



Brussels News Update

July 2010

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10 key recommendations to improve the European Research Area

At the ERAB (European Research Area Board) Conference held in Seville the Commissioner of Research and Innovation, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, laid down the challenge of realising 10 key recommendations to improve the European Research Area (ERA). The conference was organised as the first public discussion on ERAB's first report: "Preparing Europe for a New Renaissance. A Strategic View of the ERA". This resulted in 76 recommendations. The 10 key recommendations include proposals for the short, medium and long term on the direction of the next Framework Programme, such as, concentrating Research & Innovation (R&I) funding around a selection of themes relevant for EU 2020 challenges such as, renewable energy and climate change. It also includes suggestions, such as, setting up a European Venture Capital Fund, dedicating 30% of Structural Funds spending to research and innovations and promoting risk taking and excellence.

Sources: <http://ec.europa.eu2> <http://ec.europa.eu3>

Industry and Research Minister – Research and Innovation Informal Council

A recent informal council of industry and research ministers was brought together on 14th and 15th July. The Belgian Presidency organised the meeting to draw the two issues of Research and Innovation closer together. The meeting was an initial meeting to consider why Europe's good research results, aren't always translated into economic benefits and employment. The Industry ministers also considered sustainable industrial policy, as well as innovation policy, whilst in a separate meeting research ministers considered the Commission's Communication of Simplification of the EU's research framework programme. The discussions also looked at the need to identify strategic European industrial interests, that transcended national sectors and industries and that allowed Europe to compete at a global level, given the intense growth in other countries, such as, India and China.

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/enterprise1>

1000th ERC Grant

Commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn (MGQ) celebrated the awarding of the European Research Council's 1000th Grant, to Professor Erika Van Mutius, an immunologist and paediatrician, in Munich, MGQ said that the European Research Council had come a very long way in a very short time and was already delivering excellent results for science and for Europe. The meeting was followed by a visit to the Max-Planck Institute in Munich where the Commissioner signed a 'statement of intent' to work more closely on the European Research Area with EIROforum, which is a collaboration between the seven European intergovernmental scientific research organisations (CERN, EFDA – European Fusion Development Agreement, EMBL – European Molecular Biology Laboratory, ESA – European Space Agency, ESO – European Organisation of Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere, ESRF – European Synchrotron Radiation Facility, and, ILL Institut Laue-Langevin).

Sources: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm> <http://www.eiroforum.org>

Commission Work Programmes 2011

The Commission's recently published Work Programmes cover:

- Health
- Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and New Production Technologies (NMP)
- Energy, Environment (including Climate Change)
- Transport (including Aeronautics)
- ERC, as part of the 'Ideas' Work Programme.

Source: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/wp-2011_en.html

Simplification of FP7

The Belgian Presidency organised a seminar to examine the Commission's recent proposals on the simplification of FP7, speakers included the European Parliament's rapporteur, Maria Da Graca Carvalho MEP, the LERU group of research intensive universities and the current head of EUROHORCS, who represent granting giving national bodies. Mrs Carvalho's report was broadly welcomed by those receiving grants. There was a good deal of discussion about whether lump sums would be beneficial and whether the 'results' based approach was right, this caused a great deal of concern among representatives. Most researchers preferred the approach put forward by Mrs Carvalho, taking a 'science based' approach.

Source: <http://www.eu2010.be/> <http://www.eu2010.be>

Food in the EU may be the safest in the world

According to the Commission, the strengthening of border controls on certain fruits and vegetables and the removal of around 700 substances, (considered to be carcinogens, mutagens or toxic to reproduction and endocrine systems), by the adoption of EU pesticide legislation, has resulted in the EU having the world's toughest food safety standards. Controls applied to both domestic and imported products resulted in around 10% (1,360 consignments) of imported products being found to be non-compliant.

<http://ec.europa.eu4>

Communication Nanotechnology: 'An Action-Packed Roadmap Towards a Brand New Dialogue'

DG Research is keen to build a broad consensus to support the EC's policy on integrated, safe and responsible nanotechnology. The detailed Communication Roadmap aims to develop a consensus between all stakeholders and to strengthen the EU's image as an impartial, transparent and trustworthy communicator of nanotechnology. The ultimate goal will be the creation of a European Platform on Nano Outreach and Dialogue (NODE).

Source: <http://www.google.co.uk/search?sourceid>

Key Technologies to Shape the Industrial Future of the EU

The European Commission proposes to develop and implement a European vision for the industrial deployment of Key Enabling Technologies. Key Enabling Technologies such as nanotechnology, micro- and nanoelectronics including semiconductors, advanced materials, biotechnology and photonics are thought to be of exceptional importance for managing the shift to a low carbon, knowledge-based economy. It is hoped that these technologies can improve growth and add to sustainability. These areas are thought to be the main drivers for the innovative goods and services needed to address major societal challenges. A new high-level expert group has been given the task of developing a longer term strategy and well co-ordinated concrete actions at European level. The Commission will report back to the Council on the recommendations of the high level group in 2011.

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

FP7 Interim Evaluation

The Commission must carry out an interim evaluation of the current Framework Programme for Research in 2010. The Commission has selected its external experts and the questions that it wishes the panel to address. The evaluation covers the quality of the research activities under way, as well as the quality of implementation and management, as well as progress against the original objectives set.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations>

More People are interested in Science than Sport

According to Eurobarometer, which carries out public opinion surveys for the European Union. 80% of Europeans say they are interested in scientific discoveries and technological developments, compared to 65% interested in sport. Over 70% think that EU research will become more important, they also feel that more effort should be put into the communicating of science, especially to the young and most believe that involving more women in research would improve the way research is conducted. The survey involved over 30,000 people from the EU27, as well as, Iceland, Croatia, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/public2>

Report identifies shortage of 14 critical Mineral Raw Materials

The Commission have identified 14 critical raw materials for the European Union. Demand for these materials is expected to triple by 2030. Emerging technologies are partly responsible for driving demand, materials include : Antimony for micro-capacitors, Cobalt for synthetic fuel cells, Indium for photovoltaics, and Palladium for seawater desalination. The expert group makes five main recommendations, including, policy actions to make recycling of raw materials or raw material-containing products more efficient; promoting research on substitutes, improving the overall material efficiency of critical raw materials.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies>

Court of Auditors critical of FP6 infrastructure support schemes

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has passed judgement on two research infrastructure support schemes. The first, 'Design Studies' was judged to have provided critical early stage funding and to have encouraged collaboration between would-be competitors. The second, 'Construction of New Infrastructures' was judged to have produced little by way of added value. The report is also critical of the Commission, which 'despite advocating the use of complementary sources of funding,... did not actively promote use of the other funding sources available for research infrastructures in Europe', the ECA pointed to the failure to make use of the €3bn allocated to research infrastructures within the Structural Funds budget.

Sources: www.eca.europa.eu <http://eca.europa.eu/portal1>

Commission proposes Translation Arrangements for the EU Patent

The Commission has been anxious to improve the ease of creating a European patent, currently it is expensive and complicated, with further validation required in some states, along with full translation. The Commission's proposal to grant an EU Patent, as long as it is in one of the three official languages of the European Patent Office (English, French or German) and the claims are translated into the other two languages. The EU patent would then be valid throughout the EU. The Commission hopes that this will greatly reduce cost. At the moment a patent validated in 13 Member States is estimated to cost €20,000, compared to the US equivalent of €1,850. However, even with the proposed changes, the Commission estimate that the average EU patent will cost €6,200.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market

Catalogue of Environment Research Projects

DG Research have compiled a list and short summaries of all Environment (and Climate Change) projects so far funded under FP7's Cooperation programme. Areas include, environment and health, urban environment project and environmental technologies, including cultural heritage.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/research2>

Revising Legislation on Biodegradable Waste

On 6 July 2010 the European Parliament (EP) adopted a resolution directed to the European Commission, requesting new legislation on biodegradable waste (or biowaste) by the end of this year. According to MEPs, the future directive should oblige Member States to set up a separate collection system (except where this is not the best option from the environmental and economic point of view) and to recycle biowaste. It should also put in place a quality-based classification of the different types of compost from biowaste. The European Commission is asked to develop criteria for obtaining and using superior quality compost and adopting minimum standards for finished products. MEPs argued that the recycling of biowaste would help the EU meet its target of 20 per cent renewable energy by 2020 as well as the targets set by the Fuel Quality Directive. The EP also notes that more needs to be done

to optimise the recovery of resources, including the creation and development of markets for compost and digestate, bioenergy and biofuels produced from biowaste.

Source: www.europarl.europa.eu

Funding

COST Open Call

COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology. COST aims to reduce the fragmentation in European research investment. It does not fund research, but supports different sorts of networking activities including : meetings, conferences, short term scientific exchanges and outreach activities. Proposals that play a precursor role for other European programmes are particularly welcome. Applicants are asked to select one of the nine broad research domains, including a domain dedicated to 'Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies', however, inter-disciplinary proposals are welcome and will be assessed separately. The deadline is 24th September and 'Actions' will be selected in a two stage process. The COST Secretariat (based in the European Science Foundation) aims to take a decision within six months of the deadline. Actions are expected to start within three months of the decision being made. A financial allocation for each action is around €100,000 over an average period of 4 years, each action must include a minimum of 5 COST countries. For further information on COST go to www.cost.eu

Source : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ>

Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

The Commission have given notice of the launch of a call for proposals under the Annual Implementation Plan 2010 of the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking. The call code is given in the call for proposals at the link below.

Source : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu6>

Open Consultations

- Public consultation on Addictiveness and Attractiveness of Tobacco Additives, Public Health, deadline 5 September 2010
- Public consultation on Definition of "Nanomaterial", Public Health, deadline 5 September 2010
- Public consultation on the Raw Materials Initiative, Enterprise, deadline 19 September 2010

Source : http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm

Forthcoming Events

August

29 August – 2 September, 3rd EuCheMS Chemistry Congress, Chemistry - the Creative Force, Nürnberg / Germany

September

7 and 9 September, 'Industrial Technologies', focusing on nanotechnology and nanosciences. Belgian Presidency programme. <http://www.industrial-technologies2010.eu/>

14 September, Conference on KBBE, Knowledge Bases Bio-Economy – Cooperation area; there will be three main topics: feedstocks for the bio-economy; innovative bio-based products and innovative food production. <http://www.kbbe2010.be/>

15 September, High Level Group on Chemicals Industry Workshop

24 September, Researchers' Night

23 and 24 September – 'Soil, Climate Change and Biodiversity - where do we stand?' jointly organised by the Commission Directorate-General for the Environment and the Joint Research Centre



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