
News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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EU POLICY

EP: More research and innovation - investing for growth and employment

The EP recently adopted a non-legislative resolution on implementing the EC ‘Lisbon Agenda’ which aims to invest 3 per cent of the EU GDP in research by 2010. The EP acknowledged that this objective will probably not be achieved, and expressed regret that the Member States had not made firmer commitments in favour of research and innovation at the 2006 March European Council. However, they appealed to Member States to take it upon themselves to re-launch the Lisbon strategy.

The EP resolution consisted of 57 points, covering the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy, supporting innovation, and improving the European market for researchers (especially early stage researchers). It also encompassed lifelong learning, intellectual property rights (IPR), SMEs, and public procurement. The EP stressed the need to raise the profile of scientific career paths and called for greater support to be given to the best European researchers, especially early-stage researchers, in the form of more attractive working conditions, the reduction of legal, administrative and geographical barriers and the equal treatment of European researchers with their foreign counterparts. It also underlined the need to improve co-operation between Member States on taxation and the transfer of certain social benefits, in order to remove obstacles to researchers’ mobility and career development.

On SMEs, the EP felt that greater SME involvement in Technology Platforms would ease current poor co-ordination and integration, bottlenecks, and poor knowledge management. The EP also proposed that structural funds should be seen as a key means

of supporting research and innovation capacity, especially in the pursuit of cohesion. It proposes a trebling of the amount of structural funds to be spent on research and innovation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on the Lisbon Strategy can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/key/index_en.htm

The EP non-legislative resolution and an explanatory statement can be found at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/sipade3?OBJID=122193&L=EN&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

FP7: Show me the money

The recent European Council at the Competitiveness Council meeting reached an agreement on the budget for FP7. The overall budget for the seven year programme is to be €50.5 billion, with some slight changes between the budgets of certain programmes and thematic areas. The co-operation specific programme is set to receive €32.365 billion; ideas, which covers the new European Research Centre is set for €7.46 billion; the people programme, which consists of the Marie Curie actions is set for €4.728 billion; capacities, which includes the science in society and regions of knowledge programmes will get €4.217 billion; and the non-nuclear actions of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) are set to receive €1.751 billion.

For the co-operation specific programme, the actual breakdown by thematic area has not changed that much, with the exception of the security and space themes, which will see a combined budget of €2.78 billion, a reduction of € 78 million from the EC's revised proposal. The capacities specific programme, with a reduction in overall budget of €74 million, sees the most internal changes. The 'research infrastructures' and 'science and society' programmes will both see a reduction in funding. However, the 'research for the benefit of SMEs', 'research potential' and 'activities in international co-operation' programmes all see an increase in funding. €70 million is also to be made available for the coherent development of research policies, which was not a part of the EC's revised proposal. The European Council's position will now be sent to the EP in autumn 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Competitiveness Council conclusions can be found at:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/intm/90654.pdf

EC launch study on researchers' salaries across Europe

The EC has launched a study to assess the remuneration of researchers in the public and private sectors in EU Member States, Candidate Countries and 'Associated States' in the Research Framework Programmes.

The aim of the study is to gain an understanding of remuneration rates of researchers across Europe, in the context of the EC's work around improving the attractiveness of research as a career. The EC plans to use the results of the surveys to contribute to the assessment of its remuneration schemes. Researchers from all sectors are invited to complete the questionnaire, which is available online, is anonymous, and should take no longer than five minutes to complete.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The survey is managed by an external consultancy and is available at:
<http://www.carsa.es/research/InitialEmail.htm>

SME participation in the Framework Programmes

A recent study has shown that SMEs are still not fully engaged in the EU's Framework Programmes for Research. The problem is most acute in the area of ICT (information and communication technologies) in FP6, and with SMEs from the new accession countries, according to the study by EFP Consulting and Empirica. The report goes on to suggest some of the possible reasons for this. SMEs in new Member States often found it difficult to find the funds to co-finance projects and were also deemed to be deterred from participating because of a historical tendency of not working collaboratively with European partners or investing sufficiently in R&D. Overhead rates of 20 per cent for SMEs in FP6, and the initial cost of putting together proposals and finding partners, meant that it was also too expensive for many. The study also highlighted the problem that SMEs face in joining consortia already underway, and with the subordinate position they often found themselves in during contract negotiations and carrying out the projects.

The report goes on to suggest that the EC could improve the situation by some of the following actions: the reintroduction of more suitable instruments for SMEs and better engagement in policy development; a reduction of the administrative burden placed on SMEs; enhancing the co-ordination between SMEs and the EC; reintroducing suitable instruments like the 'exploratory awards' for SMEs; increasing the overhead rate; and exploring ways to better facilitate subcontracting to SMEs.

FURTHER INFORMATION

A copy of the report is available at:
<http://www.efpconsulting.com>

FP7 and the Structural Funds 2007-13

The Framework Programmes and the Structural Funds are separate EU programmes, yet they are both integral in helping to achieve the revised Lisbon targets of making the EU the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the World by 2010. Therefore, it is vital that the two programmes complement each other. Whilst the Framework Programmes provide funding for research, the Structural Funds, which are distributed at a regional level, primarily aim to aid the economic development of Europe's regions, improve infrastructure, create jobs, reduce unemployment and up-skill Europe's workforce. Member states will be considering how to best use Structural Funds to complement FP7 in their regional implementation programmes.

Participation in FP7 can stimulate the emergence of regional 'clusters' and creative industries and help to develop the technological competence and innovative capacity of local SMEs. A sound use of Structural Funds in regions can ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as transport links, business parks and a well-skilled workforce is in place in order to maximise the benefits of participation in FP7. Furthermore, FP7 specifically carries an extended regional dimension under the 'capacities' specific programme with two specific actions: 'regions of knowledge' and 'research potential'. The regions of knowledge initiative will provide support to R&D-intensive regional clusters and stimulate the emergence of new ones. The research potential initiative aims to 'unlock research potential' by supporting excellence in institutions through twinning institutions from technologically advanced regions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Releases MEMO/06/280 and COM/06/386 of 13 July 2006, on Cohesion Policy, are available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

The EC's DG Regio website is available at: http://europa.eu/pol/reg/index_en.htm

The EC's DG Research website is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/research>

Further information on the Framework Programmes is available at: <http://www.cordis.lu>

Further information on the Lisbon Targets can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/key/index_en.htm

EURAB publishes activities report for 2005

The European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) has published its activities report for 2005. EURAB plays an important strategic role in advising the EC on general European research policy and on specific and topical issues such as the establishment of the European Institute of Technology. The recommendations and reports published by EURAB in 2005 included: an assessment of FP6 with particular focus on instruments and a forward look to FP7; the financial perspective for FP7 and criteria for the selection of topics for work programmes; 'Science and Society' - an agenda for a responsive and responsible European science in FP7; an EURAB recommendation on the proposed European Institute of Technology (EIT); and an EURAB letter on FP7 budget increase to name but a few.

The report also goes on to detail EURAB's current and planned activities, which will be more towards general issues such as research management. Some of these activities are as follows: ongoing monitoring of FP7's development and the development of the new instruments within this; to conduct a study into new trends in knowledge diffusion for innovation; to conduct a further study into the societal dimension of research with special reference to the impact and use of research and technology on other policies within the EU; to consider the recommendations from the recent EC publication, which examined the scientific publication system in Europe; and to examine the future of the advice provision to the EC, including its own future role. The report also includes a useful list of its members and details of its working groups.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EURAB Activities Report 2005 is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/eurab/pdf/eurab_activities_report_2005.pdf

2006 EURYI awards announced

The 25 researchers selected to receive the 2006 European Young Investigator (EURYI) awards will receive their diplomas at a special ceremony in Prague on 13 October 2006. The scheme is designed to attract and retain outstanding young scientists in order for them to create their own research teams at European research centres. This is the third round of awards to be made, after the scheme was launched in 2003 as a joint competition supported by European national research organisations. The award scheme was developed jointly by the European Heads of Research Councils (EuroHORCs) and the European Science Foundation (ESF).

For this round, 457 applications were received. Two stages of evaluation are involved; the first, at national level, is undertaken by the relevant participating organisation, and the

second stage is at international level by a scientific panel. The awards will range between €1-1.25 million, and most awardees are between 30-35 years old. This year's awardees will be based in 11 countries: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details on EURYI and the 2006 Awards select EURYI on left-hand menu at:

<http://www.esf.org>

European biotechnology sector lags behind US

Although Europe is a major incubator of new ideas and start-up companies, the biotechnology sector is hampered by a lack of funding according to a recent report entitled 'Biotechnology in Europe: 2006 Comparative study', by EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries. It compares the performance of 18 European countries with the US, looking in-depth at France, Germany, Switzerland and the UK. The report highlights the major difficulties biotech companies face raising any capital, in particular risk-taking venture capital and outlines the consequences. For example, many relatively mature European biotechnology firms have been acquired by better-funded US counterparts, and some of those that remain are looking to establish a presence in the US specifically to access the more generous financial market. This often means that value-creating research and development (R&D) and manufacturing jobs are, in effect, exported.

The European and the US biotechnology industries both have around 2000 companies, but the US sector employs nearly twice as many people, spends around three times as much on research and development (€21 billion in the US, €7.6 billion in Europe), and has twice the number of employees involved in R&D. US firms also raise over twice as much venture capital, have access to 10 times as much debt finance, and generate twice as much revenue (€41.5 billion, as opposed to €21.5 billion in Europe).

The Austrian and Finnish Presidencies of the EU also recently co-hosted a round table on boosting the competitiveness of EU biotechnology in the context of the EC's 2002-10 life science and biotechnology strategy, which is currently up for mid-term review.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The EuroBio website is available at:

<http://www.europa-bio.be>

'Biotechnology in Europe: 2006 Comparative study' is available at:

<http://www.europa-bio.be/Critical2006/Critical2006.pdf>

The EC website on biotechnology:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/biosociety/index_en.htm

Further information on the Biotechnology Stakeholder round table discussions at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/biosociety/news_events/news_round_table_biotech_competitiveness_en.htm

EC plans to improve EU-level crime and criminal justice statistics

On 8 August 2006, the EC proposed an action plan to develop EU statistics on crime and criminal justice over 2006-10. The Communication, entitled 'developing a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice', was foreseen under the Hague Programme, 2005-2010, which is a five-year programme to enhance European co-

operation on justice and home affairs matters. The action plan will co-ordinate work with the Member States and other stakeholders, and will work towards accessible high quality information. According to the EC, the development of the statistics will be key to revealing the magnitude of crime across the EU and providing insight to policy makers on future measures to be adopted.

The EC will establish an expert group to support the plan's implementation. Four categories of experts will be used in the expert group; Member and Accession State representatives, European and international bodies, academic representatives and private sector representatives. Eurostat will publish the first EU statistics on crime and criminal justice, consisting of compilations of national data, by the end of 2006. The objective is to produce harmonised statistics for some areas later in the five-year period.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Action Plan is available at the Europa Justice and Home Affairs website:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/index_en.htm

Results from nano(eco)toxicology consultation to feed into FP7

The results of an informal EC consultation on nano(eco)toxicology, held in early 2006, have now been published. Stakeholders were invited to review the policy objectives for nano(eco)toxicology in order to better prioritise the future research agenda in this area. They were asked to submit their comments relating to the following four areas of nano(eco)toxicology: research and development in nano(eco)toxicology; the need for databases on toxicity; 'poles of excellence' in nano(eco)toxicology; and other initiatives, such as metrology and standardisation. Of the 75 full contributions and over 170 suggestions the EC received, over 38 per cent came from academia.

The results of the consultation showed that most responses related to analytical improvements concerning the development of specific measurement equipment, testing methods and protocols, and the testing of adequate testing materials. Fundamental toxicology knowledge was also cited as an area of priority, as were environmental issues. A lesser number of submissions referred to databases, 'poles of excellence', societal aspects and other issues. It is expected that the EC will take these results into account, along with other information, when developing FP7.

FURTHER INFORMATION

'Informal collection of inputs for nanotechnology R&D in the field of (eco)toxicology ' at:
ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/nanotechnology/docs/inputs_nanoecotox.pdf

EC seeks input on Intelligent Energy Europe II

Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) is the main means of converting EU policy for smart energy use and more renewables into action on the ground, addressing today's energy challenges and promoting business opportunities and new technologies. The current IEE programme, which still has a call open, finishes in 2006 and supports projects, one-off events and the setting up of local/regional energy agencies with a total budget of €250 million, covering up to 50 per cent of the costs. The programme currently supports more than 200 international projects, over 30 local/regional energy management agencies, and almost 40 European events in the areas of: new and renewable energy sources; energy efficiency, notably in buildings and industry; energy aspects of transport; and co-operation with developing countries.

A second Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEE II) will start next year as part of the Framework Programme for Competitiveness and Innovation (CIP) 2007-13. The EC has launched a consultation to help develop the annual work programme for 2007, which will determine objectives, funding priorities, project types, budgets, and procedures. The EC welcomes comments and suggestions, which can be submitted until 10 September 2006 using an online questionnaire. The first calls for proposals under IEE II are expected in spring 2007.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The questionnaire can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/iee2/index_en.htm

Intelligent Energy Europe homepage at:

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

Current Intelligent Energy Europe call (which closes 31 October 2006):

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call_for_proposals/index_en.htm

EU consults on ideas for future call on intercultural dialogue

The year 2008 will be the official European year of intercultural dialogue. In total, around €10 million will be made available for various projects implemented in the framework of EU programs and Community actions covering the areas of culture, education, youth, sport and citizenship. In line with this, the EC has launched a call to civil society and other interested parties for ideas to help in defining future calls for proposals, the results of which are expected to be published in 2007. All stakeholders are invited to submit contributions using an online form before the deadline of 13 October.

The submissions should relate to three key questions: how can one contribute towards identifying, evaluating, developing and exchanging experience and good practice in intercultural dialogue on a European scale?; what information and communication initiatives could contribute towards involving all EU residents, and particularly young people, in the promotion of intercultural dialogue in day to day life and familiarising them with it?; and what specific European scale initiatives likely to reach, directly or indirectly, as many people in the EU as possible – and particularly young people – could contribute towards promoting intercultural dialogue?.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Europa website on intercultural dialogue, including the online consultation form is at:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/dialogue/year2008_en.html

Sustainable use of pesticides

The EC has proposed a strategy on the safer use of pesticides, as one of the seven thematic strategies developed in response to the EU's 6th Environmental Action Programme. Several member states have already started implementing measures to reduce the risks from pesticides; however these will need to be harmonised across the EU. This strategy will stimulate research and innovation for the development and use of more effective and safer substances, and crop protection. The use of alternative plant protection methods will be promoted and there will be a market opportunity for innovative companies developing chemical and non-chemical technologies.

At this stage the strategy focuses on the largest group of pesticides plant protection pesticides; however there will be scope to include biocides, for example disinfectants and wood preservatives, at the second stage. As one of the measures Member States will be asked to prepare 'National Action Plans' to reduce hazards, risks and dependence on chemical control for plant protection.

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ppps/home.htm>

Natura 2000: EU works to protect biodiversity of New Member States

The biodiversity of the ten new Member States that joined the EU in 2004 is particularly rich. Therefore, it is crucial that the EU protects this in order to reach its target of halting biodiversity loss in Europe by 2010. Significant progress has been made in implementing nature protection in these states. 20 new habitat types and 178 new species have been added to those already protected by the EU's Birds Directive and Habitat Directive, as part of Natura 2000. These included, for example, Białowieża primeval forest in Poland with its European Bison, and large areas of grasslands in Hungary, bogs and flower rich meadows with large populations of orchids.

The cornerstone of EU biodiversity policy, Natura 2000, consists of a network of protected areas set up under the EU's Birds Directive and Habitats Directive, in order to safeguard Europe's most important wildlife areas and species. Member States must take all necessary measures to guarantee their conservation, and ensure that any economic activity within the sites is compatible with the conservation of habitats and species. Almost 11 per cent of the overall territory of the new Member States is protected under the Birds Directive and over 12 per cent has been proposed for protection under the Habitats Directive, as part of the EU-wide Natura 2000 network of high value nature areas which is also being extended to the marine environment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release MEMO/06/292 of 18 July 2006 is available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

EU's nature and biodiversity homepage, including more information on Natura 2000 is at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/home.htm>

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

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

Researching the European Economic and Monetary Union

A recent EC communication on current and possible future actions to support research and analysis into the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) has been published. Under the EMU, the EU aims to create a single European currency. Specific EC actions have already been in place since 1999. These have now been reviewed and recommendations for new exercises made. The EC feels that the current programme should continue in much the same format, but with certain areas enhanced and with recognition of the importance of FP6 and FP7 broadening into areas of interest for EMU policy makers.

The programme currently comprises four main areas: the European forecasting network, which was established in 2002, and is now being reviewed for continuation after 2007; the economic research conferences and workshops and the economic seminar programme, which strengthens dialogue and brings original research to the attention of the EC; the visiting fellows programme, which was launched in 2001 to bring leading economists to the EC for short-term visits; and the economic studies programme, which commissions various study programmes on specific and relevant issues.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release COM/06/389 of 14 July 2006 is available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Papers from the EMU publication programme are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications_en.htm

The Europa website on Economic and Monetary Affairs is available at:

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

New EIB University Research Sponsorship Scheme results announced

The recently launched European Investment Bank (EIB) 'Universities Research Action' includes the 'European Investment Bank University Research Sponsorship Programme' (EIBURS), through which the EIB aims to foster its institutional relations with universities. EIBURS provides grants to university research centres working on research topics and themes of major interest to the bank. EIB bursaries, of up to €100,000 per year for a period of three years, are awarded through a competitive process to interested university departments or research centres associated with universities in the EU, Accession or Acceding Countries, with recognised expertise in areas of direct interest to the EIB.

For the first ever call, the EIB received 75 proposals for this year's four EIBURS themes which were: financial and economic valuation of environmental impacts (8 applications received, of which one was from the UK); technology assessment and acceleration of innovation (8 applications, three from the UK); public-private partnerships (19 applications, one from the UK); social dimensions of sustainable development (28 applications received, four from the UK). The programme of activities covered by these will be published on the EIB website once the contracts with the Universities have been signed.

The next round of EIBURS is expected to be launched early next year. The themes will also be announced with the launch. The other two programmes of the EIB-Universities Research Action, STAREBEI (STAgés de REcherche BEI) and EIB University Networks are also being developed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EIB website on EIBURS evaluation:

<http://eib.eu.int/news/news.asp?cat=&news=162>

The EIB-Universities Research Action webpage is at:

<http://www.eib.org/universities>

Keeping Europe on the move

Keeping Europe on the move is expected to be the main focus of the EU's future transport policy, the EC's communication on the mid-term review of the transport white paper has shown. Jaques Barrot, the EU Commissioner for Transport, has suggested that making

aviation and road transport more efficient will also be one of the priorities. Focus will be given to logistics, green propulsion and intelligent transport systems. In the case of the latter, the EC plans to equip ships, trucks, trains and cars with the same high-tech equipment as aircraft.

The mid-term review stresses that although much progress has been made, more still needs to be done particularly to ensure that Europe continues to adopt measures to ensure sustainable transport infrastructures in the long term. The EC will present its strategic technology plan for energy in 2007, which is to complement a programme on green vehicles expected in 2009. A strategy for freight lorry logistics will also be launched in 2007 to bring together transport modes. Public consultations on various aspects relating to transport are expected before any key decisions are made in producing specific measures.

FURTHER INFORMATION

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/transport_policy_review/index_en.htm

Culture 2007

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council recently adopted a common position about the Culture 2007 programme, aimed at providing financial support for the European cultural sector for the period 2007-13. The text will be sent to the EP for a second reading.

The common position includes some new elements not in the EC proposal. The first of these new elements is that the Agriculture and Fisheries Council has agreed, with the EC and the EP, to transfer support for measures for the preservation of memorials to the proposed 'Citizens for Europe' programme. The second is that in order to make it easier for small operators to access the programme, the Council, in line with the EP's approach, has lowered the minimum community support from €60,000 to €50,000, and also reduced the minimum number of operators from four to three for co-operation measures. Thirdly, the Council has introduced a management committee procedure for projects with a total Community contribution exceeding €200,000.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release PRES/06/217 of 25 July 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

MEDIA 2007

The European Council adopted a common position on the MEDIA 2007 programme at the recent EU Competitiveness Council meeting in Brussels. The EP will now look at the common position in a second reading. The MEDIA 2007 programme will bring together the successful existing Media Plus and Media Training programmes in order to support the European audiovisual sector. In 2004 prices, the financial package allocated to the MEDIA 2007 programme is €671 million. The current Media Plus programme ran from 2001-5, which was then extended a further year until the end of 2006. MEDIA 2007 will now come into force in 2007 and replace the previous programmes.

The objectives of MEDIA 2007 are specifically to: preserve and enhance European cultural and linguistic diversity, and cinematographic and audiovisual heritage, guaranteeing its accessibility to the public and promoting intercultural dialogue; increase the circulation and viewing of European audiovisual works inside and outside the EU,

through greater co-operation between industrial players; and to strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual sector in the framework of an open and competitive European market favourable to employment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Media Plus programme website:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/media/index_en.html

EC Press Release PRES/06/215 of 24 July is available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Technology Platform on Smart Systems Integration launched

The European Technology Platform on Smart Systems Integration, EPoSS, was launched in Brussels recently. It brings together European private and public stakeholders working in the field with the aim of co-ordinating research into smart systems in relation to automotives, aerospace, telecommunication, medical technologies, logistics, and underlying technologies. Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Information Society and Media, welcomed the launch.

Smart Systems Integration (SSI) is an emerging area with applications in many industrial sectors. Systems consist of components which can obtain information from the environment, process it electronically, communicate signals and data, and then take appropriate action. These systems are very interdisciplinary, and integrate mechanical, electrical and biological functions. As an example, Commissioner Reading discussed the benefit SSI would bring to health: 'smart systems are the drivers for the expected revolutionary changes of health care, moving from hospital-based care to personalised and home-based care'. She gave the example of a portable molecular detection tool for diagnosis of diseases such as cancer, which will soon be available on the market.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the EPoSS is available at:

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

Wind Technology Platform seeks steering committee

The new European Technology Platform for Wind Energy, TPWind, recently announced a call for members for its steering committee. This committee will aim to identify and prioritise policy and technology R&D tasks; develop roadmaps to accelerate wind energy deployment; work on policy and market development issues, on technology issues, and on the TPWind Strategic Research Agenda. The Steering Committee will be supported by the TPWind Secretariat, which is funded by the EC under FP6. Professor Arthouros Zervos, President of the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), and also a member of the temporary TPWind Advisory Council, said 'TPWind is vital in the struggle to build up public and private funding for wind energy research'.

TPWind published their Strategic Research Agenda in July 2005, which outlined several areas that needed research, including: wind resources - availability, limitations and new sources; turbines - the development of ever more reliable and efficient generators; wind farms - to generate new electricity storage systems and models for wind flow and risk assessment; development of the electricity grid systems - to allow better integration of wind power; environment and public support - researching possible effects to the ecology around turbines; and developing standards. In each area, 'showstoppers' are discussed,

which are issues that could prevent wind power development, as well as 'barriers' which are physical limitations and 'bottlenecks' - which are problems that can be overcome in the short-to-medium term.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further Information on the nomination process, and on the Strategic Research Agenda at:
<http://www.windplatform.eu>

ZEP Technology Platform: vision of fossil fuels with zero emissions

Climate change, largely due to increased carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, is one of the most serious single challenges faced by humankind today. Probably one of the greatest impacts in reducing CO₂ emissions will be made by the introduction of Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants, including carbon dioxide capture and storage. Europe hopes to lead in this area, with the 'European Technology Platform for Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants', known as ZEP. This will play a crucial role in enabling the EU to tackle climate change and to look at developing and deploying technology for Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants within the next 15 years and help European industry to compete effectively on world markets.

ZEP has recently published its vision statement, which outlines how fossil fuel power sources such as coal, gas and oil could become zero-emission. EU Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potocnik, said 'the setting up of this Technology Platform for 'Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Generation' is one essential way of responding to these ambitious objectives'. ZEP will examine a wide area of research into carbon capture and storage (CCS), from carbon sequestration to 'cracking' fossil fuels to release their hydrogen - a genuinely emission-less fuel. ZEP will also investigate the best ways to transport and store or inject CO₂ into geological formations and how safe these processes are.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about the ZEP Technology Platform is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/nn/nn_rt/nn_rt_co/article_2268_en.htm
The vision statement is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/pdf/zero_emission_ffpp_en.pdf

European Technology Platform 'Food for Life' consults research agenda

The European Technology Platform (ETP), 'Food for Life' has launched an online consultation on the development of its Strategic Research Agenda (SRA), which is due to be published in April 2007. It follows on from the 'Food for Life Vision for 2020 and beyond' which was launched in July 2005. A detailed 'Implementation Plan' will also be subsequently published in December 2007, which will describe the research, training, education and dissemination needed to fulfil the vision and strategy behind the technology platform.

The current consultation aims to pinpoint the key challenges for ETP Food for Life, by gathering significant and qualitative input from a broad range of experts, and is open until 1 December 2006. The SRA will define themes and priorities for future research which the ETP will strongly suggest to the EC should be included in the priorities of the 7th Framework Programme, and beyond, in the area of food.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Take part in the 'Food for Life' online consultation process at:

<http://etp.ciaa.be/webconsultation/welcome.asp>

EU consults on promotion of heating and cooling from renewable energies

The EC is holding an online public consultation to address all renewable energies used to produce heating and cooling: solar thermal, geothermal and heat pumps, and biomass; as well as all types of measures/policies in order to evaluate their potential. Furthermore, all sectors of activity (the public sector, industry, energy services and district heating, tertiary and domestic) are addressed. Information from the consultation will be taken into account in the further preparatory work, and any contributions should be made by 6 October 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Consultation on 'promotion of heating and cooling from renewable energies' at:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/consultation/heating_cooling_en.htm

EU consults on single market for online content

An EC consultation to help identify ways of stimulating the development of a single EU market for online digital content - for things such as games, films and music - has recently been launched. The deadline for contributions, which should be submitted online, is 13 October 2006. The provision of digital content online is an increasingly important opportunity for the European industries and an area of increasing focus for the EU. The removal of the remaining barriers would help to create a stronger European market and in turn improve its ability to compete in a global market.

The consultation is in the form of an online questionnaire and its results are likely to help shape an EC communication on online content, which is due to be adopted at the end of the year. Some of the questions asked include: which economic and regulatory barriers do online content services face in Europe's single market?; how does the competitiveness of Europe's online content industry compare to that of other world regions?; would creative businesses benefit from Europe-wide or multi-territory licensing and clearance?; and is progress needed as regards interoperability of digital rights management (DRM) systems in Europe?.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Further information and the consultation document can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/other_actions/content_online/index_en.htm

EU consults on electronic communications networks/services regulations

The EC recently adopted a Communication on the review of the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services. The Communication is complemented by a 'Staff Working Document', which outlines in greater detail possible changes to the regulatory framework, and by an 'Impact Assessment'. These documents launch a formal public consultation. The EC has launched a formal public consultation to invite comments on the changes proposed in the Communication and on the accompanying Staff Working Document. The public consultation will run until 27 October 2006. Taking account of the comments received, the EC intends to propose legislative measures to the EP and Council around the end of 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/consultations/index_en.htm#open_consultations

EU consults on child safety and mobile phone services

The EC has recently launched a public consultation on the potential risks to children of using mobile phones. Input is invited from all stakeholders, including child safety, parent and consumer organisations, mobile network operators, content providers, handset and network manufacturers, and regulators. The consultation will run until 16 October 2006 and addresses issues linked to content and behaviour, such as access to harmful or illegal content, bullying (e.g. distribution of abusive or compromising messages and photos amongst children), grooming (e.g. strangers 'making friends' with children with a view to meeting them), risks to the privacy of children, and the risk of unexpectedly high expense.

The consultation is part of the EC's Safer Internet Programme, which has been running since 1999, and aims to equip parents and teachers with the knowledge and tools they need to ensure internet safety. The current four-year programme (2005-08) has a budget of €45 million to combat illegal and harmful internet content. It also covers other media, such as videos, and explicitly addresses the fight against racism and e-mail 'spam'.

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/1059 of 25 July 2006 is available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

The consultation and further information is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/saferinternet>

RESEARCH NEWS

EU to tackle oil spills

A team of EU researchers has decoded the genome of an oil degrading bacteria, *alcanivorax borkumensis*. It is hoped that this research will lead to the development of new, effective and environmentally friendly methods to clean up oil-contaminated waters. This bacteria is able to grow effectively and almost exclusively on the hydrocarbons found in crude oil. It is also able to degrade a wide range of hydrocarbons and detoxify arsenate, mercury, copper and heavy metals.

At the moment, the EC is harmonising the EU member states' oil pollution assistance in Lebanon. Approximately 15,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil was spilt into the seas following the bombing of a heating plant at Jiyet. The oil slicks have contaminated 150 miles of coastline, including the Byblos beach, a UNESCO world heritage site. The EU is providing assistance in the form of dispersants, booms, absorbents, skimmers and specialised boats, and other materials to assist the clean up operation. The EU's Joint Research Centre (JRC) is also providing the satellite imagery through an international charter on 'space and major disasters'.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from:
<http://www.nature.com/naturebiotechnology> and
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/leb_cy_2006.htm

Cracking the Earth's secrets

Using satellite images obtained by the European Space Agency's (ESA's) satellite Envisat, scientists from the UK, the US and Ethiopia have been able to follow and analyse a 60 kilometre crack that appeared in the East Africa Rift in Afar, Ethiopia, in September last year. Scientists believe that the tear could eventually lead to the formation of a new ocean, separating Ethiopia and Eritrea from the rest of Africa. Using satellite images from before and after the tear happened, the team of scientists determined that the 8-metre rift took just three weeks to develop. It is the first time that scientists have been able to use satellite data to analyse a spreading process such as this, and were able to show that the process happened suddenly, and not smoothly.

The images have also allowed scientists to determine that the tectonic plates split due to the injection of magma. The process, which is ongoing, began around 30 million years ago when lava separated the Arabian Peninsula from Africa and created the Red Sea. It is one of a few places on Earth where a continent is actively being separated by plate tectonic movements. The ESA is an inter-governmental organisation. It was funded in 1975, and currently has 17 Member States. The ESA co-operates closely with the EU, with future co-operation also foreseen in the context of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Available from the European Space Agency website at:
http://www.esa.int/esaEO/SEM14GBUQPE_index_0.html

Listening to volcanoes

European and Latin American scientists working together on the two EU funded projects, EGEE and EELA, have found a way to listen to volcanoes, and use the information to find out when volcanoes could erupt. In the process called 'sonification', the seismic data readings are collected digitally, and then transformed into audible sound waves. The information is processed using the grid systems GEANT2 and ALICE-RedCLARA, both projects funded under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6).

Audible representations then allow researchers to pick out patterns which are analysed and used to predict future activity by identifying similarities in eruption dynamics. The work has so far concentrated on the Sicilian volcano Mount Etna, and recently also on the volcano Tungurahua in Ecuador.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Further information is available at:
<http://istresults.cordis.lu/index.cfm/section/news/tpl/news/Briefs/briefs/ID/88139>

European satellite brings us closer to the Moon

The European Space Agency's SMART-1 satellite is due to complete its mission on 3 September when it will crash into the moon after a three-year journey, including 16

months of harvesting scientific results in orbit around the Moon. The satellite, which was originally launched into orbit around the Earth, made its own way to the Moon, a journey in this instance of around 100 million km using only 60 litres of fuel. The final stage of the mission, a controlled crash landing, will offer useful information as it provides European scientists with the chance to examine the impact in some detail. It is expected to produce a small crater of around three to ten metres in diameter.

As a result of the SMART-1 mission, scientists all over Europe and around the world now have the best resolution surface images ever from lunar orbit, as well as a better knowledge of the Moon's minerals. For the first time from orbit they have detected calcium and magnesium using an X-ray instrument. They have measured compositional changes from the central peaks of craters, volcanic plains and giant impact basins. SMART-1 has also studied impact craters, volcanic features, lava tubes and monitored the polar regions.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

ESA Press Release on SMART-1, available at:

http://www.esa.int/esaCP/Pr_30_2006_p_EN.html

More information on the ground based observation of the impact, available at:

http://www.esa.int/esaCP/SEMTU0Z7QQE_index_0.html

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CULTURE

Latest update on the next generation of education and training programmes

At a recent EU Competitiveness Council meeting, the Council of the EU adopted a common position on the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). This common position will now be forwarded to the EP for a second reading in the autumn. The LLP will run from 2007-13 with a budget of €6.97 billion. It is the successor to the existing Socrates, e-learning and related programmes, which ends in 2006. The LLP comprises four sub-programmes already existing within the current Socrates programme: Comenius (school education); Erasmus (higher education); Leonardo da Vinci, (vocational education and training); and Grundtvig (adult education). It will also include a 'transversal' programme incorporating four key activities (policy development, language learning, innovative approaches and dissemination of project results), plus a Jean Monnet programme to support action related to European integration, European institutions and associations.

The Competitiveness Council also reached a common position on the 'Youth in Action' programme, which will also be forwarded to the EP for a second reading. 'Youth in Action' is the successor to the current 'Youth' programme, and is aimed at providing young people in the 31 participating countries with opportunities for group exchanges and voluntary work, as well as supporting a range of activities and reinforcing co-operation in the youth field.

Further information

The Competitiveness Council conclusions can be found at:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/intm/90654.pdf

Lifelong Learning Programme website, available at:

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

Youth Programme website, available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html

Tempus: EC approves new university co-operation and structural measures

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 EC recently approved 110 new university co-operation projects and 61 structural measures under the Tempus programme.

The projects fall into three categories. Firstly, 'Joint European Projects' are innovative multilateral initiatives involving universities from a partner country, from an EU Member State and one other academic or non-academic partner in a different EU state. These projects aim to transfer knowledge from EU universities to institutions in the partner countries in the fields of curriculum development, university management and institution building. The second category, 'Structural and Complementary Projects' are short-term interventions designed to support national higher education reforms and strategic framework development. Projects address issues such as quality assurance, accreditation systems and good university management practice. Finally, 'Individual Mobility Grants' help staff in participating partner countries to take part in training and conferences abroad. They also assist European teachers to deliver training courses in partner countries. Three other Tempus calls for proposals will be organised in 2006 - for 'Structural and Complementary Measures' and for 'Individual Mobility Grants' (in October), and for 'Joint European Projects' (in December).

FURTHER INFORMATION

EC Press Release IP/06/998 of 17 July 2006 is available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Further information is available at:

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

UK group of the Marie Curie Fellowship Association reforms

The Marie Curie Fellows Association (MCFA) is the association of scientists who have been awarded Marie Curie Fellowships by the EC. With over 3000 members across all disciplines, they are involved in science policy discussions at European level, taking part as stakeholders in meetings, conferences and events. 'National groups' of the MCFA try to offer help and advice to Marie Curie Fellows in order to tackle problems related to their mobility in Europe and abroad. The UK group of the MCFA has recently been reformed, with a new Co-ordinator.

The MCFA feel that based on their own experiences, they understand the issues that mobile researchers face, and are working to improve the living and working conditions of Marie Curie Fellows. The MCFA organise local/regional/national meetings to gain feedback on the impact and implementation of Marie Curie actions, as well as offering a platform to Marie Curie Fellows to express their views and concerns. The UK group aims to improve their visibility, so have been actively contacting fellows in the UK, and their host institutions, to let them know who they are, what they do and how they can be contacted. The MCFA would like to encourage any current or previous MC Fellows to contact them if they would like to become involved, or would like further information.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The MCFA website is available at:

<http://www.mariecurie.org>, and the UK branch website at: <http://www.mariecurie.org/uk>

The MCFA UK National Group blog (which is in its testing phase) is at:

http://www.mariecurie.org/mcfa_template/index.php

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

EU-Canada agreement on higher education, training and youth 2006-13

At a recent Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting in Brussels, a decision was adopted approving the signature of an agreement with Canada, with a view to establishing a framework for co-operation in the fields of higher education, training and youth for the period 2006-2013. The general objectives of the agreement are to promote mutual understanding, including broader knowledge of their languages, cultures and institutions, and to improve the quality of human resources by facilitating the reciprocal acquisition of skills required to meet the challenges of the global knowledge-based economy.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC Press Release PRES/06/217 of 25 July 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

Estonia to advise on R&D in Georgia

A new co-operation programme, jointly initiated by the Representation of the EC in Georgia and the Archimedes Foundation in Estonia, has been launched to help develop the research and development (R&D) system in Georgia. The main aim of the programme is to assist the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science and the National Science Foundation of Georgia in defining a clear strategy and transparent policy for the modernisation of the overall R&D policy system in Georgia.

With Estonia's experience of the EU arena, and the strong potential for science and research in Georgia, the programme will increase the country's participation in EU R&D Framework Programmes in the future, and also elaborate recommendations to improve Georgian legislative framework in line with EU standards. At present, Georgia's science and technology base comprises around 110 research and technology organisations covering numerous scientific domains and employing some 12,000 people.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Further information is available (in Estonian and English) at:

<http://www.archimedes.ee>

EU-Mauritania: new fishing agreement highlights scientific co-operation

The EU has signed a fisheries agreement with Mauritania that underlines the importance of continuing scientific assessment in order to monitor the fish stocks and the ecosystem of Mauritanian waters. European Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Joe Borg, said 'this agreement, the biggest with an African country, is a major breakthrough. The new partnership approach will be of mutual benefit to the EU and Mauritania in terms of jobs, strengthened monitoring and control, conservation of resources in compliance with scientific assessment and environmental protection.'

The agreement provides for enhanced scientific co-operation between the EU and Mauritania to ensure the continued monitoring of fisheries resources. A joint scientific committee will be set up to implement an annual scientific programme aimed at improving knowledge of the stocks and the ecosystem, and the elaboration of an annual scientific report on the state of the resources covered by the agreement. The agreement also envisages the possibility of undertaking experimental research surveys to determine fishing possibilities and exploitation options while assuring conservation of the resources and the ecosystem.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

EC Release IP/06/1052 of 22 July 2006 available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid>

EU-Latin America: events on higher education co-operation

The Academic Co-operation Association (ACA) is an independent European organisation dedicated to the management, analysis and improvement of education and training co-operation within Europe, and also between Europe and other parts of the world. Its main focus is on higher education, but it also covers other education sectors, and training. They hold a series of events, the 'European Policy Seminars', which aim to familiarise higher education institutions with the latest developments in European policy and programmes in education, training and research.

The next event will be held in Brussels on 13 October 2006 and is entitled 'co-operation in higher education between Europe and other world regions: Latin America'. Questions to be covered at the event include: what is happening in Latin America's higher education systems and economies?; how could the EU, its member states and universities best co-operate with their counterparts in Latin America?; what are possible models and tools to foster this co-operation?; what is being done, and what are the perspectives for the future?; how does bilateral co-operation fit in the European context?; and what works for European institutions, from strategic co-operation and targeted recruitment to the setting up of specific regional programmes?

FURTHER INFORMATION

Registration is open online (with an early bird offer until 15 September) at:

<http://www.aca-secretariat.be/08events/Seminars/EU-LatinAmerica.htm>

EVENTS and AWARDS

EC to hold public hearing on strategic EU energy review

The 'European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy' Green Paper, which was launched in March 2006, will be adopted in January 2007. The EC has been holding an online open consultation on this paper, which closes on 24 September 2006. In addition, the EC is now also organising a public hearing on 22 September 2006 in Brussels. Online registration is open until 10 September 2006 and attendance is free of charge.

Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, will open the event, which will be focused on discussions about what the content of the strategic energy review should be, and will be led by panels of key players from European institutions and organisations, the energy market and the academic world. The first session entitled 'the EU's energy mix and achieving the objectives of sustainability, competitiveness and security of supply' will debate the advantages and drawbacks of different energy sources to ensure that the EU's energy mix best achieves the objectives of sustainability, competitiveness and security of supply. The second session, 'a competitive and secure European internal energy market for the benefit of the EU's citizens and industry' will focus on ways to improve the transparency and predictability of the internal energy market and the necessary investments needed to ensure the continuous provision of energy at affordable prices.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Energy Green Paper, online consultation, and details of the event in Brussels are at: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/green-paper-energy/index_en.htm

Workshop: molecular targets for cancer

The EC's DG Research, together with the Centre de Recherche Public Santé (CRP Santé) in Luxemburg, is organising a workshop on 6-7 October 2006 on 'Molecular Targets for Cancer'.

The workshop programme will cover four main areas: molecular targets in basic research; preclinical evaluation of molecular targets; clinical evaluation of molecular targets; added value and commercialization of molecular targets. Each session will include presentations from international speakers and opportunities for discussion. The workshop will conclude with a round-table discussion on the challenges of developing novel molecular targets into applications. The aim of this workshop is to identify possible bottlenecks, and to put forward solutions that boost the commercial value of potentially innovative findings on molecular targets, emanating from European research on cancer.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Including the programme and registration details are available from the following website: <http://www.ccrn.lu/cancer>

IST Helsinki conference – registration and networking sessions

The '2006 IST (Information Society Technology) Conference' takes place in Helsinki on 21-23 November 2006, and is hosted by the Finnish Presidency of the EU. The programme focuses on the importance of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in a European context, and on research to be carried out in the ICT thematic priority in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The conference will also include a series of networking sessions and workshops. The final workshops will be chosen on 15 September, and until then anyone registered on the conference website can comment on the proposals for this final workshop. Comments will be then be taken into account when selecting the final workshops.

The IST Conference is expected to be widely attended by participants from all over Europe. People interested in attending are therefore encouraged to register to attend the conference sooner rather than later, and in particular, to book accommodation as soon as possible, as hotel capacity in Helsinki will be stretched during the Finnish Presidency of

the EU. The conference organisers have reserved a limited number of rooms for participants, full details can be found on the conference website.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Further information, including the conference programme and registration:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/istevent/2006/conference/index_en.htm

EU Presidency to hold events on Manufuture and on biorefinery research

The Finnish Presidency of the EU will be hosting two research and development (R&D) related events in October 2006. The first, the fourth annual Manufuture conference, will be taking place in Tampere, Finland, from 8-10 October, and is by invitation only. It will be attended by major stakeholders from academia, industry, government and research institutes. In line with the aims of the European Manufuture Technology Platform, the event will focus on the future of manufacturing in Europe. It will also enable delegates to discuss ideas on the issues relating to the implementation of Manufuture in FP7. The second day will play host to a series of parallel workshops covering topics such as knowledge-based engineering and ICT for manufacturing.

The 'European Conference on Biorefinery Research' will be taking place in Helsinki from 19-20 October, also under the auspices of the Finnish Presidency of the EU. The conference aims to provide a forum for a technical review of state of the art biomass fractionation and conversion technologies. The European Technology Platforms on bio-fuels, white biotechnology, the forest-based sector and on 'plants for the future' will be presented at specific sessions. It will be attended by high-level participants from the spheres of research, science and technology, industry and policy making from all over Europe.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

More details of the conference in Tampere are available at:

<http://www.manufuture2006.fi>

Further details of the conference in Helsinki are available at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/energy/gp/gp_events/biorefinary/article_3764_en.htm

Information on the Manufuture Technology Platform is available at:

<http://www.manufuture.org>

European Technology Platform for nanoelectronics events

The European Technology Platform for Nanoelectronics (ENIAC) will hold a joint workshop on their 'Strategic Research Agenda', on 22 September 2006, in Switzerland. Participation is open to all interested parties.

ENIAC will also hold its first annual forum on 30 November in Monaco. This aims to give an insight into ENIAC's activities, the latest on their Strategic Research Agenda and how it ties to the EC's seventh Framework Programme (FP7), and will also cover future developments of ENIAC towards a 'Joint Technology Initiative' under FP7. Other items on the agenda include nanoelectronics networking in the world, and involvement of small to medium enterprises (SMEs). The event will be organised in conjunction with the MEDEA+ Forum, which is a pan-European programme for co-operative R&D in microelectronics.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The ENIAC website is available at:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/eniac>

The MEDEA+ website is available at:

<http://www.medeaplus.org>

Rail and waterborne transport events

The UK National Contact Point (NCP) for 'Surface Transport' in FP6 is organising two conferences on rail transport and waterborne transport in FP7 in October. The first conference, on rail research in FP7, will take place on 9 October 2006. The conference will consist of specific presentations, issues including the rail research scene in the UK, the need for research and innovation in the rail sector within the UK, and the need for UK collaboration in European research projects. In both events, the UK NCP for Surface Transport will be issuing guidance to delegates wishing to participate in FP7, and there will also be time for delegates to develop potential ideas for collaboration.

The second conference, on waterborne transport, will include presentations on the vision, Strategic Research Agenda and implementation plan of the Waterborne European Technology Platform. The presentations will be given by the EC's DG Research, UK officials and those who have been involved in projects in the past. In both conferences, it is expected that some indication will be given as to what the priorities for the first calls of FP7 will be in relation to rail and waterborne transport.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Registration at both events is available at:

<http://www.fp6.org.uk/events.html>

For more information on the UK National Contact Point for Surface Transport:

<http://fp6uk.ost.gov.uk/page.aspx?SP=1285>

EMBL science and society conference

The seventh joint European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) science and society conference will be taking place in Heidelberg, Germany, on 3-4 November 2006. Entitled 'genes, brain/mind and behaviour', the conference will cover areas of research in the life sciences, the brain and bioethics. The main issues discussed at the conference are likely to be the mass of knowledge currently coming out of research in neurosciences and the potential this has for different applications, and the social, legal and bioethical implications of treatment and manipulation of the mind.

The two-day programme is divided into the following specific sessions: 'genes and behaviour', which concerns a fast-growing area of biology research where recent research has drawn links between stretches of DNA and behavioural patterns, whilst also finding that diverse cultural and environmental factors have a role to play too; 'from genes to brain/mind', which will be covering issues such as the relationship between biology and neurophysiology of the brain, and the nature of the consciousness; 'the mind/body shop: behavioural drugs and new neurotechnologies'; and 'from 'genetics' to 'neuroethics'?'. In addition, there will be a further two panel sessions, as well as an EMBO award for communication in the life sciences.

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.embl.org/aboutus/sciencesociety/conferences/2006/scope06.html>

International conference and book on peer review's present and future state

The European Heads of Research Councils (EuroHORCs), together with the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the Czech Science Foundation are organising an international conference entitled 'Peer Review - Its Present and Future State' in Prague on 12-13 October 2006. It will bring together research policy makers and managers, as well as experts in evaluation processes from Europe and from around the world.

The conference aims to analyse contemporary trends in the evaluation of research, to examine how the peer review process is understood and performed, and consider its future modifications in response to the requirements of research in the 21st century. The conference will focus on peer review as performed in funding agencies and evaluation bodies. However, attention will also be paid to the peer review process for publishing scientific results in journals. The conference will be structured around three main themes: assessment and selection of grant proposals; evaluation of institutions and programmes; and the peer review process in scientific publishing. Registration for the conference has already closed (15 June 2006) with the exception of representatives from EuroHORCs and ESF member organisations, but it is expected that the proceedings of the conference will be published in book form.

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.pragueforscience.cz>

ESF conference on new technology and medical decision making

A European Science Foundation (ESF) conference on new technology and medical decision making will be taking place at Salzau Castle (near Kiel) in Germany from 4-9 October 2006. This is one of a series of forthcoming conferences on the global health economy being organised by the ESF. The objective of this conference is to build international and interdisciplinary networks between researchers involved in medical decision making. Young researchers with backgrounds in medicine, economics and other related disciplines are invited to apply for the conference and contribute their own research findings for short talks and viewing sessions. Travel costs will be awarded to the best young applicants.

The programme will be based around five main themes, each consisting of invited presentations and short talks on: trends in medical technology – focusing devices, technological trajectories, and forecasting; the science of medical decision making – producing and using information for efficient risk management; medical infrastructure, insurance, and the diffusion of innovation; methods for estimating the causal effect of medical interventions from observational data; and priority setting, health technology assessment, and research investments.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Full details including a draft programme and registration form are available at:

http://www.esf.org/esf_genericpage.php?section=10&language=0&genericpage=2552&shortcut=1

Nano and microtechnologies in food and healthfood

A conference on nano and microtechnologies in the food and healthfood industries will be taking place in Amsterdam on 25-26 October 2006. The conference aims to showcase the applications of micro and nanotechnologies to the food industry in Europe and will specifically address the following aspects: nano and microtechnologies in food processing, monitoring, labelling, storage and distribution; using nano and microtechnologies to meet the challenges of food for nutrition and food for health; new techniques and technologies for rapid safety testing and the prevention of food-borne disease; regulatory and safety issues related to the use of new technology; and the role of nano and microtechnologies in food-related health issues and disease avoidance.

The conference is being organised by the Institute of Nanotechnology and Micro and Nanotechnology Commercialization Education Foundation (MANCEF). Speakers will include representatives of the EC, government departments of various countries, leading universities, research institutes and the private sector. The conference is open to participants from all relevant stakeholder groups.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information and registration is available at:
http://www.nano.org.uk/conferences/food_health

Wind power workshops and report

On 25 October 2006, a 'workshop on best practice in the use of short-term forecasting of wind power', will be held in Delft, the Netherlands. It will be organised by the POW'WOW (Prediction Of Waves, Wakes and Offshore Wind) FP6 project.

On October 26-28 2006, following on from this conference, the 6th 'international workshop on large-scale integration of wind power and transmission networks for offshore wind farms', which will focus on technical issues, will also be taking place in Delft. It provides an international forum to discuss the technical and economic issues of the large-scale integration of wind power and the recent advances in AC and DC technologies; innovative ideas and present results from ongoing research; stimulate interdisciplinary thinking between wind energy and power transmission industries, as well as universities; and to identify subjects requiring more research efforts. At the event, the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) will also present its recently launched report on the large-scale integration of wind power.

On 7-8 November 2006 in Brussels, the EWEA will also hold a special topic policy conference on 'large scale integration of wind energy'. With its focus on policy issues, this event is complementary to the more technical Delft meetings. This conference is supported by the EC, and is aimed at academic institutions, developers and industry.

FURTHER INFORMATION

On the 'workshop on best practice in the use of short-term forecasting of wind power':
<http://powwow.risoe.dk/BestPracticeWorkshop.htm>

6th international workshop on large-scale integration of wind power and transmission networks for offshore wind farms':

<http://www.offshoreworkshop.org>

European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) 'special topic conference on large scale integration of wind energy' website at:

<http://www.ewea.org/index.php?id=233>

European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) website, including the latest news on wind power research and policy, and their strategic research agenda, is at:

<http://www.ewea.org>

EuroBio 2006 conference

The Paris Region Economic Development Agency, in partnership with other institutions, is organising a conference 'EuroBio 2006', which will take place in Paris from 25-27 October 2006. The conference is aimed at all key players in the bio-sciences and bio-industries in Europe (healthcare, agri-food, and environment). The event includes a conference programme linked to a partnering event; an exhibition of the leaders in these sectors; and a 'Job Fair' addressed to the new generation of young entrepreneurs and scientists. Reduced registration fees are available before 8 September 2006.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Conference website with full details on the event:

<http://www.eurobio2006.com/conferences.php>

NEW PUBLICATIONS and ONLINE RESOURCES

COST launches electronic newsletter

The COST office (European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research) has launched an electronic newsletter to complement the existing news section of its website. The first issue covers July and August, and outlines some of the reforms that COST has recently undergone, such as a first COST 'Open Call' and a change to its structure of scientific domains. The COST Open Call was introduced to improve transparency and to make the COST actions more competitive.

The two stage COST Open Call received over 800 applications at the first stage deadline, with a large number of proposals for the 'Individuals, Society, Culture and Health' (148 proposals) and 'Earth System Science and Environmental Management' (113 proposals) domains.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

COST Newsletter, available at:

http://www.cost.esf.org/uploads/media/newsletter1_01.pdf

Details of the COST Open Call, available at:

<http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php?id=441>

UK Patent Office's European and international work

The UK Patent Office recently launched a new publication, entitled 'The Patent Office Annual Review, Our Story: Highlights of 2005', which details the UK Patent Office's involvement in European and international Intellectual Property (IP) policy. This new 'Annual Review' will supplement the more formal 'Annual Report', allowing the patent office to discuss its intellectual property and innovation activities in a more accessible format, and in more detail than in the Annual Report. It includes easy-to-read facts, figures and statistics. The report also includes information about its new business model 'A Patent Office for the 21st Century'.

The review covers the European/international dimension to the UK Patent Office's work including: an IP perspective on the UK's EU Presidency in 2005; UK involvement in negotiations to amend EC regulation number 2869/95 on the fees payable to the office for harmonisation in the international market; work during the presidency of G8, including the 2005 Gleneagles Summit, on international actions against counterfeiting and piracy; work on increased co-operation with the African Regional Industrial Property Organisation (APIRO); and a section on international IP co-operation. The UK Patent Office also took part in European Patent Office (EPO) strategy debate, covering questions such as 'should national offices work on behalf of the EPO?'

FURTHER INFORMATION

Press Release on launch of the Annual Review:

<http://www.patent.gov.uk/media/pressrelease/2006/1007.htm>

'Annual Review, Our Story: Highlights of 2005' can be downloaded from:

<http://www.patent.gov.uk/about/reports/review2005.pdf>

More information on the European Patent Office strategy debate can be found at:

http://ac.european-patent-office.org/strategy_debate/documentation/index.en.php

LIFE website updated - new thematic and country summaries now available

The EU's LIFE scheme contributes to the implementation, development and enhancement of EU environmental policy and legislation as well as the integration of the environment into other EU policies. LIFE also supports the development of new solutions to environmental problems facing the EU. Updated thematic summaries of LIFE-Environment projects are now available on the LIFE website. The most relevant and recent LIFE-Environment projects (from 1999 onwards) have been grouped in 14 thematic areas (waste incineration, pig manure, tanneries, dioxins, ports, wine, etc). For each theme, a summary document is available that includes links to further information such as layman's reports, project websites and web summaries. The most recent thematic dossiers to be created and updated are those on textiles and hunting. The full list of thematic summaries can be found here.

In addition, information about LIFE projects by country can now also be found on the LIFE website. The country summaries give overviews of funds spent, co-funding, managing team contact details and lists of projects.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The LIFE website is available at:

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

The full list of thematic summaries is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/projectsbythemes.htm>

The list of country dossiers is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/projectsbycountry.htm>

OzoneWeb enables online tracking of air quality and pollution

Ozone Web, a new internet tool, was recently unveiled by the European Environment Agency (EEA). This near real-time tool offers users the opportunity to monitor and track ground level ozone on a European scale, for the first time. The system draws on data from more than 500 monitoring stations. Users can monitor and track ozone pollution incidents at pan-European scale or check levels in their own or another region. The website also provides background information for citizens on ozone pollution and its

health implications, because although ozone high in the atmosphere (10-50km) protects us from the sun's harmful rays, ozone at ground level on the other hand when it is in high concentrations, presents one of the most prominent air pollution problems in Europe and is a health hazard. It can irritate airways, causing breathing difficulties and damaging lungs after only a few hours of exposure. Up to 30 per cent of Europe's urban population is exposed to ozone concentrations above the threshold levels set by the EU. Ozone pollution is responsible for as many as 20,000 deaths in Europe every year.

Separately, the EC has also recently published a newsletter which has details of the EU's air quality policy, as well as information about projects in this area funded under the EU's LIFE programme.

FURTHER INFORMATION

European Environment Agency Press Release:

<http://org.eea.europa.eu/documents/newsreleases/Ozone2006-en>

The EEA ozone maps are available at:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/maps/ozone/welcome>

LIFE newsletter focussing on air pollution projects and policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/lifeflash/lifenews07_06.htm#breathe

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

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

	<p>technological laboratory in support of EU policies, with a range of institutes and research activities. http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int</p>
MEDIA	<p>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</p>
Mobility	<p>Human Resources and Mobility Programme (FP6) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/activities.htm</p>
NATO	<p>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation http://www.nato.int</p>
NMP	<p>Nanotechnology, Materials and Production Priority (FP6) http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/activities.htm</p>
PHARE	<p>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</p>
RTD	<p>Research and Technological Development</p>
SDGC	<p>Sustainable Development and Global Change Priority (FP6) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/activities.htm</p>
SME	<p>Small and Medium sized Enterprises</p>
TACIS	<p>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</p>
Treaty of Amsterdam	<p>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</p>
UUK	<p>Universities UK (formerly the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals) http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk</p>
White Paper	<p>White Papers are documents containing proposals for Community action in a specific area. They often follow a Green Paper.</p>

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