



European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences
Europäische Vereinigung für Chemische und Molekulare Wissenschaften
Association Européenne pour les Sciences Chimiques et Moléculaires
Европейская Ассоциация Химических и Молекулярных Наук

Brussels News Update

November 2006

Contents

- EIT Gets “Green light” From Summit
- Commission Prioritises Innovation Actions
- Research Infrastructures Priorities
- ERC Work Programme
- FP7 Specific Programmes
- New European Energy Technology Programme?
- Lisbon Strategy “Well on Track”
- China-EU Co-operation

EIT Gets “Green light” From Summit

Meeting in Lahti, Finland on 20 October, an informal EU summit gave a green light to the commission’s proposal for a European Institute of Technology (EIT). The proposal sets out a budget of €2.4 billion from 2008-2013 with more than half coming from EU funds, as well as significant funding from the private sector.

Speaking after the summit Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen said “We are pleased that during our Presidency we will be able to start working on the details of this proposal in the Council. There are of course many open questions at this stage but the discussion we just had, it showed a real green light to the Commission’s initiative.”

The European Commission has adopted a proposal on establishing a European Institute of Technology (EIT), which is hoping will receive the approval of the EU's Heads of State and Government when they meet informally in Lahti, Finland, on 20 October.

Despite the doubts about the project when it was first announced Commission President José Manuel Barroso thinks these have now been largely overcome. He described the Institute as a 'flagship for European innovation'.

The latest proposal envisages an institute with two levels: a governing board that will be the EIT's legal entity, and Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The EIT itself will have around 60 scientific and support staff plus a 19-member Governing Board comprising 15 high-profile people from business and the scientific community and four members representing staff and students from the KICs.

The KICs will bring together universities, research organisations and businesses within an integrated partnership. The partnership should then contribute to all three aspects of the 'knowledge triangle': research, innovation and education.

The success of the EIT is partially dependent upon industry, as the EIT will rely on at least some of its funding coming from the private sector but while welcoming the proposal, the European Chambers of Commerce (Eurochambres) immediately called for clarification of where the money would come from. Speaking after the informal summit, President Barroso was confident that major companies would support the EIT and Education Commissioner Jan Figel listed at least 12 companies that are behind the EIT including Siemens, Unilever, Nokia, British Petroleum and Eriksson.

In addition to €310m from the margins of research and innovation budgets, EU funding from the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and the Structural Funds are expected to provide up to €1.2bn.

Matching funding is expected to come from other public bodies, venture capital, banks (including the European Investment Bank), resources resulting from its own activity (for example intellectual property rights), and resources from any endowments that the EIT accumulates. "We have the fullest confidence in our ability to come up with the money," said Mr Barroso.

The proposal states that the EIT's legal structure should be set up by 2008, and the Institute would then become operational in 2009.

DG Education
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eit/index_en.html
Cordis
http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_FP7&ACTION=D&RCN=26523&DOC=7&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1162546426760
Euractiv
<http://www.euractiv.com/en/education/businesses-invest-eit/article-158897>

Commission Prioritises Innovation Actions

The Commission has identified three key areas where it says action would significantly boost Europe's innovation capacity. In addition to proposals for a European Institute of Technology (see above) the commission also outlined plans to bring forward the creation of joint technology initiatives (JTIs) in key fields and kick-start moves towards an EU patent.

The Commission launched its communication 'Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU' on 13 September 2006. This was intended to establish a broad-based strategy whilst the latest communication is addressed to the informal summit of heads of state and government in Lahti, Finland on 20 October, and seeks to ensure political support at the highest level for these three initiatives.

The communication promises a roadmap for the early establishment of JTIs as part of the Progress Report on the Growth & Jobs Strategy (by the end of 2006). JTIs are expected to cover the following fields:

- Hydrogen and Fuel Cells
- Nanoelectronics
- Innovative Medicines
- Embedded Computing Systems
- Aeronautics and air transport ("Clean Sky")
- Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES)

Agreement on a European Patent has proved difficult over a number of years, particularly as a result of disagreements over language. The commission calls for a further concerted effort and clear political leadership from the European Council in order to achieve progress. In the meantime it is proposing the creation of a community instrument to improve the means for litigation under the present system, a move it says will make the current system more efficient. However, the post-summit press conference made little mention of any progress on this issue.

European Innovation Policy:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/innovation/index_en.htm
Commission Communication, 20.10.06:
<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/innovation/doc/EN.doc>
INNOVA Portal: <http://www.europe-innova.org/>

Research Infrastructures Priorities

The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) has prioritised 35 large scale projects for European research infrastructures.

After two years of consultation and negotiation between international experts and EU governments, ESFRI has identified the projects with sufficient member state support to be taken forward. The projects will require some €14 billion to be realised. Although FP7 will finance new as well as existing infrastructures for the first time, it will provide only €1.7 billion from 2007-2013. The projects therefore require member state support, and those already committed are now inviting the participation of other governments in order to develop the

infrastructures which will be open to access from all scientists.

Euractiv: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/eu-research-facilities-pool-international-talent/article-158934>

European roadmap for research infrastructures: ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/esfri/docs/esfri-roadmap-report-26092006_en.pdf

ERC Work Programme

The ERC has published its first draft of the work programme for 2007, outlining eligibility and evaluation procedures. Two grants will be available, with the Starting Independent Researcher Grant (SIRG) to be launched first, followed by the Advanced Investigator Grant (AIG). No deadline has yet been published although early approval of FP7 by Parliament and the Council could see the launch of SIRG before the end of 2006.

Grants will be between €100,000 and €400,000 per year for up to five years. The Scientific Council has stated that it will encourage interdisciplinary, "high risk – high gain" proposals.

ERC: http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/erc-draftwp-2007_en.pdf

Cordis:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_FP7&ACTION=D&RCN=26582&DOC=1&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1162546426760

FP7 Specific Programmes

The European Parliament's Research committee has agreed consultative reports on the Ideas, Capacities and Co-operation programmes.

On the ERC, the committee is pressing for the Parliament and the Council to have a hand in approving Scientific Council appointments with confirmation hearings, as well as an annual ERC report to both institutions. MEPs also agreed amendments to ensure funding for a number of areas including dementia and Parkinson's disease, ageing, ecosystem preservation, and global change under the co-operation programme, and further promote the involvement of SMEs in the capacities programme.

Separately, the committee agreed its report on the People programme which emphasises the importance of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This is designed to "provide a level playing field for European research and to give individual researchers the same rights and obligations wherever they work throughout the EU" according to Commissioner Potocnik.

The reports will be debated and voted upon in the plenary session of 13-16 November and forwarded to the Council. If the Council is able to accept these changes, FP7 will receive rapid approval, but a lack of agreement would lead to lengthy conciliation talks.

Cordis:

Ideas, Co-operation and Capacities reports

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_FP7&ACTION=D&RCN=26478&DOC=12&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1162546426760

People report

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_FP7&ACTION=D&RCN=26445&DOC=17&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1162546426760

New European Energy Technology Programme?

The Commission's High Level Group (HLG) on Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment has called for an ambitiously funded European Energy Technology Programme. The HLG's report looks at the long-term energy future for Europe and investment in power generation and energy efficiency. It includes a number of recommendations on policy options to deliver a sustainable, low carbon, and competitive energy system for Europe's future.

The HLG, says that the European Energy Technology Programme should aim to accelerate technology deployment, e.g. the setting up of a joint technology initiative on renewables or carbon capture and storage. To help encourage technology deployment the Commission should also look at new risk and revenue sharing tools such as the EIB risk sharing financial facility. Member States and the Commission should also promote energy efficiency and innovation through demonstration projects, public awareness, finance schemes, tax incentives and energy audit standards.

The group has also established an ad hoc group to analyse innovation and technology perspectives in energy intensive industries.

The HLG advises the Commission on the development of current and future policy and legislative initiatives.

Commission press release

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1496&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Lisbon Strategy “Well on Track”

The commission’s review of actions says it is well on track to completing all the actions planned at the European level for the Lisbon strategy. Agreement on FP7 and the EIT proposal are seen as key elements. However, this assessment only measures policy inputs rather than outcomes, and only those at the European level, whereas progress has been most patchy at the member state level.

Evidence elsewhere is mixed. The EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard shows that private-sector investment was up 5.3% in the year to August 2006 compared to the stagnation of the previous year, but there is little evidence yet that this is part of a longer term trend. The biggest growth rates were in pharmaceuticals & biotechnology with pharma providing three of the EU’s top ten investing companies. A further four of the top ten are from the automotive sector where energy related research plays a key part.

However, the EU cannot reach it’s target of becoming the most competitive knowledge economy in the world by 2010 according to a report from the London School of Economics. The report cites the failure of R&D investment to reach even 2% of GDP (let alone 3%) and the continuing brain drain of highly qualified staff towards the USA as key factors, along with

the failure to agree an EU patent and member states unwillingness to implement product and labour market reforms.

Cordis: Lisbon strategy progress

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_FP7&ACTION=D&RCN=26567&DOC=3&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1162546426760

Euractiv: R&D investment

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/large-increase-private-sector-rd-investment/article-158527>

Euractiv: Car industry research

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/eu-research-facilities-pool-international-talent/article-158934>

Euractiv: LSE report

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/innovation/eu-innovation-goals-doomed/article-158644>

LSE Centre for Economic Performance:

http://cep.lse.ac.uk/briefings/pa_lisbon_agenda2.pdf

China-EU Co-operation

The China-EU Science and Technology Year (CESTY) was launched on 11 October. Further cooperation will be targeted particularly in health, energy, environment, food and biotechnology. A programme of events is planned with the first taking place in Shenzhen, China, in October and the next, dedicated to industrial partnerships at Le Havre, France, from 6 December. The programme will be accompanied by efforts to open up EU and Chinese research programmes to greater collaboration, encourage more student exchanges and improve “knowledge protection”.

DG Research - CESTY:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/eu-china/index_en.html

Cordis:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_FP7&ACTION=D&RCN=26485&DOC=11&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1162546426760

Euractiv: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/eu-china-science-year-boost-exchange-resources/article-158697>

Produced for EuCheMS by Glenn Vaughan, EuCheMS European Policy Consultant
tel. +32 473 96.44.68 email. Glenn@GVCBrussels.eu

EuCheMS AISBL - Registered office Avenue E. Van Nieuwenhuysse 4, B-1160 Brussels
Secretariat: Evelyn McEwan mcewane@rsc.org www.euchems.org

Any advice given by EuCheMS has been carefully formulated but is necessarily based on the information available, and EuCheMS cannot be held responsible for accuracy or completeness. In this respect, EuCheMS owes no duty of care and shall not be liable for any resulting damage or loss. EuCheMS acknowledges that a disclaimer cannot restrict liability at law for personal injury or death arising through a finding of negligence