



Brussels News Update

April 2009

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Council adopts climate and energy package

The Council of the European Union has given its official stamp of approval to the climate and energy package, which comprises several pieces of legislation designed to help the EU tackle climate change. Under the package, the EU has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas

emissions by 20% by 2020. The Commission first put forward the climate and energy package back in January 2008. One of the directives in the package aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the EU's total energy consumption to 20%. According to the directive, each Member State must now adopt a national plan setting out its targets for the share of renewable energy consumption in transport, electricity, heating and cooling in 2020. Elsewhere in the package, a decision sets out how the Member States should reduce greenhouse gas emissions in key sectors such as transport, agriculture and housing. While the overall aim is to reduce EU emissions by 20%, some countries, notably those with a lower gross domestic product (GDP) and strong prospects for economic growth, will be allowed to increase their greenhouse gas emissions. The Council also adopted a directive establishing a regulatory framework for the geological storage of CO₂. Another part of the package lays down strict environmental and social sustainability criteria for biofuels. Finally, the package includes a revision of the Emissions Trading System (ETS) with the aim of achieving greater emissions reductions in energy-intensive sectors such as electricity generation, cement works and the glass, pulp and paper industries, among others. © Council of the European Union 2009

Sources: <http://cordis.europa.eu/1> <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/pdf>

Link: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/climate-change/>

Commission sets out climate change adaptation plans

The European Commission has set out a strategy to help the EU cope with the impacts of climate change. The Commission will create an Impact and Adaptation Steering Group (IASG) to oversee the implementation of the strategy. This will be made up of representatives of the EU Member States and will be supported by technical groups focusing on key sectors. Between now and 2012, the IASG will work to develop a comprehensive strategy on adapting to climate change from 2013 on. It is hoped that one of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) will focus on climate change and adaptation.

The Commission also proposes the establishment of a Clearing House Mechanism, through which information on climate change risks, impacts and best practices could be exchanged amongst different Member States. The Clearing House Mechanism should be set up by 2011. Elsewhere, the strategy highlights the importance of accounting for the impacts of climate change in all policy areas, especially health, agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, and coastal and marine policies. In each area, policy makers should investigate the actual and potential impacts of climate change, calculate the costs of action and inaction, and analyse the impacts of possible measures on other policy areas.

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

Consultation on the future of The Lisbon Strategy after 2010

The Committee of the Regions has decided to launch a consultation of the European local and regional authorities on the future of the growth and jobs strategy after 2010 to enable them to voice their viewpoints and concerns to the European Council.

The outcome of the consultation will be presented and discussed in Brussels during the Open Days week (5-8 October 2009). The consultation is open to all local and regional authorities, which are invited to submit their comments on the future of the Lisbon strategy.

Source: <http://www.cor.europa.eu/>

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

Research Infrastructures and the Regional Dimension of the ERA

A recently released document on the research infrastructures and their funding in relation to the EU regions and national policies, notes the disproportional location of existing Research Infrastructures in regions of the largest EU Member States. The document draws attention to the need for redistribution of new facilities throughout the EU and creation of 'regional partner facilities' acting both as pre- and post-processing centres for the large Research Infrastructures if the European Research Area is to realise its full potential.

Furthermore the document states that the sustainability of Research Infrastructures depends on long-term commitment of Member States alongside sound management and favourable fiscal and legal conditions. Improved co-ordination between the three main EU-funding mechanisms and enhancement of the compatibility of accounting and reporting rules for Community funding are also essential.

In the recent conference on *Research Infrastructures and the regional dimensions of ERA*, the European Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, brought the same message forward, asking for the growing and developing ERA to be defended from research protectionism and noting the need for a "balance of research competition and research cooperation".

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/1> <http://europa.eu/2>

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

Consultation on ERC's structures and mechanisms launched

The ERC Review Panel has started its work on the analysis of the structures and mechanisms of the European Research Council (ERC). The Panel has launched an open consultation seeking the views of representative organisations in European science on the structures and mechanisms of the ERC.

The tasks of the independent ERC Review Panel are to: analyse the ERC's structures and mechanisms against criteria of scientific excellence, autonomy, efficiency and transparency, and with the full involvement of the Scientific Council; consider the process and criteria for the selection of the members of the Scientific Council; consider the advantages and disadvantages of a structure based on an Executive Agency and a structure based on Article 171 of the EC Treaty. Apart from consulting the main representative organisations for research, the Panel welcomes inputs from other representative organisations and stakeholders on the three above-mentioned issues before 24 April 2009. Responses should be sent to the following address: rtd-erc-review@ec.europa.eu

The Panel is expected to report to the European Commission in July.

Source: <http://erc.europa.eu/3.pdf>

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

Review of Framework Programme 6

An academic review of the successes and failures of the Framework Programme 6 has been published. A detailed response from the Commission is currently in preparation.

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

MEPs vote to step up eco-labeling

The European Parliament adopted a first reading agreement on the voluntary EU Ecolabel ("EU flower") system for environment-friendly products to become less costly and bureaucratic to use. The label has so far been awarded to over 3,000 products such as detergents, paper and shoes. The proposed regulation sets general requirements for the development of the

Ecolabel criteria for any goods or services, which are supplied for distribution, consumption or use on the Community market. The criteria themselves will not be determined by the regulation, but by subsequent decisions, for each product group (laundry detergents, soaps and shampoos, tissue paper, camp site service, etc.)

Ecolabel for processed food: As demanded by MEPs, before criteria for food and feed products are developed, the Commission shall first conduct a study to see whether it is possible to set reliable environmental criteria for such products. It shall also be considered whether only products certified as organic would be eligible for receiving the Ecolabel award, to avoid confusion for consumers.

No Ecolabel for toxic products: The Ecolabel should not in principle be awarded to goods containing substances of very high concern (e.g. toxic, hazardous to the environment, carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction).

Considering reduced animal testing: To obtain the Ecolabel, products and services must meet stringent environmental criteria, which are agreed at European level following wide consultation with experts from industry, environmental and consumer organisations and trade unions. MEPs want the Commission to ensure that reducing animal testing shall be taken into account in the development and revision of the award criteria for Ecolabel product groups.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/2.htm>

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

'No data, no market' for nanotechnologies

The European Parliament's environment committee has adopted a report which calls for tighter controls on nanotechnology, including the application of the 'no data, no market' principle contained in the REACH Directive. The own-initiative, non-binding report calls for products containing nanotechnology which are already on the market to be withdrawn until safety assessments can be made.

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

MEPs define nanomaterials and approve new rules for cosmetics

The Parliament has approved an update of EU legislation on cosmetics and introduced a definition of nanomaterial to mean an insoluble or bioresistant and intentionally manufactured material with one or more external dimensions, or an internal structure, on the scale from 1 to 100 nm".

The new regulation introduces a safety assessment procedure for all products containing nanomaterials, which could lead to a ban on a substance if there is a risk to human health. MEPs also pushed successfully for any nanomaterials present in cosmetics to be mentioned in the list of ingredients on the packaging. The regulation provides for strict rules for the use of substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction (CMR) and will allow the continued use of ethanol in cosmetics.

The regulation - directly applicable in all Member States - will enter into force 20 days after publication in the EU Official Journal. It will apply 42 months later - except for certain parts on CMR substances and nanomaterials, which will apply from an earlier stage.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/4.htm>

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

Commission adopts two regulations regarding light bulbs

Two Ecodesign regulations were adopted by the Commission laying down energy efficiency requirements, functionality and product information requirements for household lamps. Inefficient incandescent light bulbs will be progressively replaced by improved alternatives starting in 2009 and finishing at the end of 2012.

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

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

Green science to save the economy

There are plans for Framework Programme 7 funding to be diverted to three large-scale partnerships focusing on the use of clean technologies in each sector. The move, part of the EU's Economic Recovery plan, will see €1.6 billion from Framework Programme 7 flow into the three projects: "Factories of the Future", "Energy-efficient Buildings" and "Green Cars." This will be matched by the industry partners in staff and other resources. First calls for research projects will be published in July with deadlines at the turn of the year, which could allow the first projects to start in Spring 2010.

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

EU and Japan together in energy research

The European Commission and Japan will increase their collaboration in the fields of photovoltaics, power storage and carbon capture and storage (CCS) with fuel cells and hydrogen forming a further area of cooperation in the future. An industry expert workshop is to be jointly organised. Both sides also noted the potential of twinning of projects such as on power storage and CCS, and possible joint research projects for high-efficiency solar cells.

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

€15 million euro to promote sustainable energy investments in cities

The European Commission has adopted the 2009 Work Programme of the Intelligent Energy-Europe (IEE) Programme aiming at co-financing non-technology projects to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and clean transport. The IEE 2009 budget is more than €96 million of which €15 million is foreseen for developing the potential of municipalities and regions to accelerate local investments.

Sources: <http://europa.eu/5> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/4.htm>

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

Next steps for a unified patent litigation system

The European Commission has adopted a Recommendation that would provide the Commission with negotiating directives for the conclusion of an agreement creating a Unified Patent Litigation System (UPLS). The UPLS would increase legal certainty, reduce costs and improve access to patent litigation for businesses, in particular SMEs. The court structure to be established in the framework of the UPLS would have jurisdiction both for existing European patents and for future Community patents.

Sources: <http://europa.eu/6> <http://ec.europa.eu/7.pdf>

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

EU University-Business Forum to become annual

Presenting a set of measures to support dialogue between universities and business, the Commission has taken further steps in order to facilitate the modernisation of the Member States' higher education systems. The Commission's proposal to make the University-Business Forum a Europe-wide platform for dialogue involves higher education institutions, companies, business associations, intermediaries and public authorities with an aim to stimulate all the stakeholders to exchange good practice and to discuss and find solutions together.

Despite the bright examples of cooperation between educational institutions and business, there are considerable differences in the level of cooperation across countries, universities and academic disciplines. The influence of the cooperation initiatives on the governance and organisational culture of participating organisations remains so far limited. The Commission therefore emphasises the necessity to continue and further develop the dialogue giving it a reinforced structure with meetings held on a regular basis. It will work to strengthen the involvement of national and regional authorities, later opening the door even for actors from outside the EU.

Source: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/93910.php>

Tender: evaluation study of LIFE+

The European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment has published a call for tenders for an evaluation of LIFE+, the European financial instrument for the environment for the period 2007-2013. The objective of this study is to evaluate the implementation of the LIFE+ Regulation for the period 2007-2009.

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

Tender: study on mobility developments in higher education

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture is calling for tenders for a study on mobility developments in higher education. The European Commission is preparing a Green Paper on learning mobility for young people and will also conduct in parallel a study on 'Mobility developments in higher education'. The study will focus both on quantitative and qualitative aspects of mobility developments and will analyse the feedback on higher education mobility in the public consultation, which will take place after the launching of the Green Paper (July-October).

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

Call: proposals under the 'Intelligent Energy- Europe' Programme

The European Commission's Directorate-General of Energy and Transport has published a call for proposals in the field of energy under the 'Intelligent Energy - Europe' Programme. Managed by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI), the Programme will provide for initiatives to: - foster energy efficiency and the rational use of energy resources; - promote new and renewable energy sources and to support energy diversification; - promote energy efficiency and the use of new and renewable energy sources in transport.

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

Call for 'Knowledge and Innovation Communities'

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) has launched a call for proposals for the establishment of 'Knowledge and Innovation Communities' (KICs). KICs are an integral part of the EIT concept. As highly integrated, creative partnerships including education, technology, research, business and entrepreneurship, they are designed to produce new innovations and innovation models, as well as to inspire others to emulate them. Activities specific to the KICs are the following: - address long-term challenges in the themes and identify and tackle new opportunities; - transfer higher education, research and innovation activities into a business context and into commercial and societal applications; - attract, keep and work with partner organisations and top-class talent from around the world; - develop entrepreneurial people and bring them to business; - maximise the share of financial contribution from the private sector; - address leading innovation-driven research essential to the KIC objectives; - set up new schemes of innovation-focused education through EIT-branded master, doctorate and post-doctorate education. These activities must involve at least three independent partner organisations from at least three different EU Member States, including at least one higher education institution and one private company.

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

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

World forum backs water as 'basic need'

During the World Water Forum ministers from around 100 countries declined to recognise water as a basic human right, instead acknowledging it as a "basic need" as it is stated in the adopted Istanbul Ministerial Declaration.

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

New Science for Environment Policy website and archive

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



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