



Brussels News Update

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ERA: 'Vision 2020'

The Competitiveness Council adopted a 'Vision 2020' for the ERA. This founding text makes the ERA an area of freedom and exchange for scientists and aims to create the framework for the free movement of researchers and their work in a European area without borders and based on human resources and infrastructures. The Member States specified the procedure for joint programming in research, thereby committing to taking a common and concerted approach to tackling major societal issues of common interest, in order to increase the effectiveness of public funding for research and development in the EU.

To this end, they propose to work together to overcome the challenges: the food crisis and its consequences for agriculture and how we manage our ecosystems; climate change which makes renewable energies indispensable; the transition to a knowledge-based society; and the ageing of the European population. The joint programming will be implemented gradually throughout 2009. The Council continued its examination of the draft regulation on the legal status of research infrastructures of pan-European interest. The Council also adopted conclusions on a European strategy for marine and maritime research and defined guidelines for the future development of the GMES (Global Monitoring and Environment Security) programme.

Source: <http://www.ue2008.fr/1> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/1>

Research in Budget 2009

Parliament's Budgets Committee voted on the draft EU budget for 2009. MEPs endorsed the agreement concluded with the Council on the level of payments (€116.1 billion) and voted for spending levels higher than those in the preliminary draft budget for a number of measures and programmes, including research.

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

Political Agreement on renewable energy

EU governments and the European Parliament agreed on a bill obliging Europe to use renewable sources for 20 percent of its energy needs by 2020. Under the deal, biofuels and "renewable" electricity will make up 10 percent of transport fuel in the EU by 2020. Each member state will be given national objectives within the European total.

The deal foresees cross-border projects and 'effort sharing'.

Sources: <http://news.smh.com.au> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/2>

Links: <http://www.ft.com/cms/1.html> <http://www.euractiv.com/2>

Future policy goals & Climate Change

Parliament's Temporary Committee on Climate Change adopted its final recommendations for a future EU integrated policy on climate change. Among others, they recommend a binding goal of 20% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020 as well as specific interim reduction targets; a flexible policy to take account of the complex nature of biofuels production, including life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions and assessment of all relevant indirect effects. In addition they recommend the establishment of a European Climate Fund and/or corresponding funds in the Member States. **Source:** <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/3.htm>

Ten new EU research infrastructures

The European Commission has offered its support to ten new research projects in addition to the thirty-four projects from the initial European roadmap for research infrastructures. The new projects are:

- 3 projects in the field of Environmental Sciences
- 4 projects in Biological and Medical Sciences
- 1 project for non-nuclear Energy
- 1 project in Materials and Analytical Facilities
- 1 project in Physical Sciences and Engineering

Sources: <http://europa.eu/rapid/1> <http://cordis.europa.eu/1>

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

Reviewing chemical exposure

The draft opinion, requested by the European Commission and compiled by the Scientific Committees on Consumer Products (SCCP), Health and Environment (SCHER) and Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR), on the use of the Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) Approach for the Safety Assessment of Chemical Substances in cosmetics, toys and cleaning products is now accessible. Interested parties are invited to send their comments on the draft. The three scientific committees call for further research to be carried out into the development and validation of toxicity databases and for further improvements on the methodology for assessing systemic exposure. The deadline for the submission of comments is 2 January 2009

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/1> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/4>

SNEnergy-TP and its strategic research agenda

Europe's Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform (SNE-TP), has presented its strategic research agenda (SRA) outlining science and technology research and development (R&D) priorities for the next 10 years. Safety is a theme throughout the agenda with particular consideration on the effects of ageing on existing 'light-water' reactors, and of 'Generation-IV fast neutron' reactors. The importance of continued research on partitioning and transmutation technologies is also emphasised. The SRA outlines objectives for developing other applications for nuclear technology that can replace fossil-fuel-based industrial processes. Several other issues are considered like research in the areas of improved materials, innovative power conversion systems, enhanced safety and innovative fuels, waste management efforts, upgrading existing facilities and building new ones to include experimental fuel-cycle facilities and extremely large-scale nuclear research facilities. Additionally, the SRA addresses the importance of education and training, as highly qualified staff is essential.

The SRA is available to the public and comments are invited from all stakeholders.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/2>

Alternative fuels in Aeronautics research agenda

The Advisory Council for Aeronautics Research in Europe (ACARE) has updated its Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) to take into account rising environmental concerns,

the need for alternative fuels and rapidly changing security threats. A full review of the SRA will be carried out in 2010. The addendum recommends that 'adjustments and accelerations' be made in the areas of environmental technologies, the development of alternative fuels and security systems. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/3>

Physical Sciences in Space

Europe's space ministers gave the green light to a wide range of scientific initiatives including the use of the Columbus laboratory in the International Space Station (ISS) for the 'European programme for life and physical sciences' (ELIPS), a programme that seeks answers in space to fundamental questions in life and physical sciences. There is a strong focus on applied research, covering areas such as the development of diagnostics and treatments for age-related diseases, as well as industry-driven research and development projects in aerospace, energy and biotechnology. Member States reportedly agreed on a EUR 10 thousand million figure to cover the next three to five years. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/4>

EU to consider CO2 labelling for products

The Environmental Council has asked the Commission for a study estimating the impact of inserting a carbon footprint for products into existing EU environmental labelling instruments, including the eco-label and energy labelling, and to develop common voluntary methodologies for its calculation and assessing environmental performance of products throughout their life cycles, including the supply chain and their impact at global level. The Commission is expected to assess the implementation of the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) action plan by 2012, to provide guidance on widening of the scope of the Eco-Design Framework Directive to other product types.

Source: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/3> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/4>

FLABEL: a new look at nutritional labels

The FLABEL ('Food labelling to advance better education for life') project will receive EUR 2.8 million in funding to investigate which methods of food labelling are the most popular with consumers, which have the most effect and how consumers relate to different types of food labelling. Ultimately, FLABEL will compile an EU-wide 'nutrition map' and its results will be shared with all major stakeholders involved in the food industry such as research institutes, SMEs and health organisations.

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

GMO-free zones

EU ministers have recently agreed to:

- improve evaluation of the medium and long-term environmental impacts of GM crops, in particular of pesticide-producing and herbicide-resistant GM crops;
- launch a joint European Commission and member-state reflection group in 2009 to define and consider socio-economic implications of placing GMOs on the market;

- improve the use of member-state experts in the European Food Safety Authority's safety evaluation of GMOs;
- fix Community thresholds for the presence of GMOs in conventional seeds;
- establish GMO-free zones.

Source: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/4>

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

SBA and action plan for European SMEs

A political agreement has been reached on the 'Small Business Act for Europe' and on the establishment of an action plan for the European SMEs. This action plan will take immediate effect and will make it easier for SMEs to get financing, reduce their administrative burden, and enable them to fully benefit from the opportunities offered by European and international markets. The proposed actions stimulate employment, support enterprise, and invest in research and technologies of the future, thus giving a budgetary stimulus to the European economy over two years. In terms of innovation and the competitiveness of the European economy, the ministers adopted conclusions on world class clusters in the European Union. These conclusions favour the emergence of clusters ('poles of competitiveness') in Europe, based on a research-companies-training triptych, which would be able to compete internationally, particularly in leading-edge technology sectors.

Source: <http://www.ue2008.fr/2> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/6>

Bioenergy

A new report by the European Environment Agency entitled "Maximising the environmental benefits of Europe's bioenergy potential" analyses what bioenergy can offer Europe in terms of climate mitigation and energy security, and what role it can play in Europe's future energy mix. The report quantifies the benefits to be gained through the optimal use of the EU's domestic bioenergy potential.

Source: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/1> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/7>

EU, China, US and toys

Officials from China, the US and the European Union have agreed to work towards synchronising safety standards for children's toys in order to improve safety in toys. Separately, the EU and China signed an updated memorandum of understanding obliging Beijing to report four times a year on any dangerous products and to publicise action taken to remedy problems. The EU-China agreement has also been broadened to cover food safety, allowing Beijing new access to the EU's rapid alert system for tainted food. **Source:** <http://www.ft.com/2.html>

Young people, science and scientific careers

A survey of around 25,000 people aged between 15 and 25 across all 27 Member States of the EU has shown that, although young people in Europe are overwhelmingly interested in science and technology (S&T) and positive about the benefits they bring to society, few are interested in pursuing a scientific career. According to the survey, young men are much more likely to be interested in science and technology news than young women. Within the S&T field, the most popular topics were 'new inventions and

technologies' and 'Earth and the environment'. There was also widespread agreement with the idea that science could improve our quality of life and help to eliminate poverty and hunger and that research today is influenced too much by profit.

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

First ever Joint Undertaking projects worth €400 million

The ARTEMIS and ENIAC Joint Undertakings have allocated €185 million of public funding to 20 industrial R&D projects. This amount will be matched by more than €200 million of own resources by industry and research actors, thus producing an R&D volume of around €400 million. The decisions complete the evaluation and selection processes for 2008, which started with the publication of Calls for proposals in May 2008. Similar Calls are foreseen on a yearly basis, the next one to be published in February 2009. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/7>

Commission proposes pan-European metrology research programme

The European Commission has put forward a proposal for a joint European Metrology Research Programme (EMRP), which would bring together 22 national metrology research programmes from across Europe. The EMRP will be funded to the tune of EUR 400 million and its work will be coordinated by the European Association of National Metrology Institutes (EURAMET). Currently, metrology research in Europe is coordinated through an ERA-NET project called iMERA-Plus. The European Parliament and Europe's research ministers will further discuss the Commission's proposal.

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

Tender: ex-post evaluation of NMP (FP6)

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has published a call for tenders on the ex-post evaluation of the NMP ('Nanotechnologies and nano-sciences, knowledge-based multifunctional materials and new production processes and devices') Thematic Area under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). One part of the evaluation (Lot 1) will assess the effectiveness of the NMP Thematic Area on the basis of the outcomes of the funded projects; while the other (Lot 2) will be dedicated to evaluating the strategic impact of NMP in the context of the overall policy objectives of FP6. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/9>

Tender on global university ranking

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture has issued a call for tenders for the design and testing of the feasibility of a multi-dimensional global ranking system. The envisioned ranking system would aim to make it possible to compare and benchmark similar institutions within and outside the EU, both at the level of the institution as a whole and focusing on different study fields. The project will cover all types of universities and other higher education institutions as well as research institutes. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/10>

International Research Staff Exchange Scheme call for proposals launched

The European Commission's Directorate General for Research has published a call for proposals for the Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES). The call is part of the 2009 People work programme of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). Financial support will be provided for a period of 24 to 48 months for the transnational exchange of researchers, technical and management staff. The indicative budget for this call amounts to EUR 30 million.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/11>

Call for research infrastructures

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has issued a new call for proposals on research infrastructures. The 2009 call for proposals focuses on the support of existing infrastructures as well as support for policy development and programme implementation. The latter will take the form of a European Research Area network, on the one hand, supporting cooperation for research infrastructures in all science and technology (S&T) fields, and studies, conferences and coordination activities on the other, supporting policy development in the context of international cooperation for e-infrastructures. The total indicative budget amounts to EUR 9.6 million. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/12>

Several calls for proposals published

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has launched a number of calls for proposals under the 2008 and 2009 work programmes of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and under the 2009 work programme of the Seventh Euratom Framework Programme for Nuclear Research and Training Activities. Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, nuclear fission and biotechnology feature amongst other areas addressed by the calls, in addition to European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Investigators Grant and Marie Curie Co-Funding of Regional, National and International Programmes.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/13>

Extension on deadline for tenders on 'Science in society' in Europe

The deadline for submitting tenders for the MASIS ('Monitoring research and policy activities of science in society') service contract has been extended to 19 January 2009. Tender documents may be requested until 12 January 2009.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/14>

K4I platform to launch the Lisbon Forum of the European Parliament

Knowledge4Innovation (K4I), in cooperation with Members of the European Parliament, and representatives of the European Commission, the European Council and the business community, will introduce the "Lisbon Forum" – a new platform focused on driving policy dialogue with Members of the European Parliament and representatives of different Commission Directorates General responsible for areas pertinent to innovation such as enterprise, research, education, health, food, energy, regional development and ICT. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/15>

EBTC launched

European Business and Technology Centre (EBTC) has started to operate in New Delhi. A consortium led by Eurochambres has been selected to operate the EBTC; its operations will be entirely demand driven. The initial budget of the Centre is over 8 million euro, 80% of which is coming from the EU budget.

The EBTC will primarily focus on sectors such as environment, transport, energy and biotechnology.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/16>

ResearchGATE: the scientific Facebook

ResearchGATE is the latest networking platform that makes applications available to researchers, effectively fuelling and strengthening cooperation and knowledge exchange across the board.

The new search engine spotlights scientists, groups or group discussions that are related to the search query, and processes abstracts to find similar ones on various databases, such as PubMed. **Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/17>

The new Western Balkan Research Directory

The Western Balkan Research Directory has been established within the framework of the "ERA WESTBALKAN+" project and is a database of universities, institutions and companies active in R&D in West Balkan Countries.

Sources: <http://cordis.europa.eu/18> <http://cordis.europa.eu/19>

Link: <http://www.westbalkanresearch.net>

Research Review now online

Link: <http://cordis.europa.eu/20>

Evaluation and Impact Assessment for EU R&D Framework Programmes

All presentations regarding the overview of the tools and methods used for research programme evaluation and some results of the FP6 evaluation are now accessible.

Links: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/4.htm> <http://cordis.europa.eu/20>



Produced for EuCheMS by Ioanna Psalti

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