



Brussels News Update

January 2011



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EuCheMS submits pre-consultation views on future of the EU's research programme

EuCheMS has submitted an initial input on the future of the EU's Research Framework Programme, FP8. The response recognises the challenges facing Europe and the world and underlines that EuCheMS is fully committed to meeting these challenges. In particular, we identify six areas where the chemical sciences have a role to play, namely: 'breakthrough'

science (catalysis, synthesis, formulation...); food; energy; health; water; and, resource efficiency. Over the next six months EuCheMS will be working with member societies, Divisions and working groups to develop a 'roadmap for the chemical sciences' with the aim of identifying critical gaps in knowledge which are limiting technological progress and where the chemical sciences can bridge the gaps. The roadmap will form the central part of a EuCheMS submission to the Commission's consultation on the future of FP8, due to be launched at the beginning of February.

Source: <http://www.euchems.org/News/FP8Cons.asp>

Other pre-consultation views on the future of the EU's Research Framework Programme

Views on the future of the EU's next research framework programme have been emerging over the last couple of months. Views are in line with current proposals. So far papers have been published by the following organisation and states: EUROHORCS; Ireland; Sweden; Norway, Swiss, Austria, Spain and Turkey.

Source:

EUROHORCS (European Heads of Research Councils): <http://www.eurohorcs.org/>

Ireland: <http://www.era.gv.at/Ireland>

Sweden: <http://www.era.gv.at/attach/Sweden>

Norway: http://www.era.gv.at/attach/Norway_preliminary_refelctions.pdf

Swiss: <http://www.era.gv.at/attach/2010-12-01SwissNon-PaperFP8.pdf>

Austria: <http://www.era.gv.at/attach/AustrianReflectionPaper.pdf>

Spain: http://www.era.gv.at/attach/FP8-Spanish_preliminary_inputs_dec2010.pdf

Turkey: <http://www.era.gv.at/attach/TurkeysPositionPapertowardsFP8.pdf>

European Science Foundation and EUROHORCS to join forces

The European Science Foundation (ESF – www.esf.org) is in discussions with EUROHORCS (European Heads of Research Councils – www.eurohorcs.org) about a possible merger of the two organisations. EUROHORCS is an informal association of the heads of 45 national public organisations which fund research or perform research. ESF and EUROHORCS have an overlapping membership and have worked together to support the European Research Area, notably through their paper entitled "EUROHORCS and ESF Vision on a Globally Competitive ERA and their Road Map for Actions". A vote will be held on the proposed new organisation during a Special Assembly in May 2011.

Source: <http://www.esf.org/about-us/latest-developments-between-esf-eurohorcs.html>

€1 Billion, European Patent Fund

In a recent 'non-paper', the current thinking on a European Patent Fund was outlined. A task force comprising the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC), the European Investment Bank (EIB), KfW (Germany), the Cassa di depositi (Italy), Innovationsbrön (Sweden), Veraventure (Finland), and CDTI (Spain) was set up in June 2010 to lay the groundwork for a European patent fund. The European Patent Fund could compile a broad portfolio of IP rights on patents held by universities, research bodies and private-sector firms (the aim being to assemble at least 10,000 families of patents). This would allow patents to be protected and developed, by organising them into technological clusters for licensing purposes, primarily to European firms, and to innovative SMEs especially. The royalties from these licenses would then be paid to public and private-sector research bodies, after remuneration of the equity employed by the fund. The initiative would mirror similar funds in the US (€5 billion and has acquired 30,000 families of patents), Japan (Innovation Network Corp of Japan has been set up with \$ 1 billion) and South Korea a \$350 million fund is being set up). The European Commission issued a call for tender in the first half of 2010 for a study to explore ways to

create a European financial market for intellectual property rights (IPRs). The results of this call for tender will be announced in the first half of 2011.

Source: <http://www.era.gv.at/space/11442/directory/21218/doc/22124.html>

€4 Billion European Venture Capital Fund

In a further 'non-paper/memorandum' the French have set out a proposal for joint action to address, 'the critical state of the European venture capital (VC) industry' and the implications that this has for innovative firms. The memorandum proposes a number of measures including the creation of a European Fund to Finance Innovative Companies, through the European Investment Fund (EIF). The size of this fund would be around €4 billion, initially, which is roughly the order of magnitude of the EIF's current portfolio of equity investments, bringing a doubling of its current capacity. There would also be support for small seed capital funds that would largely be managed through national operators.

Through the European Fund to Finance Innovative Companies, the EIF could continue and step up its work in favour of European venture capital by supporting large trans-European VC funds able to make 'big-ticket investments'. The European Fund to Finance Innovative Companies could be used within the framework of an industrial policy focused on the sectors of the future, and where market gaps are most glaring. Possible sectors include : eco-technologies, biotechnologies, nanotechnologies and the information and communication technologies (ICT), along with transport technologies, including aerospace technologies.

Source: <http://www.era.gv.at/space/11442/directory/21218/doc/22122.html>

New EU flagship initiative – Agenda for new skills and jobs

The EU has launched another one of the seven flagship initiatives that form part of the Europe 2020 strategy. The main objective of the initiative is to contribute to reach the 2020 target of 75 per cent employment rate among 20-64 year-olds. The Agenda contains 13 key actions which are aimed at reforming labour markets, ensuring that skills are taught in line with markets needs, improving working conditions and job quality and creating new jobs. The Commission is aware of specific skills shortages, it is anticipated that Europe will an estimated deficit of one million researchers by 2025.

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1541&>

Research: OpenAIRE opens access to EU scientific results

OpenAIRE (Open Access Infrastructure for Research in Europe) has recently been launched it OpenAire has been developed from a European Commission pilot initiative, started in August 2008. Projects funded under FP7 are requested to deposit peer-reviewed papers in online repositories and to provide open access within 6 or 12 months after publication depending on the thematic area. OpenAIRE will provide a network of open repositories providing free online access to work produced by scientists receiving grants from the Seventh Framework programme (FP7) and European Research Council (ERC). OpenAIRE includes the fields of health, energy, environment, parts of Information and Communication Technology and research infrastructures, social sciences, humanities, as well as science in society. Neelie Kroes, Vice-President of the European Commission for the Digital Agenda said: "The launch of OpenAIRE marks a very concrete step towards sharing the results of EU funded research to our mutual benefit. Scientific information has the power to transform our lives for the better – it is too valuable to be locked away. In addition, every EU citizen has the right to access and benefit from knowledge produced using public funds."

Source: <http://www.openaire.eu/>

Graduate Employability Eurobarometer Survey

A new Europe-wide, Eurobarometer survey among employers shows that, when it comes to graduate recruitment, 'soft' skills are just as valued as sector-specific and computer skills. Significant numbers of employers questioned said that the ability to work well in a team (98%), to adapt to new situations (97%), communication skills (96%), and knowledge of foreign languages (67%) were important when recruiting for their companies. Almost 50% of companies with considerable international business identified knowledge of foreign languages as the most important skill for the future. Over 7 000 recruiters working in public and non-public companies in 31 countries were interviewed for the survey.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/flash_arch_en.htm#304

Dioxin in Feed, Germany, how did the incident start? Frequently asked questions

The German authorities notified the through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) of contaminated fatty acids getting mixed with 500 tonnes of vegetable feed fat. The consignment originated in a biodiesel company and was delivered to a feed fat producer, where the mixing occurred. The contaminated fat was then delivered to nine feed manufacturers and the compound feed produced from the contaminated fat was delivered to about 40 farms. Consequently, all these farms were blocked. The incident started with the mixing of fatty acids, meant to be used for technical purposes (such as paper processing), with vegetable feed fat, which is used in the production of compound feed for animals. The fatty acids were contaminated with dioxins, and that is how the dioxins ended up in compound feed. The actual source of the dioxin contamination –i.e. why dioxins were present in the fatty acids– remains unknown for the time being.

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEM>

FUNDING

EUROCORES call delayed

With a proposed merger of ESF and EUROHOCS, see item above, some activities of the ESF will be stalled until a decision on the merger is taken in May, namely, the planned 2010 call for Research Networking Programs (RNPs) will not be launched and a 2011 call for EUROCORES Themes and the collaborative research projects call will not be launched. EUROCORES Themes are "bottom-up" proposals for the creation of new collaborative research programmes dealing with broad and complex topics which are best addressed through multinational cooperation. Through its annual call for theme proposals, ESF solicits new ideas from the scientific community with a view to creating large-scale European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) programmes in and across all scientific domains.

Source : <http://www.esf.org/activities/eurocores.html>

EUREKA's Eurostars Programme

A call for applications under the work programme of the Eurostars Joint Programme has been announced. EUREKA's Eurostars Programme is the first European funding and support programme to be specifically dedicated to SMEs. Eurostars aims to stimulate SMEs to lead international collaborative research and innovation projects by easing access to support and funding. Applicants must be based in a Eurostars participating country and invest 10% or more of full-time equivalent or annual turnover in research activities.

Source: http://www.eurostars-eureka.eu/EN_C_352/14

Official Journal of the European Union 23.12.2010

Erasmus Mundus

The Erasmus Mundus programme's overall aim is to promote European higher education, to help improve and enhance the career prospects of students and to promote intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries (these are non-EU countries). The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) has launched a call for proposals for three actions under the Erasmus Mundus programme, including : Erasmus Mundus Master Courses (EMMCs); Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates and Erasmus Mundus Partnerships, that aim at fostering structured cooperation between European and third-country higher education institutions through the promotion of mobility at all level of studies for students (undergraduate and masters), doctoral candidates, researchers, academic and administrative staff.

Source : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/2>

EU-US Cooperation in Higher Education and Vocational Training

The Commission has launched 'Atlantis', an initiative for Transatlantic Links and Academic Networks in Training and Integrated Studies. The general objectives are to promote mutual understanding between the peoples of the European Union and the United States of America including broader knowledge of their languages, cultures and institutions. Actions include: Transatlantic Degree Consortia Projects, and Excellence in Mobility Projects.

Source : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/3>

CHEMICALS UPDATE

Chemicals: More than three million classification and labelling

More than three million notifications on the classification of chemical substances in line with new EU rules have been received by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). All companies manufacturing or importing hazardous substances were required to classify them by 1 December 2010 and notify ECHA by 3 January 2011. Classification is essential to determine whether a chemical is dangerous for health and the environment, and will determine the information on the labels of chemicals that workers and consumers use. The data will enable ECHA (European Chemicals Agency) to establish the first European inventory of hazardous substances and harmonised classifications.

European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship said: "The first inventory of all hazardous substances in the EU will ensure that all companies – including small businesses - and consumers will have the necessary information for the safe use of chemicals. I am proud that Europe is a frontrunner and that together with REACH, the CLP Regulation will foster the sustainability and competitiveness of the European chemicals industry."

Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Environment said: "The publication and harmonisation of classifications will improve safety for all those handling chemicals and will enable downstream users and consumers to select less hazardous chemicals for their needs".

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/4>

Commission strengthens legislation on safety at European chemical plants

The European Commission has presented draft legislation to strengthen rules on the control of major accident hazards involving chemicals. The revision of the so-called Seveso II Directive will align the legislation to changes in EU chemicals law and will clarify and update other provisions. This includes introducing stricter inspection standards and improving the level and quality of information available to the public in the event of an accident. The new Directive should apply from 1 June 2015.

Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik said: "The Seveso II Directive has been instrumental in reducing the likelihood and consequences of chemical accidents. However, such accidents still occur and can often have devastating effects. We cannot compromise with safety. This is why the proposed new rules will further strengthen legislation in this area and ensure the necessary high levels of protection."

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/5>

BUSINESS UPDATE

Prior notification of a concentration Johnson & Johnson and Crucell

On 20 December 2010, the Commission received a notification of a proposed concentration where Johnson & Johnson ('JNJ', USA) wished to Crucell N.V by way of public bid. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:

JNJ: consumer health and care products, including beauty, oral care, baby, over-the-counter medicines, nutritional, women's health, wellness and prevention products; medical devices and diagnostics; pharmaceutical products,

Crucell N.V.: research, development, production and sale of biologic medicinal products (i.e. vaccines, proteins and antibodies) for the prevention or treatment of infectious diseases.

The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/6>

State Aid approved for 'LignoBoost' research and development project

The European Commission has authorised €9.8 million of Swedish aid to support LignoBoost research and development (R&D) project. Södra Cell AB, a Swedish pulp producer, will develop a demonstration plant for the production of chemical grade lignin from pulp mill residue material. The Commission concluded that the project is compatible with the EU Framework on State aid for research, development and innovation. In particular, the aid aims at tackling a market failure and generates positive effects for the EU, notably increased research activities and environmental protection.

Joaquín Almunia, Vice-President of the Commission in charge of competition policy, declared: "The project will pave the way to transform a pulp mill into a real bio-refinery without unduly distorting competition. Fossil fuel will be replaced by a novel source of renewable energy, contributing to Europe's 2020 objectives concerning R&D, climate change and energy."

Source: <http://europa.eu/7>

CONSULTATIONS

Intellectual Property Rights Consultation

The objective of the consultation is aimed at identifying additional issues that should be considered in the review of the Directive on the enforcement of intellectual property rights. Effective means of enforcing intellectual property rights are essential for promoting innovation and creativity. Directive 2004/48/EC on the enforcement of intellectual property rights harmonises the minimum means available to right holders and public authorities for fighting infringements of intellectual property rights. The directive covers different types of rights, such as copyright, patents, trademarks and designs, but also geographical indications and plant breeders' rights. One of the issues that has arisen, since the Directive was adopted, is the unprecedented increase in opportunities to infringe intellectual property rights using the Internet. The Directive was not designed with this challenge in mind. Other issues that could need special attention are the use of provisional and precautionary measures such as

injunctions, procedures to gather and preserve evidence (including the relationship between the right of information and protection of privacy), clarification of the meaning of various corrective measures, including the costs of destruction, and calculation of damages.

Deadline: 31st March 2011

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

Public consultation on the Professional Qualifications Directive and a European Professional Card

About 800 categories of regulated professions exist across the 27 Member States. A regulated profession implies that access to a profession is subject to a person holding a specific qualification, such as a diploma from a university. In order to find out more about regulated professions please consult the Regulated Professions Database:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/regprof/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.home

Qualification requirements often determine access to a profession according to national laws or regulations; these often differ from country to another and may make the right to exercise one's profession in another Member State quite difficult. European rules establishing mutual recognition of qualifications were introduced over the course of the last few decades. These rules have since been consolidated in a single Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications). The Commission are proposing the introduction of a Professional Card to be developed by professional organisations in order to better facilitate mobility. Originally this suggestion was not supported, but the consultation reopens this debate.

Source: <http://europa.eu/8>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

January

18th January, Women Sharing a Chemical Moment, event in European Parliament, web streamed: <http://www.chemistry2011.org/participate/activities/show?id=509>

20th January, Nanofutures European Technology Platform

27th January, Official Launch of IYC, UNESCO/IUPAC, Paris

28th January, deadline public consultation, European Innovation Partnership pilot on 'Active and Healthy Ageing'

31st January, deadline public consultation, targets for bio-waste recycling

February

1st or 2nd February, Communication and consultation launch for FP8 expected

4th February – First Innovation and Research Council

4th February – Deadline, consultation on the future of consultation on the successor to the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013 (CIP)

10th February, High Level Group on Competitiveness of the Chemicals Industry

10th February, EuCheMS President launches the IYC in Brussels and banner for IYC on Berlaymont building

17th-19th February 1st Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Meeting, Venice

23rd February, ERAC (European Research Area Committee) : Presentation on draft ERAC advice on ERA instruments for the next framework programme; also, seminar on universities expected end of February

24th – 25th February, FP7 Interim Evaluation Workshop, Budapest

March

7th – 8th March, Women in Science Conference, Budapest

10th – 11th March, Council Competitiveness, : Europe 2020 strategy – Annual Growth Survey, exchange of views; discussion on Innovation Policy: Flagship Initiative implementing the orientations from the February European Council on innovation; extension Euratom; interim evaluation FP7; policy discussion FP8; Knowledge-based bio-economy

18th – 19th March, Brain Research Conference, Budapest

31st March, deadline Intellectual Property Rights consultation

April

3rd - 5th April Monitoring and analysis of water: Chromatographic methods for determination of ionic substances, Torun

11th – 13th April, Informal Council Competitiveness, Budapest-Gödöllő : the 8th Framework Programme for Research and Developments; and, Strategic Research Agenda of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT)

11th -14th April EuCheMS Inorganic Chemistry Conference, Manchester

28th – 30th April The Culture of Responsibility: Ethic, Chemistry and Environment, Modena

28th – 29th April, ERAC (European Research Area Committee), Budapest : Progress on the idea of European Innovation Partnerships, including state of play with first pilot action; presentation of Research and Innovation policy; discussion on the nature and scope of the consultation on ERA policy; discussion on interaction between next Framework programme and national programmes.

May

1st -6th May EUCHEM Conference on Stereochemistry, Brunnen

9th – 11th May Chemometrics' Epistemology in Systems Biology, Öresund

19th – 20th May, ICT Proposers' Day

30th May – 1st June, EuroNanoForum, Budapest

30th – 31st May, Council Competitiveness : Interim evaluation of the European Research Council (ERC), Information from the Commission; (possible) Mid-term review of ambient assisted living joint program (AAL), Information from the Commission; Mid-term review of EUROSTARS program, Information from the Commission; Strategic Agenda of the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT), information by the Presidency

31st May, Stakeholder conference on future orientations of EU Research and Innovation policy
End May, beginning June, , ERAC (European Research Area Committee) : Preparation of the Innovation Convention under the Polish Presidency; Progress on framework conditions for Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI), including, standardisation and procurement; R&I investment crisis; advice on modernisation of universities in preparation of Commission Communication

June

20th – 22nd June, ERC Meeting, Budapest



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