



## Brussels News Update

### January 2010

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#### Spain takes over EU Council Presidency

With innovation and equality at the core of its programme, Spain has pledged to drive forward the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA) during its six-month Presidency of the Council of the EU, starting on 1 January. The Spanish Presidency will be the first to operate under the rules of the Lisbon Treaty.

Three 'axes' have been identified as essential in driving the ERA forward: the integration axis focusing on the importance of integrating research and development (R&D) policies into other policies - and specifically into the EU's strategy for 2020; the involvement axis, through which all regional, national or pan-European instruments supporting R&D and innovation in Europe can potentially address the major societal challenges such as climate change, energy or health; and

the inclusion axis that focuses on the contribution of science and innovation in promoting social cohesion and tackling poverty and exclusion.

Spain, Belgium and Hungary have put together an 18-month work programme with research and development and innovation at its core emphasizing the importance of the regional dimension of innovation and research policies (the presidency will be handed over to Belgium on 1 July and Hungary in the first half of 2011). In addition to the creation and governance of the ERA, priorities identified by the three countries include the analysis of the mid-term review of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and the implementation of joint programming. The three nations have pledged to closely follow the creation of the first knowledge and innovation communities (KICs) and 'closely monitor' progress on the development of the pan-European research infrastructures identified by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI).

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

### Parliamentary hearing: Commissioner designate for Research, Innovation and Science

The European Commissioner designate for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, pledged to move research, innovation and science 'to the heart of European policy' in her recent hearing at the European Parliament. The new Commissioner designate said that the European Union must become an Innovation Union and that a common vision for research, innovation and science is needed together with 'a cross-cutting reform agenda to connect up and speed up innovation along the policy chain from research to retail'. She said that 'within a new Research and Innovation policy Framework, the Framework Programme will be seen as an instrument and not as an end in itself'.

If approved as Commissioner, Mrs. Geoghegan-Quinn will focus on completing the European Research Area (ERA), addressing societies' grand challenges, and creating an innovation research culture. The Commissioner designate has also underlined the importance of bringing more small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) into the EU's research programmes, and leveraging complementary structural funds for research. The Commissioner designate is also prepared to chair the group of Commissioners with innovation in their portfolios.

The hearings of the Commissioners designates began on 12 January and will run until 19 January. The European Parliament will vote on the new Commission on 26 January.

**Source:** <http://cordis.europa.eu/1a> **Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/en/a>

### Šefčovič ready to bridge institutional divide

A EurActiv interview with Maroš Šefčovič, commissioner-designate responsible for inter-institutional relations and administration in the new European Commission, on how to optimise the connection between the Council, the Commission and the Parliament, involving also the national parliaments.

**Source:** <http://www.euractiv.com/b>

### Commission wants quick follow-up on Copenhagen

A EurActiv article on the plans of European Commission to call for swift implementation by the EU of the Copenhagen Accord on climate change.

**Source:** <http://www.euractiv.com/en/c>

## The EU Council

### Tackling 'Chemical cocktails'

In its December meeting, the Council of the European Union has welcomed the initiative of the Commission to undertake a study to examine the scientific basis for assessing the risks due to combination effects of exposure to multiple chemicals (so-called 'chemical cocktails'). The study is to be finalized in early 2010. The Council has also underlined the need for further action in the field of chemicals policy, research and assessment methods to address combination effects of chemicals as the existing EU legislation in most cases builds on a chemical-by-chemical assessment approach. Furthermore the Council has called on the Commission and the Member States to increase research efforts in this area, including a review of the existing research database, and to call on the OECD to adequately address the issue of combination effects from exposure to multiple chemicals, including endocrine disruptors.

The Council has also asked the Commission "to pay appropriate attention to the precautionary principle and the potential risks of chemical combination effects when drawing up future proposals, inter alia by assessing the need for risk management measures to protect the environment and human health." In addition the Council has urged for the following:

Recommendations on how to address exposure to multiple endocrine disruptors within the existing Community legislation and in the context of its forthcoming report on the implementation of the Community strategy on endocrine disruptors;

Assessment on how and whether relevant existing Community legislation adequately addresses risks from exposure to multiple chemicals from different sources and pathways, and on this basis to consider appropriate modifications, guidelines and assessment methods, and report back to the Council by early 2012 at the latest.

**Sources:** <http://docs.google.com/> <http://www.se2009.eu/en/1>

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

### Debate on biocides directive

The Council of the European Union has held its first policy **debate** on a proposal for a revised regulation on biocides. **Biocides** include non-agricultural pesticides, for instance insecticides, disinfectants and repellents as well as material preservatives but not veterinary or human medical products. The Council has decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission directive concerning the inclusion of warfarin sodium in the list of authorized active substances for biocidal products. It is hoped that the existing legislation– the Biocide Directive – will be replaced with a new regulation to include the three elements discussed in the debate:

Centralised authorisation procedure. There was broad support for the principle of centralised authorisation for products, as an option in addition to the current system of national authorisations where approval has to be granted from each individual Member State. The Commission's proposal is to introduce approval at European level with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), initially granted to products containing new active substances and low risk products with the possibility of extending these categories after 2023. Authorisation for all other products will be the responsibility of member states. Some Member States pointed out that national procedures must be maintained to take account of specific conditions of use in different Member States and that a centralised authorisation procedure must not place excessive burdens on SMEs, in particular through fees.

### Exclusion criteria

Many delegations welcomed the Commission's proposal to set specific criteria (for example, the

ability to cause tumours, mutations, reproductive problems and hormonal imbalance) identifying active substances which are excluded from use in biocidal products due to their inherent hazardous characteristics. Environment Ministers and the European Commission have agreed that environmental hazards should be added to the exclusion criteria for deciding which biocides should be banned. There was also broad agreement that active substances that meet the exclusion criteria could be authorised when certain strict risk or socio-economic criteria are met.

### Treated articles and Materials

There was broad support on the proposal to bring articles and materials treated with or incorporating biocidal products, e.g. furniture, textiles and materials that have contact with food, within the scope of the regulation and to also set rules on how biocide-treated goods and materials are to be labelled for consumers. There was also broad support for requiring articles whose primary function is to be biocidal to be authorised as biocidal products.

Negotiations on the regulation will be concluded in 2010.

**Sources:** <http://66.102.9.132/search> <http://www.se2009.eu/2>

### **EU-wide ban on phosphates in detergents**

The Council has also adopted conclusions on regional management of water and the marine environment, including the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The EU environment ministers urged the Commission to speedily designate the Baltic Sea as a pilot project for quicker and more stringent measures to improve the marine environment, including the drafting of a proposal for an EU-wide ban on phosphates in detergents aimed at reducing eutrophication.

**Source:** <http://www.se2009.eu/3>

### **First three KICs launched**

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) has announced its first three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs):

Climate-KIC with core partners to include major companies, academic institutions and regional agencies and co-location centres in London (UK), Zurich (Switzerland), Berlin (Germany), Paris (France) and Randstad (the Netherlands). This KIC will address climate mitigation and adaptation by concentrating initially on four specific areas: (1) assessing climate change and managing its drivers, (2) transitioning to low-carbon resilient cities, (3) adaptive water management, and (4) zero carbon production.

KIC InnoEnergy to address sustainable energy and with co-location centres in Germany, France, the Netherlands/Belgium, Spain, Poland and Sweden. It will be managed as a business and actually be set up as a European company in order to provide stability and develop sustainability.

EIT ICT Labs dedicated to the future information and communication society and with co-location centres in Berlin (Germany), Eindhoven (the Netherlands), Helsinki (Finland), Paris (France) and Stockholm (Sweden). Its aim is to speed up the transformation of ideas and ICT technologies into real products, services and business.

The KICs are expected to become fully operational towards mid-2010 and are designed to bring together higher education institutions, research and business in highly integrated partnerships to boost innovation and contribute to Europe's competitiveness and the goals of the future EU 2020

strategy. Their launch is a crucial step towards setting up the EIT, which will equip the KICs with a start-up grant of a total amount of €3 million.

**Sources:** <http://europa.eu/rapid/1> <http://cordis.europa.eu/2>

**Links:** <http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/1>  
<http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/2> <http://www.euractiv.com/2>

### OECD report highlights increasingly global nature of research

A new report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) draws on information on patents, research papers, researcher mobility and technology transfer to highlight the increasingly international nature of research. The subject is one of several featured in the latest OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard, which the organisation produces every two years. The report notes that many challenges facing countries today, such as the economic downturn, international competition, environmental pressures and longer life expectancies, are global in nature in the sense that they affect all countries. 'But they are also global because the scale of problems exceeds the capability of any one country and requires cooperation by all countries,' the report reads. In the section on research, the report states: 'Today, scientific and technological innovation requires more complex and interactive processes. This added complexity has led innovators to partner to share costs, find complementary expertise, gain access to different technologies and knowledge quickly, and collaborate as part of an innovation network.' The data reveals that the production of scientific knowledge has shifted from individuals to groups, from single to multiple institutions and from national to international levels. The proportion of scientific articles boasting authors from more than one country tripled between 1985 and 2007. In 2007, it stood at 22%.

Over 80% of scientific articles published worldwide come from OECD countries with the number of articles coming from Latin America and southeast Asia rising rapidly. Patent data reveal a similar picture. In Belgium, Chinese Taipei and Switzerland, over 40% of patents filed in recent years involved collaboration with at least one inventor based abroad. In France, Germany, Sweden, the UK and the US, the figure ranges between 11% and 25% and the proportion of these international patents is rising steadily in many countries.

Migration also has an important role to play in transferring knowledge across boundaries, the report's authors point out. The number of foreign students in OECD countries has tripled since 1980, and the mobility of doctoral students is also on the rise, with foreigners now making up over 40% of the doctoral population in New Zealand, Switzerland and the UK. The OECD uses the technology balance of payments as a measure of international technology transfer. 'In most OECD countries, technological receipts and payments increased sharply during the 1990s and up to mid-2000,' the report states, adding that overall, the OECD remains a net technology exporter with regard to the rest of the world. Collaboration with foreign partners can provide companies with access to a wider pool of resources and knowledge while sharing risks. In the EU, the proportion of companies collaborating on innovation with partners elsewhere in Europe ranges from less than 2% to over 13%.

The OECD also notes that research and development (R&D) expenditures tend to be first in line for cuts during recessions. Early indications are that the companies have indeed lowered their R&D spending in the first quarter of 2009. Venture capital is also becoming harder to come by, and foreign direct investment (FDI) is also falling. 'As foreign affiliates provide access to new technologies and generate knowledge spillovers for domestic firms, lower inflows of FDI will reduce innovation capabilities in the host country,' the report concludes.

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

### Commission launches monitoring of patent settlements

As a result of the findings of the 2009 pharmaceutical sector inquiry, the European Commission has asked certain pharmaceutical companies to submit copies of their patent settlement agreements between originator and generic pharmaceutical companies in the period between 1 July 2008 and 31 December 2009. An analysis of the agreements and a statistical overview will follow. The Commission is in particular looking at patent settlements where an originator company pays off a generic competitor in return for delayed market entry of a generic drug. The pharmaceutical sector inquiry has highlighted the risk that certain types of patent settlements may have negative effects on European consumers by depriving them of a broader choice of medicines at lower prices and indicated that the Commission could monitor such patent settlements.

Depending on the outcome of the exercise, information requests to companies may be sent out annually.

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

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

### EU balancing competition with innovation in pharma sector

A EurActiv interview with Philip Lowe, director-general at the EU executive's competition wing, and his views on innovative medicines and the need to reform Europe's patent system.

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

### EU plans SME help centres across the world

A EurActiv article on the plans of the EU executive to open new offices across the world to help small businesses expand into new markets.

**Source:** <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enterprise-jobs/eu-plans-sme-help-centres-world/article-188903>

### National measures taken to implement the Small Business Act (SBA)

Member States have adopted policy measures to enhance SMEs' access to liquidity, especially to bank lending, through the creation and extension of loan and guarantee schemes for SMEs. The European Investment Bank package of €30 billion for loans to SMEs for 2008-2011 also allowed some member countries to use a second level guarantee scheme. In addition, Belgium and France have set up a "credit mediator" acting as a contact point for SMEs and entrepreneurs that have problems with their bank. Several Member States have taken action to reduce late payments, anticipating the recast of the late payments Directive and in some cases, going beyond its scope.

All Member States have adopted national targets for reducing administrative burdens and continued to simplify the administrative environment for SMEs. The average time and cost to start-up a private limited company is now 8 days (compared to 9 days in 2008) and the cost is €417 (compared to €463 in 2008). Eighteen countries have provided an operational one-stop-shop that is able to serve the creation of private limited companies and has developed at least a number of pre-defined procedures (company registration, tax registration, etc).

In order to facilitate SMEs' access to public procurement contracts, the Commission invited Member States to make the most of the "European Code of Best practices" ('the SME Code') adopted as a part of the SBA .

**Sources:** <IP/09/1933>

<http://europa.eu/3>

### Access to EU documents: urgent update of rules needed

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Parliament has called for the updating of the rules on public access to EU documents such as legal service opinions, Council documents, including positions and votes cast, and documents relating to international agreements, protection of personal data and the content of institutions' registers. MEPs call for the scope of the regulation to be widened to cover all EU bodies, offices and agencies, including the European Central Bank, the European Court of Justice, Europol and Eurojust.

**Source:** <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/1>

**Link:** <http://www.euractiv.com/5>

### Europe catches up on clean tech venture investment

A EurActiv article on the research findings of Cleantech Group and Deloitte on venture capital investment in clean technology in Europe and in North America.

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

**Link:** <http://cleantech.com/> (full report of the Cleantech research)

### Results of the consultation on EU Innovation Policy

A summary of the responses, as well as individual responses from stakeholders, to the EU's public consultation on community innovation policy are now available on the Commission's website.

**Source:** <http://ec.europa.eu/4> (and click on **summary of responses**)

### New website of Patent Offices

The European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China (SIPO), and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) have recently launched a new website. The "IP5" Web site aims to provide news and information on the common projects run by the offices. The offices agreed on the large benefits of work sharing particularly the elimination of unnecessary duplication of work among the offices, enhancement of patent examination efficiency and quality, and guarantee of the stability of patent right. It was estimated that the number of applications, where work from one office which could be reutilised by another office currently stands at up to 250 000 per year. An enhanced work sharing among the five offices could contribute to significant increase in examination capacity. The Heads of the five Patent Offices have emphasized the importance of open communication with other users of the system, especially with other patent offices and have re-iterated the necessity of involving WIPO in the implementation of the Foundation Projects.

**Source:** <http://www.fiveipoffices.org/>

### Official Launching of NANOfutures

The European Technology Innovation Platform NANOfutures has been officially launched. NANOfutures provide an opportunity for knowledge dissemination on nanotechnology and networking of European industrialists and researchers in the field

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

### New tools to aid in evidence-based policymaking

A new set of tools has been released, designed for use in all countries and aimed at policymakers and other groups such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to influence policymakers.

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

### Technology matchmaking event and conference of LESI

A technology matchmaking event will take place in Istanbul, Turkey on 28 and 29 January 2010. Companies having high technological and innovation capabilities and those looking for solutions are expected to participate. The event will take place at the same time as the annual conference of the Licensing Executives Society International (LESI), an association with interests in technology transfer, licensing of intellectual property rights, patented inventions, software, copyright and trademarks.

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

### Call for the EU-Canada Programme

The European Commission has issued a call for proposals for the EU-Canada Programme for Cooperation in Higher Education, Training and Youth 2010 to promote mutual understanding and to improve the quality of human resources in the EU and Canada. There are two types of actions under this call, namely Transatlantic Exchange Partnerships and Transatlantic Degree Partnerships. Submission of grant requests under this call is open to higher education institutions and vocational education and training institutions.

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

### Joint PhD Symposium on SEE

The first Joint PhD Symposium on South East Europe aims to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and ideas by bringing together young scholars working on topics related to South East Europe. The Symposium is intended to help graduate-level research students to overcome the academic isolation associated with PhD research, to share their ideas with a wider audience, and to establish collaborative links across disciplines.

**Source:** <http://www.wbc-inco.net/>



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