



Brussels News Update

February 2010

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European Parliament approves new European Commission

The European Parliament has elected the new European Commission. The new Commission will stay in office until 31 October 2014. Some of the present European Commission portfolios together with the current Commissioners are:

Connie Hedegaard (Denmark)
John Dalli (Malta)
Androulla Vassiliou (Cyprus)

Climate Action
Health and Consumer Policy
Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

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Janez Potočnik (Slovenia)	Environment
Antonio Tajani (Italy)	Vice-President Industry and Entrepreneurship
Joaquín Almunia (Spain)	Competition
Günther Oettinger (Germany)	Energy
Máire Geoghegan-Quinn:	Research, Innovation and Science

For a complete list of Commissioners: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010

Source: <http://www.europa-eu-un.org/> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/1>

Two new Directorates-General for Energy and Climate Action

The European Commission has today taken a number of decisions to implement the organisational consequences of the allocation of portfolios to Commissioners. Two new Directorates-General have been created: DG Energy (ENER) and DG Climate Action (CLIM). The Energy DG consists of the departments in the former Transport and Energy DG dealing with energy issues and of the Task Force Energy which will be transferred from the External Relations DG. The position of Director-General will be assumed by Philip Lowe, a British national, currently Director-General in DG Competition. The departments responsible for transport policy will remain in the renamed Mobility and Transport DG (MOVE). The Climate Action DG will be created from the relevant activities in DG Environment, the activities in the External Relations DG related to international negotiations on climate change and the activities in the Enterprise and Industry DG related to climate change. Jos Delbeke, a Belgian national and currently Deputy Director-General in the Environment DG, has been appointed Director-General of the Climate Action DG.

The Commission has also decided to appoint Christian Leffler, a Swedish national, to the position of Deputy Director-General in the DG for Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States. Rudolf Strohmeier, a German national, has been appointed to the position of Deputy Director-General in the Research DG.

The Commission also made a number of appointments at the level of Director and Principal Advisor, including two officials from the Member States which joined the EU in 2004. These decisions were delayed while it was in caretaker mode. It also agreed to transfer a number of activities from one DG to another to better align them with the responsibilities of the respective portfolios of the Commissioners. The DGs concerned are those for Mobility and Transport, Competition, Enterprise and Industry, Environment, Humanitarian Aid and Health and Consumers.

To advance the Commission's strategic approach on research, a task force, to be chaired by the Secretary-General, has been set up. This will launch a strategic reflection at Commission level on the evolution of the research budget, the degree of externalisation in the management of research programmes and the links between research and other policies in organisational terms.

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

Commissioners mull joint innovation paper

A EurActiv article on the new policy paper drawn up by the EU commissioners for innovation and industry and on the key areas where the innovation commissioner intends to focus, including the European Research Area (ERA), helping business access funds, intellectual property rights and public procurement.

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

Science and Donostia-San Sebastián Declaration

On 7 and 8 February, European research ministers have unanimously adopted the Donostia-San Sebastián Declaration, which recognises that fundamental and applied research are part of the solution to the current crisis. The declaration states that 'basic research not only leads to groundbreaking innovations; it requires advanced materials, equipment and technological infrastructures, many of which are supplied by European companies'. While noting that the quest for knowledge is 'a cornerstone of European culture', the declaration points out that science is also vital for addressing many of the challenges faced by society today that 'are of global scope and have a significant socioeconomic impact'. The declaration concludes that science is 'committed to achieving a more sustainable and knowledge-based economy'.

The ministers have made a commitment to increase investment in R&D and to promote a culture of trust in scientists while reinforcing accountability.

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

EU Parliament gaining new powers

The European Parliament (EP) has approved a set of key principles to be implemented in the cooperation agreement governing relations between the EP and the Commission. Commission President Barroso endorsed MEPs' demands, reflecting the new position of Parliament under the Lisbon Treaty. The negotiators of Parliament and the Commission are now working on the text of the Framework Agreement, which defines the relations between the two institutions - including their political responsibilities, the flow of information and legislative coordination – and should be ready by May 2010.

The Commission has committed to the principle of equal treatment for Parliament and the Council of Ministers and to improving the accountability of the Commission as the EU executive body, including a transparent procedure for nominating special representatives and ambassadors. A new Question Hour with Commissioners, including the Vice-President for External Relations/High-Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, will be included in Parliament's plenary sessions.

The Commission has also undertaken to strengthen the position of legislative initiative requests made by Parliament with a three-month deadline for the Commission's response on the concrete follow-up to a legislative initiative report and, as a rule, one year for the submission of a proposal to Parliament. The Commission has also agreed to consult Parliament on the use of soft law initiatives and to enhance Parliament's right to information on infringement procedures.

In addition the deal between the two institutions includes a commitment by the Commission to reinforce its association with Parliament in international negotiations including fully updating of Parliament at all stages of negotiations and with the Commission acting as facilitator to enable the chair of the EP delegation to be granted observer status at international conferences.

The Commission has also agreed to seek a "common understanding" of the institutions prior to adopting the Annual Work Programme.

Source: <http://www.europa-eu-un.org/1>

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

Belgium, Hungary set EU presidency priorities

A EurActiv article on the joint 18-month programme agreed between Spain, Belgium and Hungary, beginning in January 2010, for their 'trio' of EU presidencies, the first such 'presidency trio' to take place under the EU's revamped institutions.

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

European Industrial Initiatives

In its latest draft conclusions, the European Council has stressed the need to move from the Technology Roadmaps to the implementation of the European Industrial Initiatives (EIs) and has agreed to the launching in 2010 of those EIs that are mature, cost-effective and which demonstrate industry commitment and added value at European level. The implementation of the various EIs will differ between sectors but a common overall framework could be applied regarding definition of priorities and concrete actions, identification of potential financial instruments and of criteria for public intervention, and development of key performance indicators. The EIs could take the form of flexible "public (EU and/or Member States) – private partnerships" with a variable geometry, decentralised, open architecture, with common objectives, planning, monitoring and reporting tools and implementation mechanisms.

Furthermore the Council stressed the importance of basic research addressing key scientific mid-to-long term energy challenges (e.g. innovative materials) and called for improvements in the integration of the related needs, resources and funding mechanisms into the overall SET-Plan. Given the scale of the funding required for the medium term, an increase in the proportion of public investment at EU level should be considered in the next Financial framework.

The Council has called for greater information sharing and due protection of intellectual property rights and has requested Member States and the Commission to give a more prominent role to the SET-Plan Steering Group in the governance structure of the European Energy Research Alliance (EERA), particularly in its Executive committee.

In addition the Council has asked the Commission to fully develop the SET-Plan Information System (SETIS) to assess performance, cost-effectiveness and progress towards objectives.

The Council has invited Member States to incorporate EU and national regulatory measures in support of EIs and the Commission to set up a platform for involving interested financing organisations in order to exchange information and best practice as well as to coordinate actions.

Source: <http://66.102.9.132/.consilium.europa.eu.pdf>

EU funding for energy technologies still elusive

A EurActiv article on the response of Member States to the European Commission proposal to finance the Strategic Energy Technology (SET) plan.

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

Is it time for simplified licensing?

A Science|Business article by Lori Valigra on the idea of a standard license fee scheme which may accelerate technology transfer.

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

Lawmakers join forces to waterproof EU policies

A EurActiv article on the newly-established Water Intergroup in the European Parliament that is to assist with more horizontal consideration of EU water policies, as the European Commission prepares to put its water strategies in line with climate and resource-efficiency policies.

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

Framework for the future

A Science|Business article by David Pringle on the peer review of grant applications.

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

NER300

The Climate Change Committee of the European Council reached an agreement on the allocation of EU money from the bloc's emissions trading scheme to support renewable energies and emerging technology to capture carbon dioxide and store it underground. The final agreement, the so-called "NER300" (New Entrants Reserve) includes four more new renewable energy categories eligible for funding.

The agreement has eliminated a provision whereby all Member States would have been required to match NER300 funding from their national budget. However, the NER300 selection procedure remains complicated, requiring an evaluation and coordination by developers of innovative nature, Member States involvement and agreement by the European Investment Bank.

Source: <http://www.erec.org/> (and documents therein)

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

Fifty-five nations join Copenhagen climate accord

A EurActiv article on the goals in the "Copenhagen Accord".

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

Agreement on Harmonised Classification for Three Chemical Substances

The Committee for Risk Assessment (RAC) of ECHA has adopted opinions on the proposals for classification across Europe of three chemical substances as carcinogen, mutagen or toxic for reproduction.

The substances are:

• **Indium phosphide** - used as a semiconductor in the electronics industry.

RAC agreed that the substance should be classified as a carcinogen, toxic for reproduction and for repeated dose toxicity through prolonged or repeated inhalation exposure.

• **Di-tert-butyl peroxide (DTBP)** - used by industry in polymerisation reactions.

DTBP is currently classified at EU level for certain physico-chemical hazards. RAC agreed to also classify it as a mutagen.

• **Trixylyl phosphate** - used as a fire resistant hydraulic fluid.

RAC agreed for a harmonised classification of toxic for reproduction.

Please note that a detailed explanation and description of the categories (carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction) will be given in the RAC's opinions, which will be published shortly on ECHA's website.

Source: <http://echa.europa.eu/> (and click on document dated 28/01/2010)

Public Consultation: White spirits, Fuberidazole and Thiacloprid

The European Chemicals Agency has launched a public consultation on the proposal to harmonise the classification and labelling of white spirits, fuberidazole and thiacloprid. All comments will be taken into account in the subsequent decision-making process. The public consultation closes on 3 March 2010.

Information about the new EU regulation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, the so-called CLP Regulation is available at:

http://echa.europa.eu/classification_en.asp

Source: <http://echa.europa.eu/1> and click on Public Consultation

Research: EU governments in funding tug-of-war

A EurActiv article on the €50 billion Community research budget and on the plans of the incoming EU commissioner for research, innovation and science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, on the €86 billion earmarked for innovation in the European Structural Funds.

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

LERU calls for measures to strengthen research careers in Europe

A Science|Business article on the report of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) that sets out the key issues that need to be addressed to improve research careers.

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

Skills shortage worsens EU unemployment

A EurActiv article on a recent report on the chronic skills shortages in Europe's labour market.

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

Obstacles to researchers' mobility in the EU

A Science|Business article by Cristina Jiménez on the obstacles still persistent to mobility of researchers within the EU: inflexibility of national systems towards foreign workers, opaque recruitment practices and everyday practical problems that researchers face when moving from one country to another for work.

Source: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/4>

Public consultation: EMEA Road Map to 2015

The European Medicines Agency has published a draft paper setting out its vision for the strategic development of the Agency for the five years. It addresses three strategic areas:

1. Public health needs, where the Agency aims to stimulate medicine development;
2. The facilitation of access to medicine
3. An optimized and safe use of medicine (improve patient safety).

With this strategy paper to guide it, the Agency will seek to consolidate its achievements to date and further strengthen its role as a guardian of human and animal health in the European Union. The draft paper has been published for a three-month public-consultation process. Deadline: 30 April 2010.

Source: <http://www.ema.europa.eu/> **Link:** <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/5>

EU strengthens R&D ties with Egypt

It has been announced that the European Union will offer €20 million to Egypt to promote research and innovation. The funds will be earmarked for the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) programme and managed by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

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

EU and India launch biotechnology and health NPP

India and EU Member States have launched the Initiative for the development and integration of Indian and European research (NEW INDIGO). This is a Networking Pilot Programme on biotechnology and health aiming to establish a joint infrastructure for advanced research in the field. Coordinated by France's National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS), NEW INDIGO brings together researchers and policymakers from Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, India, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. NEW INDIGO has received almost €2.5 million under the 'Horizontal actions and measures in support of international cooperation' (INCO) priority of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). Activities will focus on bioinformatics for health, biomarkers and diagnostics, and structural biology for health.

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

Evaluation of Lisbon Strategy published

The European Commission has published an evaluation document of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, together with a first overview of responses to its public consultation on the EU 2020 Strategy.

Originally launched in 2000, the Lisbon Strategy was re-launched in 2005 focussing on growth and jobs, with research and innovation among its four priority areas. The main conclusion from the evaluation document is that the Lisbon Strategy developed into a very complex structure with multiple goals and actions and an unclear division of responsibilities and tasks, particularly between the EU and national levels. In addition there is a large gap between well-performing Member States and those who did not deliver on their commitments. The Strategy has however helped build a broad consensus on necessary reforms, mobilise investments for growth and jobs by earmarking structural funds for innovation and it has stimulated a considerable exchange of good practices between Member States.

A revised Strategy will be launched later on this year, focussing on a smart and green economy, innovation and a better use of resources. Foreseen changes could include an increase of EU funds for innovation and the adoption of a number of related measures on Intellectual Property Rights, standards and regulation.

Sources: <http://www.earto.eu/>
<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/> (and click on evaluation document)

Report on the impact of publicly funded research on innovation

A report on the impact of publicly funded research on innovation has been published on the Commission's website. The report contains several recommendations for the future of the Framework Programme for research such as funding instruments to be kept simple, the role of SMEs in FP projects to be enhanced, and FPs to promote projects in new areas.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/> and click on more

Links: <http://www.earto.eu/1>

China to lead world scientific research by 2020

China will be producing more scientific research than any other country within a decade, according to a recent analysis. Heavy state investment in schools, universities and research programmes and a rapid technology transfer are considered accountable for such growth with Chinese scientists being particularly strong in Chemistry and materials engineering, fields that are both seen as crucial to the country's industrial development.

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>

Europeans understand food labels but don't use info

A study conducted in six European countries has found that consumers generally understand how to 'read' the nutritional labels on a product's packaging but are less likely to use that information when selecting their products for purchase. The team of researchers also noted national differences between use and understanding, and concluded that some 'may be attributed to different histories of the role of nutrition in the public debate'.

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

Clean Sky launches third call for proposals

The Clean Sky Joint Technology Initiative has launched its third call for proposals covering 45 topics with total available funding of up to €12.4 million. Deadline: 27 April 2010.

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

COST Open call

The European Commission has issued an open call for European cooperation in the field of scientific and technical research. Developing stronger links amongst European researchers is crucial to building the European Research Area (ERA). COST invites proposals for actions contributing to the scientific, technological, economic, cultural or societal development of Europe. Proposals playing a precursor role for other European programmes and/or initiated by early-stage researchers are especially welcome.

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

First KICs available online

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) has published presentations of the three selected Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), with a list of participants, list of primary contacts for each KIC and links to the KICs individual websites.

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



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