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Brussels News Update

May 2009

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Increase in funding for Research and Innovation in the EU budget 2010

The Commission has adopted a €139bn preliminary draft budget for 2010. Funds for major programmes linked to research and energy will increase by more than 12%, as €6bn will go into research and innovation. The proposal channels the biggest share of funds (45%) into growth and employment measures – a 3.2% rise on 2009 – to help restore competitiveness across the Union. Cash for cohesion policy will grow too, with the EU-12 set to receive 52% of cohesion and Structural Funds. The final adoption of the EU budget will take place during the European Parliament plenary in December.

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/1> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/1>

Scientific Hearing on Nanotechnology - Launch of Public Consultation

In recognition of the importance of the issue of safety of nanotechnologies, the Commission is organising a one-day scientific hearing, which will take place on 10 September 2009 in Brussels. The hearing will focus on the scientific aspects of the issues covered in the opinions of the independent EU Scientific Committees regarding nanotechnology. In order to prepare for this hearing, the Commission is launching a public consultation relating to the three main objectives to be addressed:

- identification of any possible topics which have not been covered in the opinions from the relevant EU Risk Assessment Committees and Bodies;
- identification of what are -according to current scientific knowledge- the main potential risks that could emerge from the use of nanomaterials in the future; and
- identification of the issues to be discussed at the hearing including provision of background information and comments on those issues.

The outcome of the consultation will be presented at the Scientific Hearing in September.
Deadline for submission of comments: 19 June 2009

Sources: <http://ec.europa.eu/2.htm> <http://ec.europa.eu/3>

Nanomaterials: MEPs call for more prudence

Parliament calls for the provision of information to consumers on the use of nanomaterials in consumer products: all ingredients present in the form of nanomaterials in substances, mixtures or articles should be clearly indicated in the labelling of the product (e.g. in the list of ingredients, the name of such ingredients should be followed by the word 'nano' in brackets)

The House calls specifically on the Commission to evaluate the need to review REACH concerning inter alia:

- simplified registration for nanomaterials manufactured or imported below one tonne,
- consideration of all nanomaterials as new substances,
- a chemical safety report with exposure assessment for all registered nanomaterials,
- notification requirements for all nanomaterials placed on the market on their own, in preparations or in articles.

MEPs also call specifically on the Commission to evaluate the need to review worker protection legislation concerning inter alia:

- the use of nanomaterials only in closed systems or in other ways that exclude exposure of workers as long as it is not possible to reliably detect and control exposure,
- a clear assignment of liability to producers and employers arising from the use of nanomaterials,

- whether all exposure routes (inhalation, dermal and other) are addressed.

MEPs call for the urgent development of adequate testing protocols and metrology standards to assess the hazard of, and exposure of workers, consumers and the environment to, nanomaterials over their entire life cycle, including in the case of accidents, using a multi-disciplinary approach.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/1.htm>

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/2>

Commission publishes its 2009 progress report on renewable energy

The Commission has adopted a progress report on renewable energy (in the electricity and transport sectors), highlighting the patchy progress made and the EU's likely failure to reach the 2010 indicative targets. The report explores the reason for this and explains that the new Directive on renewable energy, agreed as part of the energy and climate package and due to enter into force in May, addresses all the concerns highlighted in the report and provides a solid basis for removing barriers and increasing the growth of renewable energy for the next ten years.

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

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/PDF>

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/3>

EU Research: Connect more

According to Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research, EU needs “to connect more, whether it is across borders or between organisations that have not worked together before”. Speaking at the recent Research Connection in Prague, Potočnik referred to the recent report on FP7 that shows EU12 Member State participation in terms of submitted and retained proposals to be proportionally lower than their share of the overall EU27 research workforce. The average success rate of EU12 in terms of applicants is also slightly lower than the overall EU27 average: 17.9% compared to 21.8%. The EU12 Member States on average receive proportionally more money from the Framework Programme than they invest at home: EU 12 participants have obtained almost 5% of the total requested FP7 contribution, compared with a 2.8% share of the EU12 in the total EU27 intramural R&D expenditure.

Potočnik also said that “the potential of the EU12 has not been fully tapped” and he called for researchers to ‘be involved and look for the opportunities that transnationality, better collaboration and integration can bring’ while help will be given to less performing Member States to integrate better into the Framework Programmes and to increase capacity building.

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

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/4>

FP7 review

The European Union's largest ever funding programme for research and development has fared well in a review of its first two years. According to a progress report, the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) is on the right course to respond to the EU's socio-economic needs, and is particularly relevant with regard to the challenges posed by the current financial crisis.

Preparation of the FP7 Progress Report is a legal requirement that paves the way for an evaluation of the programme by an independent expert group to be completed at its four-year milestone in 2010. The report is an initial assessment of the effectiveness of FP7 activities implemented during the two years since the programme's inauguration in 2007. It also aims to provide an outline of the EU's current socio-economic landscape with a view to forecasting and addressing forthcoming challenges.

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Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/1>

Link: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/1>

Patent applications falling across Europe

The European Patent Office (EPO) has published its *Survey of intentions for making patent applications*. Its preliminary figures show a decrease of applications for new patents for the first two months of 2009.

Source: <http://documents.epo.org/.pdf>

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/5>

EPO announces plans for quality improvements

The European Patent Office has announced measures to improve the quality of patents while improving efficiency in the granting process. These measures, planned to be launched in spring 2010, are contained in the annual report for 2008, which has just been published.

Highlights of the planned changes include:

Clarification of the scope of patent protection sought prior to search: a cap on the number of independent claims per application, and the opportunity for the examiner to have the claims clarified before searching, will help examiners perform a more focused search and reduce the risk of missing an important document.

Mandatory response to the written opinion issued with the search report: this reply from applicants, required before entering examination, will allow them six months to research and justify any issues raised in the written report.

One opportunity to file voluntary amendments: once in possession of the written opinion and the search report, applicants will be granted only one chance to make amendments of their own volition. This will focus attention and activity earlier in the examination process, and reduce the average number of communications required.

Mandatory provision of the basis for amendments: since applicants are better placed than anyone else to outline the basis for amendments, they are now obliged to clearly identify any changes they seek.

Source: <http://www.epo.org/.html>

How European students perceive Higher Education in Europe

A new Europe-wide survey among students show that they want wider access to higher education and that universities should open up cooperation with the world of work and to lifelong learning. A large majority agree that it is important for higher education institutions to foster innovation and an entrepreneurial mindset among students and staff, and that there should be the possibility to undertake work placements in private enterprises as part of a study programme. More students want to study abroad and a majority wants more information about the quality of higher education institutions in order to inform their study choices.

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/6>

The Bologna Process – reforming universities in the next decade

Ministers responsible for higher education from 46 European countries have met to take stock of the achievements of the Bologna Process, set a new agenda, and agree priorities for the European Higher Education Area for the next decade up to 2020. For the first time a 'Bologna Policy Forum' took place between the 46 countries participating in the Process and 20 countries from outside Europe. The Commission's latest report on Bologna confirmed the good, albeit somewhat uneven, progress that has been made in implementing the Bologna reforms, and said

the focus should now be on modernising national policies and implementing reform of Europe's higher education institutions.

Sources <http://ec.europa.eu/7.pdf> (full report entitled *Higher Education in Europe 2009: Developments in the Bologna Process*)

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/pdf> <http://europa.eu/rapid/8>

Link: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/2>

Proposal for animal testing limits without impeding scientific progress

A draft directive that still awaits approval by the Parliament and the EU Council, recommends a significant drop in the number of animals in research and ethical assessment on any planned tests. A significant feature of the directive is that Member States will be able to apply or adopt stricter national measures and furthermore it supports the expansion of the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/2>

Tyre labels to show fuel efficiency, safety and noise

A mandatory tyre label proposal adopted by the European Parliament will use fuel-efficiency classes ranging from best-performance (green "A" class) to worst (red "G" class). It will also show the tyre's wet grip and noise performance. MEPs think that a regulation (directly applicable in all Member States) would be a better format for the new legislation. The Commission had proposed a directive, which would need to be transposed into national law.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/2.htm>

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/6>

RAPEX Report 2008: Rise in number of dangerous products being detected

The number of dangerous consumer products withdrawn from the EU market rose by 16% in 2008 compared to in 2007, the Commission's annual report on the Community rapid alert system for non-food dangerous products ("RAPEX") reveals today.

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/9> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/7>

Potonik: Europe must lead 'green revolution'

Janez Potočnik, Commissioner responsible for Science and Research in an interview with EurActiv. **Source:** <http://www.euractiv.com/8>

European Research Council set for growth, says president

An interview with European Research Council president, Fotis Kafatos.

Source: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/3>

REACH chief: Companies 'failing to properly register chemicals'

The executive director of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), Geert Dancet in an interview with EurActiv.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/9>

EIT call for independent experts launched

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) has published a call for prospective independent experts to assist the EIT with tasks related to the evaluation and implementation of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/3> © Official Journal of the European Union 2009

Erasmus University Charter call for proposals launched

The European Commission has published a specific call for proposals to apply for the Erasmus University Charter. The Erasmus University Charter provides the general framework for the European cooperation activities that a higher education institution (HEI) may carry out within the Erasmus Programme as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).

The award of an Erasmus University Charter is a prerequisite for higher education institutions that wish to organise student mobility, carry out Erasmus intensive language courses and intensive programmes, or apply for multilateral projects, networks and accompanying measures, including the organisation of preparatory visits.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/4> © Official Journal of the European Union 2009

Call for proposals on industry-academia partnerships

The European Commission Directorate-General for Research has issued a call for proposals under the 2009 work programme 'People' of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The 'Marie Curie action: industry-academia partnerships and pathways' (IAPP) seeks to open and foster dynamic pathways between public research organisations and private commercial enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), based on longer term cooperation programmes with a high potential for increasing knowledge-sharing and mutual understanding of the different cultural settings and skill requirements of both the industrial and academic sectors.

The action will be implemented through targeted and flexible support for human resources initiatives within cooperation programmes between at least two organisations, one from each sector and from at least two different Member States or Associated Countries. The indicative budget amounts to € 65 million.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/5> © Official Journal of the European Union 2009

Call to advance measurement science and technology in the field of Energy

EURAMET e.V. announces the launch of the following calls within the European Metrology Research Programme (EMRP), jointly funded by the European Commission and the participating countries. This includes:

A. Joint Research Projects and integrated Researcher Excellence Grants to advance measurement science and technology in the field of energy:

Stage 1: Call for proposals for potential metrology research topics (open from 15 May to 28 June 2009), followed by:

Stage 2: Call for proposals for Joint Research Projects (JRPs) which may include proposals for associated Researcher Excellence Grants (open from 2 September to 2 November 2009)

B. Stage 3: Call for proposals for (following the publication of the list of selected JRPs on the website, indicative date is early 2010):

- Researcher Excellence Grants for JRPs not awarded such a grant at Stage 2
- Researcher Mobility Grants

C. Early-Stage Researcher Mobility Grants (call opens following the publication of the list of selected JRPs on the website, indicative date is early 2010)

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/6> © Official Journal of the European Union 2009

ERA-Net PRIOMEDCHILD prepares for Joint Call

Priority Medicines for Children (PRIOMEDCHILD), a network of research funding organisations recently determined the focus for the first Joint Call, which is published on the PRIOMEDCHILD website. The launch of the Joint Call is planned late 2009.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/7> © European Communities, 2005-2009

CEMP post-doctoral fellowships Call

The partner Institutions of the National BioPhotonics and Imaging Platform – Ireland (NBIPI) have announced the opening of the call for postdoctoral fellowships under the Career Enhancement Mobility Programme (CEMP). Within the remit of the NBIPI, the CEMP will fund and support research fellows wishing to undertake interdisciplinary research and training programmes in BioPhotonics and Imaging in the following research areas and technologies

(a) Research Areas: apoptosis and cancer; cardiovascular research, neuroscience/neurodegenerative disease; cell and Molecular endocrinology

(b) Technologies: molecular and cellular imaging; small animal imaging; Imaging and data analysis; integration of imaging technologies and methodologies; Images and mathematical modelling; drug designs and molecular models for imaging applications; high content analysis.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/8> © European Communities, 2005-2009

Tender: molecular typing in surveillance and control of MRSA

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has published a call for tenders for molecular typing in surveillance and control of MRSA (Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus) in hospitals and the community. Successful tenderers should be able to collate available evidence of the current use of different molecular typing methods for MRSA in the context of disease surveillance in the EU and assess how this evidence could be used as part of a model for integration of molecular typing data with epidemiological and clinical data on MRSA obtained in the EU.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/9> © Official Journal of the European Union 2009

Tender: a quantitative microbiological risk assessment of Campylobacter

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a call for tenders for a quantitative microbiological risk assessment of Campylobacter in the broiler meat chain. The aim of the contract is to carry out a quantitative microbiological risk assessment (QMRA) at EU level and based on existing models, regarding Campylobacter spp. in the broiler meat chain from primary production to consumer level.

Source:

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<http://cordis.europa.eu/10>



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