

# SwissCore Synopsis Research

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### **Commission Communication on how to make research "the key to Europe's future"**

Much expected and delayed (see our latest Synopsis Research for a detailed report), a Commission Communication on the future of EU research policy was published on 16 June 2004.

This paper contains the Commission's "proposed orientations for the development of future European Union programmes to support research activities and policies" (i.e. FP7). Although discussions on the future financial framework of the EU are just beginning, it is clear that the realisation of the plans sketched in this Communication would imply a significant increase in the European Community research budget for the period 2007-2013. Indicatively, in a policy paper presented in February 2004, and preparing the way for the so-called Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013 which should be proposed later this year, the Commission was suggesting doubling the research budget for this period. What will come out of negotiations with EU Finance Ministers remains to be seen. But the Commission is certainly setting the FP7 expectations quite high...

As we have already reported in previous editions, six major objectives for research are identified in this Communication:

- Creating European centres of excellence through collaboration between laboratories (i.e. collaborative research similar to the principles of FP6);
- Launching European technological initiatives (a specific instrument geared towards large-scale applied and industrial research collaboration based on a strong public/private partnership, see also article below);
- Stimulating the creativity of basic research through competition between teams at European level (i.e. funding fundamental research through, for example, a European Research Council);
- Making Europe more attractive to the best researchers (i.e. mobility grants and incentives);
- Developing research infrastructure of European interest;
- Improving the coordination of national research programmes.

In addition, two new areas for European-level research activities are presented in this Communication: Space and Security research.

As means of implementation, the Commission proposes, whilst strengthening the link with national structures, to externalise management for bottom-up objectives (i.e. individual research teams in basic research and mobility actions). There, several possibilities remain open such as a European Research Council (ERC), an executive agency; an EU agency of the conventional type; or a specific structure (for example, a foundation), set up under Article 171 of the Treaty. Support for collaborative research should however continue to be managed by the Commission itself. This externalisation, and the degree to which it should be implemented, was one of the controversial issues that led to the delay in the publication of this Communication. This explains why the Commission now remains vague about the details...

The Communication can be found below (German and French versions are also available):

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2004/com2004\\_0353en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2004/com2004_0353en01.pdf)

### **Launch on a consultation FP7**

As the Commission is currently in the process of preparing a legislative proposal for FP7 (expected in the beginning 2005), it is inviting the research community and users of research programmes, including public institutes, universities, large companies, SMEs, research organisations, international organisations and associations to react to this Communication and share their views and comments regarding the future European research policy.

Comments can be sent through an electronic form at the address below  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/comments\\_en.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/comments_en.cfm)

or sent to: Future research policy consultation  
Directorate-General for Research  
European Commission  
Unit A1  
Office SDME 02/50  
B-1049 Brussels, BELGIUM.

### **European Technology Platforms: ever more the shining star...**

A concept officially presented by the European Commission last year (see also article in Synopsis August-October 2003), the European Technology Platforms (ETPs) have gained momentum since then following the disappointing results of industry in FP6 and the presentation by the Commission of its plans for FP7.

The principle of the ETPs is the following: they bring together high-level private and public stakeholders around a common field defined as strategic for the future competitiveness of Europe. They have the objective to define for their area a coherent and unified approach in order to tackle the economic, technological or societal challenges ahead and, as a result, elaborate a Strategic Research Agenda for the years to come.

For the moment, a dozen of ETPs have already been launched on topics as diverse as "Hydrogen and Fuel Cells", "Nanoelectronics", "Water Supply and Sanitation", "Rail Transport" or "Textile and Clothing". Another ten are being prepared or should be launched later this year.

With all these groups preparing Strategic Research Agendas whose timing will more or less coincide with the start of FP7, it was important that the Commission sketch how it foresees the implementation of all this future research effort at EU level (although ETPs should also mobilise other funding sources, such as private funds, EU Regional and Structural funds, national funding, Eureka, European Investment Bank, etc).

In the Communication on the future of European research policy published in June (see article above), the Commission gave some hints on 3 possible options for implementation:

- 1) In most cases, the existing instruments for collaborative research (for example, Integrated Projects) are expected to be the most appropriated way to provide support at EU level for the implementation of the Strategic Research Agendas. This of course means that the Strategic Agendas should be largely taken into account during the definition of the thematic research priorities for FP7.
- 2) In a limited number of cases and when the above instruments are not likely to provide the most suitable response, the Commission plans to set up "Joint Technological Initiatives". These would be established using article 171 of the Treaty which allows the Commission to set up joint undertakings for the "efficient execution of Community research, technological developments and demonstration programmes". The Joint Technological Initiatives would be geared towards large-scale applied and industrial research programmes and would need to bring together a high level of public and private investment and mobilise a large critical mass of researchers in order to provide an adequate response to the challenges identified in the Strategic Research Agendas.
- 3) In the case of the existence/launch of national research programmes in line with the Strategic Research Agendas, the Commission could also use of the article 169, which provides for the participation of the Community in R&D programmes undertaken by Member States.

The Commission plans to publish a detailed paper on the European Technology Platforms in September.

## ◆ **News in Brief**

### **EU-Research Policy:**

#### **Start of the Dutch Presidency**

On 1 July, the Netherlands took over the EU Presidency from Ireland. In an institutionally not ideal context (renewal of the Commission in November and of the European Parliament in July), the Dutch have set themselves the following policy priorities:

- Making a success of enlargement
- Strengthening the European economy and reducing the administrative burden
- The Area of freedom, security and justice
- The Union's future financial and budgetary structure: Agenda 2007
- The EU's role in the world: an effective, coherent and committed external policy

In terms of research-related topics, the Dutch have announced specific work on the following issues: 1) the admission of researchers from third countries, 2) the launch the preparations for the Seventh Framework Programme (but no discussion on the budget) with a special emphasis on the issue of fundamental research (ERC) and of technology platforms for which the Dutch hope to be able to present Council conclusions in November. It has also been confirmed that the Dutch Presidency will not try to take up again the work on the establishment of a Community patent.

Competitiveness Council meetings (dealing with issues related to the Internal Market, Industry and Research policies) are planned on 24 September and 25 November.

The Dutch Presidency website:

[http://www.eu2004.nl/default.asp?CMS\\_ITEM=0A3E39C87BE84E86B38D6C42CCDA88F2X1X41319X14](http://www.eu2004.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=0A3E39C87BE84E86B38D6C42CCDA88F2X1X41319X14)

#### **New faces at European Parliament and European Commission**

Following elections mid-June throughout Europe, the new and enlarged European Parliament took up its work mid-July. As one of its first tasks, it elected Josep Borrell (Spanish socialist) as its President for the first half of the five-year term. It then went on to defining the realm and composition of its different Committees.

Of the 732 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), 51 will be members of the re-adjusted and re-named Industry, Research and Energy Committee (which formerly also included External Trade). This Committee will be chaired by the British conservative Giles Chichester who was already a member of the Committee in the previous legislative term.

The former ITRE Committee had been very active in the field of research (more than 40 reports!) following the pace set by Commissioner Busquin. However, this Committee has borne heavy losses through retirement, non-re-election or change of Committee of MEPs who had been very active with regard to the ERA initiative and the setting up of FP6: amongst others, Rolf Linkohr (report on "Investing in research"), Gérard Caudron (reports on FP6 and EDCTP), Elly Plooij-van Gorsel (reports on ERA), Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (report on FP6 rules for participation). This constitutes a heavy loss of knowledge and experience for research policy at EU level.

On the European Commission side, the nomination of José Manuel Barroso, chosen by the EU Head of States and Governments as a successor to Romano Prodi, was confirmed on 22 July by the European Parliament. Mr. Barroso will now spend the summer recruiting -on the suggestion of the Member States- "his" college of 25 Commissioners before facing the European Parliament again for the approval of the college as a whole mid-September. The new Commission will then take up its work on 1 November.

During the last few weeks, some unexpected changes have taken place regarding the current Commissioner for Research, Philippe Busquin. For reasons of internal politics, the Belgian

government has chosen not to represent Mr. Busquin, who wished to stay, but instead to propose Mr. Michel, the current Foreign Minister as the future Belgian Commissioner. This decision lead to much surprise (also, it is said, to that of Mr. Busquin himself).

Mr. Busquin should thus leave the European Commission in September to take up a mandate as an MEP (he had been put on the election list as a “emergency exit”) and be replaced by Mr. Michel until November.

In the field of Education and Culture, Ms. Reding is hoping to remain at her current place. The confirmation of her nomination as the Luxemburgish candidate for the post of Commissioner has not yet been made.

The 1999-2004 activity report of the ITRE Committee can be found under:

[http://www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/itre/activity\\_report\\_1999\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/itre/activity_report_1999_2004_en.pdf)

### **Second term and 22 new members for EURAB**

EURAB, the European Research Advisory Board, 's first term came to an end in June. Created by the Commission in June 2001 as a high-level, independent, advisory committee to provide advice on the design and implementation of EU research policy, EURAB's first three years of activities have been “a real success”, according to Commissioner Busquin.

On a total of 45 members, 22 new members have joined for this second term (2004-2007). Helga Nowotny was unanimously re-elected as Chairperson.

Priority topics identified for this second term are, for example:

- How to increase industry participation in the Framework programmes,
- How to develop a long term perspective for Europe beyond 2025,
- The interaction between innovation and state aids policies;
- How to make Europe more attractive for the researchers or
- Questions on intellectual property rights.

The list of new members and of papers published up to now can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/eurab/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/eurab/index_en.html)

### **EU aims at a strategic partnership with India**

On 16 June, the Commission presented a Communication on an EU-India strategic partnership. In this paper, the Commission identifies challenges and opportunities ahead and suggests areas for deepening cooperation between the EU and India.

With regard to research-related policies, the Commission expresses the wish for further cooperation in the field of information society technologies, transport, energy, biotechnology as well as space and Galileo.

Building more synergies in science and technology also constitutes a priority reflected by this Communication. There, the Commission suggests that current areas of collaboration such as research programmes (an EU-India Scientific and Technological Agreement has been signed in 2002) and Galileo should be furthered (for example by formalising India's participation in the Galileo programme). New areas of collaboration should also be explored “actively” (for example, developing research collaboration on fusion energy).

The Commission hopes that this Communication be the launch of a debate that could culminate in the signature of an Action Plan and of a new Joint EU-India Political Declaration at the 6<sup>th</sup> EU-India Summit in 2005.

A working document annexed to the Communication contains a detailed analysis as well as concrete proposals for action of the EU side in order to implement this strategic partnership.

Both documents can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/india/news/2004\\_comm.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/india/news/2004_comm.pdf)

### **Study launched on the evolution of the scientific publications market in Europe**

“Scientific results do not only serve to disseminate results, they also constitute a tool for evaluating the quality of the research teams”. Based on this reasoning, Commissioner Busquin announced on 15 June the launch of a study which will look into the economic and technical developments of the scientific publications market in Europe.

Given the current efforts to create a genuine European Research Area as well as discussions in the last years about open access to knowledge and the changes undergone by the publishing sector as a result of the introduction of information technologies, the Commission is seeking answers to the following questions:

- What are the main changes in the scientific publications market in Europe?
- What and who is driving change and why? If there is any resistance to positive change, what/who is blocking it?
- What are the consequences for users (authors, readers, libraries)?

The study should also “identify measures at European level which could help to improve conditions governing access to and the exchange, dissemination and archiving of scientific publications while guaranteeing a high level of quality, diversity and protection of authors’ rights.”

The results of this study should be available in 2005.

More information can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/headlines/news/article\\_04\\_07\\_06\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/headlines/news/article_04_07_06_en.html)

### **Space: developments in the Galileo programme**

The beginning of the summer saw many developments in the Galileo programme.

1) On 14 July, the Commission presented a proposal for a Regulation on implementing the Deployment and Commercial operation phases of the programme.

The Commission proposal focuses mainly on the financial aspects of these two phases, namely the Deployment phase (2006 and 2007), which will involve the building and launching of the satellites and the establishment of the entire ground-based component, and the Commercial Operating phase (from 2008), which will cover the management of the system as well as its maintenance and updating.

The Commission estimates the costs of the Deployment phase at 2.1 billion Euro (around 700 million should be borne by the public sector). As for the Commercial operation phase, the costs should be borne exclusively by the private sector. However, the Commission plans that it will still need to spend around 500 million Euro during the first operational years to complement private spendings. The Commission thus requests 1 billion Euro (200 million have already been budgeted) to be planned in the Financial Perspectives for these two phases.

Concerning institutional questions, the text also describes the tasks to be fulfilled by the Supervisory Authority (see below).

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2004/com2004\\_0477en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2004/com2004_0477en01.pdf)

2) On 12 July, Ministers gave their final approval to a Regulation establishing a Community Agency called Global Navigation Satellite System Supervisory Authority (GNSS) to ensure the management of the Galileo Programme as well as a Joint Action on issues linked to the security of the Union.

Overall, two structures will be created: 1) a Supervisory Authority which will run the overall and financial management and take over from the current Joint Undertaking from 2006 (this authority will have the status of an Agency) and 2) a Centre for Safety and Reliability which will be, in emergency cases, the contact point between the political actors and the Supervisory Authority.

[http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/81415.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/81415.pdf)

3) The Commission also signed on 13 July an agreement on cooperation and membership in the Galileo joint venture with Israel as well as reached and signed an agreement with USA on the coexistence and interoperability between Galileo and GPS. Furthermore, the Commission is pursuing negotiations with Russia on the compatibility of Galileo and their positioning system, GLONASS and is preparing a request for a mandate to negotiate an agreement with Ukraine. Informal talks on cooperation in the field of Galileo have also recently taken place with Brazil and Mexico.

#### ▪ **Health and Environment (2004-2010) Action Plan launched by Commission**

On 9 June 2004, the Commission presented its “European Environment and Health Action Plan 2004-2010”. This Action Plan stems from the will of the EU to give itself the scientifically grounded information necessary to help Member States reduce the harmful effects of certain environmental factors (for example, different types of pollution). It also aims at a better cooperation between the environment, health and research fields.

The Action Plan represents the first cycle of the measures foreseen in a European Health and Environment Strategy published in June 2003. This strategy paper was then followed by a broad consultation in order to prepare the current Action Plan.

According to the Action Plan, 3 main issues should be addressed in this first cycle. For each, the Action Plan defines specific actions to be taken. The details and technicalities (who should do what, when and with what means) is presented in the Technical Annex to the Action Plan.

The issues to be tackled are the following:

- I) Improve the information chain by developing integrated environment and health information to understand the links between sources of pollutants and health effects.
- II) Fill the knowledge gap by strengthening research and addressing/identifying the emerging issues on environment and health.
- III) Review policies and improving communication by developing awareness raising activities, risk communication, training & education towards citizens and professionals.

In order to make progress in this complex area, the Commission counts on the cooperation of many actors: national, regional and local authorities, international organizations as well as industry and civil society.

More information on the developments in this field as well as the papers mentioned above can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/health/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/health/index_en.htm)

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

### **Publication of the Marimon report on the evaluation of the New Instruments in FP6**

As had been planned since their launch, the so-called “new instruments” that came into life with the start of FP6, Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence, have just undergone a mid-term review by a panel of independent experts.

The report that came out of the work of this group of experts chaired by Prof. Marimon was published on 21 June.

The main recommendations and conclusions of the 70-page report, which can be summarised as follows:

- Overall, the report finds that the New Instruments (NI) are a powerful way to foster transnational collaborative research in ERA and should be maintained in FP7. However, many design and implementation aspects need to be improved, possibly still during FP6.

- Instruments should be classified according to the goals to which they are expected to contribute. Participants should then define the specific research objective they will pursue and choose the Instrument accordingly.
- Clearer guidelines and criteria for their use should be established and communicated to the participants to help them prepare their proposals.
- The notion of “critical mass” and the “common misconception that the NI have to be very large” have led to many misunderstandings.
- The major problem with the Networks of Excellence, NoEs, has been the concept of “durable integration”. The lack of participation of industry should also be addressed in the future.
- Integrated Projects (IPs) have gained general approval but many processes such as consortia-building, proposal submission, proposal evaluation and contract negotiation need to be improved.
- The differences between IPs and Specific Targeted Research Projects (STREPs) should be clarified.
- STREPs and small consortium IPs should have a greater role and “a substantial increase” in terms of budget in future calls of FP6 and in FP7.
- Special efforts have to be made to attract “emerging groups, especially SMEs.
- A two-step evaluation procedure should be introduced in order to improve efficiency and reduce costs for participants.
- Administrative procedures and financial rules should be significantly simplified and further improved to allow more efficiency and flexibility in implementing participation instruments. The report also presents a set of specific recommendations in order to improved the Commission’s service in this respect.

Overall, the Marimon report is fairly consensual and points out to the “usual” problematic issues of FP6: clarity of the definition of the different instruments and their roles, SME participation, administrative procedures. Still, the report prides itself to have widely consulted FP6 users through questionnaires and hearings in different Member States that gives it supplementary legitimacy and weight.

Given the fact that the workprogrammes until the end of FP6 have now already been defined in most thematic areas, the first traces of this report should be found in the formal FP7 proposal expected in the beginning of 2005.

Website of the Marimon Group where the report can also be found:

[http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/instruments\\_review/ref.htm](http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/instruments_review/ref.htm)

### **Some remarks about EPSS**

The European Commission recently drew up a list of the most frequent comments/issues it dealt with regarding EPSS. We reproduce here the points made by the Commission’s EPSS project office:

- “The proposers are requested to use the submit button. The sequence of screens makes this obligation evident with "submit now" and "submit later" buttons. This feature is needed to identify very precisely the submission time versus the end of upload time.
- User id and passwords are now sent immediately by electronic mail to the coordinators of the proposal. Previously the passwords were processed daily at 12:00.
- The FAQ or frequently asked question is sent by electronic mail, as attachment, to the electronic mail containing the coordinator and the partner password. The FAQ covers all aspects related to the use of the EPSS.

- The possibility to add annexes (i.e. supplemental files) is now configurable on a call by call basis. By default, the proposers are allowed to upload one file: the proposal file (PART B).
- Proposers are strongly advised to use PDF files only. The EPSS is checking the filename and extension and issues a warning message. The idea is to move to submission using only PDF files in the future.
- Derived from past observations, the proposal file size is limited. Please note that including heavy graphical elements in a proposal is not recommended: the proposals are printed in black and white at 300 DPI (copier resolution).
- Manuals are revised to reflect the changes, including some advice on what to do to reduce the file size of the proposal: no colour pictures should be included (the proposals are printed in black & white), no high resolution picture (the proposals are printed at 300 DPI)."

### **Network of “mobility centres” to help researchers benefit of ERA**

Based on the recognition of the importance of the human resources factor as one of the critical issues to make ERA a success, the European Commission is multiplying initiatives to facilitate the mobility of researchers within and to Europe.

The launch on 29-30 June of the ERA-MORE initiative, a European network of mobility centres providing free and customised assistance to mobile researchers and their families is one of these initiatives. The network currently brings together information desks from 21 European Countries which can assist researchers in all matters relating to mobility in their professional and daily lives, including practical information on housing, schooling, day-care or language courses.

The ERA-MORE initiative complements a new internet portal called ERA-careers designed to help researchers find jobs and grants and make mobility easier through country-specific information on financial and legal issues.

ERA-MORE, the European network of mobility centres:

[http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index\\_en.cfm?l1=4](http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index_en.cfm?l1=4)

ERA-careers website:

[http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index\\_en.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index_en.cfm)

### **5-year report on EU research activities from 1999-2003 expected this autumn**

The European Commission just announced that it has commissioned a 5-year report covering all research activities supported by the EU in the years 1999-2003. The report panel will be chaired by Dr Erkki Ormala, vice-president of Nokia.

The panel's Independent Assessment Report is expected to be presented to the Commission's services no later than November this year. It will, without any doubt, be a major contribution in the preparation of the legislative proposal for setting up FP7.

### **Reporting and audit in FP6**

The Commission is preparing an “FP6 reporting guide”. It is expected to be published in September 2004. More on this topic thus in our next edition.

## ◆ Publications

### **EU Communication on the share of renewable energy in the EU**

On 26 May, the Commission published a Communication presenting

- 1) the progress made by the EU15 toward achieving national targets for 2010 for electricity from renewable energy sources;
- 2) an assessment of the prospects for achieving the target of a 12% share of renewable energy in overall energy consumption in the EU15 in 2010
- 3) further proposals for concrete actions at national and Community level to ensure the achievement by the EU of its renewable energy targets for 2010.

An annexed Working document gives an overview of the different situations of renewable energy sources in the European Union Member States.

The Communication and Working paper can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/res/documents/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/res/documents/index_en.htm)

### **Progress report on life sciences and biotechnology**

The European Commission published this spring the second progress report on its life sciences and biotechnology strategy adopted in January 2002.

The goal of this report is both to highlight progress made towards the goals set in 2002 and identify the upcoming issues. It thus provides a comprehensive description of the state of the biotech sector.

The report can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/pdf/com\\_2004\\_250\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/pdf/com_2004_250_en.pdf)

### **New figures on number of women in science and engineering**

In June, Eurostat published its latest statistics on women, science and technology. It is divided into 3 main chapters:

- Women slowly catching up among engineering graduates especially in EU-15 countries;
- Women researchers more likely to work in sectors with lower R&D expenditure;
- Level of education impacts differently on employment outcomes for women and men.

In general terms, it shows that more women are graduating in maths, science, computing and engineering but that, with regard to their representation in the scientific and engineering jobs, the "gender gap" seems to be widening.

The report can be found under:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wssi/pdf/stat-focus\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wssi/pdf/stat-focus_en.pdf)

## ◆ SwissCore Küche

### **SwissCore Annual Event with Prof. Susanne Suter**

On 30 June, SwissCore held its Annual Event, the opportunity to gather and thank all of SwissCore's partners and contacts for their collaboration throughout the year. The welcome address was held by Dr. Jürg Pfister, Head of International Relations at the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). This year's host was Prof. Susanne Suter, President of the Swiss Science and Technology Council, SWTR.

Some pictures can be found below:



Jürg Pfister, SNSF



Susanne Suter, SWTR



Rolf Gerspacher, Elisabeth Guyer, Remigi Winzap, Swiss Mission to the EU



Jürg Pfister, SNSF, Susanne Suter, SWTR and Erik Yssen, Norwegian Mission to the EU