

European RTD Insight

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News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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EU Policy

Next round of FP7 calls open

The majority of 2008 FP7 calls recently opened on 30 November. All of the supporting documentation needed to submit an application, such as the work programmes and guides for applicants for each topic, are available on the EU's Cordis website. The first call to open for 2008 was the Marie Curie Co-fund scheme, which is open for national and regional funding agencies. The scheme opened on 16 November and has a deadline of 13 March 2008. Calls within the Co-operation pillar of FP7 were opened on 30 November for the following themes: Food; Agriculture; Fisheries and Biotechnology; Nanosciences; Nanotechnologies; Materials and New Production Technologies; Energy; Environment; and Transport.

In the Marie Curie pillar of FP7 the following calls opened on 30 November: Industry Academia Pathways and Partnerships (IAPPs); Researcher's night; the International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES); the European Reintegration Grant; and the International Reintegration Grant. The call for the European Research Council's Advanced Grant also opened on 30 November. There will be three deadlines in 2008, depending on which panel the proposal is being submitted to. The deadline for the physical sciences and engineering panel is 28 February 2008, social sciences and humanities closes on 18 March and life sciences closes on 22 April. Several calls within the Capacities pillar of FP7 also opened on 30 November.

However, not all themes and areas within FP7 have opened calls at this time. In many cases, such as the space and security themes of FP7, there will be no further calls opening until the 2009 work programme is formally published.

Further information

A full list of all of the calls that have opened, including all of the supporting documentation, is available from: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm>

2007 Galileo call opens

The 2007 Galileo call was formally opened at a launch conference in Brussels in November, which was attended by over 600 stakeholders. The current call is managed by the GNSS Supervisory Authority (GSA) and will close on 29 February 2008. The call topics are divided into the following four activity areas: exploiting the full potential; creating the tools and creating the appropriate environment; adapting receivers to requirements and upgrading core technologies; and supporting infrastructure evolution. A mixture of collaborative projects, support actions and tenders will be used.

The funding for the call comes from the Transport theme of FP7. Essentially, it is looking to fund new applications that can be developed to make use of the current and future satellite navigation systems. Currently, the standard system is the GPS system. The development of EU's own Galileo system, which is a separate project to the current open Galileo call, has run into a series of problems over the last few years. A decision was recently taken by the European Council and EP on where the additional finances now needed to fund the project will come from.

Further information

Further details are available on the GSA website at:

<http://www.gsa.europa.eu/go/news/fp7-first-call-launch>

Political agreement reached on the European Institute of Technology (EIT)

At a meeting of the Competitiveness Council in late November, ministers reached agreement on the EC's proposal for the European Institute of Technology. The next step is for the EP to formally reach agreement on the EC proposal, during the second reading of the proposal. The agreement reached by ministers will see the EIT renamed to the 'European Institute of Innovation and Technology'. The EIT will have a Governing Board consisting of 18 appointed members, and four representative members. The first appointed Governing Board Members will be selected by an Identification Committee to be set up by the EC.

In the initial phase, the EIT will consist of two - three 'Knowledge and Innovation Communities' (KICs), each consisting of at least three legal entities from two different Member States. The Council of Ministers text suggests that the subjects for the first Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) could include climate change, renewable energy and the next generation of information and communication technologies, but leaves the final decision to the Governing Board. With agreement in Council of Ministers, final agreement on the EIT proposal is expected to be reached in 2008. In a separate meeting, agreement has also been reached on the budget for the EIT and the satellite navigation system Galileo, for 2008.

Further information

Further information on the EIT is available at:

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

ERC publishes updated information

The European Research Council (ERC) has recently published a revised version of the 'ERC Rules for the submission of proposals and the related evaluation, selection and award procedures relevant to the Ideas Specific Programme'. The new version includes a new annex regarding rules for reimbursement of travel, subsistence and other expenses for Principal Investigators (PIs) invited for an interview.

In addition, the Scientific Council (ScC) of the ERC published the draft work programme for the Advanced Grants on their website in mid-November. This was superseded by the formal work programme that was published when the call formally opened on 30 November. In mid-November the ERC had also published the closing dates for the Advanced Grants and the list of panels that would be used for evaluation. A one-stage application submission process will be used for the Advanced Grant, with a two-stage evaluation process. In total, 25 panels will be used, which fit into one of the following areas: physical sciences and engineering (PE); life sciences (LS); and social sciences and humanities (SH).

Further information

The ERC website including the work programme, further details of the call and the updated rules for submission are available at: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm>

Start of the ITER agreement

The ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) agreement, signed on 26 November 2006, entered into force on 24 October 2007. The start of this agreement has been authorised by the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA). The ITER project, an international collaborative research project on an unprecedented scale, aims to recreate the fusion reactions that power the sun and the stars. Fusion uses an abundant fuel (a type of hydrogen), available everywhere, and does not produce greenhouse gas emissions. Unlike current 'nuclear fission' technology, fusion is inherently safe with no possibility of 'runaway reactions' and it also has no long-lasting radioactive waste to be passed on to future generations.

There are seven ITER partners, including the EU, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, India and the United States. These partners have agreed to jointly co-ordinate the project, each of the partners using their own industrial and research organisations to develop and construct the various component parts needed for the reactor. As ITER will be constructed in Cadarache, France, and Fusion for Energy has its headquarters in Barcelona, Spain, the EU will contribute around half of the components. The EU adopted the Agreement on 5 February 2007. The EU's membership is based on the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community.

Further information

EC Press Release IP/07/1586 of 24 October 2007 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Industry priorities for food research published

The European Technology Platform (ETP) 'Food for Life' recently released its Strategic Research Agenda (SRA), which is meant to guide research and technology development in Europe's agro-industries. Food for Life was established with the support of the EC and the Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the European Union (CIAA), aiming to develop a roadmap, help pool resources at national and EU level, and galvanise support from private sector and venture capital firms.

The first report, 'ETP Food for Life vision for 2020 and beyond', was published in 2005 and provided an overarching future strategy. The second and most recent report, 'ETP Strategic Research Agenda', was launched on 13 September 2007. The SRA describes the priority themes for research, communication, training and knowledge transfer that are considered necessary to stimulate and underpin innovation in the European food and drink sector. The SRA takes into account wide-ranging national, regional and web consultations undertaken between April 2006 and January 2007, followed by further deliberation within the ETP Food for Life Board, Operational Committee and individual Working Groups. The third report, the 'Implementation Plan', is due to be published in 2008 and will outline the activities required to achieve the Food for Life vision and strategy.

Further information

The 'Food for Life' website is available at: <http://etp.ciaa.eu/asp/home/welcome.asp>

New nanoelectronics R&D programme

It has been announced that a new programme will be the follow up to MEDEA+, a European-wide collaborative research programme centred on microelectronics and part of the EUREKA project. The MEDEA+ programme supported 77 projects, involving 20,000 person-years and around 450 partner organisations. The results of the projects included innovations within a number of areas, such as automotive and traffic control, broadband communications, secure society, energy saving and healthcare. The new CATRENE public-private partnership will ensure the continued development of European expertise in semiconductor technology and applications.

The CATRENE (Cluster for Application and Technology Research in Europe) will have two novel features: the Lighthouse Project, to address major socio-economic needs (such as transportation, healthcare, security, energy and entertainment) and a new structure that will focus on large application markets, identified in a roadmap of required technologies. CATRENE will start on 1 January 2008 and it will last four years. It is also extendable by a further four years. It will operate under the EUREKA programme. Commercial participants in EUREKA projects can get half their costs paid by their national governments, while academic institutions can get up to 75 per cent of their eligible costs paid.

Further information

Further details are available from:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/headlines/news/article_07_11_12_en.html&item=Infocentre&artid=5553

The CATRENE website is available at: <http://www.catrene.org/>

Potočnik addresses high-level conference on nanotechnologies

Janez Potočnik, the European Commissioner for Science and Research, spoke at a recent conference in Portugal entitled 'Nanosciences and nanotechnologies: opportunities and responsibility', which was held as part of the Portuguese Presidency of the EU. The event took place in Braga on 19 – 22 November. An International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory was launched at the same time as the conference. Potočnik stressed how nanosciences and nanotechnologies can make significant contributions to major global challenges such as tackling threats to the environment, preventing climate change and making better use of resources.

Potočnik stressed the progress being made in certain areas, but indicated that more was still to be done. The nanotechnologies action plan for Europe for 2005-09 highlights the need to increase investment, both public and private; create the necessary interdisciplinary infrastructures and train skilled human resources; foster industrial innovation; and ensure that nanotechnologies are developed and applied safely. Potočnik stressed that this must continue into the future. The EC is currently developing a code of conduct for responsible nanotechnology research, which follows on from a consultation held in the summer. In the consultation 88 per cent of respondents welcomed the idea of a code of conduct, with 86 per cent saying they would adopt such a code when developed. The code itself will try to build a consensus around the issue of nanotechnology research in Europe and is likely to be ready in spring 2008.

Further information

EC Press Release SPEECH/07/733 of 21 November is available from: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Study on researchers' salaries compares EU with rest of world

The EC recently carried out a study of researchers' salaries and observed that those in the EU earn less than counterparts in the US, Australia, Japan and India. It appears that there are also huge variations across the EU, from €800 in Bulgaria to €6500 in Switzerland, as well as significant differences between male and female researchers. There were also large differences in the way that salaries increase with experience and career progress.

EU Commissioner for Research, Janez Potočnik, highlighted that such differences were an obstacle to the free movement of researchers across Europe. The salary gaps also meant that some of the best EU researchers were seeking opportunities elsewhere as a result. The survey had responses from nearly 10,000 researchers at various stages of their careers, and included details of gross and net take home pay.

Further information

The full report can be downloaded at:

http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/pdf/final_report.pdf

Launch of the Nuclear Energy Forum

On 26 November 2007 the Nuclear Energy Forum was inaugurated in Bratislava, Slovakia. The forum is supposed to serve as the first ever channel for EU-wide dialogue on the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear energy. The platform brings together relevant stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and risks of using nuclear energy in member states' low carbon energy mix.

Currently, 15 member states have nuclear power stations and some of these countries use nuclear power as a main source of electricity. Altogether, around one third of electricity and 15 per cent of the EU bloc's overall energy is of nuclear origin. Despite the increasing recognition of the benefits of nuclear energy, many countries have safety concerns. Many EU member states would like to see a solution to the problem of radioactive waste. Furthermore, the latest EU-wide opinion poll shows that 53 per cent of Europeans think that the risks posed by nuclear energy are greater than the advantages it offers. When asked about specific aspects of nuclear energy, 69 per cent of Europeans agreed with the principle that it decreases energy dependency and 50 per cent agreed with the idea that it ensures lower and more stable energy prices. EU energy commissioner Andris Piebalgs, speaking to the forum in Bratislava, emphasised that safety must never be compromised.

Further information

Further information is available at: <http://euobserver.com/9/25220/?rk=1>

EU Commissioner for Environment highlights key challenges

Addressing the World Science Forum, EU Commissioner Stavros Dimas referred to the pressures of an increasing world population, man-made global warming causing irreversible damage and the destruction of natural areas and ecosystem services at an alarming rate, which actually form the Earth's life support system. Underlying this is the fact that we are consuming our natural resources at an unsustainable rate, with the global population exceeding biological capacity by 25 per cent and this situation actually worsening.

Such a shortage of resources is now leading to international tensions and instability. Science must play its role in establishing the facts for policy development and help develop the technological innovations to dramatically improve the efficiency of natural resource usage. Two main challenges to be addressed by a new Panel for Sustainable Resource Management, set up by the UN Environment Programme, should include effective metal recycling schemes and efforts to ensure that biofuels are sustainable.

Further information

The activities and further details of the Panel for Sustainable Resource Management are available at: <http://www.unep.fr/pc/sustain/initiatives/resourcepanel/>

Responding to global challenges

A workshop on global challenges in research provided the EC with a chance to consult key stakeholders on the international issues raised in their recent green paper on the European Research Area. The workshop, which is the first in a series, included a range of speakers on topics such as health, environment, agriculture and food, energy sustainability and socio-economic development. The aim was to identify important global challenges for research, see what remains to be done in those areas, discuss implementation and appropriate mechanisms, identify the actors and seek a consensus on co-ordinated actions where Europe could have a key role.

The meeting was chaired by Mary Minch who is the Director of international co-operation in the EC's Research Directorate General. Presentations are available online for the 'Responding to Global Challenges: the role of Europe and of International Science and Technology Co-operation' workshop held in Brussels 4-5 October 2007.

Further information

Further information is available from:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?lg=en&pg=wkshp_4-5_10_2007

European strategic energy technology plan and energy mapping exercises launched

In January 2007, the EC proposed a new integrated energy and climate change package aiming to cut emissions. The proposals set a series of ambitious targets on greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy and also aim to create a true internal market for energy and strengthen effective regulation.

Now, as follow-up to this, the EC has presented its strategic energy technology plan (SET-plan). This aims to accelerate the long-term availability of energy technologies and simultaneously engage European industry in the process, with the aim that Europe will gain world leadership in this sector. It should address current structural weaknesses within the energy technology and innovation process, such as long lead times for new technologies to mass market, locked-in infrastructure investments, diverse market incentives and network connection challenges. In addition, the market take-up of new energy technologies is also hampered by the nature of the technologies themselves, because they are generally more expensive than the technologies they replace.

The EC's own Joint Research Centre has also recently published two mapping exercises to accompany the SET-plan, firstly mapping Europe's energy technology potential, and secondly mapping Europe's energy research capacity which provides (in the public and private sectors) in EU member states as well as a comparison to Japan and the USA.

Further information

EC press releases IP/07/29, MEMO/07/6, MEMO/07/7, MEMO/07/8 and MEMO/07/13 of 10 January 2007 and MEMO/07/469 of 19 November 2007 are available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Additional related documents can be found at:

http://europa.eu/press_room/presspacks/energy/index_en.htm

IPCC highlights urgent need for negotiations on emission cuts

At an important conference on climate in Brussels recently, EC Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas welcomed the synthesis report just published by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which summarises key conclusions of the IPCC's fourth assessment report released earlier this year. Dimas stressed that the report was a stark warning that the world must act fast to slash greenhouse gas emissions if we are to prevent climate change from reaching devastating levels. On a more positive note though, deep emission cuts are both technologically feasible and economically affordable. The synthesis report is seen as vital reading for decision-makers everywhere ahead of the UN climate change conference in Bali starting in December, and efforts will be needed by all major emitters to control climate change before it is too late.

The report confirms the analysis underlying the EU climate and energy package presented by the EC in January 2007 and endorsed by the European Council in March. The IPCC was awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize jointly with former US Vice-President Al Gore 'for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change'. Research projects funded under the EU's Framework Programmes on research, as well as under research programmes by individual Member States, have contributed significantly to the IPCC reports. Out of the 275 lead authors of the IPCC report, 110 come from European countries.

Further Information

EC Press Releases IP/07/1716 of 17 November 2007 and SPEECH/07/721 of 19 November 2007 are available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

The IPCC website is available at: <http://www.ipcc.ch>

Competitive performance of EU economy has improved

The European Competitiveness Report 2007 has outlined the improved performance in 2006 and underlined the central role that productivity plays as a source for growth. The report also highlights the contribution of several economic sectors, especially those relating to the micro-economic pillar of the Lisbon Strategy. Economic reforms to enhance the environment for business, facilitate structural change, and the reallocation of resources is crucial, as is competition through trade openness and a reinforced single market.

Another crucial area for economic performance is research and innovation, as well as training and education initiatives. The EC has estimated that the impact of reaching the EU target of three per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), spent on research and development, would be an increase in productivity of 0.8 per cent. However, additional progress is required in this area with a particular challenge being how to induce sufficient private R&D spending. For the EU-25 the latest figures show that 1.75 per cent of GDP is currently spent on R&D with a target by 2010 of 2.75 per cent. However, the situation varies widely within the EU with Sweden currently at over 3.75 per cent (with a target of four per cent), to Slovakia which is currently at 0.5 per cent (with a target of 1.75 per cent). The UK currently spends about 1.75 per cent of GDP on research and development and has a target of 2.5 per cent.

Further information

EC Press Release MEMO/07/445 of 5 November 2007 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Research News

Development of new accelerator facility

On 7 November 2007 representatives from 15 countries signed a joint communiqué giving the approval for the construction of the Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research (FAIR). The construction of the facility will cost €1.2 billion. The aim of FAIR is to support researchers in answering some fundamental questions of physics.

The accelerator in the facility will generate antiproton and ion beams of an unparalleled intensity and quality, while an underground double-ring accelerator of 1,100 metres in circumference will be at the heart of FAIR, with existing accelerators serving as pre-accelerators. The purpose of this structure is to enable scientists to address the mystery of why the universe is almost completely devoid of antimatter, while there is matter everywhere. Construction of the facility is expected to start in 2008-09 and to be completed in 2015 at the earliest. Over 2,500 scientists all over the world have been working on the development and planning of the new accelerator and experimental facilities since 2003. As the facility will be situated in Darmstadt, Germany, the main share of the costs (75 per cent) will be born by Germany. The remaining 25 per cent of the costs will be contributed by the current partner countries, namely China, Finland, France, Georgia, UK, India, Italy, Austria, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Slovenia and Spain.

Further information

Further information about FAIR is available at: http://www.gsi.de/fair/overview/info/index_e.html

EC conference 'Towards a post-carbon society'

On the 24 October 2007 the EC organised a major conference entitled 'Towards a post-carbon society: European research on economic incentives and social behaviour'. The conference explored a number of key issues from a variety of perspectives, including macro-economic and environmental issues, and the behaviour of individuals. EU Science and Research Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, opened the conference after which the Deputy Director-General, Jose Manuel Silva Rodriguez, referred to the ongoing work related to this area of 15 European Technology Platforms and 14 ERA-NETs, as well as dedicated topics under the FP7 Co-operation pillar.

Speakers from the International Energy Agency, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research and the European Environment Agency provided updates on the evidence provided in recent reports, such as the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change and insight into the scale and scope of problems faced. Policies proposed to combat climate change included changes to urban planning and patterns of behaviour. Speakers later on in the programme looked at more detailed issues, but it became increasingly clear that a range of actions is required at the same time, including management of energy supply and demand. Speakers were inclined to disagree on the appropriate role of nuclear research.

Further information

The conference website is available at: <http://postcarbonsociety.teamwork.fr/index.php>

What future for existing Networks of Excellence?

A group of Networks of Excellence (NoEs) funded under Framework Programme Six (FP6) recently organised a seminar to explore issues around sustainability of Networks of Excellence. The event included participation from the EC, the EP and Networks of Excellence from different FP6 priorities.

The event provided an opportunity to share best practice, explore issues of sustainability, and exchange ideas with the EC. The Networks of Excellence have also issued an opinion paper which calls on the EC to reconfirm their commitment to NoEs and to provide further funding for existing networks of excellence.

The EC was represented by Mr Etienne Magnien, Acting Director, DG Research. Mr Magnien highlighted that the EC is setting up a 'Group of Wise People', which will explore issues around whether NoEs have fulfilled the role they were meant to fulfil and what their future role NoEs should be. Mr Magnien added that the impact of Networks of Excellence will continue to be evaluated.

Further information

Further information on the following website:

<http://www.supportresearchnoes.eu/cc/openforum.xhtml>

Using technology for the protection of security and privacy in Europe

EU Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, Franco Frattini, has expressed the need to use technology to protect the security and privacy of European citizens. EC funding allocated to this area through FP7 is €1.5 billion. Furthermore, the Preparatory Action on Security Research helps with the development of security policy in Europe, particularly on border security.

Despite these efforts, Frattini feels that more needs to be done. He announced that in 2008 he will present a communication on how new technologies can be used for efficient border management. Frattini also stressed that it is essential to investigate whether sector-specific legislation is needed to apply data protection principles to new technologies. As many of the new technologies designed to ensure safety also risk undermining privacy, further research is required to develop additional technologies to protect personal data and privacy. This requires involvement from all stakeholders and improved communication practices among them in order to clarify European security research priorities, needs and limits. It is necessary for individual companies, governments or universities to work together in carrying out research. In the context of collaboration Frattini also stressed the need for policy makers to consider results of security research when drafting new policies.

Further information

Further information about security research is available at:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/cooperation/security_en.html

Research Commissioner sees stars

Mr Potočník, EU's Science and Research Commissioner, recently visited the European Southern Observatory (ESO) in Chile. During his visit he captured a new image of a spiral galaxy called NCG-134. Mr Potočník looked through the Very Large Telescope (VLT) to observe the 'Island in the Universe'. Although similar to our own galaxy, the NCG-134 spiral galaxy has a far more pronounced warped disc. The exact cause of warps, found in half of all known spiral galaxies, remains unknown and many theories seek to explain them. It is thought that the warps are the aftermath of a collision with another galaxy and these types of encounters are known to leave trails of material as the two galaxies pull apart again. Researchers say the VLT image reveals that NCG-134 does have a 'tail of gas stripped from the top edge of its disc'.

The image Potočník captured on ESO's VLT shows the galaxy has some star-forming regions, which are full of ionised hydrogen gas. NGC 134 was originally discovered by Sir John Herschel at the Cape of Good Hope and is located in the Sculptor southern constellation. The galaxy is located about 60 million light-years away, when the light that was captured by the VLT originally left the galaxy.

Further information

Full details are available from: <http://www.eso.org/public/>

Details are also available on Potočník's blog at: <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/potocnik/>

Education, Training and Culture

European qualifications framework launched

A major conference in Lisbon saw the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture, and Youth, Jan Figel, launch the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The EQF, which will act as a translation device between different EU qualifications systems, has eight reference levels covering the range from the most basic to the highest level qualifications. It is recommended that countries should relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010. By 2012 every new qualification issued in the EU should have a reference to the appropriate EQF reference level. This will allow individuals and employers to use the EQF as a reference tool to compare the qualifications of different countries throughout the EU.

The EP approved the EC proposal on 24 October 2007 with some changes. Political agreement was reached in the Council of Ministers on 15 November, and the EQF is now expected to be formally adopted in 2008. The political agreement on the EQF was announced by the Commissioner at the conference on Valuing Learning, hosted by the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, which took place on 26 to 27 November 2007.

Further information

EC Press Release IP/07/1760 of 26 November 2007 is available at <http://europa.eu/rapid>

A cultural and creative contribution to the Lisbon Agenda

Presentations are now available from an EU conference on how the culture and creative sectors have contributed to economic and regional development. The conference took place in Lisbon under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU from 31 October to 1 November 2007 and was attended by representatives from member states, the EC, academia and other stakeholders. The aim was to examine the current and potential contributions to the Lisbon Agenda for increasing employment and social cohesion through culture and the creative industry.

The conference focused on four main sessions: a research agenda for culture - statistics and indicators; culture and its role in the development of regions and cities; culture as a driver of growth and jobs, and a political agenda for culture - promoting creativity and innovation. It was agreed that there was a need to create an appropriate working structure that will enable concrete work to start on the assessment of the economic impact of culture and to develop cultural statistics in general. The EC was also encouraged to focus more attention on addressing the market imbalances that exist around Europe.

Further information

The presentations and further information on the conference are available at:

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/20071105SeminarioCultural.htm

The Eurostat Cultural Statistics Pocketbook is available on the Eurostat website at:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46587259&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=KS-77-07-296

External Collaboration

Israel latest country to join CIP

Israel recently became the latest country to join the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) pillar of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP). This follows on from Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which have both joined in recent months. CIP itself is a new programme with a budget of €3.6 billion that runs from 2007 to 2013. EIP pillar is the largest of three pillars that make up CIP. It is likely that Israel will join the Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) and the Intelligent Energy-Europe (IEE) Programme (which are the two other CIP pillars) at some point in the future.

The EIP pillar aims to foster the competitiveness of enterprises. It links providers of business and innovation services into a European network, and innovation actors and clusters in European networks. Now organisations in Israel will be able to participate in EIP on the same bases as organisations in all EU 27 member states and certain third countries such as FYR Macedonia and Croatia.

Further information

EC Press Release IP/07/1643 of 1 November 2007 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>
The official CIP website is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index_en.htm

Potočnik visits Chile and Brazil

European Science and Research Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, has visited Brazil and Chile to demonstrate the EU's commitment to strengthening science and technology (S&T) links with South America and to building solid research partnerships to combat global challenges. This follows on from the launch of an EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership and the recent EU-Brazil Science and Technology Agreement. The EU already has an ambitious bilateral relationship with Chile and the S&T agreement dates back to 2002. In both countries, the Commissioner had meetings with ministers and senior officials; visited research projects and interacted with the business community.

Brazil is one of the most active third country participants in the EU's Research Framework Programmes, with involvement in 96 projects between 2002 and 2006. While Chile's participation was not at the same level, it has nonetheless increased its co-operation with the EU in successive framework programmes, increasing from 18 projects in the 5th Framework Programme to 58 in the 6th Framework Programme. Interest in European universities is clearly demonstrated by the fact that more than 7000 people attended a recent European university fair in Santiago, Chile (Europosgrads).

Further information

EC press release IP/07/1585 of 24 October 2007 is available at: <http://www.europa.eu/rapid/>

Events and Awards

ERC Advanced Grants events

In its capacity as the UK National Contact Point for the ERC, and in partnership with several universities in the UK, UKRO is holding a series of ERC Advanced Grants events around the UK in

December and January. The call for the Advanced Grant opened on 30 November 2007. The events will be taking place in the following places: Newcastle University on Monday 3 December 2007; University of Cambridge on Wednesday 5 December 2007; the university of Edinburgh on Wednesday 9 January 2008; Queen Mary, University of London on Thursday 17 January 2008; and the University of Bath on Friday 18 January 2008.

The events are all free of charge but are based on a first come, first served basis. They are aimed at researchers (either currently based in the UK or planning to move there) who plan to submit proposals to the current call. Two identical sessions will be held at each venue, one in the morning and one in the afternoon and it is only necessary to attend one of these sessions. Participants should gain a deeper understanding of the proposal format and the key issues they are required to address in planning, writing and costing their proposal.

Further information

Further details and registration for the events are available at:

http://www.ukro.ac.uk/erc/events_ukro/index.htm#adv_investigator_grants

Workshop on aeronautics and air transport in 2008

A workshop on the 2008 aeronautics and air transport (AAT) calls within FP7 will be taking place in Brussels on 12 December 2007. The workshop is being organised by the EU-funded AeroSME project. Several industrial partners, including Airbus, Thales and Snecma will be at the event to present details of the large collaborative projects they plan to submit. Further details of these five projects are included in the website below. The event will also include presentations from the EC on feedback from the 2007 calls and plans for the 2008 calls, as well as details of the current status of the Clean Sky Joint Technology Initiative. SMEs are especially welcome at the event but it is also open to non-SMEs.

The 2008 transport calls opened on 30 November. AAT forms a major part of the FP7 transport theme, along with the sustainable surface transport (SST) area. The other transport call that opened at the same time as AAT and SST will fund projects looking at issues that cut across the theme. As the 2007 Galileo calls have only just opened, the 2008 calls for Galileo, which is also part of the FP7 transport theme, will open at a later point in 2008.

Further information

Full details are available from: http://www.aerosme.com/html/Workshop/FP7_2ndCall/12Dec07.asp

Environment information days

Two FP7 environment events will be taking place in Brussels on 13 and 19 December 2007. The first event on 13 December will provide information on the topics relating to environmental technologies in the environment calls that opened on 30 November. Some of the topics that cover environmental technologies in the current calls include waste technologies and clean processes; water, soil and marine technologies; built environment and cultural heritage; and technology assessment, verification and testing. The information day will also provide attendees with advice on lessons learnt from the first environment calls in 2007. It will also look at possible funding opportunities beyond 2008.

The focus of the second information day will be sustainable development and in particular sub-activity 6.4.2 of the Environment work programme, which is 'forecasting methods and assessment tools for sustainable development taking into account differing scales of observation'. The event is also expected to cover financial and administrative issues. There will be three topics open within this area in 2008: engaging civil society in research on sustainable development indicators;

rethinking globalisation in the light of sustainable development; and enhancing connectivity between research and policy-making in sustainable development: knowledge brokerage.

Further information

Full details of both events are available on the Cordis Environment events pages at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/cooperation/environment-events_en.html

For further details of the environmental technologies event please contact Annick Janssens at annick.janssens@ec.europa.eu or on fax +32 202 952097.

For further details of the sustainable development event please contact Wanda Gaj at wanda.gaj@ec.europa.eu or on fax +32 229 8 46 86.

International symposium for space applications in 2008

Two major conferences, the European Navigation Conference – Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ENC-GNSS) and the European Forum for Time and Frequency (EFTF), will be held from 22 to 25 April 2008 in Toulouse, France. These two gatherings (ENC-GNSS and EFTF) will be associated with an international symposium on space applications and an exhibition covering all application areas.

The symposium will integrate five major events in the following areas of space applications: the annual European Navigation Conference – Global Navigation Satellite Systems, ENC-GNSS 08 (23 to 25 April 2008); the European Forum for Time and Frequency, EFTF 08, (23 to 25 April 2008); an international conference on Space applications, SPACEAPPLI 08 (22 to 25 April 2008); an international exhibition for the industry along with business meetings (22 to 25 April 2008) centred on these applications; and associated events for the general public, students and young people, to promote the value of space applications in civil life, will be organised in parallel throughout the week.

The symposium will be co-organised by CNES (for the symposia) and Midi-Pyrenees Expansion (for the exhibition and business meetings). The deadline for submitting abstracts has now closed, however it is still possible to register for the conference. There is an early bird fee for those who register before 29 February 2008.

Further information

Further information is available at:

http://www.toulousspaceshow.eu/toulouse_space_show.htm

Further information on registration and fees is available at:

http://www.toulousspaceshow.eu/en_registration.htm

Shortlist for the European Enterprise Awards

The shortlist for the 2007 European Enterprise Awards has been selected by a jury of European entrepreneurs, leading business organisations, academics and representatives of the EC and Portuguese Presidency of the EU. The shortlist of 13 has been selected from 48 nominees and the winner will be announced in Porto on 6 December 2007. Included in the 13 projects are two from the UK: Enterprising North Staffordshire, and The Paper Trail (Hemel Hempstead).

More than 300 projects competed in the national rounds of the competition, from which participating countries could select two candidates for the European competition. The objectives of the awards are to recognise initiatives that promote enterprise and entrepreneurship, showcase and share examples of best policies and practice, create a greater awareness of entrepreneurs, and also encourage potential entrepreneurs.

Further information

EC Press Release IP/07/1589 of 24 November 2007 is available at <http://europa.eu/rapid>

New Publications and Online Resources

Re-launched website for ICT results

The former IST Results website has been re-launched. The website has changed its name to ICT Results to reflect the change in terminology from FP6 to FP7. The website will continue to show results from EU-funded research projects, including technological breakthroughs, and new products and services. It also gives information on how ICT Results can help you promote your project's achievements, news and events.

The aim of the website is to provide an editorial service created for the EC to showcase EU-funded ICT research and activities. In addition, the website also includes a section on latest news, funding opportunities and relevant events in the area of ICT research. The section on 'investors room' gives an insight into some of the young, successful companies behind ICT projects. The room also highlights ICT project participants seeking venture capital finance to commercialise their results and any other news of interest to the investor community. FP6 and FP7 ICT projects interested in being featured on ICT Results can contact the editors by filling in an online form.

Further information

Further information on ICT results is available at:
<http://cordis.europa.eu/ictresults/index.cfm?section=home&tpl=home>

Accessing Europe's cultural heritage online

With new technology, the idea of a library as somewhere to store books is expanding to include virtual objects, such as media files and electronic copies of books that can be accessed online. The European Network in Open Cultural Heritage (EPOCH) funded under the Information Society Technologies (IST) Priority in FP6, consists of 100 European cultural institutions across Europe. The organisations collaborate to improve the quality and effectiveness of ICT use for cultural heritage.

Work carried out by EPOCH partners includes using scanners to produce digital images of a cuneiform tablet from the 4th Millennium BC, and the resulting images can then be manipulated by researchers. Digitisation of cultural objects including manuscripts, photographs and letters is currently underway throughout Europe. For example, the National Library of the Netherlands has uploaded their collection of eight million newspaper pages dating back to 1618. New technology will ensure that the pages remain accessible in digital format long after the paper versions have disintegrated. The initiative is one of several European-funded projects to explore digitisation of information. It complements projects such as the European Digital Library, which allows users to access information held in different national libraries through a joint portal.

Further information

Further information on the EPOCH project is available at <http://www.epoch-net.org/>

ESA produces new online teaching resources

The European Space Agency (ESA) is developing a series of online lessons for primary and secondary school students, and their teachers. The online lessons are based on demonstrations and experiments performed on board the International Space Station (ISS). The idea is that by

using space related topics, which usually capture the imagination of students, they will also be encouraged to increase their understanding of other scientific disciplines. The first lesson in the series is now available. The topic of the lesson is radiation and it includes footage recorded during ESA astronaut Christer Fuglesang's Celsius Mission in December 2006.

Further information

The online lessons are available from:

http://www.esa.int/SPECIALS/Lessons_online/SEMVT1V7D7F_0.html

UK Science Insight

Science Insight is the British Council's monthly science news bulletin covering the latest developments and forthcoming events in science, engineering and technology in the UK.

URL: <http://www.britishcouncil.org>

CORDIS

CORDIS is the official Community, Research and Development Information Service for science, research and innovation and is provided by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. The interactive website offers daily news and detailed information on the EU's research programmes.

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

IGLO Project Search

The IGLO Project Service offers a forum for publishing and disseminating details of proposed FP7 projects and/or research skills offered. The service enables 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 EU treaties and recent copies of the Official Journal of the European Communities (OJ). The OJ, published daily in 23 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 on EUR-LEX).

URL: EUR-LEX <http://www.europa.eu/eur-lex>

Official Journals C and L <http://www.europa.eu/eur-lex/en/oj>

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

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>

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://europa.eu/rapid>

cubed... from the British Council

cubed, the monthly webzine from the British Council discusses the science that's shaping our society and bringing a new dimension to everyday life. It brings the latest innovations in fashion and music, design and digital, film and life, and the products and ideas that will change our world. Visit: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/science-cubed.htm>

Talking Science

Created by the British Council, the Talking Science website provides up-to-date information and links to the latest ideas in science communication in the UK: www.britishcouncil.org/talkingscience

GLOSSARY

Capacities

'Capacities' is the fourth Specific Programme of FP7 and is worth over €4 billion from 2007 to 2013. It aims to enhance research capacities throughout Europe and ensure their optimal use. It is made up of the following broad areas: Research Infrastructures; Research for the Benefit of SMEs; Regions of Knowledge; Research Potential for the Benefit of Convergence Regions; Science in Society; Support to Coherent Development of Research Policies; and International Cooperation.

<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/capacities>

CIP

The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme will run from 2007 to 2013. With a budget of €3.6 billion, it is made up of three Specific Programmes: the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme; the ICT Policy Support Programme; and the Intelligent Energy-Europe Programme

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/cip>

Cooperation

Cooperation is the first Specific Programme of FP7. Worth over €30 billion between 2007 and 2013, it is made up of ten thematic areas: Health; Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Biotechnology; Information Communications Technology (ICT); Nanosciences, Nanomaterials, Materials and New Production Technologies; Energy; Environment; Transport; Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities; Space; and Security.

<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/cooperation>

COST

European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research is a framework for scientific and technical cooperation, allowing the co-ordination of national research on a European level.

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

'Council'

'Council' refers to the 'Council of Ministers', the principal 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

EC

The European Commission - made up of 27 commissioners nominated by the member states - both initiates proposals for EU legislation and executes EU policies and actions.

<http://ec.europa.eu>

EP

The European Parliament is 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' that proposed ways in which research in Europe could be more effectively organised and co-ordinated.

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

ERC

The European Research Council, which is the Ideas Specific Programme of FP7, is worth over €7 billion from 2007 to 2013. New to the Framework Programme, the ERC will fund investigator-led, frontier research. It consists of two grant schemes, the Starting Independent Researcher Grant and the Advanced Investigator Grant.

<http://erc.europa.eu>

ESA

The European Space Agency is responsible for designing and developing the European space programme. The Agency's projects are designed to find out more about the Earth, its immediate space environment, the solar system and the universe, as well as to develop satellite-based technologies and services, and to promote European industries.

<http://www.esa.int>

ESC

The 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>

ESF

European Science Foundation

<http://www.esf.org>

ESF

The European Social Fund, part of the EU's Structural Funds

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf2000/index_en.html

ETP

European Technology Platforms are stakeholder groupings, led by industry, that help to define research and development priorities, timeframes and action plans on a number of strategically important issues.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/nn/nn_rt/nn_rt_hlg/article_1262_en.htm

Euratom

The European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) was set up in 1957 and is legally separate from the European Community. Euratom will have €2.7 billion from FP7 to fund nuclear research and training activities between 2007 and 2011.

<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/euratom>

Eureka

Eureka is a Europe-wide network for industrial research and development.

<http://www.eureka.be>

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 then running from 2002 to 2006, and FP7 running from 2007 to 2013. The budget for FP7 is over €50 billion.

Further information on the thematic and horizontal programme composition of FP6 is available at:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6>

Further information on FP7 can be found at: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7>

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.

ICPC

An International Cooperation Partner Country is an economically less developed country, which is not an EU member state or associated state. ICPC partners can participate in FP7 projects and receive funding.

Ideas

'Ideas', is the second Specific Programme of FP7 worth over €7 billion from 2007 to 2013. New to the Framework Programme, 'Ideas' will fund investigator-led, frontier research. It is implemented through the European Research Council and consists of two grant schemes, the Starting Independent Researcher Grant and the Advanced Investigator Grant.

<http://erc.europa.eu>

ITRE

The European Parliament Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (FP7)

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/itre_home_en.htm

JRC

The EC's Joint Research Centre acts 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>

LLP

The Lifelong Learning Programme is made up of four pillars: the Comenius programme for pupils, teachers and schools; the Erasmus programme for students, scholars, professors and universities; the Leonardo da Vinci programme for apprentices, workers and employees; and the Grundtvig programme for adults and teachers and related organisations. There is also a transversal programme (for policy development, languages, information and communication technology) and the Jean Monet programme (dealing with issues relating to European integration, European institutions and associations in the fields of education and training).

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/llp/index_en.htm

Marie Curie Actions

The Marie Curie Actions make up 'People', the third Specific Programme of FP7, which is worth over €4 billion during the period from 2007 to 2013. The Marie Curie Actions aim to improve the quality of human resources in European research through training and trans-national mobility of researchers.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/people/home_en.html

MEDIA

The MEDIA Programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry.

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

NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

<http://www.nato.int>

People

The third Specific Programme of FP7 is worth over €4 billion during the period from 2007 to 2013. Made up of the Marie Curie Actions, it aims to improve the quality of human resources in European research through training and trans-national mobility of researchers.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/people/home_en.html

RTD

Research and Technological Development

SICA

Specific International Cooperation Actions are FP7 call topics where a partner from an ICPC country has to be involved.

SME

Small and medium sized enterprises

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

Specific Programme

FP7 is made up of seven Specific Programmes: Cooperation; Ideas (implemented through the European Research Council); People (the Marie Curie Actions); Capacities; the Joint Research Centre (JRC); Euratom and the JRC implementing Euratom.

SSH

Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities is the eighth theme of the FP7 Cooperation Specific Programme.

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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