

# SwissCore Synopsis Research

## January-March 2003

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>◆ Focus</b>  |    |
| ▪ Commission Communication on the role of universities in a Europe of knowledge       | 2  |
| <b>◆ EU-Research Policy</b>   |    |
| ▪ Competitiveness Ministers put R&D at the forefront                                  | 2  |
| ▪ Latest statistics on R&D expenses in EU regions and candidate countries             | 3  |
| ▪ Discussion of themes for the next research policy benchmarking exercise             | 4  |
| ▪ China and USA to join ITER project  | 4  |
| ▪ Under-representation of women in industrial research: wake up call for the industry | 5  |
| <b>◆ 6th Framework Programme (FP6)</b>  |    |
| ▪ Consortium Agreement models for FP6   | 5  |
| ▪ Entry into force of a scientific cooperation agreement with Ukraine                 | 5  |
| ▪ Preparation of a renewed cooperation agreement with Russia                          | 6  |
| <b>◆ Life sciences</b>  |    |
| ▪ EU strategy for life sciences and biotechnology: first progress report              | 6  |
| ▪ EDCTP to be hosted in The Hague   | 6  |
| <b>◆ Information society technologies (IST)</b>                                       |    |
| ▪ Cyber security in Europe to be boosted by the creation of a Network Security Agency | 6  |
| ▪ Publication of a new IST strategy in parallel to the eEurope 2002 final report      | 7  |
| ▪ eLearning portal launched by the European Commission                                | 7  |
| <b>◆ Aeronautics and space</b>  |    |
| ▪ One step closer to a European Space Policy: Green Paper on Space published          | 7  |
| ▪ Galileo blocked again   | 8  |
| <b>◆ Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems</b>                        |    |
| ▪ US-EU agreement on collaboration in energy research                                 | 9  |
| <b>◆ Anticipating scientific and technological needs (NEST)</b>                       |    |
| ▪ NEST: first call for proposals published  | 9  |
| <b>◆ Research and innovation</b>  |    |
| ▪ At last: agreement reached on Community patent!                                     | 9  |
| ▪ Commission publishes policy documents updating the EU's approach to innovation      | 10 |
| ▪ Innovation barometer 2002 published by the Commission                               | 10 |
| ▪ FP6 Workprogramme and first call published on Research and innovation               | 10 |
| <b>◆ Mobility (Marie Curie)</b>   |    |
| ▪ Commission publishes implementation report on its Mobility Strategy                 | 11 |
| <b>◆ Science and society</b>  |    |
| ▪ Two "Science and society" calls for proposals launched on 1 <sup>st</sup> March     | 12 |

## ◆ Publications

|   |    |
|---|----|
| ▪ Marie Curie Handbooks   | 12 |
| ▪ Third European Report on Science & Technology Indicators 2003 | 12 |
| ▪ Future Commission Communication on researchers' careers       | 12 |

## ◆ Focus

### Commission Communication on the role of universities in a Europe of knowledge

On 5 February, the Commission published a Communication on the role of universities in a Europe of knowledge. This is a joint initiative of Commissioners Reding (Education) and Busquin (Research) for whom universities need to increase levels of education and training in order to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based society. This need had already been recognised by the European Council in Barcelona (March 2002) where it was stated that European universities needed to become a “world reference”.

This Communication is both a policy declaration from the Commission and a background paper for a consultation of stakeholders. Indeed, as a follow up of the White paper on governance and given the will of the Commission to make decision-making at EU level more transparent, the Commission is institutionalising the organisation of consultation procedures in the preparation of its legislative proposals.

This communication is thus structured around a number of questions that the Commission believes need to be addressed in order to have a debate allowing for future decisions to be taken. These are some of the central issues:

- how to achieve adequate and sustainable incomes for universities, and to ensure that funds are spent most efficiently;
- how to ensure autonomy and professionalism in academic as well as managerial affairs;
- how to concentrate enough resources on excellence, and create the conditions within which universities can attain and develop excellence;
- how to make universities contribute better to local and regional needs and strategies;
- how to foster, through all of these areas, the consistent, compatible and competitive European higher education area called for by the Bologna Declaration. And how to foster the European Research Area set out as an objective for the Union by the Lisbon European Council, in March 2000.

The Commission indicated that it will review the state of the debate in the summer of 2003 and identify suitable initiatives, possibly in a further Communication for examination by the Education Ministers and the Research Ministers, as well as by the European Summit of Higher Education Ministers scheduled for 18-19 September 2003 in Berlin.

Contributions to the debate can be sent to the Commission until end of May 2003. The Communication and the reply form can be found in the Communication under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/consultations/list\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/consultations/list_en.html)

## ◆ EU-Research Policy:

### Competitiveness Ministers put R&D at the forefront

In view of the meeting of EU Heads of State and Government at the Brussels European Summit (Spring Summit) on 20-21 March 2003, EU “Competitiveness” Ministers (including Research Ministers) prepared a paper summarising their priorities and the role they want to play in the year to come.

Three priority areas for action have been defined, one of which has an almost exclusively research policy component. Ministers aim at the following goals:

- 1) Making European enterprises more competitive and efficient;
- 2) Building the European knowledge-based economy;
- 3) Strengthening competitiveness and growth through improved market performance.

In order to advance towards the creation of the European knowledge-based economy, Ministers have put forward the following points:

- 1) The potential of FP6 should be used to the maximum in support of the ERA. Especially actions to enhance SME participation and cooperation with European intergovernmental research organisations should be put forward.
- 2) Investment in research must be increased considerably. In that view, Member States should devise and implement strategies so as to work towards the 3% objective.
- 3) A common EU agenda for frontier and leading-edge technologies should be developed. Especially the implementation of the Action Plan on Biotechnology, the joint ESA/EU space strategy and the Galileo project should be pushed in the short term. High priority should also be given to the information society goals such as GEANT and GRID.

This is once more a confirmation of the political profile which research policy has been gaining at EU level in the past years. It is also worth mentioning the specific emphasis of the potential of the open coordination method in this field.

### **Latest statistics on R&D expenses in EU regions and candidate countries**

In January and February 2003, Eurostat published two sets of statistics concerning R&D expenses and personnel.

The first report concentrates on the latest figures for the candidate countries (2000). The main findings are the following:

- The Czech Republic and Slovenia spent the highest percentage of their GDP on R&D (resp. 1.33% and 1.52%). This remains under the EU average of 1.93% in 2000.
- The average investment on R&D over all candidate countries was of 0.84%.
- In terms of absolute spending, Poland spent most in 2000 (1.2 billion Euro). Turkey came second with 850 million Euro.
- Between 1995 and 2000, absolute spending in R&D has increased in all candidate countries apart from Romania. The most striking increases were to be found in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Turkey.
- In terms of the percentage of R&D personnel compared to the total workforce, only Slovenia almost reached the EU average of 1.38% in 2000. In Romania and Bulgaria, the share of R&D personnel shrunk by almost half between 1995 and 2000.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=KS-NS-03-001--N-EN&mode=download>

The second report analyses the R&D expenses and personnel of European regions between 1997 and 1999. The main findings are the following:

- Of the 10 European regions with the highest R&D spending in percentage of GDP, 5 are in Germany, 2 in Finland and the 3 others in France, Norway and the UK.
- The German regions of Braunschweig, Stuttgart and Oberbayern are on top of the list in terms of R&D spending in percentage of GDP: respectively 6.34%, 4.84% and 4.76%.
- The best ranked regions in all EU-countries apart from Greece and Spain have R&D spendings higher than the EU average of 1.93%.
- In terms of absolute spending in R&D, the Île de France region spends most: 13.4 billion Euro in 1999. Oberbayern and Stuttgart come second and third with respectively 6.55 and 5.64 billion Euro.
- In 1999, 5 of the 10 regions with the highest proportion of R&D personnel in the workforce were situated in Scandinavia. The top ranked regions were Uusimaa-Suuralue in Finland with 3.9% and Stockholm in Sweden with 3.72%.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-product/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=KS-NS-03-002--N-EN&mode=download>

### **Discussion of themes for the next research policy benchmarking exercise**

At a conference organised by the Greek Presidency in Athens in January 2002, representatives of Member and Associated States, the European Commission as well as other stakeholders discussed the lessons learned from the “first cycle” of the benchmarking exercise that ended last summer as well as looked closely at future topics for further such exercises.

Last summer, the Commission had published reports on the five benchmarking exercises that took place between mid-2000 and mid-2002 (see Synopsis Research of October 2002). The topics of these benchmarking exercises had been the following:

- 1) Human resources in RTD (including attractiveness of S&T professions);
- 2) The impact of RTD on competitiveness and employment (IRCE);
- 3) Public and private investments in R&D;
- 4) Benchmarking the promotion of R&D culture and public understanding of science;
- 5) Benchmarking S&T productivity.

The conference concluded that these exercises had proven their usefulness and recognised the value of further elaborating the benchmarking exercises, especially in light of the will of Research Ministers to explore the use of the open method of coordination in their field (see Synopsis of December 2002).

The conference therefore looked closely at the following topics for a possible next benchmarking “cycle”:

- 1) The development of human resources for both the private and public sector;
- 2) New patterns of R&D funding;
- 3) Local clustering of R&D;
- 4) Public policies aimed at the promotion of public understanding of science.

Documents from the conference can be found under:

<http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/era-developments/athens.htm>

More on the benchmarking exercise and reports of the first “cycle”:

<http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/era-developments/benchmarking.htm>

### **China and USA to join ITER project**

Negotiations to set up ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor), an experimental nuclear fusion research project, have recently taken a new turn with the entry into negotiations of China and the comeback of the USA.

According to ITER’s own website, “ITER’s mission is to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy for peaceful purposes. (...) ITER will be the first fusion device to produce thermal energy at the level of an electricity-producing power station. It will provide the next major step for the advancement of fusion science and technology, and is the key element in the strategy to reach the following demonstration electricity-generating power plant (DEMO) in a single experimental step.”

The engineering design of ITER was carried out in the ‘90s in the framework of an international agreement between the EU, with whom Canada was associated, Japan, Russia and, until 1998, the USA. Negotiations on the possible realisation of the experimental device started in November 2001 and the main points still to be decided upon by the end of 2003 include the choice of the site, the cost-sharing scheme as well as the allocation of responsibility for supplying components.

The ITER project is expected to cost around 4.5 billion Euro for its construction (lasting around 10 years), 5.3 billion Euro for its operating phase (approximately 20 years) and 430 million Euro for its dismantling phase.

The next round of negotiations will take place in Vienna on 20 and 21 May. Before that the Commission will present the Competitiveness Council meeting on 12 and 13 May with a Communication addressing the latest developments in the negotiations.

ITER website: <http://www.iter.org/>

### **Under-representation of women in industrial research: wake up call for the industry**

In spite of the fact that in 2000 women accounted for 55% of all graduates of higher education in Europe, they barely make up 15% of the researchers working in industry. A report published on 23 January by the High Level Expert Group on Women in Industrial Research analyses these figures. The expert group was lead by Helga RübSamen-Waigman, Vice-President of Bayer AG.

The report not only contains an analysis of a situation Philippe Busquin describes as “worrying”, it also contains a series of recommendations for both companies and political leaders. These aim at:

- 1) Attracting more girls to science and engineering in order to widen the recruitment base;
- 2) Modifying recruitment cultures in companies and public research bodies;
- 3) Setting up structures to support a better compatibility between professional and family life;
- 4) Developing indicators allowing to better compare results of national policies;
- 5) Compiling and disseminating successful examples of companies that have implemented best practices towards employing more women researchers.

The report as well as more information is available under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wir/report\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wir/report_en.html)

## **◆ 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP6)**

### **Consortium Agreement models for FP6**

As fixed in the “Rules for Participation” from 16 December 2002, it will be mandatory for project partners in FP6 to set up and sign a Consortium Agreement, unless specified otherwise in the Call for Proposals. It will be an agreement exclusively between the project partners, *i.e.* the Commission will not be a partner in this contract. Hence, the Commission did not (and will not) issue a formal “model agreement” but rather published non-binding guidelines on the issues which might usefully be covered in a Consortium Agreement.

In this situation, different interest groups set up their own models for Consortium Agreements. Following an initiative by IGLO, the Informal Group of Liaison Offices, the different models currently available were presented to an expert audience in Brussels earlier this month. The authors of the different versions were UNITE (Universities International Team of Experts), ANRT (Association Nationale de la Recherche Technique, France), CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spain), a German consortium around Helmholtz-Gemeinschaft, and a French consortium of public research organisations. All Agreement models deal, among others, with the organisational and managerial structure of Community projects, with issues of IPR, ownership and access rights to knowledge, and with modalities of changes in the consortium (in friendly and also unfriendly times). At the IGLO event it was acknowledged that the different actors such as industry, academia etc. may have different interests but it was still generally regretted that there was no really unified Consortium Agreement model.

The different Consortium Agreement models and the presentations given by the corresponding representatives can be found under <http://www.iglortd.org/fs-ca.htm> .

### **Entry into force of a scientific cooperation agreement with Ukraine**

The scientific and technological cooperation agreement between the EU and Ukraine signed last summer has entered into force on 11 February 2003. This agreement foresees collaboration in the fields of environment and climate research, biomedical and health research, agriculture,

forestry and fisheries research, industrial and production technologies, materials research and metrology, non-nuclear energy, transportation, information society technologies, social sciences, science and technology policy and the training and exchange of scientists. The collaboration provided for by the agreement takes the form of access by Ukrainian researchers in Community projects and vice-versa (at own costs) as well as access to the respective research installations, the organisation of seminars and symposia, the exchange of scientific staff as well as the sharing of information of research legislation and programmes.

### **Preparation of a renewed cooperation agreement with Russia**

On 27 February, the Commission presented a draft Decision to renew the scientific and technological cooperation agreement between the EU and Russia that expired at the end of 2002. The previous agreement signed in November 2000 had entered into force in May 2001.

## **◆ Life sciences**

### **EU strategy for life sciences and biotechnology: first progress report**

In January 2002, the Commission had adopted a "Strategy for Europe on Life Sciences and Biotechnology" (see Synopsis 1/2002), which set out policy recommendations as well as a 30-point action plan. A roadmap up to 2010 was proposed in order to put the biotechnology sector at the forefront of the technologies helping the EU meet its Lisbon targets ("become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010...").

In a progress report published on 5 March, the Commission highlights the progresses made in 2002, such as the adoption of FP6 and of a regulatory framework for GMOs. It also stresses that certain areas are suffering from serious delays, for example the Member States are currently slow in transposing the legislation adopted on biotechnology patents.

According to the Commission, the biotechnology sector is currently facing difficulties due to the collapse in investor confidence in knowledge-based industries, which makes concerted action between public authorities and the public sector even more important.

The progress report is available under:

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003\\_0096en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003_0096en01.pdf)

### **EDCTP to be hosted in The Hague**

On 4 March 2003, representatives from different countries met in Brussels to discuss further the details and implementation of EDCTP, the European - Developing Countries Clinical Trials Programme. The programme will be managed and implemented by an EEIG, a European Economic Interest Grouping, for which the Member States (excl. Finland, which has juridical problems with the suggested format) and Norway nominated the organisations participating in their name. The EEIG is not officially founded yet; this will probably take place on 2 April 2003, after the European Parliament hopefully gives it final approval to the project on 27 March in Strasbourg. Adoption by the Council is expected in April / May as an A point. Furthermore, it was decided at the meeting in Brussels that the European host site will be in The Hague, NL.

EDCTP has a website on

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/info/conferences/edctp/edctpini\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/info/conferences/edctp/edctpini_en.html)

## **◆ Information society technologies (IST)**

### **Cyber security in Europe to be boosted by the creation of a Network Security Agency**

On 10 February, the Commission presented a proposal for the creation of an EU Network and Information Security Agency (COM(2003) 63). The aim of such an agency is to supplement existing anti-virus software, "fire-walls", etc. as well as national initiatives to ensure maximum

security of electronic communications. The Commission has indeed noted that the priorities of these initiatives are sometimes quite different and the levels of progress uneven.

In order to have a mechanism allowing for systematic cross-border cooperation and effective action at EU level, the Commission proposes to set up an Agency which will have the following tasks:

- act as a centre of expertise and technical advice for Member States and EU Institutions;
- contribute to better co-operation between information security players;
- contribute to the interoperability of networks and information systems;
- promote security standards;
- act as a platform for the development of co-operation on security outside the EU.

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2003/com2003\\_0063en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2003/com2003_0063en01.pdf)

### **Publication of a new IST strategy in parallel to the eEurope 2002 final report**

On 12 February, the Commission published in parallel two documents with a certain continuity.

- 1) The eEurope 2002 final report reviews the main goals that had been set at the European Council of Feira in June 2000 when defining the eEurope 2002 Action Plan. The analysis concentrates on the following issues: internet connectivity, legislative framework for e-communications and e-commerce and increasing the effective use of internet.

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003\\_0066en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003_0066en01.pdf)

- 2) The Communication "Electronic communications: the road to the knowledge economy" aims at reminding Member States of the need to complete rapidly the definition and implementation of the actions already planned and to complement these where necessary. It presents the actions currently underway in Europe particularly at the EU level, and focuses on the actions that are most likely to impact on the sector in the next 12 to 18 months. The main issues outlined are the following:

- implementation of the new regulatory framework for electronic communications which must be transposed into national legislations by 24 July 2003;
- incentives for the development of electronic communication services (broadband services, third generation mobile services or interoperability);
- support of current research efforts at national and EU level to ensure Europe's long-term competitiveness.

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003\\_0065en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003_0065en01.pdf)

### **eLearning portal launched by the European Commission**

In February, Education and Culture Commissioner Reding launched a new internet portal devoted to eLearning. This portal will present information on Community initiatives in the field of eLearning, such as the new eLearning programme (2004-2006) which is now being adopted, as well as links with national, public and private initiatives.

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/>

## **◆ Aeronautics and space**

### **One step closer to a European Space Policy: Green Paper on Space published**

On 21 January 2003, Research Commissioner Busquin unveiled the Commission's Green Paper on EU Space Policy. This document, prepared in co-operation with the European Space Agency (ESA), tackles a wide range of issues and aims at launching a debate on a future space policy at EU level.

Until now, space policy has been managed exclusively at national and intergovernmental levels. Recent developments such as Galileo or GMES (Global Monitoring for the Environment and Security) show that space has become a crucial component for implementing European objectives and policies. According to the Commission, this is notably the case in the field of

sustainable development, environmental protection, transport and mobility, the information society, research as well as in the case of emerging security needs, with both civilian and defence aspects encompassed by the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

The EU is therefore convinced that "EU-wide action is needed to create a coherent policy for space activities", as Enterprise Commissioner Liikanen put it. Further, the Green paper aims at the definition of a mid- and long term European space policy as well as of the EU's role in a future space policy and of a possible institutional set up in this view (especially the collaboration with ESA).

From the text of the Green Paper emerge 12 questions which the Commission would like to be central to the debate it is launching. Indeed the Commission aims at having a broad consultation including all stakeholders: national and international organisations, the European space industry, the scientific community and the general public. This consultation will take place until 30 May 2003 and is structured around a dedicated website where contributions can be submitted and around consultation events that will take place throughout Europe this spring.

One of the Commission's goals is also to "communitarise" space policy. Therefore, the issue of introducing it into a future EU constitution, which is currently being drafted by the Convention on the future of the EU, is also at stake. At the first consultation event on the Green Paper that took place in Brussels on 6 March, Jean-Luc Dehaene, former Belgian Premier Minister and Vice-President of the Convention said that: "Everybody recognises that if there is one area where Europe can only progress through the pooling of resources, this would be space." The current draft convention refers explicitly to space, and, according to Mr Dehaene, none of the 2.000 amendments proposed to the text have so far related to this section.

As a result of this consultation process, an action plan ("White Paper") will be drawn up by the Commission before the end of 2003. It will detail the actions to be undertaken and the role of each partner in ensuring that they are successfully implemented.

The Green Paper as well as all relevant information can be found on the following website:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/space/futur/introduction\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/space/futur/introduction_en.html)

### **Galileo blocked again**

In March 2002, Transport Ministers reached an agreement on going ahead with the Galileo programme and releasing the Community part of the budget (550 million Euro) necessary to the development phase of the European satellite navigation and positioning system.

Before this development phase can be launched and the joint venture that should manage the project, the "Joint Undertaking", the European Space Agency (ESA) must reach a unanimous agreement on the management of the ESA part of the budget.

An agreement of principle had been reached late December 2002 between ESA members. However Spain and Germany could not confirm this agreement. The issue ESA members cannot agree upon is that of the national contributions to the ESA part of the budget (also 550 million Euro). The reason is that, according to ESA rules, the industrial return in form of contracts for each country is derived from the national contribution. Indeed, Germany would like to make a higher contribution to the budget of 550 million Euro, in order to be able to benefit from a higher return in terms of contracts from the Galileo project for its space industry.

Another issue at stake, which is closely linked to the share of budget contribution of ESA members, is the actual leadership of the Galileo programme.

In January 2003, the Commission issued a statement insisting that the programme, which is due to launch commercial services in 2008, will not be delayed and that a director for the Joint Undertaking was to be named mid-March. Although the Commission intends to go on with "business as usual" and stresses that the Joint Undertaking might start to work without an ESA agreement, consequences of the delays in setting up the Joint Undertaking are also felt in the Aerospace thematic priority of FP6, where projects should actually be managed by the Joint Undertaking.

Galileo homepage:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy\\_transport/galileo/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/index_en.htm)

## ◆ **Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems**

### **US-EU agreement on collaboration in energy research**

On 6 March 2003, Commissioner Busquin and Spencer Abraham, Secretary of State for the US Department of Energy, signed a new Euratom nuclear cooperation agreement. This agreement will notably allow American researchers to participate in the Euratom programme (at their own costs).

Future cooperation in the field of hydrogen fuel technology as well as climate research was also announced at this meeting.

## ◆ **Anticipating scientific and technological needs (NEST)**

### **NEST: first call for proposals published**

On 27 February, the Commission published its first call for proposal for NEST. This area opens the possibility for the Commission to finance research at the frontier of current knowledge on topics proposed by researchers themselves. A strong emphasis will also be put on the multi-disciplinarity of such projects.

The type of projects to be developed in NEST is limited to the so-called “traditional instruments”(Specific Targeted Projects, Coordination Actions and Specific Support Actions).

In the “Adventure” part of NEST, projects should aim at developing novel and ambitious research with tangible objectives. This implies a potential for high impact, but also a high risk of failure. The “Insight” part of NEST should finance research which will investigate discoveries which might have implications on our health or quality of life, such as environmental contamination or new forms of crime.

The deadlines for this call have been set on 14 May 2003 and 22 October 2003. Proposals for Specific Targeted Research Projects will be evaluated in two stages.

The NEST workprogramme and the call text are available under:

[http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call\\_details.cfm?CALL\\_ID=56](http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/call_details.cfm?CALL_ID=56)

## ◆ **Research and innovation**

### **At last: agreement reached on Community patent!**

At the Competitiveness Council of 3 March, Ministers also agreed on a “common political approach” on the characteristics of the Community patent. Discussions were based on a compromise presented by the Greek Presidency.

The compromise Ministers agreed upon covers the main controversial points that had prevented an earlier solution of this question:

- 1) The system of jurisdiction: until 2010, national courts will remain competent for disputes concerning future Community patents. After this, the jurisdictional system will be centralised and a specialised court, established at the Court of First Instance in Luxemburg, will deal with disputes and appeals.
- 2) The linguistic regime: in order to keep patent costs as low as possible, it was agreed that applicants could file their initial patent claims in German, French or English, the European Patent Office’s (EPO) official languages. Applications in any other EU official languages will be translated into German, French or English at the cost of the EPO.

However, once a patent has been accepted, translation of the claims into all official languages of the EU will have to be paid for by the applicant.

- 3) Ministers have also agreed upon a way to distribute the fees between the national and the European patent offices. This system will be based on a distribution key Ministers will still have to agree upon.
- 4) A review of the Community patent, concentrating above all on these points will be presented by the Commission five years after the first Community patent has been granted.

This compromise still has to be endorsed by EU Heads of State and Government on 20-21 March 2003.

The Commission had presented its proposal for a Community patent in 2000 and since then the Commission had many times threatened to withdraw its proposal because of the lack of progress on this issue.

### **Commission publishes policy documents updating the EU's approach to innovation**

On 11 March, the Commission published a new Communication on innovation entitled "Updating the Union's approach in the context of the Lisbon strategy". Together with the recent Communication on industrial policy in an enlarged Europe and the Green Paper on entrepreneurship, these policy papers should form a coherent framework for the development of an enterprise policy that fosters competitiveness of companies and contributes to the growth of Europe's economy whilst taking into account the current context of European economy. These papers aim at bringing a new approach into innovation policy in view of the Spring European Council which will review progress made towards the Lisbon goals.

Factors considered in this respect include the role of research ("innovation turns knowledge into money"), the implications of enlargement, demographic trends, and the large size of the public sector in EU economies.

While innovation policy takes place mostly at the national and regional levels, the Member States and the Commission need to intensify their cooperation for the strengthening of innovation in the EU, including coordination and assessment mechanisms for mutual learning, as well as for taking stock of progress achieved.

The Communication makes concrete proposals on how to turn European diversity into a strength and suggests several new directions for EU innovation policy and interaction with other policy areas.

Communication on innovation policy:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/innovation/communication.htm>

Communication on industrial policy in an enlarged Europe:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/industry/policy.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/industry/policy.htm)

Green paper on entrepreneurship in Europe (The Commission invites stakeholders for contributions until 30 June 2003):

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/green\\_paper/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/green_paper/index.htm)

On 13 March, the Commission also published its "Innobarometer" 2002. Foreseen by the Commission in its Communication on "Innovation in a knowledge-based economy" (September 2000), the survey concentrates on managers' opinions with respect to major factors affecting innovation in their companies, such as

- their investments in innovation and the output achieved;
- their practice of co-operation and sharing of knowledge;
- their companies' strengths and needs in innovation;
- the role of European integration in facilitating innovation.

### **FP6 Workprogramme and first call published on Research and innovation**

After a delayed adoption, the Commission published on 1 March both the workprogramme and the call for proposals for the “research and innovation” area of FP6. This theme, which comes under the “Structuring the European Research Area” pillar of FP6 aims at addressing structural weaknesses that prevent European research from producing maximum economic and social benefits.

In line with this goal, the first call will concentrate on the participation of SMEs in FP6, especially within the new instruments. Activities that could be financed include the creation of groupings of SMEs that have similar innovation needs or the promotion of transnational cooperation between SMEs. The identification and dissemination of best practice in this view will be especially encouraged.

The total budget indicatively foreseen for this call closing on 29 April 2003 is 20 million Euro. The projects to be financed in this call are Specific Support Actions (SSA) and Coordination Actions (CA).

The call text and the workprogramme are available under:

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/innovation.htm>

### **◆ Mobility (Marie Curie)**

#### **Commission publishes implementation report on its Mobility Strategy**

On 4 February, the Commission published a first implementation report on its “Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area”. It covers the period between the adoption of the Mobility Strategy in June 2001 and December 2002.

The Strategy published in June 2001 aimed at “enhancing the living and working environments of researchers in Europe in order to attract and maintain a high level of human resources in research, both quantitatively and qualitatively”.

In the implementation report published in February 2003, the Commission highlights results in the following fields:

- Conditions of entry of third country researchers to Europe (measures to be adopted in 2003);
- Coordination of social security schemes (a seminar was organised on this topic in October 2002 and a concrete legislative is currently under examination);
- Information and practical assistance to mobile researchers (the launch of a pan-European Researcher’s Mobility Web Portal is foreseen in May 2003 and, in parallel, a European Network of Mobility Centres should be officially launched in the summer 2003).

The report also underlines issues for future action. For example:

- Benchmarking exercise on human resources in RTD (see article above);
- Indicators on the international mobility of researchers;
- Social visibility of the researcher and the researcher’s career.

The implementation report on “a Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area” can be found under: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/pdf/implement.pdf>

## ◆ **Science and society**

### **Two “Science and society” calls for proposals launched on 1 March**

On 1 March, the Commission published the first two calls in the area of “Science and society”. With a budget of 5 million Euro, the call “Deepening the understanding of ethical problems” will concentrate on cross-cutting questions relevant to many different areas of research (for example: information society, nanotechnologies or human genetics). Such cross-cutting issues would probably not be dealt with in the framework of the ethical review of Integrated Projects as such reviews will concentrate on the topic of the project itself.

Beyond this will for a multi-disciplinary approach, proposals should put an emphasis on comparative research and foresight. The overall goal will be to develop recommendations on how to address emerging ethical questions. Both Specific Targeted Projects (STREP) and Coordination Actions (CA) will be financed. The deadline for application is 5 June 2003.

The other call published is for the establishment of a “European Science Education Initiative”. There, the focus will be on creating a mechanism in order to allow science teachers, science professionals, education specialists and associated expertise from across Europe to exchange ideas, techniques, and methods to supplement existing science curricula and educational strategies and make science studies at schools more attractive.

In order to guarantee that proposers take a broad view of science, the Commission is envisaging to support an integrated approach to this issue: either through a single project, or a number of projects which will be clustered. 7 million Euro will be made available in this call for STREPs and Specific Support Actions (SSA). The deadline for application is 8 October 2003.

[http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/calls\\_activity.cfm?ID\\_ACTIVITY=622](http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/calls_activity.cfm?ID_ACTIVITY=622)

## ◆ **Publications**

### **Marie Curie Handbooks**

The Commission published two very useful and complete handbooks about the following Marie Curie actions: Research Training Networks and Intra-European Fellowships. These handbooks give clear explanations about

- the goal of the action and how it is supposed to function;
- which researchers or organisations can take part;
- the type of research covered;
- the financial aspects;
- and how to submit a proposal.

Handbooks concerning all Marie Curie Actions should follow. The handbooks can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/publications\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/publications_en.html)

### **Third European Report on Science & Technology Indicators 2003**

On 17 March, the Commission published another set of statistics about EU R&D. Snapshots of the Science & Technology Indicators 2003 are available on the internet (see address below). The full version can be ordered from the same website.

[http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/indicators/third\\_report.htm](http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/indicators/third_report.htm)

### **Future Commission Communication on researchers’ careers**

Commissioner Busquin announced that a Communication on research as a career should be presented by his services in June 2003. The aim is not to develop at all costs a common status for researchers but to make “serious efforts to take forward work to recognise the specific nature of researchers (...), especially through the identification and dissemination of best practices”.