



Brussels News Update

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Boosting research by cutting research funding red tape

A recent Communication by the European Commission outlines the simplification strategy in research funding that aims to attract the very best researchers in the framework programmes. The first part of the strategy concerns changes that can be made under the current legal and regulatory framework such as improved IT systems for user support and reducing the time taken to award grants and make payments; more consistent application of rules, in particular on auditing, and improving the structure and content of the "calls for proposals" in response to which research organisations bid for e-funding. The Commission has also committed to ensuring that calls for

proposals and deadlines are timed to take into account major holiday periods. The Commission will also investigate the use of prizes, noting that these are administratively simple to run and encourage other investors to spend money on research to win the prize. The Commission will run a pilot action for prizes under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The second part of the simplification plan involves changing the current financial rules such as widening the use of "average cost methodologies" removing the need for projects to account separately for each item of expenditure. The Commission also suggests paying a lump sum for personnel based on an agreement of the personnel costs during grant negotiations in order to tackle the issue of recording personnel time for accounting purposes. The Commission also aims to allow projects to use the same accounting methods for EU funding, as they are required to use for national research funding. These proposals are subject to approval by both the European Parliament and the Council. The third and final part of the Communication concerns changes, which could be implemented under future framework programmes. Among the options presented is a move towards "payment by results": payment of full amounts would be linked to whether pre-agreed objectives are achieved.

In the meantime, the interim evaluation of the current Programme (FP7) is to be undertaken by a group of independent experts, chaired by Mr. Rolf Annerberg of the Swedish Council for Environment, Agricultural Science and Spatial Planning (FORMAS). The 10-strong group will examine all aspects of the FP7, including its impacts on the European Research Area (ERA), the global position of Europe in science, the efficacy of novel measures under the FP7, and the role of research in efforts to tackle major societal challenges. The report of the group is expected this autumn and will feed into the design of the Eighth Framework Programme (FP8). The Commission is expected to publish its proposals for the FP8 in late 2011 or early 2012.

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

Links: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/1> <http://www.euractiv.com/1>

EU looks to US model for measuring R&D impact

A EurActiv article on how the US plans to measure the long-term impact of research spending in a global struggle to find reliable ways to assess the return on investment in science.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/2> **Link:** <http://www.nature.com/>

The new realities for tech transfer

A Science|Business article by Nuala Moran on the new ways to reduce the risk profile of novel technologies, while increasing internal efficiencies, cut costs and sharpen academic awareness of industry's needs.

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

Industry projects to grab EU energy research funds

A Science|Business article by Gail Edmondson on the Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan and the shifting of the bulk of future energy research funds towards industry-driven projects.

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

Mayors to receive extra EU cash for energy projects

A EurActiv article on the plans to divert unused EU stimulus cash into a fund to help regions and cities become more energy efficient.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/3> **Link:** <http://europa.eu/2>

Science to help combat poverty

The Spanish Minister of Science and Innovation, Cristina Garmendia has recently highlighted the priority of the Spanish Presidency of the European Union to forge a new way of dealing with one of the greatest challenges for European science and innovation policies - the contribution they can make to the agenda in the battle against poverty and inequality. This spring, the Council of European Ministers of Competitiveness is to adopt a common position on the role of the European Research Area (ERA), in social issues and the fight against poverty is expected. The Ministers will consider a call for changing the model of helping less-developed countries, and to look at how they can benefit from knowledge transfer and technology. For example, more than 80% of the papers published in high-impact international journals and more than 90% of the patents registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office come from developed countries.

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

Research and Innovation Strategy

One of the flagship initiatives of the EU-2020 Strategy is the Innovation Union, whose aim is to improve conditions and access to finance for research and innovation. The European Plan for Research and Innovation (EPRI) will be developed within this framework. According to recent announcements by the Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the EU's forthcoming Research and Innovation Strategy for Europe will: focus on the major societal challenges; have a broad definition of 'innovation'; and seek to remove bottlenecks to the flow of knowledge. According to the Commissioner, the strategy will aim to the emergence of a 'Single Market for Research and Innovation' and innovation will include not only research but also innovation in business models, management structures and the delivery of public services. The Commissioner revealed her intentions to tie up the EU's Research Framework Programmes much more closely to the major societal challenges with more allowances for innovation. The Research and Innovation Strategy will be published by September 2010 for consideration at the Autumn European Council meeting.

Sources: <http://cordis.europa.eu/3> <http://cordis.europa.eu/4>

EU to convene subgroup of 'innovation commissioners'

A EurActiv article on the plans of the European Commission for the formal establishment of a subgroup of at least eight EU commissioners with a stake in innovation policy.

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

EU commissioner planning 'step change' in innovation policy

A EurActiv interview with the EU Innovation Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn on the fundamental differences of the expected Research and Innovation Strategy

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

Back to basics: Fixing America's broken innovation ecosystem

A Science|Business article by Lori Valigra on the need to adjust policies and regulations to encourage entrepreneurial researchers to commercialise their work.

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

EU investment funds directive 'will hurt SMEs'

A EurActiv article on the impact of the new rules of the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) on the growth of small businesses.

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

Science and Innovation Citizens Agenda

The Spanish Presidency of the European Union has launched an innovative on-line vote to give Europeans the chance to choose which challenges in science and innovation should be resolved by the year 2030. The results will be fed to the meeting of the EU Competitiveness Council. The challenges being voted on are known collectively as the Science and Innovation Citizens Agenda. The voting areas are: - innovate in healthy eating habits, - store electricity more efficiently, - overcome language barriers using technology, - technologies to help the elderly, - innovate in public social services, - personalised medical treatment thanks to genetics, - more comfortable, accessible and ecological cities, - reduce the consumption of raw materials, - agriculture that is less damaging to the environment, - understand how the brain works to improve our lives, - use ICTs and the Internet for the benefit of education, - artificial organs to replace damaged organs, - unify all physics theories, - robots that make our lives easier.

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

New EU industrial policy begins to take shape

A Science|Business by Anna Jenkinson on the outlines of a new EU industrial policy and the preliminary findings of a new analysis of European industry.

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

MEPs agree tighter rules on industrial pollution

A EurActiv article on the agreement of the MEPs to strengthen legislative proposals to limit industrial air pollution by allowing for more limited derogations than EU governments had demanded.

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

Call for banning cyanide-mining technologies in the EU

Parliament has recently called for a complete ban on the use of cyanide mining technologies in the EU before the end of 2011 in order to protect water resources and biological diversity.

MEPs have also called on the Commission and the Member States "not to support, either directly or indirectly, any mining projects in the EU that involve cyanide technology until the general ban is applicable, nor to support any such projects in third countries".

The Commission is asked to encourage redevelopment of the areas where cyanide mining is banned, through financial support for alternative green industries, renewable energy and tourism.

The joint resolution also asks the Commission to put forward an amendment to existing legislation on the management of waste from the extractive industries requiring that every operating company should take out insurance to cover compensation for damage and all remedial costs incurred in restoring a site to its original ecological and chemical status in the event of an accident or malfunction.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/1> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/8>

Solar industry divided over EU toxic substances law

A EurActiv article on the solar panel manufacturers asking for an exemption from EU legislation restricting the use of dangerous chemicals in electronic products.

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

EU to revamp Clinical Trials Directive

A EurActiv article on the plans of the EU executive for a major overhaul of the rules governing medical research amid a growing acceptance that a directive in place since 2004 has hampered clinical trials.

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

AXLR8 launched with €500K FP7 funding to replace animal tests

A Science|Business article on the new initiative to develop computer and cell-based alternatives to animal toxicity testing, with the aim of replacing the use of one million animals each year in Europe.

Source: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/5>

European research strategy on neurodegenerative diseases

The Scientific Advisory Board of the Joint Programme on Neurodegenerative Diseases (JPND), which comprises 15 experts from the fields of basic, clinical and social/healthcare research, has started working on the preparation of short-, medium- and long-term pan-European research agendas that will guide the work of the new initiative. The JPND is the first Joint Programming initiative to get underway, and its launch marks a change in the way research is funded and coordinated in Europe. Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases cost European health services some €72 billion annually and they form the focus of the first Joint Programming scheme with 24 European countries having already signed up to the initiative. The full research agenda is expected to be ready in 2011. The JPND's Management Board is already in place while the Scientific Advisory Board is expected to compile a list with a number of major topics before the end of 2010. Participating countries will choose areas of interest to them and decide on how to best coordinate their activities. Existing initiatives may be linked up whereas the establishment of new initiatives is not excluded. The European Commission will be supporting the work of the JPND through a coordinating action with an EU contribution of close to € 2 million. The JPND will build on existing collaboration in Europe that has been supported by the European Commission under the Research Framework Programmes (FP): the FP6 has supported 28 projects on neurodegenerative diseases with €136 million whereas FP7 has supported until now 34 projects with €159 million. The Commission will continue launching activities that are complementary to the work of the JPND. This pilot JPND will provide organisational information for other Joint Programming schemes already under consideration.

Sources: <http://cordis.europa.eu/6> <http://europa.eu/3>

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

Cancer: MEPs urge more detection and prevention

In a resolution adopted recently, MEPs welcome the Commission's proposal to set up a European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013 to support the Member States' efforts to tackle cancer. They believe particular efforts should be directed towards the new Member States. All Member States are urged to set up integrated cancer plans, to help achieve the Partnership's long-term aim of reducing cancer by 15% by 2020. The MEPs have recently

called for further action to promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce environmental and workplace risk factors as well as demanding increased EU investment in information and screening campaigns "directed at the general public and all healthcare providers".

The MEPs have also called for increased support for research into cancer prevention, including the effects of harmful chemicals and environmental pollutants, nutrition, lifestyle and genetic factors. The links between cancer and risk factors such as tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceutical and synthetic hormones should be investigated, says Parliament.

MEPs argue that cancer medicines, including treatments for rare and less common cancers, should be uniformly available to all patients who need them, and inequalities of access to cancer treatment and care must be reduced, including the new 'targeted' cancer drugs recently put on the market.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/2> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/12>

A further €21 million for breast and kidney cancer

The European Commission has earmarked €21 million for two new research projects on cancer, as part of an international research effort coordinated by the International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC), which aims to elucidate comprehensively the changes in the human genome present in many forms of cancer.

The two new projects (BASIS and CAGEKID) will involve 27 research institutes from 10 countries throughout Europe and the USA. They will focus on unlocking the genetic code of breast cancer (the most common class of cancer diagnosed in women worldwide with more than one million cases diagnosed annually) and kidney cancer (of particular importance in Europe where the highest global incidence rates are observed).

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

Commission puts ITER funding in spotlight

The European Commission has recently adopted a communication justifying the creation of a sustainable financial framework for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). EU Member States should provide financial support to the facility, whose expenditure is €4.5 billion more than the initial €2.7 billion planned, the European Commission said. □□ In a memo, the Commission explained that the financial support earmarked by Member States for the project's lifespan plus a mechanism for managing any additional overruns should be agreed, subject to an overall cap. A breakdown shows that some €1.4 billion is needed to meet the estimated cost increases in the European Atomic Energy (Euratom) Community contribution to ITER in 2012 and 2013. Two ways to boost this funding are to secure more money from the Member States or to raise the ceiling in the EU budget. International in scope, the ITER project brings together experts from across the EU, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the US. ITER is an experimental reactor that will generate energy by fusion. ITER's main objective is to demonstrate both the scientific and technological feasibility of using fusion as a key energy source on a larger scale.

Under the international agreement signed between the ITER partners in 2006 and implemented in 2007, the project has a duration of 35 years: 10 years for construction, 20 years for operation, and 5 years for deactivation of the ITER facilities. 'The launch of the ITER project marked an important milestone in the development of worldwide big science collaboration,' the European

Commission stated. 'For Europe the project is emblematic of the EU's capacity to take a leading role at the global level in science and technology.'

The ITER organisation presents a possible model for future large-scale international collaborative infrastructure projects. Implementation of ITER is therefore a test case for future EU-international scientific collaboration on large-scale projects.' The ITER partners argue that the results of this project could bolster the energy sector considerably by offering power that is cheaper and safer, as well as being limitless and free of carbon dioxide (CO₂). In terms of safety in particular, the potential for power stations to have meltdowns or 'runaway reactions' is very low. Once it is up and running, the Cadarache, France-based ITER reactor will have a generating fusion power capacity of 500 million watts and will form the basis for a future demonstration power plant, called DEMO. The final step of the project will lead to the commercialisation of fusion power. The European Commission has pointed out that some 75% of the overall European contribution to ITER will lead to contracts with high-tech industries in Europe. The EU has said the project's success should come with reasonable financial and technical risks, as well as costs that do not burn huge holes in Europe's pockets. On the whole, the EU targets 'a Europe with a thriving and sustainable economy, with world leadership in a diverse portfolio of clean, efficient and low-carbon energy technologies as a motor for prosperity and a key contributor to growth and jobs.'

This vision is outlined in the Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan, which seeks the 'complete construction of the ITER fusion facility' and to 'ensure early industry participation in the preparation of demonstration actions'. The ITER partners should now agree on the project's 'Baseline': the specifications and timetable for the construction of the fusion reactor, and the cost. The European Commission noted that the Baseline should be agreed at the forthcoming meeting of the ITER Council, due to take place in mid June of this year.

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

World's five largest patent offices move ahead with work-sharing projects

A Science|Business article on the framework for work-sharing of the five largest intellectual property offices.

Source: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/6>

Geoghegan-Quinn promises to "finish the job" on single EU patent

A Science|Business article on the pledge of the Research and Innovation Commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, for a vigorous push to reach agreement on an EU Patent.

Source: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/7b>

Make English the sole language of patents

A Science|Business by Anna Jenkinson on the EU regulation on the issue of translation requirements for the EU patent.

Source: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/7>

New Web research network gets off the ground

A Science|Business article on the new international network, the Web Science Trust Network of Laboratories (WSTNet) that creates an alliance of world-class research laboratories supporting the Web Science research and education programme

Source: <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/8>

Erasmus University Charter call for proposals

The European Commission is issuing a call for proposals for the Erasmus University Charter 2011. The Erasmus University Charter (EUC) provides the general framework for European cooperation activities, which a higher education institution (HEI) may carry out within the Erasmus Programme as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). The awarding of an EUC is also a prerequisite for an HEI to be able to organise student mobility and teaching and other staff mobility projects.

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

EFI Event

The European Forum for Innovation (EFI) 2010 - 'Empowering the pan-European community in a competitive global environment' will be held from 23 to 25 June 2010 in Trento, Italy. The event will cover issues ranging from the general 'What is innovation?' to more concrete, open sessions and workshops that address the current European status quo in technology, the innovation cycle and how best to unlock Europe's true potential, and the science needed for innovation, business and technology.

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

Clean technology - European partnering event

The 'Clean technology - European partnering event' (Meet4Cleantech) will be held on 1 and 2 June 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland.

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



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