



Brussels News Update

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New international strategy for science and technology

The European Commission called on governments to jointly develop a strategy for international cooperation in science and technology. It proposed a strategic framework for jointly strengthening science and technology cooperation with non-EU countries, notably in the field of Information and Communication Technologies where Europe is a strong exporter. The Commission's objective is to contribute to sustainable development worldwide while at the same time improving Europe's competitiveness in science and technology. The Commission invites Member States to define together, rather than in isolation, priority research and technology areas where a coherent EU effort would have more impact.

The strategy adopted by the Commission sets out a framework for a European approach to international cooperation in science and technology. It outlines core principles, which should underpin European cooperation with the rest of the world and proposes specific orientations for action to:

- strengthen the international dimension of the European Research Area (ERA) by integrating Europe's neighbours into the ERA and fostering strategic

- cooperation with key third countries through geographic and thematic targeting;
- improve the framework conditions for international cooperation in science and technology and for the promotion of European technologies worldwide. This includes the joint development of global large-scale research infrastructures (such as GEANT), support to mobility of researchers or management of intellectual property.

Sources: <http://europa.eu/rapid/1> <http://ec.europa.eu8>
Links: <http://www.euractiv.com/1> <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/1>

Parliament votes on climate—energy package

The Parliament's Environment Committee voted largely in favour of the main elements of the climate-energy package proposed by the European Commission in January this year. The vote concerned the Commission's proposals for a revised directive on the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), a decision on effort-sharing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in non-EU ETS sector, and a directive on carbon capture and storage.

Sources: <http://europa.eu/rapid/2> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/1>
Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/2>

Public Consultation on EFSA's Strategic Plan 2009–2013

A public consultation on the Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2013 of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is now open until 3 November, after which the EFSA management board is expected to adopt the final plan before the end of 2008. EFSA is developing the Strategic Plan in consultation with a wide range of partners, European institutions, Member States, stakeholders and interested parties. The aim of the document is to outline the strategic direction for the Authority over the coming five-year period, enabling EFSA to programme its work on a multi-annual basis and to establish the priorities in light of an evolving environment. The Plan will provide the basis for the development of EFSA's Annual Work Programmes. EFSA will assess all relevant comments and those that might enhance the document will be taken into consideration when preparing the final version. Following this procedure, EFSA will publish the relevant comments received, as well as a short report on the outcome of the consultation.

ESFA identifies globalisation, climate change, new technologies and environmental pollution caused by agri-chemicals to be among the risks that the agri-food sector will face in future while it sees new food production technologies like nanotechnology, cloning, genomics and proteomics as "new challenges". An additional challenge is also to upgrade existing and design new risk assessment practices to keep up with the pace of science and innovation. EFSA expects to carry out more environmental risk assessments in years to come.

Sources: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/1> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu:80/2>
Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/3>

From Candidate list to Authorisation list

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) Member State Committee has unanimously agreed on the identification of 14 Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC) that may become subject to authorisation. One additional substance was already identified as

SVHC without Member State Committee involvement as no comments were provided during the public consultation. The 15 substances will be included in the 'Candidate List' which will be published on the ECHA website later in October.

Once the candidate list is officially published, companies will be obliged to inform consumers within 45 days whether such chemicals are present in the products on sale in the EU single market.

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

Adoption of rules on EU exports and safe storage for metallic mercury

The EU Council has adopted a regulation in order to ban exports of metallic mercury and to provide for its safe storage, with a view to reducing risks of exposure to population and to the environment (3638/08). Under the regulation, the ban will apply to exports of metallic mercury, cinnabar ore, mercury chloride, mercury oxide and mixtures of metallic mercury with other substances, including alloys of mercury, with a mercury concentration of at least 95% weight will be prohibited as from March 2011.

Since this date, mercury stemming from the three major sources – chlor-alkali industry, natural gas cleaning and non-ferrous metal production – will be considered as a waste. Therefore it will have to be safely stored within the EU in order to make sure that it does not re-enter into the internal market.

Sources: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/1> <http://europa.eu/rapid/3>

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

EIT throws open its doors

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) has marked the launch of its activities with the first meeting of its recently appointed Governing Board. The Board has taken a number of major decisions determining the EIT's operation, among them the election of the Chairperson and of the four other members of the Executive Committee. Moreover, the Board has discussed the first steps towards the selection of the first 2-3 Knowledge and Innovation Communities by early 2010. The newly elected Executive Committee will see to the daily needs of the operation while the Governing Board, an independent decision-making body, remains responsible for guiding the EIT's strategic orientation and for monitoring and evaluating its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

The EIT's Governing Board will enjoy a very high level of autonomy. The Governing Board's first seven-year Strategic Innovation Agenda, outlining the EIT's long-term priorities and financial needs, will be presented by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament by 2011 at the latest.

Sources: <http://cordis.europa.eu/1> <http://europa.eu/rapid/4>

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

ERC Identification Committee named

The European Commission has named the members of the European Research Council (ERC) Identification Committee. The newly formed group has two tasks: to identify three

new members of the ERC's Scientific Council and establish a procedure for the replacement of members in the future. The new members of the Scientific Council should be named in early 2009.

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

Researchers' careers and nanotechnologies

The Competitiveness Council has adopted conclusions on the European partnership for researchers and responsible nanotechnology research in addition to neurodegenerative diseases. The conclusions highlight the importance of ensuring mobile researchers' social security and pension needs are met; improving researchers' work and employment conditions; and enhancing the training and skills of researchers. Member States are also encouraged to implement the 'scientific visa' Directive and promote the implementation of the European charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

According to the Council conclusions, Member States should provide an update on their activities taken in this area by the end of 2009 at the latest, and the Commission should carry out an assessment of overall progress and results in 2010.

Meanwhile, French Research Minister Valérie Pécresse has tasked her counterparts from Portugal and Luxembourg, José Mariano Gago and François Biltgen, to look into the definition of a European status for researchers. The pair will report back at the next Competitiveness Council.

The ministers also adopted conclusions on responsible nanosciences and nanotechnologies research. Among other things, the Commission has been set the task of monitoring global developments and promoting European competitiveness in this area and encouraging public debate on nanotechnologies.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/3>

Feasibility study of a pan-European pension fund for EU researchers

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has launched a call for tenders to study the feasibility of a pan-European pension fund for researchers. As foreseen in the 2008 'People' work programme, the contractor will study the legal, technical, and financial requirements for setting up a pan-European pension fund for EU researchers with existing legislation under the Second Pillar such as the Institutions of Occupational Retirement Provision ('IORP') Directive'. Life-insurance-based pension arrangements that could best fit researchers' needs will also be analysed.

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

Assessing fund-raising from philanthropy for research funding

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has launched a call for tenders for a study to assess fund-raising from philanthropy for research funding in European universities. As foreseen in the 2007-2008 'Capacities' work programme of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), this study will assess the importance of philanthropic funding in European universities in general, and specifically in support of university-based research. It includes an identification of universities active in fund-raising from philanthropic sources. Afterwards, data will be collected and analysed,

notably in terms of their fund-raising structure and cost, degree of success, forms of philanthropic support, funds allocation, strategies and tactics adopted to raise funds for research, positive and negative impacts associated with the receipt of philanthropic funding for research, and success and failure factors.

Sources: <http://cordis.europa.eu/5> <http://cordis.europa.eu/6>

European Technology Platforms evaluated

An evaluation report on the 34 European Technology Platforms (ETPs) European Technology Platforms has now been completed. The evaluation was carried out at the request of the European Commission. Its main objectives were to map the functioning, concept development and objectives of the ETPs; list and analyse their output, results and impact; identify successes, limiting factors and best practices; and formulate recommendations for the future. The report made 18 targeted recommendations to policymakers and ETPs respectively, and 12 general recommendations.

The evaluation recommended that EU and national policymakers 'clearly and unambiguously continue to support the ETP concept', promoting them more forcefully on the political level.

In terms of communications, the survey noted that improvements have been made in the past three years, but interactivity can be improved. It recommended that ETP websites 'must be optimised and professionalised'. The report emphasised that coordination and cooperation between ETPs must be intensified 'in order to enlarge their financial scale, resources, added value and influencing power, to avoid duplication and inefficiency' and to find common approaches for social issues. The evaluation also called for ETPs to be open and transparent.

The report recommended that the Commission clarify the possibilities for ETPs to extend beyond the EU, as several of them saw such international cooperation as essential to furthering competition with other world powers. It was also important, according to the survey, that policymakers consult and invite ETPs 'to provide their opinion and contribution' during policy preparation in order that they might move beyond 'technology'. A specific recommendation of the evaluation to the platforms themselves was to move beyond scientific and technical challenges, shifting their focus to 'regulations and standards that affect the commercialisation of research.' ETPs should, according to the report, also be 'facilitators, communicators and promoters for new and adapted training and education programmes'.

More attention should be paid by ETPs to fundraising and financial engineering, according to the report, including improved dissemination of funding possibilities to stakeholders. Additionally, ETPs were encouraged to increase their financial resources by introducing a fee-based system for their members.

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

EU/AU partnership in science, ITC and space

Commissioners of the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) have released a joint statement on the need to strengthen African research capacity and presented 19 flagship projects that will form the basis of the EU/AU thematic partnership in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and space. The Commissioners also

presented a list of 19 projects, 6 of which are to receive immediate attention. The six 'early deliverable' projects include two internet-enhancing projects ('Africa connect' and 'African internet exchange system (AXIS)'); two that will help develop AU scientific resources ('Africa research grants' and 'Water and food security in Africa'); one to develop Africa's access to global monitoring ('Kopernicus-Africa'); and one on enhancing African access to the geospatial sciences ('Capacity building in the AUC on geospatial sciences'). The pan-African grants programme will support sustainable science and technology research and provide opportunities for researchers to work together across national borders.

The remaining 13 projects include an African ICT leadership initiative, an S&T popularisation project, developing a common AU S&T policy framework, S&T for the development of African SMEs and the AU initiative on climate change, among others. In the joint statement, EU and AU Member States, industry and civil society were called upon to coordinate their involvement in the flagship projects, ensuring that they receive adequate funding and can thus be implemented successfully. According to the statement, resources from the European Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) as well as from other EC development programmes will be made available 'to broaden African participation notably in the areas of health, environment and climate, energy, agriculture and food, information and communication technologies and space applications'.

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

FP7 Bookkeeping leaflet published

Changes in the Financial Guidelines between FP6 and FP7 have impacted claims for eligible direct costs in FP7.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/9>

Europe must act now to adapt to climate change, says new report

A new report warns that Europe must take urgent action to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The report, 'Impacts of Europe's changing climate', is published jointly by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It recommends wide-ranging adaptation and preventive measures in the areas of economy, health and the environment. The report highlights vulnerabilities in all areas of Europe and appeals to policymakers to develop concrete adaptation plans. 'With increasing impacts of climate change, adaptation costs will increase and response options may decrease,' the report observes. Absence of full scientific certainty, it cautions, 'should not be used as a reason to postpone measures where there is a risk of serious or irreversible harm to public health or the environment'.

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

Call for proposals: Researchers' Night 2009

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has published a call for proposals for the 'Researchers' Night 2009' event. This call is designed for organisations in European Union Member States and associated countries.

Proposed projects should have a duration of no more than seven months. The indicative

budget amounts to EUR 3 million.

'European Researchers' Night' is a pan-European event involving a wide range of scientific and research organisations, including museums, laboratories and academic institutions, which host a variety of entertaining and fun events planned to run late into the night. The aim is to give the public and in particular young people, the opportunity to meet researchers within the context of festive and 'fun' activities and to highlight the appeal of pursuing a research career.

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

Call for proposals: Marie Curie Re-integration grants

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has launched a call for proposals for Marie Curie Re-integration grants. The call is comprised of two parts: the Marie Curie European Re-integration Grant (ERG) and the Marie Curie International Re-integration Grant (IRG). While both address experienced researchers, applicants for the ERG must be benefiting, at the time of application, or have previously benefited from a training or mobility action under one of the European Commission's Framework Programmes for at least 18 months.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/12>

Academic Enterprise Awards Europe 2008

The first pan-European awards programme to recognize founders of successful university spin-out companies is now underway. The ACES Awards will be handed out to these companies based on the following themes: ICT, Life Sciences, Energy/Environment, Materials/Chemistry, The Young Entrepreneur, The Fast Start and The Bridge Award. The awards will give public recognition to those researchers, engineers, professors, students and government officials in Europe who have done the most in 2008 to foster a culture of enterprise on campus. This can be through taking the risk of launching a spin-out company, developing a discovery into a marketable innovation (even at the risk of the tenure-track publication record), or promoting policies that create a receptive environment for entrepreneurship on campus. Unlike other awards, these will focus on university enterprise and look across Europe – furthering efforts to improve the flow of ideas out of European laboratories and into the marketplace.

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

Link: <http://www.sciencebusiness.net/aces/index.php>

Plan to give drug groups direct public access

The pharmaceutical industry would have greater freedom to provide information on its medicines directly to patients across Europe under proposals endorsed recently by EU officials, member states, drug companies and consumer groups.

Source: <http://www.ft.com/1>

Making the most of EU health research funding

Knowledge-sharing and exploitation of the results of research activities took another huge step forward with the recent completion of the 'Life Competence' database. This

distinctive project has opened up all 680 EU-funded projects within FP6 Life Science and Health to public viewing in a transparent way. This not only serves to identify the funding and competences of universities, hospitals and companies involved in health research all around Europe, but it also increases the visibility of all partners in projects, opening them up to further partnerships. All in all, the projects presented represent EUR 2.4 billion in EU funding.

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

High-level pharmaceutical forum issues final report

Europe's Pharmaceutical Forum has concluded its three-year process and put forward several recommendations addressing the many challenges facing the pharmaceutical industry, public health interests and national healthcare systems.

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/15>

Industry leaders team up on science and maths education

Europe's main industry leaders have launched an initiative to develop cooperation between schools and businesses to renew interest in maths, science and technology (MST) in a bid to avoid shortages of skilled engineers in future.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/7>

'Science for Environment Policy'

Environmental policy makers across Europe now have access to a greater wealth of easy-to-read policy relevant scientific information, thanks to Science for Environment Policy's weekly News Alerts and monthly thematic Issues. Science for Environment Policy is a free news alert produced by the Science Communication Unit at the University of the West of England on behalf of the Directorate-General Environment of the European Commission and sent by e-mail to over 9000 subscribers across Europe. It covers the findings and policy implications of the latest scientific research in easy-to-understand language. A broad range of environmental topics are featured in the weekly issues, including agriculture, air quality, climate change, water and waste, to meet the needs of policy makers at all levels in both the public and private sectors.

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



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