>

Online consultation and conference on radio frequency identification

Radio frequency identification (RFID) tags allow data to be transmitted to a reader, which processes the data. While RFIDs have existed for more than 50 years, technological advances have led to increased use over the last few years. This has resulted in increased privacy concerns related to the use of RFID. Therefore, the EC has launched an online stakeholder consultation into the use of radio frequency identification, which closes on 17 September 2006. The consultation aims at establishing consent on the need to create a 'policy environment' encouraging investment into RFID, whilst safeguarding individual rights.

This consultation follows on from previous workshops on RFID which addressed a range of issues, including: standards and interoperability; international compatibility; radio spectrum allocation; and the future of RFID technology. The workshops were attended by key stakeholders, high-level experts and decision-makers from across the world. The outcome of the workshops and the online consultation will be presented at a final conference in October 2006, and will feed into a planned EC communication to the EP and to the European Council, scheduled for December this year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

RFID Consultation website available at:

<http://www.rfidconsultation.eu>

One in two Europeans believe biotechnology improves quality of life

At a recent workshop, the results of a survey entitled 'Europeans and Biotechnology in 2005' published by Eurobarometer were presented. It showed an increase in public confidence about biotechnology. 52 per cent of participants believe that biotechnology will improve their quality of life. 25,000 respondents from across the EU answered questions on stem cell research, genetically modified food, nanotechnologies and the role of the public and scientists in governance. After a drop in public confidence about biotechnology in the 1990s, this survey finds a significant shift towards greater optimism about the benefits of technology, including biotechnology, to society.

Most Europeans are in favour of medical applications of biotechnology when there are clear benefits for human health. Industrial technologies, such as bio-fuels, bio-plastics (plastics manufactured from crop plants) and biopharming (the use of genetically modified plants in the production of medicines and pharmaceutical products) for pharmaceuticals were also widely supported. However, the public is still mostly sceptical about agricultural biotechnology, and will continue to be so unless new crops and products are seen to have consumer benefits. This survey is the latest in a series of regular surveys on attitudes to biotechnology undertaken since 1991, and contributes to informing the public and policy debates.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/799 of 19 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

The survey, workshop full report and executive summary are available at:

<http://www.ec.europa.eu/research/press/2006/pr1906en.cfm>

Innovation through regional policy

The recent 'Regions for Economic Change - Innovating through EU Regional Policy' conference, the first of a series, examined best practice strategies (particularly in less favoured regions) in knowledge transfer, innovation and cluster development, addressing: creating the right environment for innovation; strengthening collaboration between public and private stakeholders; and establishing partnerships and maximising synergies. It included sharing best practice from previous 'Regions of Knowledge' projects.

Danuta Hübner, Regional Policy Commissioner, highlighted how positive local/regional actions make a difference to the whole of Europe. Her clear message was that we should experiment with Structural Funds and not invest only in tried and tested measures, but should always allocate some resources to test new ideas and approaches. Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, supported this, whilst José Barroso, EC President, encouraged the development of robust regional strategies. Günter Verheugen, EC Vice President, explained that Europe cannot compete on lower wages or standards of employment, so should aim, through innovation, to 'be the best'.

The EC also launched a progress report on 'The Growth and Jobs Strategy and the Reform of European Cohesion Policy', which provides an update on the trends in, and disparities between, the Member States and regions. It outlines key policy framework developments such as cohesion policy budget for 2007-2013.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Presentations, keynote speeches, and further information on regional policy at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/innovating_june06/programme_en.cfm

A full conference report will follow by the end of the summer.

The EC Communication on COM (2006) 281 is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/secretariat_general/regdoc/recherche.cfm?CL=en

New proposals for democracy and human rights

A new EC instrument is set to replace the existing European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which funded activities in third world countries to promote human rights, democracy and conflict prevention, and finishes at the end of 2006. The proposed new instrument will also have the specific mission to assist in meeting the EU policy objectives of promoting human rights and democracy in external relations.

It will aim at: enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms where they are most at risk and providing support and solidarity to victims of repression and abuse; strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, developing political participation and representation, and supporting conflict prevention; supporting the international framework for the protection of human rights, the rule of law and the promotion of democracy; and building confidence in democratic electoral processes through further development of electoral observation and assistance. Learning from past experiences, there will be a higher degree of flexibility in this proposal, so the EU can respond more rapidly to changing situations in human rights and democracy processes. Internal EC reforms will also ensure smoother, simpler delivery procedures. If approved, the instrument should start in 2007.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EU human rights and democratisation policy website available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/human_rights/intro

EC proposal for the new instrument at:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0354en01.pdf

Progress in Hague Programme on freedom, security and justice

The EC recently presented its assessment of the Hague Programme on freedom, justice and security. Just how important progress on the Hague Programme is to EU citizens is highlighted by the policies it covers, namely security, terrorism, organised crime and management of migration flows. The EC adopted four papers, which will contribute to the informal meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in September: a political assessment of recent progress identifying areas requiring impetus and of the way forward on policy development and decision-making; taking stock of progress made and assessment of the level of implementation at EU and national level; a mechanism for the future evaluation of results; and a concrete proposal to provide more effective judicial co-operation.

Key points identified include a lack of progress by Member States in adopting legislation in areas of police and judicial co-operation - terrorism in particular. The decision-making process is also singled out as being slow and cumbersome. The EC identified areas needing further effort and attention, and proposed action before the Hague Programme expires in 2009 on: fundamental rights and citizenship; development of a second phase of asylum; migration management; integrated management of external frontiers and interoperability of information systems; mutual recognition (in civil and criminal matters); access to information needed to combat terrorism and organised crime; and the future of Europol.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release MEMO/06/254 of 28 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

The first report on the Hague Programme is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/information_dossiers/the_hague_2006/index_en.htm

RESEARCH NEWS

Mapping science in society research in Europe

A preliminary report of a Science in Society (SiS) mapping exercise of major trends in and main institutions across the EU Member States, as well as Switzerland and Norway, is now available. This report covers the following five sub-fields within Science in Society: science and technology studies, including history and philosophy of science; ethics and science; gender and science; science education; and science communication. The report was produced by Ulrika Felt, University of Vienna, and Sally Wyatt, University of Amsterdam, on behalf of the EC.

The report finds that while Science in Society is a dynamic and growing research field within Europe, it is still very fragmented. Some countries have well-established national programmes in place, which focus on local needs, while others are more concerned with EU programmes. One major challenge for future research into SiS is the increasingly global nature of scientific and technological developments, and how these affect societies and people in a local way. It appears essential that SiS research be open to actors from many different fields and take advantage of broader and different forms of expertise.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Mapping Science in Society Research in Europe report available at:

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

Three-dimensional recognition of faces

With technological advances, digital facial and fingerprint images will be implemented into European passports in the future. This, in turn, could eventually lead biometric-enabled support border controls. At present, 2D face recognition technology is widely used, but has serious shortcomings. 2D recognition is sensitive to a range of disturbance factors, and it has no mechanisms for detecting 'alive-ness'.

The 3D Face project, funded through the information society technologies (IST) priority in the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) builds on existing 2D face recognition technologies, and applies these in secure environments. '3D Face' consists of eleven partners from across Europe, and includes both industrial partners and universities. The aim of the project is to take a further step towards fake-resistant detectors, and to improve biometric performance. The project meets both of the preconditions for self-service border control, through its focus on cost savings and increased reliability. The project also focuses on enabling privacy protection of 3D biometric templates. The 3D Face project started in April 2006 and will receive funding from the EC for three years.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Available from the project website at:

<http://www.3dface.org/home/welcome>

Kaleidoscope solutions for technology enhanced learning

Technology enhanced learning (TEL) is found at all levels of modern education, from pre-school to adulthood. However, Europe needs to ensure that this technology does what it says - enhances education – which is a huge challenge, made more problematic by linguistic and cultural diversity across the continent. Although research underpins advances, policy makers recognise that Europe needs a more transparent research agenda - we need to know exactly what researchers are addressing and how this benefits society and education.

This is tackled by the 'Kaleidoscope' Network of Excellence, funded under FP6. Over 1000 researchers from 24 different European countries and from different disciplines (computer, social and education scientists) are collaborating and contributing to how people learn. The real potential of European TEL research can be identified by providing researchers with funds to work and learn from one another. Stakeholders, including teachers, lecturers, policy makers and industry are also involved in the project. Previously fragmented communities and research findings are collated to shape a future TEL research agenda. The Kaleidoscope scientific manager aims 'to organise the fight against reinventing the wheel and developing technologies that are all-but-forgotten soon after their development by PhD students or projects. A stable EC policy would be a real incentive to make this effort.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

Kaleidoscope project website available at:

<http://www.noe-kaleidoscope.org>

Platon initiative will foster SME participation in EU projects

The PLATON project, which was funded by the EC as an Economic and Technological Intelligence (ETI) action, aims at 'supporting SME's long-term competitiveness through socio-economic research'. While SMEs are striving to survive in an increasingly global marketplace, socio-economic studies and research can help them identify new business opportunities and avoid threats that affect their business environment. The PLATON project is the only EU-funded project which aims to support SMEs in responding better and proactively to their changing global macro-environment by taking advantage of prominent European research results, or through participation in research projects in the areas of Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities. PLANTON's free service is targeted at SME groups, highly innovative SMEs and socio-economic research organisations.

The initiative will hold 'info days', training sessions, and will create collaboration profiles to support the search for possible projects and partners. SMEs and their representatives are meant to actively participate in developments in socio-economic research by identifying their interests in research action plans and integrating relevant social and economic changes into their long-term business strategies. Events will take place primarily in six EU countries: Greece, Italy, Estonia, Poland, Germany and the UK.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLATON project website at:

<http://www.platonproject.net>

SME participation/Economic and Technological Intelligence (ETI) action website at:

http://sme.cordis.lu/economic/eti_projects.cfm

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

Update on next generation of education and training programmes

The EC has published its modified proposal for the 'Lifelong Learning Programme', which, if agreed by the European Council and EP, should start in January 2007. The budget will be €6.97 billion, compared to the €13.6 billion requested in the original proposal. This significantly reduced budget has impacted on the feasibility of funding new aspects of the Lifelong Learning Programme except: mobility of upper-secondary students in the Comenius sub-programme (which will be launched on a small scale); assistantships and adult learner mobility actions in Grundtvig; and the introduction of 'Comenius-Regio', proposed by the EP to reinforce cross-border mobility in frontier regions (again launched on a small scale).

The other new activities included in the original proposal (such as mobility grants for EU students on Erasmus-Mundus Courses) still remain, but will now only be pursued before 2013 if funds become available, rather than definitive actions. Other changes to the original proposal include; an increase in the average Erasmus mobility grant from €150 to €200; the reintroduction of a programme committee to approve projects (over €1 million); introducing the 'European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education' in the list of institutions able to receive grants. There has also been a realignment of the targets with new budget for Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo de Vinci and Grundtvig.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The modified EC proposal, COM(2006) 236 final, is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/secretariat_general/regdoc/recherche.cfm?CL=en

Next steps for the EIT

At the last European Council meeting, Heads of State asked the EC to submit a formal proposal on the establishment of a European Institute of Technology (EIT), to be presented in the autumn following consultation with the European Research Council, Member States and stakeholders. The European Council's statement also gives the EC the go-ahead to pursue their work on an impact assessment of an EIT. The legislation establishing an EIT could be drafted over the coming months with a view to presenting the document to the European Council held in December 2006.

The Council's conclusions build on the recent EC Communication entitled 'The European Institute of Technology: further steps towards its creation', which outlined some of the questions that need to be worked through. These include, amongst others, identifying the relevant legal basis of the Treaty under which the EIT could be established, and a final decision on the institution's name (European Technology Institute or European Institute of Technology are two being considered).

FURTHER INFORMATION

European Council Preliminary Conclusions June 2006:

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

EC website on the EIT and recent communication available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eit/index_en.html

European Research Advisory Board publishes its second opinion on EIT

The European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) has published its second opinion on the EC proposal for a European Institute of Technology (EIT). EURAB is now more supportive of the EIT and acknowledged all the EC's work since its first communication on the EIT last year.

EURAB agrees with the proposed structure of the EIT, although they suggest that the 'Knowledge Communities' would be better named 'Innovation Communities' to better reflect their role. EURAB agrees with analysis of the European 'innovation gap' problems, especially the concerns about deficiencies in the European higher education system. They see the EIT as a good opportunity to fill a hole in the European portfolio (addressing the 'innovation gap') and an attempt to create a Europe that is competitive and attractive worldwide. However, they think that the EIT should not fulfil this role alone, and outlined some other issues that impact on the innovation gap such as taxation systems, and venture capital availability in Europe. For the EIT to succeed, EURAB believes its clear mission should be to act as the cement connecting innovation with higher education and research. Therefore, the EIT must look at other EU-wide initiatives, such Technology Platforms, Joint Technology Initiatives, current 'mini-EITs' that already exist between the academic sector and industry, and to national innovation agencies for advice.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EURAB first and second opinion on the EIT available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/eurab>

Figel's 'vision for European student mobility in the next decade'

The UK Erasmus Student Committee recently held a conference in the EP in Brussels to address the challenge of declining numbers of UK students taking advantage of the Erasmus scheme and learn from the success of Erasmus in other countries. During the conference, Jan Figel, Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, presented his 'Vision for European Student Mobility in the Next Decade'.

He explained the history of the Erasmus programme, from the first students in 1987 to the landmark one millionth student in October 2002. The number of students participating in 2004/5 was over 144,000 and it is estimated that the three million target will be met by 2012, meaning that Erasmus student mobility will need to exceed 250,000 in that year. The problem is that within the overall growth seen, there are some patterns that need to

be addressed, in particular (based on 2004/5 figures): in the UK and Ireland, there were more than twice as many incoming as outgoing students; Spain is the most popular destination with more incoming than outgoing students; and finally in Eastern Europe the number of incoming students remains a fraction of the outgoing students. Figel' identified the student grant level as an issue, and stated that this will be increased this year, and within the new Lifelong Learning Programme. There are still issues with students not receiving full recognition of their period abroad, but there are signs that this is improving, especially with the work of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Bologna Process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/398 of 22 June 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Commissioner Figel' website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/figel/index_en.htm

EC supports university reforms in neighbouring countries

The EC has approved 110 new university co-operation projects and 61 structural measures under the Tempus programme in 2006. This will include support for a broad range of academic disciplines, from engineering to European studies, and represent a Community contribution of a €53.5 million in total. Three other Tempus calls for proposals will be organised before the end of the year: in October for structural and complementary measures as well as for individual mobility grants; and in December for joint European projects.

Tempus is the EU's programme for supporting the modernisation of higher education and enhancing understanding between cultures in 27 countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region. The projects fall into three categories. The first category is 'Joint European Projects'. These are innovative multilateral initiatives which involve at least one university from a partner country, one university in an EU Member State and one academic or non-academic consortium member in a different EU state. The second category, 'Structural and Complementary Projects' are short-term interventions designed to support national higher education reforms and strategic framework development. Finally, 'Individual Mobility Grants' help staff in participating partner countries to take part in training and conferences abroad, and to assist European teachers deliver training courses in partner countries, within the context of Tempus' objectives.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

Lindau meeting of Nobel laureates and young scientists

The Lindau scheme, which began in the 1950s in Germany, is an international scheme allowing Nobel Laureates to meet for week-long workshops with young researchers from all over the world. This year's meeting was attended by 23 Nobel Laureates and 517 researchers of 53 different nationalities, including some EU Marie Curie fellows. At the meeting the Commissioner for research, Janez Potočnik, spoke about the Framework Programmes, and how policy makers at European and National level are aiming to increase scientific excellence. He stressed the need for action, noting that there has been a decline in Nobel Prizes granted to research 'made in Europe'. Potočnik also outlined the

political and economic background behind Europe's drive for a knowledge-based economy and society.

On FP7, Potočník emphasised plans for a new European Research Council (ERC), describing it as 'probably the most exciting new development in the European Research landscape'. He also talked about proposals for the European Institute of Technology (EIT), the importance of Marie Curie fellowships and the drive for a European-wide policy on human resources in research. He added that he saw Member States' and research stakeholders' implementation of the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for their Recruitment' as essential in working towards a single European labour market for researchers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release SPEECH/06/414 of 26 June 2006 at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Lindau Meetings website available at:

<http://www.lindau-nobel.de>

The future of European universities: renaissance or decay?

The Centre for European Reform has recently published a pamphlet entitled 'the future of European universities: renaissance or decay?' written by Richard Lambert and Nick Butler. It argues that in a society where knowledge is critical in shaping economic life, universities have a fundamental role to play. However, it warns that in Europe, the institutions that should be the main sources of knowledge are failing to meet the challenge. The pamphlet highlights how amongst the world's top ten universities, only two are in the EU. Europe's higher education institutions are slow-moving and under-funded. If Europe wants to stop falling behind and stem the 'brain drain' to the US it must act now. It needs to devote more resources to research, improve its teaching record, build centres of excellence, strengthen links between education and business and give universities more autonomy.

The pamphlet's Brussels launch was hosted by the British Council with a keynote speech by Jan Figel' the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Multilingualism. He supported many of the arguments and felt they reflected recent EC communications including the 'delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation'.

Further information

<http://www.cer.org.uk>

Eurodata: student mobility in European higher education

The 200-page publication presents a detailed body of data on student mobility into and out of 32 European countries. The book recognises the increase in political importance of international student mobility, and the subsequent need for comprehensive, up-to-date, and reliable information on this issue. However, they argue that the available data on international student mobility has been deficient in many ways, in particular as the data often focuses on foreign students, rather than international mobility. In addition to presenting and analysing mobility data, the book identifies the major weaknesses which still exist in international data compilation, and makes recommendations for their improvement in the future.

The Academic Co-operation Association (ACA), which wrote the publication, is an independent European organisation dedicated to the management, analysis and improvement of education and training co-operation within Europe and between Europe and other parts of the world. Its main focus is on higher education, but it also covers other education sectors, and training.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EURODATA can be ordered from the publishers, Lemmens Verlag, at:

<http://www.lemmens.de/verlag/buecher.html>

For further information on ACA at:

http://www.aca-secretariat.be/05publications/aca_papers.htm

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

British Council's new Researcher Exchange Programme

The British Council is announcing a first call for proposals under a new initiative aimed at supporting new links between early stage researchers in the UK and in other countries. The Researcher Exchange Programme (RXP) is a £500,000 initiative that provides individual researchers with awards covering travel and subsistence costs, and some consumables costs, needed to develop new scientific collaborations and contacts through exchange visits of between one week and three months' duration.

The RXP aims to encourage mobility and internationalism among early stage researchers for the exchange of information, ideas and knowledge, and for relationship-building. The research link can be in any area of science, engineering and technology, including social sciences and humanities. The term 'early stage' refers to researchers at the beginning of their research careers, with less than ten years active research experience since the completion of a doctoral degree, or those in the last year of their PhD. The maximum award that can be applied for is £5,000. Please note that more than one researcher from the same sending or receiving research group can apply for an award, but each must submit a separate application.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Full details and an online application form are available at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/science-rxp>

Making FRENZ with researchers in New Zealand

The New Zealand Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST) and the EC recently launched a new organisation to help researchers from Europe and New Zealand co-operate. The platform is co-funded by MoRST and the EC via the EU Centres Network project. The platform, which is called FRENZ (Facilitate Research cooperation between Europe and New Zealand), aims at increasing awareness of the opportunities for collaboration with New Zealand in the context of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). FRENZ will provide researchers from New Zealand with information, guidance and support through a range of activities, including information events and regular news updates. At the launch event held in Brussels, the Director of FRENZ, Ms Carole Glynn,

highlighted New Zealand's increased participation in the European Framework Programmes, and the need to ensure that researchers are aware of the funding opportunities in FP7. New Zealand is particularly keen to increase co-operation in the thematic priorities under FP7, and in the mobility programme.

New Zealand also recently stepped up international research collaboration in another area, by becoming the 12th member of the Human Frontier Science Programme Organisation (HFSP). Researchers from New Zealand will be able to participate in the upcoming fellowship competition and in the next round of grant applications.

FURTHER INFORMATION

On the FRENZ network can be found at:

<http://www.frenz.org.nz>

On the Human Frontier Science Programme at:

<http://www.hfsp.org>

European Research Advisory Board on international research collaboration

The European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) has published a report highlighting the need for a stronger EU international research co-operation strategy in order for the EU to develop its competitive position and to tackle global challenges. The report supports the need for a systemic international policy in science and technology to strengthen EU research and to address global issues. Unlike in previous Framework Programmes, where international co-operation was a separate funding area, all thematic areas in FP7 should be open to collaboration with international partners.

Recommendations are made in the following five areas: the need for a clear policy in this area and to develop large, visible projects; making Europe attractive to the best researchers in the world and lowering barriers to mobility; developing a clearly differentiated approach to countries and regions - with specific themes and instruments; the need for an efficient Commission management structure to implement this strategy; and ensuring adequate funding is allocated for international co-operation and ensure adequate participation. The report, although critical in parts, suggests the EU has a decent track record in international scientific co-operation. It concludes, 'now is the time to make this strategy internally more coherent and effective and externally more visible'.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The EURAB report is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/eurab>

Monaco Prince creates foundation to support environmental research

A new foundation will be created dedicated to environmental protection and sustainable development, announced Prince Albert of Monaco recently. The 'Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation' will have an annual budget of around €20-30 million to fund scientific projects studying climate change, biodiversity and water management. Prince Albert spoke of the urgent need to find solutions to global warming and its impact on sea levels, the decline in biodiversity and the lack of fresh water. He hopes that the new foundation will become a 'permanent source for dynamic and innovative actions for environment protection and sustainable development' and will enable resources and people to be mobilised rapidly at an international scale.

The foundation will be partly financed by personal contributions from the Prince, who is also seeking to leverage funds from private donors and from the Monaco government. He said 'Monaco may not be the biggest country in the world, but I am determined to show that it can be among the most innovative in its approaches to the environment'. A network of international experts will identify which research fields the foundation should support, whilst scientific and ethical committees will select actions for the foundation to undertake. Prince Albert predicts work could start as early as 2007.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Press Release available at:

http://www.monaco-consulate.com/news_062706.htm

Website on Prince Albert II's recent Arctic trip:

<http://www.monaco.arctic-expedition.mc/wwwpolar.nsf/HomeGb.htm>

EU-Egypt joint science and technology action plan

The EU and Egypt recently adopted a joint science and technology action plan as part of a bilateral scientific co-operation agreement signed in 2005. The action plan aims to increase the participation of Egyptian researchers in FP7 and strengthen scientific co-operation with European researchers. The action plan will address issues of common interest, including: raising awareness among Egyptian researchers about the opportunities available through the European Mobility Portal; increasing the Egyptian experts in evaluation panels; and organising promotional events to encourage participation in the fields of ICT, health, renewable energy and water resources, nanotechnologies, agriculture, food quality and safety.

In response to the action plan, the EU have agreed to allocate a total of €11 million over four years to a new Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (MEDA) programme specifically aimed at supporting research and development (R&D) and innovation initiatives in Egypt. It is envisaged the programme will include an EU-Egypt Innovation Fund to support co-operative innovation-orientated projects, twinning small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with researchers of public funded institutions; as well as the promotion of FP7 to encourage participation of Egyptian researchers in FP7 projects including the provision of information contact points. This programme is expected to be adopted during autumn 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Is available from:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/egypt/intro

EU-Japan agree new collaborative research priorities

In July, EC Vice-President Günter Verheugen joined Business leaders from the EU and Japan in Tokyo as part of the 'EU-Japan Business Dialogue Round Table' to explore new ways of enhancing economic co-operation with Japan. At the meeting, five priority areas were identified to strengthen the collaboration, of which four relate to research

The immediate priorities tend to be focused towards development in the areas of biosciences, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); ensuring that society gains from innovations in life sciences and biotechnology; fostering a partnership approach to R&D and standardisation of ICT; developing an appropriate regulatory environment that fosters digital convergence, further competition and open access to both

markets; employing ICT technologies for the benefit of future generations; establishing international rules for protecting Intellectual Property Rights and combating the proliferation of counterfeit and pirated goods; and promoting joint R&D projects such as bio-chemicals, bio-materials and bio-fuels. The fifth priority relates to the issue of taxation: 'developing measures to avoid double taxation and reduce the compliance costs associated with transfer price taxation'. During the round table meeting the group also examined long term issues including global warming, rising oil prices, IT usage and the growing divide between the rich and the poor.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Is available from the website:

<http://www.eujapan.com/europe/roundtable.html>

China to support international research in traditional medicine

China's Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) has launched a new programme to support international research into Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which is the first international big science research program initiated and formulated by the Chinese government. It will be devoted to building a worldwide international science and technology co-operation network for TCM and boosting the modernisation of TCM.

A platform will be created by the project for international co-operation in TCM development, and to pool worldwide research resources. A total of 100 million Chinese Yuan (about €10 million) has been set aside for the initial 50 projects, which will research novel TCM approaches to treating diseases like malaria, AIDS/HIV, mental illness, and cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. The identification of priorities for support, and the implementation of the programme will be carried out by an international steering committee of TCM experts. Additional funds will be made available by the Chinese government to develop co-operation between foreign governments and industry in TCM. The programme also aims to launch dialogues and consultation with international health organisations, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), to promote global policies on TCM research.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please visit:

http://www.most.gov.cn/eng/photonews/t20060706_34665.htm

InterAcademy Council call for action to improve gender balance in science

An advisory report entitled 'Women in Science', has recently been produced by the InterAcademy Council (IAC), which represents 90 science academies across the globe. The report targets the members of the Council themselves, highlighting the current situation - women make up less than five per cent of the academy's members.

The report asks for action from the academies to put together committees in-house to tackle gender equality issues, formulate action plans and monitor progress. Key goals are to increase numbers of female members and to include more women in leadership positions. Academies are also called upon to support changes beyond their organisations, to support higher education of women scientists, and to play a key role in advising government as to how to reduce barriers. Academies should also consider establishing 'knowledge centres' to bring together women scientists with society to work on technologies for local needs and applications.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The executive summary and full report can be downloaded at:

<http://www.interacademycouncil.net/CMS/Reports/Women4Science.aspx>

Overcoming Africa's brain drain

The first Euro-African conference on migration and development took place in Rabat, in July this year and brought together government ministers and officials from 58 African and European countries. The conference was also attended by Franco Frattini, Vice President of the EC with responsibility for justice, freedom and security, and by Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for external relations and European neighbourhood policy. At the conference, ministers approved an action plan that calls for the development of networks between scientists and research institutions, and which focuses on training for young African professionals. The plan also calls for increased access for African students to top institutions in Africa and Europe, and calls for incentives to encourage African students to return to their home countries once they have finished their studies. The plan argues that this could be achieved through the development of 'regional centres of excellence' in Africa, as well as providing support to existing centres. It calls for strengthened co-operation with Europe and other regions.

The adoption of the action plan is the first step in a longer process focusing on migratory patterns in Africa, and is also preparation for the high level dialogue which will take place in New York in September this year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

On the conference can be found at:

<http://www.maec.gov.ma/migration/En/conference.htm>

Increased collaboration with the Western Balkans

Before handing over the presidency of the EU to the Finnish government on 1 July 2006, the Austrian presidency of the EU held a launch event for a new platform aimed at increasing research collaboration with the Western Balkan countries. The steering platform is based on a project previously funded under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6), the ERA-NET 'Southeast European ERA network, dubbed 'SEE-ERA-NET'. The project consists of 17 partners from 14 different countries, including candidate and Western Balkan countries. SEE-ERA-NET aims to foster integration with Southeast Europe and thereby enhance research co-operation; to build on existing bilateral Science and Technology (S&T) agreements; to improve inter-regional research co-operation, and to contribute to the 2003 Action Plan in Science and Technology.

At the launch event, the European Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, highlighted the success of the 2003 EU-Balkan Action Plan on Science and Research, and its role in facilitating increased integration with the Western Balkan countries. The Commissioner argued that co-operation should go beyond the scope for the Framework Programme, and should involve additional actors and financial instruments.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

SEE-ERA-NET website available at:

<http://see-era.net>

EVENTS and AWARDS

EU celebrates birthday with logo competition

On 27 March 2007 it will be 50 years since the Treaty of Rome was signed. To celebrate this, the EC's DG Communication has launched a competition to design a birthday logo for the EU.

The competition is open to all students of art, communication design, media design and related disciplines. 2006 graduates from universities and colleges, as well as design professionals, may also enter the discipline. Applicants have to live in an EU Member State or in Bulgaria or Romania. Entrants should design a logo, and should they wish to, a slogan, referring to the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, and reflecting the EU's achievements and its future. The deadline for entering the competition is 30 September 2006 and the best logo will be awarded a prize of €6,000, with the two runners up being awarded €4,000 and €2,000.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Logo competition website at:

<http://www.logo-competition.eu/8.0.html>

UKRO conference helps prepare for FP7

The 2006 UK Research Office (UKRO) annual conference took place recently in Newcastle. The conference was well attended with over 200 delegates from the UK and Europe present from universities, research councils, public authorities and the private sector. The theme of the two-day conference was the Seventh Framework Programme and it featured presentations by many EC officials on the likely shape of the forthcoming programme.

Antonia Mochan, spokesperson for Commissioner for Research, Janez Potočnik, provided an update on the latest development on FP7. Professor Kafatos, the chair of the Scientific Council of the European Research Council provided an overview of the birth of the ERC and plans for its future development. Individual presentations with question and answer sessions were held on each of the thematic areas of the co-operation strand within FP7. A presentation was given on finance and contract-related issues. There was also a presentation on the capacities strand of FP7, as well as a session on 'mobility' in FP7, and a session covering the European Institute of Technology. Fiona Hall, MEP, provided the closing remarks.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Presentations from the conference are available from the UKRO website at:

http://www.ukro.ac.uk/annual_conference/06_conference/06_presentations.htm

Where do humanities fit in the Descartes Prize?

The annual EC Descartes Prize for research and Descartes Prize for science communication prizes total €1.4 million. The 'excellence in scientific collaborative

research' prize is for research teams who have achieved outstanding scientific or technological results through collaborative research in any field of science, including the social sciences, humanities and economics. For the first time, prizes awarded in 2005 included a social sciences project, the 'European Social Survey'.

A recent EC event brought together Descartes Grand Jury 2006 members, EC staff, journalists, researchers and other stakeholders to discuss the inclusion of the social sciences and the humanities with the 'hard' sciences in Descartes Prize evaluations. They discussed the challenge of evaluating social sciences and humanities projects alongside hard sciences. One important issue raised by the President of the National Centre for Research in Greece, Dr Ion Sotis, appears fairly innocuous at first glance, but reveals deeper problems and divisions; the use of the word 'science'. In English, the word often refers to the natural sciences, and one wonders whether this is meant to include the social sciences for example. In Greek and French, the equivalent is more inclusive of the social sciences and humanities. This year's prize-winners will be announced at the FP7 launch event in Germany in March 2007.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Descartes Prize website available at:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/science-society/descartes>

Committee of the Regions to hold 'open days'

The EU Committee of the Regions (CoR), which represents Europe's regions and local authorities, is holding a week-long 'open days' event in Brussels from 9-12 October. The theme of this year's open days is: 'investing in Europe's regions and cities: public and private partners for growth and jobs'. In all, more than 5,000 experts are expected to attend the various aspects of the open days, which are open to everyone. Over 135 regions will be represented at the event, which will include over 180 seminars, presentations and workshops.

It is being organised by CoR in co-operation with the EC and EP. It will focus on five themes: investing in competitive enterprises and high quality jobs; fostering regional innovation; investing in sustainable use of resources and environmental technologies; supporting public-private partnerships for larger infrastructure projects; and cutting red tape - managing the Structural Funds between 2007 and 2013. Specific sessions include: the role of universities in the creation of a knowledge-based economy; developing regional research and innovation potential; and SMEs, innovation and research.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2006

EC/ESF launch EuroBioFund and EuroBioForum conferences

EuroBioFund is a new initiative for which the European Science Foundation (ESF) receives funding from the EC (DG Health, fundamental genomics unit). It aims to improve co-ordination and dialogue among life sciences researchers and funding organisations. Key objectives are: providing a platform for funding organisations and life science researchers to foster joint research initiatives through networking and brokerage (EuroBioForum); helping to organise research communities and facilitate a bottom-up generation of research programmes of European scale and scope (EuroBioGenerator);

and shaping a new funding way in Europe by helping to develop joint investments and funding of life sciences research (EuroBioAccess).

EuroBioFund's new approach will centre on an annual conference, EuroBioForum, starting in Helsinki on 14-15 December 2006. The three elements to this conference are: brokerage between researchers and funders; trends in life sciences in Europe by keynote speakers; and presentations of the policies, resources and programmes of funding organisations. Life science research consortia can submit proposals for presentation at Helsinki (until 4 September) for research programmes addressing ambitious and challenging research objectives that demand a pan-European strategy. Wouter Spek, Director of EuroBioFund said 'moving toward a more co-ordinated approach to R & D investment in the life sciences is a challenging but necessary step if Europe is to remain an important global player in life sciences and biotechnology research.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on EuroBioFund, the 2006 EuroBioForum and participation by funding agencies and research consortia in the life sciences can be found at:

<http://www.esf.org/eurobiofund>

ESF Press Releases on EuroBioForum and EuroBioFund at:

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

ICT for bio-medical sciences conference 2006

Recently a conference on 'Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Bio-Medical Sciences' was organised by the EC's DG Research and DG Information Society and Media. Over 440 stakeholders from universities, industry, the EC and interest groups took part, with a notably strong UK presence. Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Information Society and Media, congratulated Europe on its strengths in medical imaging and eHealth, encouraging researchers to take advantage of new imaging technologies. She said Europe should now work towards the provision of complete online health services and training of health professionals. There are also clear synergies between ICT and bio-medical sciences when developing ambient assisted living for the ageing.

At the conference, researchers discussed possible future developments and examined potential barriers. Presentations and webcasts are available on the conference website, to be followed in the autumn by the conference report. Two new resource booklets were also launched. Firstly, the 'resource book of eHealth projects in the Sixth Framework Programme' includes FP6 projects and explores the potential future directions of the ICT for Health under FP7. Secondly, 'ICT for Health & i2010 - transforming the European healthcare landscape - towards a strategy for ICT for Health' examines progress made towards the Action Plan for a European eHealth area.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Conference website, including presentations and web casts at:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/ict_bio_2006/index_en.htm

'Resource book of eHealth projects in the Sixth Framework Programme' at:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/research/projects

'ICT for eHealth & i2010' document available (under "I") at:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/Library

Further information about eHealth research is available from:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health

European Sustainable Chemistry Technology Platform stakeholder meeting

European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem) will hold their fourth stakeholder's meeting in Budapest, Hungary, on 27 August 2006. The meeting will be free of charge and the deadline for registration is 15 August 2006. The SusChem event is entitled 'Sustainable chemistry in European research – preparing for implementation' and the programme includes sessions on: an introduction to SusChem; sustainability - the ultimate goal for chemistry in China; chemistry and biotechnology research in Hungary; chemistry innovation and competitiveness; the European Research Council; and the presentation and discussion of an implementation action plan. There will also be breakout sessions on: SusChem role in the future; European vs. national funding possibilities and priorities; specific needs of new EU member states; and the future of chemistry.

The event coincides with, and is in connection with, the first European Chemistry Congress (EuCheMS), which will take place on 27–31 August 2006, also in Budapest. For those also attending the first European Chemistry Conference, the official opening ceremony, which is free of charge, will follow the SusChem stakeholder's meeting on the Sunday evening. Participants of the stakeholder's meeting who are interested in taking part in the opening ceremony of the congress should visit the website of the first EuCheMS congress for further information.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Fourth SusChem Stakeholders Meeting website and programme available at:

<http://www.gdch.de/vas/tagungen/tg/5569.htm>

First European Chemistry Congress website:

<http://www.euchems-budapest2006.hu>

ESF to hold nanomedicine conference

A European conference on nanomedicine will be taking place in Sant Feliu de Guixols, Spain, from 15-20 September 2006. The conference, entitled 'a new opportunity for improving diagnosis, prevention and treatment for disease', is being organised by the European Science Foundation in collaboration with the Universitat de Barcelona (Spain). The aim of the conference is to encourage interdisciplinary research into all aspects of nanomedicine and clinical practice. It is open to academia, industry and policy-makers but participation is limited to 150 delegates.

Sessions at the conference will cover the following topics: diagnostics, biosensors and surgical tools; the regulation of medicines, diagnostics and devices; innovation in materials science; molecular and patient imaging; nanotoxicology and cellular fate; the characterisation of nanostructures and surfaces; ethical issues in nanomedicine; nanopharmaceuticals in research and development; and clinical applications. Several representatives from the EC will be speaking at the conference as will academics from leading universities, research institutes and the private sector. A workshop will be held in parallel to the conference discuss the launch of an 'interdisciplinary school for nanomedicine'.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Available on the ESF website at:

http://www.esf.org/esf_genericpage.php?section=10&language=0&genericpage=2530

European forum for arts and humanities: islands and bridges conference

The European Forum for Arts and Humanities' (EFAH) conference will be taking place near Helsinki, in Finland, on 5-7 October 2006. The title of this year's conference is 'islands and bridges' and the aim is to investigate and understand the value and importance of intercultural dialogue in Europe. The conference is open to anyone working in the cultural field, with delegates who can contribute to the debate particularly welcomed.

Speakers include Odile Quintin, Director General of Education and Culture in the EC and Robert Palmer, a Director at the Council of Europe. The programme is not expected to feature set-piece presentations and dry speeches. It has been designed to combine the inspiration of performance and experience with a genuine debate of the issues facing Europe: those of social cohesion, national identity, racial discrimination and the sense of the individual.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

For further information and registration

<http://www.islandsandbridges.com>

Intelligent transport systems congress

The 13th world congress and exhibition on intelligent transport systems and services (ITS) is being held in London on 8-12 October 2006. This year's theme is 'delivering transport excellence'. Speakers are expected to include Jaques Barrot, European Commissioner for Transport and Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London. The conference is being organised by Intelligent Transport Systems and Services Europe (ERTICO) in co-operation with the UK Institute for Transport Studies, the Department for Transport, the Department for Trade and Industry and Transport London and is supported by the EC and the United Nations. UK government ministers, senior officials and other key business leaders will all be at the event.

The extensive programme includes: several plenary sessions; over 70 special sessions, including sessions on strategies for future funding and traffic management; 12 executive sessions, which will cover topics ranging from ITS for crisis management to the future vision for intelligent infrastructure systems; six interactive sessions; and over 140 scientific and technical sessions covering all aspects of ITS. Debates will also be held over lunchtime. An exhibition will be held in parallel to showcase the work of researchers in the field of ITS. Several researchers are expected to use the event to launch their new ITS applications.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

<http://www.itsworldcongress.com>

Europe INNOVA conference

The Europe INNOVA conference will be taking place in Valencia, Spain, from 26-28 November 2006. Entitled 're-innovating Europe: challenges for clusters and innovative business', the conference will focus on innovation and how to build up the spirit of entrepreneurship present in Europe. It hopes to put forward ideas to help delegates better commercialise new ideas and promote an innovative spirit in businesses, building on Europe's industrial strengths. The conference will be divided into separate sessions,

including an award ceremony where the EC will present the 'cluster manager of the year' and 'best Europe INNOVA network' awards; an innovation exhibition showcasing outstanding examples of innovation in Europe and providing a networking opportunity for participants; and a partnering event.

In addition, there will also be a session that covers the youth perspective with six students reporting back on conference proceedings from their own perspective. It is envisaged that the conference will end with the adoption of a 'Valencia declaration' based on the conclusions of the conference. The conference is open to stakeholders from academia, the political and business worlds and appeal to anyone wanting to learn more about developing and improving clusters in knowledge creation.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

For further information and registration:

<http://www.europe-innova.org/conference>

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES

CORDIS website for Finnish EU Presidency launched

CORDIS (the Community Research and Development Information Service) has launched a website for research and innovation activities under the Finnish EU Presidency. It includes the Presidency R&D news and highlights service, information on events organised or sponsored by the Presidency, as well as news, interviews and documents on the Competitiveness Council meetings. The website, in both English and Finnish, will cover R&D policy in Europe and in Finland during the Presidency.

This website is in addition to the overall Finnish EU Presidency website mentioned in the last edition of European RTD Insight.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Finnish EU Presidency - CORDIS R&D and Innovation website at:

http://cordis.europa.eu/finland/presidency/home_en.html

Finnish EU Presidency – main website at:

<http://www.eu2006.fi>

Europe on your doorstep

Europe Direct centres have opened recently in the UK. In all, there are 25 Europe Direct centres in the UK, which members of the public can use to access up-to-date information on EU programmes and policies, EU law and treaties and various funding opportunities open to businesses and individuals. A network of 393 such centres will be set up around Europe, partially in response to calls from the public for more information - recent polls have shown that 60 per cent of the public would like know more about the EU.

Members of the public in the UK can access information from Europe Direct by calling freephone 0044 800 67891011, emailing or personally visiting the centres. They are usually located in public buildings like local authorities and libraries. Other services the centres will provide include: producing and distributing brochures and guides on how the EU and its institutions work; information on the laws and treaties that bind the EU and its

citizens together; information on EU policies in areas such as health, citizenship, research, education and culture. They will also have computers with open access to the EU's Europa website. In total, €564,000 has been set aside for the UK's centres for the first year, with Europe Direct centres receiving up to €24,000 in support each year for the next three years.

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.europe.org.uk/info>

UN funded 'Green TV' launched

A new 'green' broadband TV channel, green.tv has been launched, which includes world wide collaboration with more than 30 non-profit and public-sector organisations in producing environmental TV films to be shown, open access, on the internet. The channel was launched earlier this year by the Largeblue Production Company in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It aims 'to be the definite place to watch environmental TV online, or in other words, to be a green Google for green films'. Films are either produced by green.tv themselves or acquired from film makers or non governmental organisations (NGOs) - the only requirement for films is that their messages leave a positive environmental footprint.

Around 50 films are currently available online, and another 25 new films are expected to be added per month. Films are listed under the following categories: air, land, water, climate change, technologies, people and species. Examples of films include a UK Royal Horticultural Society film on the risk of spreading pests by importing new plants, a Greenpeace film on the aftermaths of Chernobyl and a film on wind power. Other contributors include the European Environment Agency, the UK Environment Agency, the RNLI (Royal National Lifeboat Institution), DEFRA (UK government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), the UK Stop Climate Chaos campaign, the Eden project and WaterAid. NERC (the UK Natural Environment Research Council) plan to add films soon, including one on rapid climate change.

FURTHER INFORMATION

European Environmental Communications Network newsflash:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/networks/newsflash/newsflash26_greentv.pdf

Green TV website at:

<http://www.green.tv>

New guidance for EC project managers

A new website has been launched to aid project managers in sharing and exchanging experiences and good practice in relation to the management and co-ordination of FP6 projects. The European Community Project Managers (UK) Network is open to project managers from the UK and beyond. Interested parties can join the network online. Meetings of members of the network are held three to four times a year, with the next meeting due to take place in Warwick on 3 October 2006.

Recently there was also an EC event which offered project management advice and guidance to co-ordinators in FP6 projects under 'Citizens and Governance'. It included EC speakers and also drew on the experiences of co-ordinators of current FP6 projects. Plenary presentations covered scientific reporting; financial reporting; general project management experience; online questionnaires; working with SMEs; and project

dissemination and communication. Four active projects gave presentations on their experiences of FP6 so far, outlining some of their lessons learned and useful tools developed. Parallel sessions looked into more detail of the objectives and methods of the projects funded under Citizens Calls 4-6. Presentations from the event are available.

FURTHER INFORMATION

European Community project managers (UK) website at:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/ecpmuk>

FP6 Citizens and Governance project management conference presentations at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/kick_off_2006_k3.htm

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/eur-lex/en/index.html>

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

Treaty of Amsterdam <http://www.europa.eu/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/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/rapid>

GLOSSARY

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| A&S | Aeronautics and Space Priority (FP6) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/activities.htm |
| C&G | Citizens and Governance Priority (FP6) http://cordis.europa.eu/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.cost.esf.org |
| '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://consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.ASP?lang=en |
| Culture 2000 | First European Community Framework Programme in support of culture, which runs from 2000/04 (inclusive). http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/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://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm |
| eEurope | eEurope A political initiative of the EC to allow Europe to benefit fully from the Information Society. http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/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.europa.eu/news/public/default_en.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://ec.europa.eu/research/era/index_en.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://eesc.europa.eu/index_en.asp

Press Releases:

http://eesc.europa.eu/activities/press/cp/index_en.asp

- ESF European Science Foundation
<http://www.esf.org>
- ESF The European Social Fund
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf2000/index_en.html
- Eureka Eureka is a Europe-wide network for Industrial Research and Development.
<http://www.eureka.be>
- FQS Food Quality and Safety Priority (FP6)
<http://cordis.europa.eu/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://cordis.europa.eu/fp6>
- Further information on FP7 at:
<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7>
- GBH Genomics and Biotechnology for Health Priority (FP6)
<http://cordis.europa.eu/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.europa.eu/committees/itre_home_en.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>
- IST Information Society Technologies Priority (FP6)
<http://cordis.europa.eu/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>

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| 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://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/media/index_en.html |
| Mobility | Human Resources and Mobility Programme (FP6) http://cordis.europa.eu/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://ec.europa.eu/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/index.htm |
| RTD | Research and Technological Development |
| SDGC | Sustainable Development and Global Change Priority (FP6) http://cordis.europa.eu/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://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/ceeca/tacis |
| Treaty of Amsterdam | The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999. http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/en/treaties/index.htm |
| 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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