



Brussels News Update

June 2010

- High-level Panel on Innovation Indicator
- EU Patent Quality survey
- European Research Area, New Joint Programming Initiatives
- EU Supercomputing
- EU offers special Oil Recovery Equipment to support the US
- Nanotechnology : Opportunities and Threats
- European Food Safety Agency seeks Scientific Experts
- EFSA Calls for Scientific Data
- Strategic Energy Technology - Plan: Launch of 4 European Industrial Initiatives
- Certification of Sustainable Biofuels
- 30% Cut Carbon Emissions and Risk of Carbon Leakage
- Ministers discuss Simplification
- Review of Financial Regulation
- LERU (League of European Research Universities) puts forward paper on FP8
- ERC Starter Grants
- Draft Work Programme 2011, NMP - Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and New Production Technologies
- Co-operation in Higher Education and Training between the European Union, Australia and the Republic of Korea
- Council recommends how to promote Innovation
- Strong Growth anticipated for Chemicals Industry
- Open Consultations
 - on the legal framework for veterinary medicinal products
 - towards an energy strategy for 2011 – 2020
 - regarding a proposed European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) Research and Technology
- Forthcoming events

High-Level Panel on Innovation Indicator

Following requests from Finance Ministers that the target of investing 3% of GDP in R&D be given 'urgent consideration' and a wider 'outcome oriented' indicator adopted, Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, who has defended the 3% target, agreed to set up a panel of experts to look at other potential indicators to measure the impact of research and innovation on economic growth. The new panel, made up of leading business innovators and economists, was recently revealed.

Sources <http://www.consilium.europa.eu> <http://ec.europa.eu1>

Patent Quality Survey

The Commission's Directorate General for the Internal Market and Services have commissioned a survey on the quality of the European Patent System as perceived by its users. European companies, universities and research organisations are invited to participate in the survey. The deadline has been extended to the end of June. To participate please contact Federico Caviggioli.

E-mail patqual@ipfinance-institute.com

European Research Area, New Joint Programming Initiatives

At the last Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry and Research) Council Brussels, on 25 and 26 May 2010, ministers discussed the future of the European Research Area, its future development, governance and ERA's social dimension. Ministers welcomed progress made in the High Level Group on Joint Programming (GPC), the group has identified a new set of themes for JPIs: Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe; Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans; More Years, Better Lives - The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change; The microbial challenge - an emerging threat to human health; Urban Europe - Global Challenges, Local Solutions; Water Challenges for a Changing World.

Source <http://www.consilium.europa.eu2>

The Council also agreed that JPIs should be established as soon as possible in 2010 addressing: Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change; Cultural Heritage and Global Change – a new challenge for Europe; A healthy diet for a Healthy Life

Source <http://www.consilium.europa.eu1>

CREST (Comité de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique) which advises the European Commission and the Council on strategic priorities in research will become European Research Area Committee (ERAC).

Source <http://register.consilium.europa.eu3>

EU Supercomputing

The Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe (PRACE) was officially launched in Barcelona on 9 June, when the major contributors, Spain, France, Italy and Germany, signed the statutes. PRACE will speed calculation time by up to 1000 trillion calculations per second. The initiative is expected to enable researchers to use supercomputers located in other countries. The European Commission is contributing €70m under FP7. The fastest computer in Europe, JUGENE in Germany (fifth fastest in the world), will be the first supercomputer available to all European researchers under the PRACE initiative. By 2015, other supercomputers in Germany, France, Italy and Spain will be accessible across the EU. PRACE could be accessible from as early as 1 August; those wishing to use the computer will have to apply and have their application considered by a European peer review process.

Link <http://www.prace-project.eu/>

EU offers special Oil Recovery Equipment to support the US

The European Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) received a request for assistance from the United States Coast Guard to provide specific types of oil recovery equipment for combating the environmental disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Within a few hours, the MIC put together a consolidated European offer with equipment available from Spain, the Netherlands and the European Maritime Safety Agency. Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva said that the EU stood shoulder to shoulder with America in dealing with this environmental disaster.

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

Nanotechnology: Opportunities and Threats

The ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) party grouping in the European Parliament recently organised a seminar on the opportunities and threats of nanotechnology. The presentations included Prof. Dr. Martin Strohrmann, Senior Vice President BASF, Polymer Physics and Analytics on "Nano Technology in the Chemical Sector".

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

European Food Safety Authority seeks Scientific Experts

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), based in Parma, aims to provide independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks regarding food and feed safety. The Authority has published a call for expressions of interest for scientists wishing to be considered for membership of the 'Panel on food additives and nutrient sources added to food' (ANS) and 'Panel on food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings and processing aids' (CEF)

A further call for expressions of interest for placement on the reserve list of all Scientific Panels and the Scientific Committee was published on the same day. The call is open to a wide range of experts, including Chemists, Toxicologists and Biochemists. The panels are : Animal Health and Welfare; Biological Hazards; Food Contact Materials, Flavourings, Enzymes and Processing Aids; Contaminants in the Food Chain; Feed Additives and products or substances used in animal feed; Plant Health; Plant Protection Products and their Residues.

Sources <http://eur-lex.europa.eu1> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu2>

EFSA calls for Scientific Data

- Call for scientific data on furan in food and beverages, deadline 31 December 2010
- Call for scientific data on food additives permitted in the EU and belonging to the functional class of miscellaneous food additives, deadline 9 December 2010
- Request for data on biogenic amines in food, deadline 3 September 2010
- Call for occurrence data on acrylamide levels in food, deadline 31 July 2010
- Call for Data for Update on the latest scientific developments of Animal Cloning (with particular reference to Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer, SCNT), deadline 9 July 2010
- Request for data on brominated flame retardants levels in foodstuffs, deadline 2 July 2010
- Request for data on perfluoroalkylated substances in food, deadline 30 June 2010

Source <http://www.efsa.europa.eu9>

Strategic Energy Technology - Plan: Launch of 4 European Industrial Initiatives

Four European Industrial Initiatives of the SET Plan were launched on 3 June 2010 in Madrid. The four initiatives cover the fields of wind, solar (photovoltaic and concentrated solar power), electricity grids and carbon capture storage. The aim is to accelerate the development of low carbon technologies.

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

Certification of Sustainable Biofuels

The Commission is encouraging industry, governments and NGOs to set up certification schemes for all types of biofuels, including those imported into the EU. This is to help implement the EU's requirements that biofuels must deliver substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and should not come from forests, wetlands and nature protection areas. The rules for certification schemes are part of a set of guidelines explaining how the Renewable Energy Directive, coming into effect in December 2010, should be implemented. It is not possible to refuse imports of non-sustainable biofuels (WTO, World Trade Organisation). However, such imports would not be eligible for EU or EU country support schemes and would not count towards the 10% target set for the share of renewable energy in transport.

Source <http://ec.europa.eu/energy2>

30% Cut Carbon Emissions and Risk of Carbon Leakage

The Commission has published a Communication (policy document) which provides an analysis of the costs, benefits and options of moving beyond the EU's greenhouse gas reduction target for 2020 of 20% below 1990 levels to a 30% target; it also assesses the risk of 'carbon leakage' a euphemism for production and its associated emissions moving elsewhere, especially outside Europe. The document was recently discussed by environment ministers, who requested further analysis of what an increased reduction objective would mean for individual EU countries and stated that it would come back to this at its October session. On carbon leakage they said there wasn't a definitive assessment of the risk of carbon leakage, but would keep options open.

Sources <http://ec.europa.eu/environment1> <http://www.consilium.europa.eu4>

Ministers Discuss Simplification

At the last Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry and Research) Council, ministers made recommendations in four different areas.

- Reducing complexity: ministers welcomed the Commission's proposals related to the optimisation of the structure and timing of calls for proposals and said that research priorities 'should be problem-solving oriented, giving more room for bottom-up, trans-disciplinary approaches'.
- Reduced audit intensity and faster contract negotiation phase. Also, a new approach that looked at lump sums and a high trust 'award' approach – which allowed for different costs in different states.
- Improved quality, accessibility, transparency and procedures.
- Better interoperability between programmes and instruments

Source <http://register.consilium.europa.eu5>

Review of Financial Regulation

Ingeborg Gräßle MEP, the Rapporteur for the tri-annual review of the Financial Regulation which impacts on all EU funding programmes, including the Research Framework Programme, argued that red tape and bureaucracy surrounding research programmes was in particular need of attention. Much of the debate at the recent hearing concerned what could be considered as a 'tolerable risk' – it was clear from the ensuing discussion that it will be difficult to reach agreement on what is tolerable. The representative of the European Court of Auditors, pointed to the much higher level of error in all EU countries budget, compared to that of the EU's budget. The presentations from the hearing, including the President of the Finnish Academy's 'research' perspective are available.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu6>

LERU (League of European Research Universities) puts forward Paper on FP8

LERU is an interest group representing 22 of the EU's most research intensive universities. LERU has recently published a paper outlining its recommendations for the development of FP8. It favours massive investment in science driven frontier research, as well as reinforced international, intersectorial and interdisciplinary research. It also strongly advocates the pursuit of excellence, simplification and risk tolerance in the future Framework Programme.

Link: <http://www.leru.org/files/publications>

ERC Starter Grants

Eligibility for Starter Grants in the 2011 work programme is likely to be 2 -12 years after PhD attainment. According to a recent Newsletter from the UK Research office (UKRO), those between 2 and 7 years are likely to be classified as 'starters' and those between 7 and 12 years will be classified as 'consolidators'. This will be explained more clearly in the Guide for Applicants. The 2011 Work Programme is due to be published on 30 July 2010, with deadlines in autumn 2010 for Starting Grants and spring 2011 for Advanced Grants.

Link <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm1>

Draft Work Programme 2011, NMP - Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, Materials and New Production Technologies, FP7

The draft Programme is unlikely to change a great deal between now and the launch date of 30 July, most actions have a deadline of 4 November. Action areas and deadlines for submission are provided for each action. Actions include: large-scale green and economical synthesis of nanoparticles and nanostructures; development of nano-scale detection and control techniques for large area substrates; active nanomembranes/filters/ adsorbents for efficient water treatment with stable or regenerable low-fouling surfaces; worker protection and exposure risk management strategies for nanomaterial production, use and disposal modelling and control of intensified process systems.

Link: <http://www.nmpteam.eu/call-information/>

Co-operation in Higher Education and Training between the European Union, Australia and the Republic of Korea

A new call for proposals under the Industrialised Countries Instrument (ICI) Education Co-operation Programme for Joint Mobility Projects (JMP) and Joint Degree Projects (JDP), has been launched. The 2010 call has a budget of €2.45m for 3-4 EU-Australian projects and 3-4 EU-Korea projects. The maximum EU contribution will be €465 000 for JDP projects and €310 000 for JMP projects. The call is open to higher education and training institutions. A consortium applying under either scheme, must include at least three higher education and/or training institutions from two (JDP) or three (JMP) different EU countries and at least two such institutions from the Partner Country. The maximum duration of JMP projects is 36 months. The deadline is 6 September 2010.

Source: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/extcoop>

Council Recommends how to promote Innovation

At the last Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry and Research) Council, ministers identified five broad areas that need to be addressed:

- the recognition of the need for more effective bank financing, encouraging the private sector, particularly venture capital and involving the European Investment Bank
- they thought more could be done to promote the market through public procurement and supporting the Commission's work on 'lead market initiatives' and completing the EU patent
- they recognised the need to simplify and streamline RTD programmes
- they want closer links with regional policy and clusters, in particular, greater support via the Structural Funds
- more needs to be done to promote education and the acquisition of the right skills for innovation, as well as to foster entrepreneurship and effective collaboration.

Source: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu7>

Strong Growth Anticipated for Chemicals Industry

CEFIC which represents the European chemical industry has estimated that the chemicals industry will grow by 9.5% in 2010. However, despite the high growth figures for 2010, output at the end of 2011 is likely to be below pre-2008 levels.

Source: <http://www.cefic.org/Files/NewsReleases>

Open Consultations

Public consultation on the legal framework for veterinary medicinal products, deadline 15 July 2010

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice>

Public consultation, towards an energy strategy for 2011 – 2020, deadline 2nd July 2010

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/energy2>

Public consultation regarding a future proposal for a new European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) Research and Technology, deadline 22nd June 2010

Link: <http://ec.europa.eu/research3>

Forthcoming Events

July

8 July, 7th Framework Programme - FP7 (2007-2013) Energy Research Information Day – 2011 calls; there will be live webstreaming. <http://ec.europa.eu/research/conferences>

9 July, Commission Information Day, Public Private Partnerships – Energy Efficient Buildings, Factories of the Future and Green Car Initiative <http://ec.europa.eu/research/industrialtechnologies>

14 July, Seminar on Simplification of the Framework Programme

15 and 16 July, Informal Research Council will address future of Research and Innovation as well as simplification issues

7 and 9 September, 'Industrial Technologies', focusing on nanotechnology and nanosciences. Belgian Presidency programme. <http://www.industrial-technologies2010.eu/>

September

14 September, Conference on KBBE, Knowledge Bases Bio-Economy – Cooperation area; there will be three main topics: feedstocks for the bio-economy; innovative bio-based products and innovative food production. <http://www.kbbe2010.be/>

24 September, Researchers' Night

23 and 24 September – 'Soil, Climate Change and Biodiversity - where do we stand?' jointly organised by the Commission Directorate-General for the Environment and the Joint Research Centre



EuCheMS aisbl, Registered office Avenue E. Van Nieuwenhuysse 4, B-1160 Brussels
Produced for EuCheMS by Catherine Feore

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