



Brussels News Update

April 2010

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New European Commission and REACH

During a joint visit to the European Chemicals Agency, ECHA, in Helsinki the Commissioners Tajani (Enterprise) and Potočnik (Environment) have announced their common approach on the identification and management of substances of very high concern. They have also welcomed progress on the translation of the guidelines for the smooth implementation of the registration of high-volume chemicals by the REACH deadline of 30 November 2010. A Directors Contact Group, chaired by the Commission,

is currently monitoring industry's preparedness towards the deadline of 30 November and implementing solutions to practical problems where needed. It is composed of director-level representatives of the Commission, ECHA and industry associations producing chemicals at high-volumes, or representing SMEs.

Furthermore ECHA has made substantial progress on the translation in all EU official languages of the guidelines and tools for REACH, especially those on registration, so making it easier for SMEs to register.

Other issues discussed with ECHA and stakeholders were:

- the criteria for the identification of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic substances, which will be stated in the revised annex XIII of REACH;
- the Roadmap for the inclusion of 106 substances of very high concern (SVHC) in the so-called "candidate list";

- guidelines for authorisation, which will shortly be provided to

ECHA.

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

Links: <http://www.euractiv.com/1>

'Chemical cocktails'

A report on the risk factor of 'chemical cocktails' in the human body and their effect on both humans and the environment has been published on the website of the European Commission's Directorate-General (DG) for the Environment. The research team involved has demonstrated that the combined cocktail effect is more toxic than the effect of individual chemicals and it proposes a number of measures that must be implemented.

EU environment ministers are now urging the European Commission to make changes to chemical risk assessments and amend existing legislation on the combined effects of chemicals. There are potentially enormous combinations of chemicals and while it is not realistic to test each combination, ministers have asked the Commission to produce new recommendations on how combinations should be dealt with on the basis of existing legislation and assessing legislative changes for 2011.

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

EU considers changing REACH chemicals law

A EurActiv article on the need to amend REACH according to the Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik.

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

EU lawmakers reject colour-coded system for food labels

A EurActiv article on the voting of the European Parliament's environment, public health and food safety committee against the introduction of a compulsory 'traffic light' labelling system and the agreement that key nutritional information such as energy content, fat, carbohydrates, sugar and salt must be displayed on front-of-pack labels with proteins, fibre and trans fats added to the mandatory list.

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

Spain pledges progress on research infrastructures

At the opening of the sixth European Conference on Research Infrastructures (ECRI 2010), in March, Spain has promised to make progress on the European research infrastructure roadmap during its time in the EU Council Presidency. The aim of the meeting was to discuss mechanisms for setting priorities and arriving at decisions regarding the location of new European research infrastructures. The conference outcomes will be discussed by EU research ministers at the next meeting of the Competitiveness Council in May. The importance of ensuring researcher mobility was also discussed as a major contributor to the efficiency of the European infrastructure roadmap. The European roadmap for research infrastructures was drawn up by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). The latest version of the document, dating from the end of 2008, features 44 projects in fields as diverse as the social sciences and humanities, environmental research, energy, biology and medical research, materials and analytical science, the physical sciences and engineering, and e-infrastructures. The construction costs alone of these projects are estimated to be around €20 billion between now and 2014; an additional €2 billion would be required to maintain them. ESFRI is scheduled to release an updated version of the roadmap at the end of 2010.

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

€35 million to turn environmental challenges into business opportunities

The European Commission has launched a €35 million call for eco-innovation projects to be funded under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme. Under the 2010 CIP Eco-innovation call for proposals, funds are available for new projects in the area of materials recycling, sustainable building products, the food and drink sector and green business practices. Applications are particularly welcome from small businesses with green products or services that need backing to penetrate markets. The call offers direct co-financing with grants that cover up to 50% of the total project cost. The €35 million funds available for the 2010 call are expected to bring to life between 45 and 50 new projects. The projects are selected on the basis of their innovative approach, their market replication potential and their contribution to European environmental policies, especially in terms of resource efficiency. The deadline for submissions is 9 September.

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

Finance ministers want 3% R&D target ditched

A EurActiv article on the views of the EU finance ministers regarding the European Commission's target of spending 3% of GDP on research and development (R&D).

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/4>

EU fund management regulation may hurt investment, say investment firms

A Science|Business report on the expected reduction in venture and growth investment if the proposed EU Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) is implemented in its current form.

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

EIB ramping up support for venture capital

A EurActiv interview with Matthias Kollatz-Ahnen, the Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) on the EU investment in the venture capital industry of €1 billion fund, known as the Mezzanine Mandate for Growth (MFG) and made available by the end of 2012.

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

European Research Council slams EU bureaucracy

A EurActiv article on the factors affecting the work of Europe's scientific funding body.

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

EU innovation strategy delayed until 'autumn'

A EurActiv article on the Commission's new *Research and Innovation Plan*, first floated last year as the *European Innovation Act*, originally expected to be published by spring 2010.

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

EU plans major expansion of 'Erasmus for Entrepreneurs'

A EurActiv article on the expansion of the pilot scheme, which pays new entrepreneurs to learn from experienced businesspeople in other European countries.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/8>

EU plans measures to curb demand for natural resources

A EurActiv article on the new measures planned by the Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik for 2011 to reflect the true cost of natural resources in products and services and substitute virgin raw materials for waste wherever possible.

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

Forging a low carbon economy

A Science|Business article by Gail Edmondson on the Commission's 10-year plan to build industrial leadership in next-generation renewable energies and speed Europe's shift to a low-carbon economy.

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

Realigning the European patent grant procedure

Following an extensive review of practice and procedure at the EPO, a package of new measures has entered into force from 1 April containing new rules on search and examination at the EPO, and time limits for the filing of divisional applications. The changes are aimed at fine-tuning patent practice in order to improve efficiency and uphold the high quality of European patents. The main changes are to a number of European Patent Convention Rules, formally adopted by the Organisation's Administrative Council. The new and amended Rules relate to the filing of divisional applications, pre-search communication between examiner and applicant, obligatory response to the search opinion prior to entry into substantive examination, a requirement for applicants to identify

and indicate the basis for amendments and a clearer restriction of examination only to the subject matter searched. Updated versions of the Guidelines for Examination at the EPO and Internal Instructions also enter into force on 1 April 2010. The new guidelines have been adapted to the more recent case law of the EPO's Boards of Appeal, and aim to help EPO examiners apply the current EPO patentability standard in an efficient and consistent manner across all technical fields.

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

EU and Ukraine set sights on stronger S&T activity

Solid research ties are on the cards between the EU and Ukraine thanks to the launching of the information platform 'S&T Gate UKR.EU', which targets better science and technology (S&T) cooperation on a global level, and facilitates the networking of research organisations and institutions in the EU and Ukraine, and scientific dialogue between EU Member States and Ukraine. The BILAT-UKR ('Enhancing the bilateral S&T partnership with Ukraine') project, funded under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) with more than €496,000 in support, developed and financed the S&T Gate UKR.EU platform. BILAT-UKR seeks to be a factor in the fuller integration of Ukraine into the broader European Research Area (ERA). The S&T Gate UKR.EU platform offers information about projects and programmes that interested parties can take part in, as well as partner organisations that could be established.

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

INCONET CA/SC

The Inconet CA/SC ('International cooperation network for Central Asian and South Caucasus countries') project focuses on the strengthening and deepening of science and technology cooperation with the Central Asian and South Caucasus countries, as well as with Moldova. Activities will feed the Regional Policy Dialogue Platform encompassing all the eastern European and Central Asian (EECA) countries and extend coverage to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The main aims of the Inconet CA/SC are: enhancing the policy dialogue within the target groups, development of synergies, organisation of Info Days and other activities aiming at an increased participation of researchers from these regions in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), capacity building and support for the FP7 contact points in the target regions; and the mapping of key research institutes and analyses/studies.

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

EU innovation scoreboard calls for performance pick-up

The ninth edition of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) is out and preliminary data show that the economic crisis impacting Europe is also affecting the progress of innovation across the region. The majority of EU Member States may have posted stronger innovation performance results in 2008, but countries with lower innovation performance levels are likely to be responsible for reversing the convergence process that the EU has undergone in the last few years. □□ Despite the EU's drive and determination to meet and potentially surpass the US in terms of innovation performance, the results show the opposite is happening. However, the EU still maintains an advantage over Brazil, China, India and Russia. The EIS is commissioned by the EU's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry and is prepared by the Maastricht Economic and

social Research and training centre on Innovation and Technology (MERIT) with support extended by the EU's Joint Research Centre. Launched in 2001, the EIS indicators focus on innovation outputs, non-technological innovation and service sectors. The EIS 2009 comprises 29 innovation-related indicators and trend analyses for all 27 EU Member States, along with Croatia, Iceland, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey. The indicators fall under three categories: enablers (human resources, finance and support); firm activities (firm investments, linkages & entrepreneurship, throughputs); and outputs (innovators, economic effects).

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

Handbook on how to assess the environmental impact of products

European Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik has launched an authoritative guide for policy-makers and business on how to assess the environmental impact of products. The guidance is part of the Commission's drive to promote more sustainable consumption and production patterns and reduce Europe's environmental footprint.

The International Reference Life Cycle Data System (ILCD) Handbook provides detailed guidance on how to conduct a Life Cycle Assessment to quantify the emissions, resources consumed and the pressures on the environment and human health that can be attributed to a product. It has been developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Environment. The ILCD Handbook is in line with international standards and has been established through a series of extensive public and stakeholder consultations.

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

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/10>

Biofuels and global trade study goes online

A study entitled *Global trade and environmental impact of the EU biofuels mandate* has been finalised by the International Food Policy Research Institute. The report is one of four studies commissioned by the European Commission in response to the Council and Parliament's request to examine the indirect land use change effects of biofuels. The other three studies are still underway. The report is positive on the emission reduction effects of first-generation biofuels, and on the environmental benefits of trade opening in biofuels. However, that is not a threat to the environmental viability of the EU biofuels policy at the currently estimated volume of 5.6% of road transport fuels in 2020, necessary to meet the 10% renewable energy mandate by 2020.

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

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/11>

EU report favours trading for air pollutants

A EurActiv article on the plans for an EU-wide trading scheme for sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) to improve air quality.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/12>

Intelligent Energy: 2010 Call for Proposals

Some € 56 million will be made available, supporting up to 75% of the eligible project costs to fund capacity building; building and spreading of know-how, skills and methods; exchanges of experience; development of market and intelligence; policy input; awareness raising and information provision; and education and training. Any public or private organisation from the EU, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Croatia can apply.

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

Looking for expert evaluators for Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE)

The Commission is looking for experts in energy efficiency, renewables or transport who are interested in helping evaluate project proposals, current or closed projects, or the impacts of the IEE programme altogether.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/2>

Call: LACOMEKO project

The first call for proposals for the LACOMEKO ('Large-scale experiments on core degradation, melt retention and containment behaviour') project has been launched. The objective of the LACOMEKO project is to provide research institutions from EU Member States (except Germany) and Associated States with access to four experimental facilities: QUENCH ('Large-scale experiments on the investigation of the quench behaviour of the fuel rod simulator'), LIVE ('Large-scale experiments on melt behaviour in the RPV lower head'), DISCO-H ('Dispersion of corium and direct containment heating experiments at low pressure') and HYKA ('Large-scale tests on hydrogen behaviour and mitigation'). These facilities are used to investigate the coolability of a degraded core, corium coolability, possible melt dispersion to the reactor cavity, hydrogen mixing and containment combustion. Access is provided free of charge to interested users or user groups, including all infrastructural, logistical, technical and scientific support needed to perform selected experiments. Travel and visit subsistence costs may also be covered.

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

Eurostars: Open call for innovative small and medium-sized enterprises

EUREKA, the European platform for research and development (R&D) funding, has issued an open call for its Eurostars programme. A Eurostars project can address any technological area; it must, though, have a civilian purpose and be aimed at the development of a new product, process or service. Overall, the projects must involve at least two participants (legal entities) from two different participating countries. In addition, the main participant must be a research-performing small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) from one of these countries. The role of the SME participants in the project should be significant. At least 50% of an individual project's core activity should be carried out by SMEs. This percentage can, however, include minor contracting. The consortium should be well balanced, with no participant or country investing more than 75% of the total project costs. A Eurostars project should be market-driven. It must have a maximum duration of three years, and, within two years of project completion, have a product ready for market launch. (The exception to this rule applies to biomedical or medical projects, where clinical trials must be started within two years of project completion.)

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

European Metrology Call: Researcher Grants

EURAMET has announced the launch of Stage 3 of the European Metrology Research Programme (EMRP) Call 2009-Energy, for the following EMRP Researcher Grants:

- Researcher Excellence Grants (REG)
- Researcher Mobility Grants (RMG)

Additionally, EURAMET reminds potential participants of the permanently Open Call that is now accepting applications for Early-Stage Researcher Mobility Grants (ESRMG). All EMRP Researcher Grants are jointly supported by EURAMET and the European Union, and are subject to eligibility criteria. Deadline Friday 07 May 2010.

EURAMET (the European Association of National Metrology Institutes) is a Regional Metrology Organisation (RMO) of Europe. It coordinates the cooperation of National Metrology Institutes (NMI) of Europe in fields like research in metrology, traceability of measurements to the SI units, international recognition of national measurement standards and of the Calibration and Measurement Capabilities (CMC) of its members. Among these tasks, EURAMET is responsible for the elaboration and execution of a European Metrology Research Programme (EMRP).

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



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