



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

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ERC Secretary General Announced

The European Research Council (ERC) has announced the appointment of its first two Secretaries-General. Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker will hold the position from January 2007, and Professor Andreu Mas-Colell will take over in July 2009, remaining in the post until December 2011. Both have extensive experience of running leading research funding agencies covering a range of scientific disciplines.

Professor Winnacker is currently President of the German Research Foundation (DFG), the largest research funding agency in Europe, and Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Munich. Professor Mas-Colell is President of the European Economic Association and Professor of Economics at the University of Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona.

The Secretary General will work together with the heads of the Scientific Council and the Director of the ERC's implementation structure to oversee the implementation of the ERC strategy and work programme, as prepared by the Scientific Council.

ERC: http://erc.europa.eu/index_en.cfm

CORDIS:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=NEWSLINK_EN_C&ACTION=D&QF_RCN=26257

Growth in Business R&D Investment Forecast

Research by the European Union's Joint Research Centre (JRC) suggests that business investment in research and development (R&D) will increase by as much as five per cent per year for the next three years.

Increasing R&D investment to 3% of GDP is a key component of the Lisbon Strategy. In 2005, only 1.91 per cent of GDP was spent on R&D in the EU. Should this increase be mirrored across the board, then the figure could rise to almost 2.2 per cent of GDP spent on R&D by 2010 - short of Lisbon targets but still a huge improvement.

'For this reason the results of this survey are encouraging. We need to maintain and reinforce our efforts at European and national level to make Europe an attractive place for companies to carry out their research. The Commission will be coming forward with some more ideas in this area in autumn 2006,' said Research Commissioner Janez Potocnik.

Report:

<http://iri.jrc.es/do/home/portal/download?IDFICHERO=288&IDSECCION=2&IDARTICULO=26&NFICHERO=EUR.22303.pdf>

Expert group report:

http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/index_en.htm

CORDIS:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=NEWSLINK_EN_C&ACTION=D&QF_RCN=26219

Zero emissions from fossil fuels

The European Technology Platform for Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants (ZEP) has published a new 'vision document'. ZEP will examine a wide area of research into carbon capture and storage (CCS), from carbon sequestration to 'cracking' fossil fuels to release their hydrogen - a genuinely emission-less fuel.

ZEP will seek to address the most pertinent ways to reduce CO₂ emissions, firstly through increasing the efficiency of power stations, using low-carbon fuels, developing CO₂ 'sinks' (such as planting forests and preventing their burning or using special CO₂ absorbing soils), using renewables and CO₂ neutral fuels, and capturing and storing CO₂.

The three key options, which ZEP is designed to address are:

- Post-combustion capture, where CO₂ is captured, usually by chemical means, and then disposed of.
- Pre-combustion capture, where the fuel reacts with air or steam to produce a combination of carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrogen.
- Oxy-fuel firing, where the fossil fuel is burnt in pure oxygen, giving a gas of mostly water and CO₂.

Vision document: http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/pdf/zero_emission_ffpp_en.pdf

SusChem R&D Agenda

The European Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem) has adopted a draft action plan to focus European R&D spending at its implementation meeting in Budapest on 27 August.

Priorities focus around eight themes: bio-based economy; energy; health care; information and communication technologies; nanotechnology; sustainable quality of life; sustainable product and process design; and transport.

Funding of around 1.4 billion euro annually is expected, with about half coming from public sources.

SusChem: www.suschem.org

European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) Press release:

<http://www.cefic.be/Files/NewsReleases/SusChemPR.doc>

Risk communication: stakeholder involvement needed

Risk communication is about dialogue and participation, not just informing the public according to a new report. STARC, a Commission supported FP6 project has identified varying national approaches to risk communication across the EU, and a general need for more engagement of stakeholders.

STARC is examining the role of risk communications in the management of a modern society. Risk communications means the exchange or sharing of information about risk between decision-makers and other stakeholders.

The project has now published its survey on national risk communication practices in three industrial sectors of the EU-25 - electricity, chemical waste and GM food.

The main recommendations include:

- identification and involvement of stakeholders and stakeholder groups in the risk-management process;
- government surveys of stakeholders' perception of risks;
- requirement for companies listed on a stock exchange to include a risk assessment in their annual reports;
- co-ordination of risk communication between the private and public sectors.

Euractiv.com: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/report-risk-communication-needs-stakeholder-involvement/article-157265>

STakeholders in Risk Communication (STARC): Report

http://mahbsrv4.jrc.it/starc/downloads/wp2/mc-STARC - D2_report - 24_Aug_06.doc

CORDIS:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=26227

Updated FP7 Factsheet

A EuCheMS factsheet is now available providing an up-to-date summary of actions currently planned. The factsheet incorporates all the Commission's latest amended proposals (28 June 2006) and includes extensive links for those needing more detailed information.

Further updates arising from debates in the European Parliament and Council of Ministers will be provided through this newsletter.