

European RTD Insight

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News on EU Research Policy and Programmes

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EU Policy

European Parliament approves new Commission

The EP elected the new college of European Commissioners on 9 February. A single vote was held on the whole College: the result was 488 for, 137 against and 72 abstentions. This means that the whole college passed. The new Commission will now stay in office until 31 October 2014. Despite the College being approved by a majority, there wasn't unanimous support from all parties. The Greens, GUE/NGL (European United Left–Nordic Green Left) and EFD (Europe of Freedom and Democracy) groups voted against the new College and the ECR (European Conservatives and Conformists) group abstained.

As part of the approval process, Commissioners Designate first had to attend Hearings in Brussels in front of MEPs. The transcripts of these Hearings are all available to read in full and include the opening speeches of the Commissioners Designate as well as their responses to the questions put to them by MEPs.

Further information

The EP website dedicated to the Hearings, which includes the full transcripts of the Commissioner's Hearings is available at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/default.htm?language=en>

Barroso presents EU2020 Strategy to European Council

At an informal European Council meeting on 11 February 2010, Heads of State and government discussed the orientations for the new strategy for Europe. At that meeting EC President J.M. Barroso presented his priorities for the new strategy. Barroso stressed that "EUROPE 2020 cannot be business as usual": greater effectiveness of the new strategy is required in order to create sustainable growth and the jobs that Europe needs. Barroso called for co-ordinated policy action, an ambitious structural reform agenda and bold action in order to tackle high unemployment. During his speech, Barroso outlined three themes which are of key importance to Europe's success in a global world and should form the backbone of the EUROPE 2020 reform agenda: growth based on knowledge and innovation; an inclusive high employment society; and greener growth.

Further, Barroso stressed the need to establish an appropriate combination of actions at Member State and EU level. He promised that the EC will make proposals to unlock untapped sources of new growth and job creation in order to re-launch the internal market, ensure that the EU budget fully reflects the agreed political priorities so that it can become a key delivery instrument for the EUROPE 2020 strategy, and design an external economic policy in full support of the EUROPE 2020 objectives. Following the meeting on 11 February the EC will shortly present its full proposals for the new strategy ahead of the Spring European Council meeting scheduled for the end of March.

Further information

Barroso's presentation to the European Council meeting of 11 February is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/statements/pdf/20102010_2_en.pdf

EC publishes summary of responses to EU2020

The EC has published a Working Document entitled, 'Europe 2020 Public Consultation: First Overview of Responses'. The 'EU 2020' strategy will build upon and replace the current Lisbon Strategy (see article below). It attempts to sum up the 1,500 contributions received on the consultation on the EU 2020 Strategy, which closed on 15 January 2010. Submissions were received from a wide range of stakeholders including from non-EU countries. All of the consultation responses will be published on the consultation website. There is broad support amongst Member States for the thematic priorities (growth for knowledge, inclusive societies and a greener, competitive economy) proposed in the consultation paper.

The responses from the research community generally agreed with the three priorities. The community felt that a thriving European Research Area based on openness and excellence is key to the achieving these. The majority of stakeholders stressed that the importance of research in the new strategy should be reflected in the future EU budget, while the proposal to appoint a Chief Scientific Advisor was welcomed by many stakeholders. Responses from the education community underlined the importance of education to achieve social inclusion as well as active citizenship and suggested that primary and secondary education should be covered by the strategy too. The ERC also submitted a response in which it underlined the importance of generating knowledge leadership as a basis for innovation, greening the economy, competitiveness and prosperity.

Further information

'Europe 2020 Public Consultation: First Overview of Responses' is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/eu2020_public_consultation_preliminary_overview_of_responses_en.pdf

The EC website on EU 2020 is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/>

EC publishes Lisbon Strategy evaluation document

The EC has published a Staff Working Document entitled the 'Lisbon Strategy Evaluation Document'. The Lisbon Strategy is the ten-year strategy to make the EU the most competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economy in the world. Introduced in 2000, the strategy is now at an end and the aim of the EC document is to identify the strengths of the strategy so that they can be built on in future, whilst also highlighting its weaknesses so that they are not repeated. The main findings are that overall, Lisbon has had a positive impact on the EU. However, it did fail to meet its main targets of seventy per cent employment rate and three per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent on research and development (R&D). It shows that the EU has also failed to close the productivity growth gap with leading industrialised countries.

It goes on to note that the links between the Lisbon Strategy and other EU instruments and strategies were not sufficiently strong. For example, it highlights the case of the European Community Patent, where despite repeated statements from Council on the importance of the issue, no solution has yet been delivered. The report also contains a stock-take of progress in specific areas, including: research, development and innovation; unlocking business potential, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); investing in people; and a greener economy.

Further information

The Lisbon Strategy evaluation document is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/lisbon_strategy_evaluation_en.pdf

New Research Commissioner launches website

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, who is the new European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, recently launched her EC website. The website also contains a video message in French, predominately English and some Irish in which she introduces herself before addressing the need for economic growth in Europe. The Commissioner then gives some more details, including references to the proposed EU 2020 strategy and the need to innovate for growth, before ending her address in Irish.

The website also has her CV and mandate as proposed by Commission President Barroso, and a diary of forthcoming meetings. Geoghegan-Quinn states on her web site, "I am delighted that the European Parliament has now approved the new European Commission and I am very excited about the next five years as Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science."

Further information

Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn's website is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/geoghegan-quinn/index_en.htm

Experts say European Technology Platforms need strengthening

European Technology Platforms (ETPs) are industry-led stakeholder groups that aim to define research and development priorities, timeframes and action plans on a number of issues of strategic importance to Europe. Their work can have an influence on the content of FP7 Work Programmes. A recent report summarises the work of an Expert Group on ETPs, convened by DG Research in early 2009, to examine how the activities and achievements of the current 36 ETPs should evolve in the near future. The report is set in the context of the need for Europe to release its potential for innovation as a key requirement for sustainable economic growth in the decade ahead. Bringing multidisciplinary research skills to bear on the societal 'Grand Challenges' that Europe faces could result in innovative products and services being part of a solution.

The Expert Group proposes that in future all ETPs should be encouraged to work in flexible clusters focused on addressing the key societal challenges facing Europe. The clusters should involve all relevant stakeholders, work across all aspects of the knowledge triangle, and be responsible for implementing potential solutions. They will then be able to contribute more help in focusing research programmes towards the challenges faced by European society and bringing the results of that research to the global marketplace.

Further information

The report is available from the ETPs website at: <http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms>

Research ministers pledge to help the economic growth and recovery

At a recent informal meeting of the Competitiveness Council, European research ministers unanimously adopted the 'Donostia Declaration'. The declaration states that "Europe must recover from the worst economic crisis in recent decades and science must be part of the solution." It goes on to state that from pure research to business-oriented technological development, all European science has much to contribute right here, right now." In terms of applied research the declaration highlights that the development of new products can help businesses which are hardest hit by the recession, especially in less innovation-intensive sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The declaration also points out that many of the biggest challenges (such as energy and climate change, healthcare and ageing populations) are of global scope and have a significant socio-economic impact.

The declaration fits one of the priorities for the current Spanish Presidency of the European Council, namely integrating research into other policy areas and into the EU's new strategy, the EU 2020 Strategy, which is currently under development. The Spanish Minister of Science, Cristina Garmendia, said "we see the European innovation plan and the launching of the 2020 Strategy as opportunities to place science and innovation firmly at the heart of Europe's future". The Competitiveness Council will next meet formally in Brussels in March.

Further information

The Donostia declaration is available at: ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/spain/docs/donostia-declaration_en.pdf

The Cordis website on the Spanish Presidency of the European Council: http://cordis.europa.eu/spain/presidency2010/home_en.html

The EU 2020 website is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020>

Spanish Presidency to push innovation

A concerted effort to boost economic recovery in Europe through the promotion of innovation in all sectors of the economy has been emphasised as one of the two major priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the EU, which runs until 1 July 2010. Along with strengthening human rights and the equality of EU citizens, the Presidency is aiming to ensure that innovation is included as part of a greater coordination of EU Member States' economic policies.

This, in turn, is designed to contribute to the development of the EU 2020 Strategy, which will rely to a large extent on the triangle of innovation, knowledge and training in order to create jobs in Europe. In this way, the Spanish Presidency is seeking to ensure that a greater emphasis on innovation across the EU will help create sustainable economic growth, as well as fully implement the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty. One concrete measure that has been mentioned is the provision of a European micro-financing instrument for entrepreneurs, the Spanish Presidency having noted that the availability of resources to turn entrepreneurs' ideas into a commercial reality is often a problem.

Further information

Further details are available at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showFocus.aspx?id=1&focusId=438&lang=en>

The full programme for the Spanish Presidency of the EU is available at:

http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/Spanish_Presidency_Program.pdf

New President for European Research Council

Professor Fotis Kafatos resigned his position of the President of the European Research Council (ERC) as of 1 March 2010. Although Professor Kafatos steps down as President of the ERC and Chairman of the Scientific Council, he will remain a member of the Scientific Council. Professor Kafatos, a leading molecular biologist currently at Imperial College London, has been the ERC's first President since its inception in 2007.

He is replaced as President by Professor Helga Novotny who will take over from 1 March. Professor Novotny, who has been serving as Vice-President of the ERC and as Vice-Chair of the Scientific Council, was elected unanimously by the 22 members of the Scientific Council. She is Professor Emeritus of Social Sciences at ETH Zurich, and Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of Vienna University. The new European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, stated her belief that Professor Novotny would, "lead with ambition this truly pioneering European project", and would be a "fantastic role model" for young women considering a career in science.

Further information

Further information on the appointment of Professor Novotny is available at:

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/Press_release_Novotny.pdf

Further information on the resignation of Professor Kafatos is available from:

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/Press_release_Kafatos.pdf

The ERC website is available at: <http://erc.europa.eu/>

Clean Sky opens latest round of calls

The third Call for Proposals under the Clean Sky Joint Technology Initiative (JTI) has opened recently. Clean Sky is the Joint Technology Initiative in the field of aeronautics and air transport. The closing date for the call is 27 April 2010, which is far shorter than the standard timeframe for Calls for Proposals under FP7. A total of 45 topics have now opened in this current call. The total contribution available from the EC and industry for all topics equates to around €18.8 million.

The 45 topics being called for fit into one of the following Clean Sky themes: EcoDesign; Green Regional Aircraft; Green Rotorcraft; Sustainable and Green Engines; Smart Fixed Wing Aircraft; and Systems for Green Operations. This Smart Fixed Wing Aircraft component has the most topics. No topics are being called for under the Technology Evaluator theme in this call. The full list of the topics (and the budget for each topic) is available in the Call Fiche document. An additional document provides applicants with details of the rules for participation, submission, evaluation, selection and award.

Further information

The Clean Sky website, which contains details of the topics currently called for as well as the documentation needed to submit, is available at:

http://www.cleansky.eu/index.php?arbo_id=52&item_id=41

Slovenia signs co-operation agreement with ESA

On 22 January 2010 Slovenia became the sixth European country to sign the European Co-operating State Agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA). This agreement strengthens Slovenia's relations with ESA and defines the legal basis for developing a Plan for a European Co-operating State (PECS) Charter, describing activities, projects and budget for Slovenia's co-operation with ESA. In 2003 Hungary was the first country to become a European Co-operating State, followed by the Czech Republic, Romania, Poland and Estonia.

ESA participated, through its Earth Observation Directorate, in the 'Bridging the Gap' conference in Portorož, 14–16 May 2008. Following this event, an ESA expert team visited Slovenian industrial and research organisations involved in space projects in 2009. During the coming months, Slovenia will define with ESA the specific areas and projects for co-operation, as well as the budget for the next five years. The country's major participation will be in ESA's Science and Robotic Exploration programme.

Further information

Further information is available at: http://www.esa.int/esaCP/SEM2BMRJR4G_index_0.html

The ESA website is available at: <http://www.esa.int>

Europe to train future leaders in nuclear energy

On 28 January, the founding treaty to establish a new European Nuclear Energy Leadership Academy (ENELA) was signed. The academy, which will be based near Munich in Germany, aims to attract university graduates to work in the nuclear energy sector and to train future leaders. ENELA has been established by six nuclear energy companies, who have agreed the strategic, legal and financial aspects of how the academy will work. The then European Commissioner for Energy, Andreas Piebalgs, welcomed ENELA, by saying that the nuclear sector faces serious challenges and that "this is a matter of concern not only to the industry, but also for researchers, regulators and the health sector. ENELA, by focussing on leadership skills, can help to close the gap in existing training programmes."

ENELA was initiated by the industrial stakeholders in the European Nuclear Energy Forum, which was set up in 2007 by the EC as a platform for a broad stakeholder discussion on opportunities, risks and transparency issues of nuclear energy. ELENA also fits in with the European Council's December 2008 request that additional efforts should be made by public and private players, in particular in the nuclear industry, to ensure that the EU remains a world leader on nuclear safety and radiation protection.

Further information

EC Press Release IP/10/87 of 28 January 2010 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

The European Nuclear Energy Forum is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/forum/forum_en.htm

Investigation into EC study on animal experimentation

The European Ombudsman has opened an investigation into how the EC conducted a study into the use for research purposes of non-human primates (NHP). The investigation has been opened following a complaint from the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE). They allege that the EC working group, which undertook the study, lacked expertise in the area and that it failed to take certain evidence into consideration. The Ombudsman, Mr Diamandouros, noted that the issue is of importance to the general public and stated: 'The Ombudsman has a vital role to play in promoting effective and transparent policy-making in the EU institutions. I expect this role to

become even more important in light of the Lisbon Treaty, which strengthens the right of citizens and associations to participate in the democratic life of the Union. The Treaty also requires the Union institutions to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative organisations and civil society.'

The EP originally urged the EC to set a timetable for providing alternatives to the use of NHP. The EC subsequently asked its Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risk (SCHER) to issue an opinion on the alternatives. Following a public hearing in October 2008 a number of groups, including ECEAE, complained that the process had been unfair.

Further information

EC Press Release EO/10/6 of 16 February 2010 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Scientists, artists and policy makers unite to tackle climate change

In late January 2010, a major gathering of global experts from the worlds of science, policy and the arts met to try to find creative solutions to one of the biggest issues currently facing the world, climate change. This two-day event was a collaboration between TippingPoint, the British Council, the EC, the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Kaaitheatre Theater in Brussels.

The event took place after the Copenhagen climate conference, yet just a few days before the deadline for all international parties to deliver their individual CO2 emissions targets in order to reach a global deal in Mexico later this year. By bringing together highly influential scientists and renowned artists, the event created a unique opportunity to show that where politicians seem not to be able to find solutions culture and science can act together. Similar gatherings have also previously taken place in Potsdam, Oxford, Oslo and New York. TippingPoint, amongst others, has inspired Simon Beaufoy, screenplay writer of *The Full Monty* and *Slumdog Millionaire*, to film a political and environmental thriller entitled "burn-up", and British artist Cornelia Parker to film a 30-minute interview, "Chomskian Abstract", with Noam Chomsky about how art might save the planet.

Further information

EC Press Release CES/10/4 of 19 January 2010 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Seminar highlights innovation in socio-economic sciences

The Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) programme recently held a meeting at which its FP7-funded projects with an innovation theme presented their results, with a view to feeding into the development of the EU2020 Strategy. The SSH projects invited to present at the seminar, entitled 'EU2020 Strategy – Insights on Innovation from European Research in Socio-economic Sciences', covered a wide range of innovation-related themes including entrepreneurship, regional innovation, social innovation, impacts of financial crisis, and the evaluation of EU research and innovation policies.

The event opened with a presentation from Jean-Michel Baer, Director of the Science, Economy and Society Unit of DG Research. In this, he emphasised that research and innovation should be integrated into economic, social and environmental objectives. He also indicated that the meeting was in part preparation for a high-level policy conference on innovation to be held on 1 June 2010.

Further information

Full details of the seminar, including project presentations, are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/events-93_en.html

Report on assessment of university-based research

The EC's Expert Group on the Assessment of University-based Research has published its final report, examining research assessment and the indicators used in current systems and proposing a new framework for research assessment. The Expert Group was established by the Commission's Directorate-General for Research in July 2008, in recognition of both the need for performance assessment of university-based research and the lack of systems designed to achieve this which adequately address the diversity of research disciplines, research outputs, university profiles and users and their needs and interests.

The recommendations of the report suggest that assessment of university-based research should be designed in relation to purpose and articulated objectives, should combine quantitative indicator-based data with qualitative information, and should be undertaken at the level of 'research clusters' appropriate to the purpose of the assessment exercise. Other outputs of the group include the outline of a multi-dimensional research assessment matrix, while the report concludes with some specific recommendations for the Commission, suggesting, for example, that it should establish a European Observatory for the Assessment of University-based Research and invest in a shared information infrastructure for relevant data to be collected, maintained, analysed and disseminated across the EU.

Further information

The report is available to download at: http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/assessing-europe-university-based-research_en.pdf

New report identifies ingredients for successful research careers

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) recently launched a new report setting out the priority issues that it considers need to be addressed in order to improve the attractiveness and excellence of research careers. The report, 'Harvesting Talent – Strengthening Research Careers' identifies two major factors required if researchers are to realise their potential for high achievement: an appropriate research environment and the ability to attain independence and take on responsibility at an early stage of a research career.

The report goes on to examine in more detail the requirements necessary to create an attractive and efficient research career structure, including well designed posts, well structured career perspectives and strong funding. It praises the European Research Council funding schemes for the policy of awarding longer fellowships which allow the researcher to develop independence and creativity free from the worry of securing their next tranche of research funding. The report also cites the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers as an example of good practice in raising responsibility for research careers. The document concludes with a model code of practice for research employment.

Further information

The report is available to download at: http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/assessing-europe-university-based-research_en.pdf

Call in Britain-Israel exchange scheme announced

The British Council has announced the second call for proposals in the Britain-Israel Research and Academic Exchange Partnership (BIRAX). The aim of the scheme is to strengthen academic co-operation between universities in the UK and Israel by awarding grants for joint research. Researchers from universities in the UK and Israel are invited to apply for funding in all fields of scientific research, including the social sciences, on the theme of 'Global Challenges in Energy and the Environment.'

In particular, proposals are sought for research that addresses the challenges of responding to increasing energy demands and the need for secure and sustainable energy supplies while mitigating against the negative impacts of production and countering the threat to climate change. The call also covers research on living with and adapting to the environmental changes brought on by rapid population and economic growth, which can lead to severe weather, biodiversity loss, and pressure on ecosystems and services that impact upon social and economic wellbeing. Proposals for research in Nanoscience and Nanotechnology with applications relevant to Energy and Environment are also welcome.

Further information

Full details of the call are available from the British Council website at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/israel.htm>

EC re-opens consultation on FET flagships

The EC has re-opened a consultation on the Future Emerging Technologies (FET) 'Flagship' initiatives, which were announced in the EU Strategy for Research on Future and Emerging Technologies in Europe published in 2009. The aim is that these will drive larger multi-disciplinary research community efforts towards foundational breakthroughs at the frontier of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), with the expectation that at least two will be launched before 2013. The intention is to finance long-term projects with a budget of around €5 million each, which should look to go beyond a FET proactive topical research area.

An initial online consultation to identify potential areas for FET Flagships was held during December 2009 and January 2010. This has now been re-opened with a new deadline for responses of 31 March 2010. A Flagship Science Forum will then be established to define the Flagship initiatives and a call for pilot projects will be launched in July or September. The consultation is supported by a report from the ICT Advisory Group, which already identifies five areas for potential FET flagships: understanding life through future ICT; anticipation by simulation – managing complex systems with future ICT; future information processing technologies; future problem-solving technologies; and robot companions for citizens.

Further information

Full details of the consultation are available at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/fet-proactive/flagshipconsult2009_en.html

Research News

Research into new medications in depression and schizophrenia

NEWMEDS is a research collaboration project between academia and the pharmaceutical industry on novel methods for the development of drugs for depression and schizophrenia. It is an Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) project, which is jointly funded by the EC (through the FP7 Cooperation Health theme budget) and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries Associations (EFPIA). NEWMEDS is led by the Danish research company H. Lundbeck A/S from the industrial sector and the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London on the academic side.

NEWMEDS involves nearly 50 scientists from both academia and industry and aims at tackling major bottlenecks in this field of research. These include insufficiently accurate animal models to guide drug discovery, insufficient tools and tests in healthy volunteers and the reliance of clinical trials on symptom-based diagnostic. The project wants to implement a new approach to drug discovery and find ways for shorter and more efficient trials of new drugs.

Further information

More information on the NEWMEDS project can be found at:

http://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/news_details.php?news_id=1267&year=2010

The website of the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is available at:

http://www.imi.europa.eu/index_en.html

FP7 project discovers Greenland's ancient Eskimo

Researchers involved in a FP7 project have recently found evidence that Greenland had its very own Eskimos 4,000 years ago. The University of Copenhagen led a team of 52 scientists, who performed a DNA analysis of hair found preserved in Greenland's permafrost in the 1980s and discovered that it was that of a human male.

The findings from the DNA analysis form part of the ECOGENE Project funded under the FP7 Capacities Research Potential Programme and which focuses on regional potential in genetics. It was originally thought that the tuft of hair belonged to a bear because it was so thick. However following a DNA test, it was discovered that the hair belonged to a male related to tribes in modern-day Siberia rather than the Inuit who currently inhabit Greenland. Through the contributions of a large team from Australia, China, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greenland, Latvia, Russia, the UK and the US researchers were able to sequence the first complete genome of an extinct human.

Further information

Further information on the ECOGENE project can be found on its dedicated website:

<http://www.ebc.ee/EBC/>

The sky's no longer the limit!

An EU-funded FP7 project has recently been launched looking at a new personal plane which would become an alternative to the private car. The 'PPlane' would be an easy to operate personal air vehicle allowing direct-to-destination routing and more efficient travel and congestion reduction on the roads.

Based on findings from several previous Framework Programme funded projects, the 30 month PPlane project will focus on the development of a Personnel Air Transport System, its viability and structure and finally how it could be part of the global air transport system and integrated into the air traffic management system. In addition, environmental design is an important part of the project and an emphasis will be placed on noise and gas emission reduction, green fuels, and energy efficiency. Eleven different European countries from different aviation domains in industry, research and academia are participating in the project which will also propose future topics for European research activities in this area.

Further information

For further information see the PPlane Project website: <http://www.pplane-project.org/>

New research on impact of extreme weather on EU transport

The European Investment Bank has just launched a research study on how extreme weather impacts on the safety and reliability of transport systems in the European Union. The Extreme Weather impacts on European Networks of Transport (EWENT) project, co-ordinated by the VTT Technical Research Centre in Finland, will also estimate the costs of weather-related disruptions.

The main driving force behind the project is the increase in extreme weather incidents due to climate change and the question of how to adapt to them. The EWENT project will cover a number of issues related to potential impacts on the transportation of people and goods such as safety and reliability and the costs associated with human injury, material damages and discontinued supply chains. The project aims to be the first to estimate these cost effects methodically. It is also hoped that the results of the project will help public authorities, businesses and other parties to prepare for extreme weather conditions, especially in terms of infrastructure sizing and management.

Further information

EC Press Release BEI/10/8 of 27 January 2010 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid>

Education, Training and Culture

Vassiliou suggests concrete education target for EU 2020 strategy

Addressing the Education, Youth and Culture Council of Ministers Androulla Vassiliou urged ministers to be as concrete in putting forward their ideas for the future EU 2020 strategy which is currently being developed by the EC. The recently appointed Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth asked them to consider that education and training, and more specifically the promotion of an increase in university studies should be made one of the concrete targets of the strategy. A number of ministers welcomed the suggestion.

Vassiliou stressed the key role that knowledge will play in finding a way out of the current financial crisis and in creating a sustainable social market economy. She also made it clear that higher and more targeted investment in the knowledge base and lifelong learning was needed. Among the issues she would like to see tackled are early school leaving rates in Europe, illiteracy and the high numbers of adults with only basic skills.

Further information

EC Press Release SPEECH/ 10/26 of 15 February 2010 is available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid/searchAction.do>

eTwinning birthday: five years of Europe-wide teaching collaboration

eTwinning is an online community for schools and part of Comenius, the EU programme for schools. The initiative, which is coordinated by European Schoolnet on behalf of the EC, celebrated its fifth anniversary during the annual conference from 5-7 February in Seville, Spain.

Over the years, eTwinning has enabled over 85,000 teachers from 50,000 schools in 32 European countries to collaborate in joint activities. eTwinning promotes project work with pupils, online communities for teachers and gives numerous opportunities for professional development. During the conference, prizes were awarded to the top eTwinning projects organised during the 2008-2009 school year.

Further information

The eTwinning portal and information on the Seville conference is available at:

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm>

External Collaboration

EU and India launch programme in biotechnology and health

India and EU Member States have launched a Networking Pilot Programme (NPP) on biotechnology and health, entitled NEW INDIGO ('Initiative for the development and integration of Indian and European research'). The programme's objective is to establish a joint infrastructure for advanced research in these two areas. NEW INDIGO has received funding of almost EUR 2.5 million under the 'Horizontal actions and measures in support of international cooperation' (INCO) priority of FP7.

While EU Member States and India have been strengthening their bilateral scientific ties in recent years, there is room for improvement in multilateral S&T co-operation. Further, a dedicated co-ordination programme between the EU and India is lacking. The NEW INDIGO project aims to establish a framework that will enable Indian researchers to access the ERA (European Research Area), and European researchers to strengthen their presence in the Indian scientific area. The projects need to ensure the involvement of at least two European and one Indian partners. The novel networking tools, established by the EC, will also prove advantageous for S&T co-operation between the EU and India. NEW INDIGO project topics will include bioinformatics for health, biomarkers and diagnostics, and structural biology for health. As these multilateral projects encourage mobility and workshop participation, their funding is guaranteed.

Further information

Further information about the NEW INDIGO project is available at: <http://www.newindigo.eu>

EU strengthens R&D co-operation with Egypt

At the recent Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Marketplace in Heliopolis, it was announced that the EU would provide €20 million to promote research and innovation in Egypt. The funds will be allocated to the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) programme, which was established under the EC-EGYPT bilateral Science and Technology Co-operation Agreement of 2007. Egyptian organisations and researchers can of course still participate in and obtain financing from FP7, the EU's main instrument for funding research.

The Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Marketplace acts as a communications platform and an information hub for researchers, inventors, academia and industry. As well as addressing the RDI programme, the event also hosted the Euro-Mediterranean Innovation and Research Forum as well as the Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Exhibition. Delegates at these meetings also discussed some of the barriers preventing Egyptian organisations from carrying out more cutting-edge, innovative research. These included patenting rules, which only apply to Egypt and not internationally, and also the general level of training of invention marketing, which is deemed to be insufficient.

Further information

The Euro-Mediterranean Innovation Marketplace website is available at: <http://www.euromed-innovation.net/>

Events and Awards

2010 Transport Research Arena

The third Transport Research Arena (TRA) will take place in Brussels from 7 to 10 June 2010. The event is jointly organised by the EC, the Conference of European Directors of Roads, and the European Road Transport Research Advisory Council. The aim of this event is to provide stakeholders of transport research and development with a platform to debate innovation for sustainable mobility in Europe, leading to a greener, safer and smarter transport system. TRA will demonstrate and highlight the problems and challenges facing road transport in the future, which require a systemic approach involving different stakeholders and multi-disciplinary research.

The conference programme is built around six main themes covering different aspects of road transport and research. These themes are: European Road Research Needs and Agendas; Transport Mobility and Infrastructure; Safety and Security; Energy, Environment and Resources; Design and Production – Automotive and Infrastructure; and Social Importance of Road Transport. The event will be broken down into general interaction at the plenary sessions, strategic sessions, and thematic sessions.

Further information

Further information including prices and registration form is available at:
<http://www.traconference.eu>

Conference on sustainable funding for universities

The European Universities Association (EUA) is organising a major experts' conference on 'sustainable funding' as part of the FP-funded EUDIS project on income diversification in European universities. The aim is that it will build on the success of the first EUA experts' conference, which focussed on full costing and accounting practices.

The event will draw together experts from across Europe to identify the key elements necessary for financial survival in the future. University leaders, policy makers, researchers and partners from the private sector will discuss the results of the EUDIS project and further explore the key features and conditions required for implementing successful income diversification strategies. The conference will include a comprehensive presentation of the findings of the project and thematic workshops tailored to foster a hands-on approach to income diversification.

Further information

Further information is available at: <http://www.eua.be/events/eudis-experts-conference/home/>

New Publications and Online Resources

Publication on corporate social responsibility research

The EC recently published a policy review examining the results of socio-economic research projects on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funded under FP6. The publication, 'Towards greater Corporate Responsibility – Conclusions of EU-funded Research' looks at the research undertaken with a view to developing a general concept of corporate social responsibility, defined in the report as an idea 'whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with stakeholders.'

The report starts by outlining the contribution of the four research projects to the conceptual development of CSR. It goes on to review the European policy context and analyse the underlying policy processes with a view to outlining a future research agenda, before identifying policy recommendations and finding policy gaps at European level. The report concludes with a summary of the research findings and resulting policy recommendations, and identifies four areas to be explored through research in the future: mainstreaming CSR in firms' strategic processes including SMEs; the linkage between CSR and innovation; performance and impact indicators; and global supply change management.

Further details

The policy review document is available to download at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/policy-briefs-reviews_en.html

New publication celebrates Marie Curie success stories

The EC has published a booklet highlighting Marie Curie success stories, which presents detailed case studies illustrating projects funded through the People Specific programme of FP7. The 350 page document, entitled 'Marie Curie Actions: Inspiring Researchers' gives details of achievements in a number of areas, including the fostering of collaboration, seeding careers, 'brain gain' and science communication. It also looks at worldwide research, the work done to help provide family-friendly working conditions for researchers and the structuring effect the actions have had on the research landscape.

Each case study gives details of the results of the project concerned, both in terms of the research undertaken and in the context of the aims of the Marie Curie programme. It also includes full project details, including details of the partners, the lead contact, project title and budget. The overarching aim of the booklet is not only to present the scientific achievements of the funded activities but also to demonstrate the importance of the 'human aspect' and effective policy in attaining these achievements.

Further information

The booklet is available to download at:
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/publications.htm>

New book outlines role science plays in tackling poverty

A new book by two of the UK's leading international development thinkers urges governments to listen to scientists to tackle poverty in poor countries. Published by the UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS), 'Science and Innovation for Development' demonstrates how science and innovation can be harnessed to tackle today's biggest challenges in poor countries, including climate change, HIV/AIDS and illiteracy. Case studies are described, including the use of tissue culture to develop disease-resistant bananas in Kenya; the use of nanotechnology to develop cheaper and faster kits for diagnosing infectious diseases and the use of organic material to power a multi-purpose stove that can also function as a refrigerator and generator.

Written by Sir Gordon Conway, Professor of International Development at Imperial College London and Professor Jeff Waage, Director of the London International Development Centre (LIDC), 'Science and Innovation for Development' demonstrates how even the most basic daily activities in developing country communities are based on science and innovation. Copies of the publication are available via the UKCDS website.

Further information

The open-access book can be downloaded from the UKCDS website at:

http://www.ukcds.org.uk/publication-Science_and_Innovation_for_Development-172.html

Further information is also available directly from Jessica Deery at: j.deery@ukds.org.uk

New website for marine and maritime research

The EC has set up a new website for marine and maritime research in the EU. The website is intended as a coherent and focused source of information on the EU's Marine and Maritime Research Strategy, which is one of the specific implementation measures of the Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU adopted in 2007. The Strategy aims to develop the maritime economy, address increasing environmental pressures on maritime areas due to climate change and to better manage the increasing number of human activities taking place in maritime areas.

EU support for research projects on marine and maritime issues is an important element of the Strategy, and of particular interest on the website is data on the funded projects across different themes of the FP7 Co-operation programme. Similar information is also shown for the Capacities programme, as well as for FP6, and a wide range of policy documents and other information is also available on the site.

Further information

The website on marine and maritime research in the EU can be accessed at:

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

CORDIS

CORDIS is the official Community Research and Development Information Service 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'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 Co-operation.

<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>

Co-operation

Co-operation 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/co-operation>

COST

European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research is a framework for scientific and technical co-operation, 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 EP (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 EC - 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 European 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 EC 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 Co-operation 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.ec.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

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 Co-operation 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: Co-operation; 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 Co-operation 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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