

SwissCore Synopsis Research

January-February 2002

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« Call for expression of interest » pour le 6e PCRD: la Commission européenne demande l'aide des chercheurs dans l'identification des priorités. Du 5 avril au 5 juin 2002, la Commission européenne ouvrira un « call for expression of interest » permettant ainsi aux chercheurs de participer à l'identification des thèmes de recherche à inclure dans les premiers appels d'offre du 6 ^e programme-cadre.	2
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« Call for expression of interest » pour le 6e PCRD: la Commission européenne demande l'aide des chercheurs dans l'identification des priorités

Le 5 avril 2002, la Commission européenne ouvrira un « call for Expression of Interest (Eoi) » permettant ainsi aux chercheurs de participer à l'identification des thèmes de recherche à inclure dans les premiers appels d'offre du 6^e programme-cadre. Une telle procédure en deux temps (manifestation d'intérêt – dépôt d'un projet) devrait à l'avenir permettre d'adapter au plus près des chercheurs les domaines prioritaires de la recherche européenne. De plus, la Commission européenne voit dans cette démarche la possibilité de concentrer les appels à proposition du début du 6^e PCRD dans des domaines dans lesquels les scientifiques sont prêts à avancer des propositions de projets concrets.

Les manifestations d'intérêt pourront provenir de n'importe lequel des sept domaines prioritaires du 6^e Programme-cadre. Le 6^e PCRD n'ayant pas encore été définitivement adopté, les propositions des chercheurs devront se baser sur les programmes spécifiques actuellement disponibles en version provisoire.

Concrètement, les chercheurs sont invités à identifier le sujet dont ils souhaiteraient traiter, expliquer dans quelle mesure leur approche constituerait une avancée majeure, aurait un impact socio-économique important ainsi que contribuerait à la réalisation de l'Espace européen de la recherche. S'il ne s'agit pas de présenter une proposition de projet toute finie, la manifestation d'intérêt doit tout de même comprendre une description de l'approche suivie ainsi qu'indiquer une échelle des ressources nécessaires ainsi que la taille et la composition possible du consortium.

Il paraît évident que des chercheurs dont les suggestions auront été retenues lors du « call for Expression of Interest » auront un avantage lors de la présentation de projets ultérieurs, la Commission européenne insiste pourtant sur le fait que l'Eoi ne vise en aucun cas à geler des consortia et que la mise en compétition ultérieure des sujets retenus lors de la première phase (Eoi) garantira la qualité des projets de recherche lors des appels à proposition du 6^e PCRD.

La sélection des thèmes se fera avec l'aide d'experts indépendants. Les Eoi couvrants plusieurs domaines prioritaires seront évalués par des experts dans le champ principal de la proposition. Des experts d'autres domaines seront invités à évaluer les autres parties du Eoi.

Suite à cette sélection, les sujets retenus seront publiés sur un site internet créé à cet effet. D'autre part, les titres des suggestions retenues ainsi qu'un résumé de celles-ci seront aussi mises à disposition sur Cordis.

A la suite de cela, la Commission invitera alors toutes les parties intéressées à participer à des workshops sur les thèmes des sujets retenus. Cette occasion servira à la formation de consortia ainsi qu'à l'explication détaillée de la participation au 6^e PCRD. L'ouverture de ces workshops à tous les chercheurs intéressés a pour but de permettre à un maximum de synergies qui à leur tour devraient garantir la masse critique et la qualité des projets déposés dans ces domaines lors des premiers appels à propositions du 6^e PCRD

Calendrier:

5 mars 2002	Pré-annonce et lancement d'un site internet dédié au « call for expression of interest »
5 avril 2002	Lancement de l'appel
5 juin 2002	Clôture de l'appel
24 juin au 5 juillet	Evaluation
12 juillet	Publication des résultats et annonce des workshops
2 septembre	Début des workshops

Concluding the Belgian Presidency...

As the Belgian Presidency of the EU had come to an end, the Belgian Government presented a review of its achievements and disappointments. Overshadowed by the events of the 11 September, the Belgian Presidency was most satisfied with its international and social policy efforts. The disappointments were linked to the following topics:

- 1) Harmonisation of asylum and immigration policy.
- 2) Community patent: in spite of an additional meeting on 20 December, Ministers could not reach an agreement concerning the cost of translation.
- 3) Galileo: the project remains blocked (see Article under "Production & Transport")

...and presenting the Spanish priorities.

Speaking on 23 January to the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Technology, Research and Energy, Ana Birulés, Spanish Minister of Science and Technology, outlined the following priorities in the field of research:

- 1) Adopting the 6th Framework Programme.
- 2) Broadening the remit of the European Research Area proposal to include the issue of innovation: work on this topic started on the 1-2 February at an informal seminar of Research and Industry ministers. These discussions also touched upon issues such as the European patent, mobility of researchers and the opening up of national R&D programmes. A foretaste of science and technology issues for the spring...
- 3) Developing the international dimension of the European Research Area: EU ministers will meet with their counterparts from Latin America, Brazil and the Caribbean in March in order to discuss the implementation of an action plan on scientific and technological cooperation.
- 4) Highlighting the importance of R&D as the engine of sustainable development: progress since the Göteborg European Summit (June 2001) will be reviewed.

For more information: http://www.mcyt.es/presidenciaue/v_english/prioritiesSTI.htm

The European Commission presents its goals for the European Council of Barcelona: creating a European Knowledge Area

In Barcelona, on 15 and 16 March, Heads of State and Governments will assess the progress that have been made with regards to the Lisbon Strategy. The goal being to create "the most competitive knowledge-based economy", many aspects concerning research and education will be reviewed.

On 15 January, the Commission presented its vision of the goals ahead in each field as well as of the measures needed to achieve these goals. Two of them are directly linked to research policy:

- 1) Development of the European Knowledge Area: in 2002, the Commission will propose an integrated strategy for Community education and research policies. According to the Commission, this will be based on an integrated approach of training and career development, university issues, the development of European knowledge and science networks and reinforced cooperation with third countries.
The adoption of the Sixth Research Framework Programme is included in this issue, as well as the setting of a target of 3% GDP for the overall level of public and private spending on R&D by 2010.
- 2) Adoption of an Action Plan for "frontier technologies" such as biotechnology: the European Council should endorse the Commission's proposal for a strategic vision of the life sciences and biotechnology and provide orientations for future work.

For more information: http://europa.eu.int/comm/barcelona_council/14_en.pdf (see p.23 onwards)

EU/Japon: collaboration scientifique renforcée

Suite à l'élaboration en décembre 2001 d'un plan d'action prévoyant un approfondissement de la collaboration entre l'UE et le Japon, le Commissaire Busquin et Mme Toyama, Ministre de l'éducation, du sport et de la science se sont rencontrés le 10 janvier à Bruxelles. Le plan d'action prévoyant un « saut qualitatif » par rapport à la collaboration actuelle, M. Busquin et Mme Toyama ont estimé qu'il serait utile de prévoir de nouveaux moyens, y compris institutionnels, de gérer celle-ci.

Actuellement, la collaboration scientifique entre l'UE et la Japon porte essentiellement sur l'environnement, les risques sismiques, la fusion nucléaire et les technologies de l'information. Dans le cadre d'une collaboration renforcée, les domaines concernés seraient, par exemple, la lutte contre la pauvreté, le développement durable, la biotechnologie ainsi que les problèmes d'éthique qui y sont liés.

La concrétisation de cette collaboration devrait avoir lieu dans les prochains mois.

Creation of an expert group on women in industrial research

The Commission recently created an expert group (STRATAN-ETAN group) to tackle the issue of women's participation in research activities in the private sector. This group should provide strategic guidance for the Commission, the Member States and industry by analysing the current situation, outlining options for new measures and their interlinking with existing structures and discussing possible impacts and benefits of different options.

The group consists of 17 members, most of them being political actors, directors or chief executive officers of international companies with important research departments. Different branches of industry are represented in this group: chemicals, pharmaceuticals, IT and communications, media, energy, biotechnology, etc.

For its work, the group will be divided into sub-groups on the following topics: young scientists, female entrepreneurs, best practice and women in EU-related industrial research. These sub-groups will meet in February and March and the group as a whole will hold a plenary session at the end of May. After a final meeting in September, a report will be presented to the Commission.

Website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wir/index_en.html

INTERREG between Switzerland and France approved

The European Commission has just approved an INTERREG programme in the area of the French and the Swiss Jura. The total amount of the programme will be 41.4 million euro. It will concentrate on issues such as: 1) coordinated planning of the crossborder area (especially public transport), 2) enhancement of natural, cultural, touristic and heritage resources and 3) encouragement to exchanges of employment, training and improved economic environment mainly by trying to harmonise the strong cost and revenue differences.

◆ Life Sciences (FP5-QoL)

L'Union européenne se dote d'une stratégie en matière de biotechnologies

Estimant se trouver « devant un choix politique majeur » au niveau européen, la Commission européenne vient de publier une stratégie en matière de biotechnologies pour les années à venir. Le but déclaré est de permettre à l'Union européenne de bénéficier pleinement du potentiel de ces domaines et ainsi de soutenir son objectif de devenir « l'économie de la connaissance la plus compétitive et la plus dynamique du monde ».

Parmi les priorités énumérées par cette stratégie se trouvent aussi bien la régulation et la gestion des risques que la communication vis-à-vis des consommateurs et la dimension internationale des biotechnologies.

Au travers d'un plan d'action, la Commission propose 30 actions à mener. Pour chacune de celles-ci, les acteurs (Etat membre, région, institution) et les délais visés sont définis par la Commission. Ces actions comprennent notamment :

- des mesures en matière de « fuite de cerveaux » ainsi que le renforcement des efforts en matière d'éducation et de formation.
- un rôle plus proactif des autorités publiques.
- l'accroissement de l'effort de recherche au travers du 6^e PCRD.
- l'adoption d'un système communautaire efficace en matière de propriété intellectuelle.
- l'adoptions des propositions législatives pendantes concernant les OGM au niveau de l'UE.

Cette stratégie de la Commission européenne est le résultat d'un vaste processus de consultation au niveau européen dont il a été question dans notre numéro de décembre 2001.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/biotechnology/pdf/policypaper_en.pdf

Preparation of a Directive on the therapeutic use of human cells and tissue

The European Commission is preparing a proposal for a Directive on the therapeutic use of human cells and tissue which will come out around mid-June 2002. The goal of the Directive will be to guarantee a high level of quality and security for all human cells and tissue intended for transplant. It will thus exclude organs, whose removal and transplant meet other criteria because of the short conservation time, as well as blood and blood-derived products who are already covered by another Directive.

Phases such as the removal, analysis, preservation, storage and distribution should all be taken into account. Other issues such as the status and standards for cell banks, systems of information, confidentiality will also be included in the body of the Directive, which is most likely to be presented as a Framework Directive where scientific standards would appear in annexes to be reviewed periodically.

For the moment, two points of differences seem to remain between the different ministers: the public nature of banks of cells and tissue and the free nature of donations.

This proposal will be discussed by the Health Ministers on 26 June together with issues pertaining to patient mobility within the EU (creation of highly-specialised reference centers, cross-border regions, use of unused capacities by people from another Member State) and to pharmaceutical issues which have been transferred from the Internal Market Council to the Health Council. Overall one can note that health issues at EU level have gained a certain momentum as well as become more prominent.

Création d'un groupe d'experts sur le terrorisme biologique et chimique

En réponse à la demande des ministres de la recherche, le Commissaire Busquin vient de mettre sur pied un groupe d'experts en matière de terrorisme biologique et chimique.

Les tâches de ce groupe composé d'experts issus des ministères de la recherche et de la défense seront d'établir une liste des activités de recherche actuelles dans ce domaine ainsi que d'analyser d'éventuelles lacunes à ce niveau. Les activités de recherche clé en vue de cet exercice sont le développement d'instruments de détection d'attaques, de mécanismes de production et de distribution de vaccins ainsi que l'étude des dangers potentiels pour l'agriculture et l'industrie alimentaire.

Un premier rapport devrait être présenté aux ministres lors du Conseil des ministres de la recherche du 11 mars.

Commission proposes 5 measures to “revitalise the rail and rapidly build a European railway area”

On 23 January, the Commission adopted a Communication named “Towards a European railway area” which follows-up on the White Paper on the future of transport (COM(2001) 370) presented last September. Entailed in this Communication are 5 proposals for legislative action on the part of the EU in order to foster harmonisation of technical and safety standards and open up freight transport to competition. The measures proposed are the following:

- 1) A directive on the opening up of rail freight. This should speed up the opening up to competition of national railways as was mentioned in a first “railway package” adopted last year, which provides for the liberalisation for some 50'000 km of freight transport lines by 2003 as well as for the connection of lines for combined transport by 2008. The new proposal foresees the liberalization of the whole European network (or 150'000km) but without setting a date.
- 2) A directive on safety that provides for the creation of national authorities responsible for safety certificates, independent enquiries and the drawing up of common safety indicators and objectives which should make possible the creation of a single system for safety in railways.
- 3) A directive on interoperability that will modernize the existing directive for high-speed trains and extend the directive on conventional rail to the whole of the European network.
- 4) A regulation creating a European Railway Safety and Interoperability Agency which should co-ordinate work on interoperability and safety standards and provide technical support to national bodies with regard to co-operation. It could also act as an appellate body in case of litigation over certificate allocation. The annual budget proposed is around 14 million euro and staff should amount to approximately 100 people.
- 5) A draft recommendation for a Council Decision authorizing the Commission to negotiate the conditions for Community accession to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF).

The second part of the Communication concentrates on the analysis of the situation of rail freight and passenger transport and the reasons which have prompted the Commission to propose legislative action and other measures.

This “package” should be completed soon by a proposal on transport infrastructure pricing (announced for March 2002) and a framework directive on allocation of income origination from levies on infrastructures, which would encourage “cross-investment” (i.e. financing the development of priority rail infrastructure by receipts from road transport). This proposal is expected for June 2002.

The Spanish Presidency has made this issue one of its priorities and will be bringing up this topic at the European Council in Barcelona in March.

Press release and text of the communication under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/rail/newpack/np_en.htm

GALILEO Projekt weiterhin blockiert

Das 3.6 Mrd. Euro teure GALILEO Projekt ist weiterhin im Ministerrat blockiert. Trotz eines letzten Versuchs der Einigung am 20. Dezember 2001 musste die belgische Präsidentschaft den Dossier ohne weitere Entwicklungen an die spanische Präsidentschaft weitergeben.

Deutschland, die Niederlande und der Vereinigte Königreich können der vorgeschlagenen Finanzierung des Projekts immer noch nicht zustimmen. Die von der europäischen Kommission vorgeschlagenen Finanzierung sieht vor, öffentliche und private Unternehmen in ein „Joint Un-

dertaking“ zu beziehen, das das Projekt leiten würde. Die Gegner dieser Lösung sehen die Teilnahme des Privatsektors in diesem Masse nicht ein. Diese Sicht wird unterstützt von denen, die für GALILEO nicht nur kommerzielle und zivile, sondern auch militärische Zwecke sehen.

In einem Bericht, das am 7. Februar verabschiedet wurde, ist das europäische Parlament dieser Linie auch gefolgt: private Unternehmen sollen nicht direkt an die Projektführung teilnehmen, sondern an einer „development company“ mitwirken, die im Privatsektor ein hohes Niveau an Information und Öffentlichkeit über GALILEO gewährleisten soll.

Towards a European Space Policy?

In December 2001, the Commission published a Communication entitled “Towards a European Space Policy” which presented the conclusions of a joint ESA/Commission Task Force reflecting on the development of a European strategy for space and the elaboration of proposals for its implementation. Keywords with regard to future collaboration are, for example, projects such as GALILEO or GMES (see Synopsis 4/2001).

One of the main conclusions of the report presented by the Task Force was that the future collaboration between EU and ESA would require more formalised relations. With a view to establishing such relations, the Commission has asked the Council of Ministers in February 2002 for a mandate to negotiate a Framework Agreement with ESA.

The Commission proposes that this political and institutional Framework Agreement between both institutions should clarify the respective roles and simplify the interaction between their member countries. This would include the following actions:

- 1) Redefine the scope and role of the current Task Force in order to provide for a structure of cooperation and consultation linking both parties,
- 2) At ministerial level, introduce “Space Councils”, meaning joint meetings between the EU and the ESA Councils,
- 3) Set out guidelines for future joint-programming work as well as for the ESA’s role in EU space-sector initiatives,
- 4) Set out common principles and procedures concerning public procurement – since space programmes often have varied financial sources and
- 5) Define mechanisms for the coordination of the external dimension of space projects as well as work out mechanisms for various technical aspects of cooperation.

The Commission hopes to get a go ahead from the Council as soon as possible in order to be able to reach an agreement by the end of 2002.

The Commission Communication can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/aerospace/space/space_communication_en.pdf

The report of the Task Force can be found in the annex to this Communication. It presents the analysis and recommendations elaborated by the Joint Task Force. It underlines the economic, societal and political role of space systems at the service of European citizens; identifies objectives and priorities for the enhancement of European capabilities and describes how they could develop in a global context.

◆ Publications

Rapport annuel 2001 sur les activités de recherche et de développement technologique de l’Union européenne

La Commission a publié son rapport annuel concernant les activités de l’UE en matière de recherche qui ont eu lieu en l’an 2000. Ce rapport présente, d’une part, un résumé des problématiques traitées pendant l’année 2000 (construction de l’Espace européen de la recherche, mise

en œuvre du programme-cadre, groupes d'experts s'étant rencontrés pendant l'année) et des perspectives futures. D'autre part, deux annexes contiennent les données statistiques et financières concernant l'année 2000 ainsi que la liste des principaux documents relatifs à la recherche communautaire publiés cette année-là.

Pour plus d'informations: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/report-2001.html>

New website on science in/for developing countries

This new website was set up in collaboration between Sweden, the UK, Canada, the journals "Nature" and "Science" and the Third World Academy of Sciences and aims at the following:

- 1) bring up-to-date scientific information to the scientific community as well as empower individuals and decision-makers by ensuring the effective contribution of science to public health, sustainable development and economic well-being.
- 2) create a network of correspondents in developing countries that will provide news on scientific developments in their countries, thereby providing a "voice for the South".
- 3) provide scientists with information on mobility, grants, conferences, etc.

Find the website and more information under: www.scidev.net

◆ „SwissCore-Küche“

Welcome to the „son of Euroscope“ and a few minor changes...

As it is usual in such circumstances, the SwissCore Synopsis would like to welcome the new born publication and wishes it all the best! But in order to avoid feeling too much like an older brother –or is a Big Brother?- it has undertaken some minor changes that will already show in this first edition of 2002...

Concentrating on wider policy issues and "fresh" news from Brussels corridors, the Synopsis research will give in-depth analysis of specific research or research-related topics. Content shall be more limited but therefore be based on more "research on the spot" (interviews, reports from conferences or meetings,...). The presentation of the Synopsis will largely remain the same but the first page has been reshuffled in order to create a more comprehensive table of content which we will also post on the web in due time...

SwissCore Annual Event on 28 May 2002

This year the SwissCore Annual Event, a reception for all of SwissCore's contacts to thank them for the good cooperation in the past year, will be hosted by Prof. Helga Nowotny, Chair of the EURAB, Professor of Philosophy and Social Studies of Science at the ETH Zurich and Director of the Collegium Helveticum.

As 2002 will also mark the 50th Anniversary of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the traditional reception will be accompanied by a exhibition of the "photos of the month" which the SNSF has been publishing for the last years. 100 to 120 persons are expected to take part in the Annual Event.

Séminaire SwissCore à Bruxelles les 14 et 15 novembre 2002

A vos agendas... La plupart d'entre vous le savent déjà, le prochain séminaire de SwissCore aura lieu les 14 et 15 novembre prochains (jeudi et vendredi). Le choix de cette date permettra de combiner notre séminaire annuel à la manifestation de lancement du 6^e PCRD prévue par la Commission européenne les 11, 12 et 13 novembre 2002 (voir Synopsis 4/2001). Etant donné, la multitude d'informations sur le contenu et le fonctionnement du 6^e PCRD que nous devrions retirer de cette manifestation, il s'agira surtout, lors de notre séminaire, de « digérer » cette information et d'en discuter les conséquences au niveau du réseau. Un programme sera élaboré

en temps voulu... Petite cerise sur le gâteau, le séminaire devrait cette année se dérouler dans les nouveaux locaux de la Mission Suisse auprès de l'UE.

Pour plus d'informations sur la manifestation de lancement du 6^e PCRD :
http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2002/index_en.html

Just another day at the office...

An example of SwissCore's troubleshooting activities for Swiss researchers on the closing day of a call for proposals...

- 09:00 am while checking the incoming emails, we came across a mail from a Swiss researcher, who informed us that he had sent his project proposal by courier to Brussels. However he noticed that there were some essential pages missing and thus he requested to include the pages, which he forwarded us by mail, in their project proposal package.
- 09:30 am contacted the Swiss researcher to obtain more detailed information in order to trace the parcel. Foreseen delivery time: before 10.30.
- 10:00 am contacted the Brussels dispatching of the courier service to check whether the package had already been delivered. Negative, it had not yet been scanned.

Seen that once the parcel is delivered at the European Commission, we would not be able to retrieve the package, we had to make sure that the courier service would only hand this parcel to SwissCore.

- 10:30 am run to the European Commission building to intercept the parcel...
- 12:00 am no sight of the parcel ... Phoned the Courier service once more to hear, 20 minutes later, that the parcel would be delivered before 14:30.
- 12:30 pm explained the situation to the responsible of the programme helpdesk and asked whether it would be possible that they would call us when the package arrived so we could return and make the necessary changes. An exception is granted, but we need a written confirmation of the project coordinator, which states that SwissCore is allowed to open the package.
- 13:00 pm returned to the office and informed the Swiss researcher about the situation. He would contact the coordinator to make sure we receive the letter.
- 14:30 pm still no sign of delivery
- 14:45 pm contacted the courier service to double check
- 15:00 pm phone call from the European Commission to confirm that the package did arrive. Rushed back to the Commission, armed with the confirmation letter, to finally include the pages.
- 16:00 pm confirmed the Swiss researcher and the project coordinator that the package has been handed in, completed as requested earlier that day...

PS: Swiss researchers then sent some Swiss chocolates to compensate for the energy lost running around Brussels that day!☺