

SwissCore Synopsis Research

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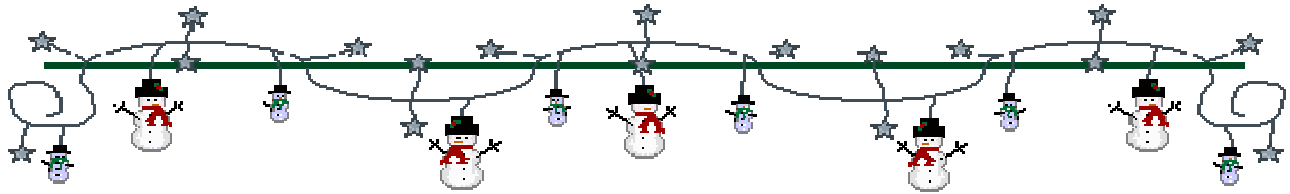
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◆ Seen from Brussels

Brussels flooded by national position papers on the future of EU research policy

Following the publication of the Commission paper on the “guidelines for future European Union policy to support research” in June 2004, the EU Member States and associated countries have taken the opportunity to express their opinions and preferences. During the autumn and winter months 2004, many national position papers have been written and sent to the Commission as input. They will, in one way or another, influence the Commission FP7 proposal which is expected for spring 2005 (see article below).

There are some points which come up in several papers in very similar forms:

- overall support for the Commission paper and for a significant increase in the budget of FP7;
- need for continuity regarding the funding instruments, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Marimon report on the New Instruments of FP6;
- need for more clarity and transparency in the process of choosing topics, setting up and implementing Technology Platforms; in any case, a mechanism should be envisaged to review them and to allow for changes in the running programme;
- appreciation for the field of research infrastructures and role of ESFRI, the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures, in defining a road map for current and future needs;
- need for further simplification and increased user-friendliness.

The most controversial issue proposed was the support of individual research teams in basic research, i.e. what has become known as “European Research Council”. Opinions on this topic range from the hope that “the creation of a strong mechanism for specific funding for basic research (..) is now an unavoidable and very promising consequence of the political process” (Sweden) to the statement that the “proposal for this new funding instrument (...) raises strong perplexity” (Italy). In a generally positive but cautious atmosphere, there is a consensus on the need for autonomy and independence of such a new body.

The UK published its position paper in November, with further positions expected when the debate advances. The ERC should get at least 15-20% of the FP7 budget and be open to “recipients from both the public and private sectors” (!). In the Marie Curie area, UK suggests three separate funding streams for academia to academia, academia to industry, and industry to industry mobility. On a more fundamental level, UK “strongly believes that Framework 7 should provide funding at the full economic cost to the organisation undertaking the research”.

In France, the results of a broad consultation have been collected and await editing to complete the national paper. It is hoped to come out early next year.

Germany favours an increase of the FP7 budget but emphasises that this must be in line with the German position of keeping the EU expenditure ceiling to a maximum of 1% of the EU Gross National Income. Regarding space and security, Germany clarifies that only space *research* (and not applications) should be funded by FP7 and that “funds for financing defence research must by no means be taken from the budget of FP7”. Most explicitly of all countries, the paper lists detailed ideas about the content of the thematic priorities. Furthermore, Germany suggests to evaluate the ERA-NET scheme in 2-3 years before a decision “on whether or not the ERA-NET

projects should be expanded” is taken; and “science and society” should continue to be a separate area in FP7.

The Italian paper is very clear in its scepticism towards the planned ERC, e.g.: “It is not clear how the funding of national research groups could create this added value; the argument that it would be provided by the competition stimulus is not convincing: for researchers, funding is a means and not an aim, and all serious research groups do anyway their best to excel.”. In line with the national policy, a better orientation of FP7 towards SMEs and industry are a priority for Italy also on EU level.

Austria asks for a duration of FP7 which is “adapted to that of the Financial Perspective”, i.e. with a budget for the years 2007-2013, requiring an intermediate evaluation of FP7 potentially allowing for a rapid adaptation of objectives, topics etc.. The paper supports the creation of an ERC but emphasises that “excellence at EU level should always have a European dimension”, i.e. “either research topics that are significant for Europe, or the possible effects of the research projects on Europe”.

Sweden strongly supports the creation of an ERC as a new funding mechanism for basic research. On Technology Platforms, Sweden expects further clarification on how they could be used in areas in which the European society faces major challenges but in which industry cannot be expected to be the driving force (e.g. environment and climate change, migration, and ageing population).

Poland published a position paper in which it broadly supports the concept of an ERC. This is remarkable especially following the Competitiveness Council in November 2004 where Poland seemed less enthusiastic about this proposal (see article below). Regarding the new areas of space and security, Poland “proposes the allocation of separate funds to these activities, in order to preserve adequate clarity”.

Denmark suggests a simpler structure of FP7 in which it would be accessible through one of the four main fields (instead of the six axes proposed by the Commission) “basic research”, “thematic programmes in support of technological development”, “research to support policy”, and “nuclear research activities”. It also strongly supports an ERC and specifies that a “substantial amount in the vicinity of EUR 2 billion per year” should be allocated.

In Belgium, a common position paper seems ready but it still needs to be approved by the relevant Minister. Collaborative research should be the core of FP7 but with more flexibility and with larger share of old instruments. Furthermore, the papers Technology Platforms while stressing the need for synergies with ERA-NET and EUREKA.

Portugal published a preliminary version of its position paper, which is expected to undergo some changes with the new government. In particular, the support for an ERC is likely to be strengthened in a next version (certainly also pushed for by José Mariano Gago, the former Portuguese Minister for Science and Technology and very active promoter of the ERC).

A Spanish paper is expected for early 2005.

The position of Ireland should be published some time in December 2004, supporting basic research and mobility actions, especially also trans-sectorial mobility e.g. to SMEs.

The official Lithuanian position awaits official approval by the Government. With a change of the Minister in charge, the position might still change from the current draft. So far, Lithuania supported the inclusion of basic research in FP7 and also industry investment.

In Turkey, a position paper is expected for April 2005. It is currently being discussed whether Turkey wishes to be associated to FP7 or not.

Norway is very positive about the entire Commission communication and also links many EU concepts to current developments on the national level. The Barcelona objective, e.g., “is an inspiration also for Norwegian science policy”.

Switzerland also supports the general thrust of the Commission plans but points out that “a good balance with national public R&D funding” has to be found. It supports the support of basic research on a European level, provided the sole selection criterion is scientific excellence. Furthermore, the Swiss paper suggests the application of the two-stage procedure in all calls and the publication of calls on a limited number of dates known beforehand by the research community.

This list of countries and the choice of points mentioned are obviously not exhaustive, and in the current state of the (European and national) debates, opinions are not really fixed in stone yet. However, one can perceive a general support for the Commission's direction in the area of R&D, which will have to be substantiated when the discussions get more concrete (e.g. also on a financial level, see article below).

Mid-term review of Lisbon strategy says EU and Member States could and should do more

In view of their mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy in the spring 2005, Heads of States and Governments of the EU had asked for a report on the current state of implementation and results of the process. The Commission established a High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, which presented its report on 3 November 2004.

In Lisbon in March 2000, European leaders had set the EU the goal to become by 2010 "the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment". The Lisbon strategy, as it came to be known, was a comprehensive but interdependent series of reforms, most of them to be applied by Member States through an open method of coordination (i.e. a supple instrument for Member States to voluntarily compare and coordinate their policies).

The Kok report paints a gloomy picture of the state of the European economy and of the Lisbon agenda. It calls for immediate actions on a concentrated field of five policy areas:

1) Creating the knowledge society:

With regard to research policy, the following points are emphasised:

- Fast track work permits and visa procedures should be introduced;
- The recognition of professional qualifications should be improved;
- An Action Plan to reduce administrative obstacles for world-class scientists and their dependants should be set up;
- An autonomous European Research Council should be established;
- The accessibility to broadband should be increased to at least 50% of the population by 2010;
- An agreement on a European patent should be found by spring 2005 or the proposal should be dropped.

2) Completing the internal market (free movement of services, liberalisation and competition policy);

3) Creating the right climate for entrepreneurs (simplification of regulatory framework);

4) Building an inclusive labour market (reforms to increase employment rates, ensure lifelong learning possibilities and find the right balance between flexibility and security on the labour market);

5) Working towards an environmentally sustainable future (meet Kyoto targets, tackle pollution and taxation issues).

In spite of the urgency of the report's tone, the issues above are not new. Neither does it bring up specific remedies to the current blockages. The main innovation of the report is to propose to "name and shame" (or praise) Member States according to their levels of performance on a reduced number of indicators (current results are often kept from the public eye and the number of indicators -more than a hundred- does not allow for an overview of the results).

Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok "Facing the challenge. The Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/pdf/2004-1866-EN-complet.pdf

Council: Ministers debate FP7... but no word on its budget

Meeting on 25-26 November in Brussels, Ministers had a very dense agenda, which included many important research-related topics. A lunch debate also provided them with the opportunity to discuss the Kok report, a mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy which blames Member States for not doing enough to turn their economies into competitive knowledge-based ones (see article above). On this topic, Ministers unanimously supported the suggestion by the Kok report that National Action Programmes be elaborated and reporting burden (i.e. number of indicators) reduced.

- FP7 and European Research Council (ERC): Overall, the Council welcomed the European Commission's intention to bring forward its proposal for FP7 in April 2005. It also stressed the need for this proposal to ensure coherence and synergy between the major objectives of the new programme and for a more coherent European strategy in the field of infrastructures as a critical topic for FP7. According to Ministers, transnational collaborative research should stay at the core of FP7, as it was in FP6, but with improved and simplified administrative and financial procedures in order to make it more user-friendly in particular for small and medium sized enterprises. However, the Council also supported the current "6 axes structure" (see Synopsis 2004/3) foreseen by the Commission.
On the topic of the creation of a European Research Council (ERC) to fund investigator-driven basic research at European level, the Commission was asked to develop its proposal on the basis of the following principles: scientific autonomy, trust and credibility, complementarity with national funding (no shift of national funding to the ERC), transparency, efficiency and accountability as well as flexibility and user-friendliness. Support for this scheme came from all Member States apart from Italy, who did not wish to commit itself without a concrete proposal on ERC, and Poland, who seemingly still has some homework to do on this topic. As announced by the Dutch Presidency, the topic of the funding that should be dedicated to FP7 was not touched upon because of the uncertainties linked to the future budget on the EU for the years 2007-2013 (see article below). This of course makes many of the positive points mentioned here look rather symbolic for the moment...
- ITER: Ministers decided to amend the Commission's negotiation mandate on ITER, the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, according to the following lines:
 - The Commission should ensure widest possible partnership;
 - Ministers confirm their support for the French site, Cadarache;
 - They "recognise the importance of a broader approach in the negotiation with all partners";
 - They clarified the transitional arrangements between the current phase of coordinated technical activities and an efficient start for a joint ITER implementation.Overall, these changes allow the Commission to offer Japan a "privileged partnership" if Cadarache is chosen –also a change in the rhetoric- and to work on a "six-partner solution" (China, European Union, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and United States) "as far as possible". For the moment, the USA have been backing Japan to host the ITER site. Negotiations were to go on with this new mandate during December 2004. No results are yet known.
- Space: The Competitiveness Council meeting provided the framework for the first meeting of the "Space Council". Established by the framework agreement on cooperation between EU and ESA (European Space Agency), this meeting brings together the ESA Ministerial Council and the EU Competitiveness Council. As a Member of ESA, Switzerland was thus represented by State Secretary Charles Kleiber.

A set of formal orientations for the preparation of a European Space Programme were discussed and agreed upon. These reiterated support for a European Space programme as a “common, inclusive and flexible framework” and agreed to define a conceptual basis for the Space Programme by the end of 2005. The next meeting will take place in the spring 2005 and the goals should then be to:

- “Recognise and identify priorities of the European Space Programme, including estimation of possible costs;
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of the EU, ESA and other stakeholders of the European Space Programme as well as the relevant funding sources;
- Identify industrial policy principles and funding principles related to the implementation of the European Space Programme.”

More details on the Council results:

http://www.eu2004.nl/default.asp?CMS_TCP=tcpAsset&id=15029AAF7CB24D9E91BEBC3A37B50942X1X39207X21

The relevant website of the Dutch Presidency:

http://www.eu2004.nl/default.asp?CMS_ITEM=22D520DA96244C1D96A0C2D619080E63X1X43716

FP7 timetable is getting clearer... or is it not?

Discussions on FP7 are starting. National position papers on what FP7 should be are flowing into Brussels daily (see articles above), but when will the Commission actually publish its formal proposal on FP7 and what are the further steps ahead?

The table below provides some insight. However, it is important to note that this information is provisional. Many stumble blocks can still come in the way of the Commission’s plans, the main one being the discussion on the EU’s future financial framework.

From the signals given by the European Commission (for example in its Communication on the Future of EU Research) we know that the goal for FP7 is to increase activities both in present and new fields (security and space research, basic research, technology platforms). To finance these very ambitious goals, the Commission would like to see the EU’s research budget doubled for the period of 2006-2010. Such an increase would almost necessarily require raising the overall budget of the EU for this period.

Although the EU has a yearly budget, a global financial framework (the so-called “financial perspectives”) is agreed upon every 7 years. The debate on the financial perspective always involves painstaking discussions on Member States’ contributions to the budget. Six countries including Germany, France and the UK have already signalled that they are not ready to consider an increase in their contributions for 2007-2013, the next period of the financial perspectives. To realise its goals the Commission was considering an increase of the EU budget ceiling to 1.14% of the EU’s total Gross National Income (GNI). Given that the current ceiling of the EU budget lies at 1% of GNI, one can already predict hard negotiations to the run up of June 2005, the date by which EU leaders would like to find an agreement.

The fact that the budget for FP7 is dependent on highly political and potentially difficult decisions has two major consequences:

1. The discussions on what FP7 should be might be void if the budget allowed for by the financial perspectives block any budgetary change;
2. A decision on what parts of FP7 can effectively be implemented might have to be postponed until Member States agree on the financial perspectives 2007-2013 which is hoped to happen in June 2005 -but might take longer!

Date	FP7	Financial Perspectives
02.2004		First Commission Communication
06.2004	Commission Communication „Science and Technology, the key to Europe’s future“	
07.2004		Second Commission Communication
01.2005	<i>First Commission Proposal (internal version)</i>	
02-03.2005	<i>Internal exchange of opinion and interservice consultation within Commission</i>	
20 April 2005	<i>Adoption by Commission of formal FP7 proposal</i>	
06.2005		Agreement at European Council
Summer 2005	<i>Possibly amended Proposal</i>	
Autumn 2005	<i>First Reading in European Parliament</i>	
Winter 2005/06	<i>Common Position of Council</i>	
Spring 2006	<i>Second Reading in European Parliament and Council</i>	
Spring 2006	<i>Adoption by Commission of proposal on Specific Programmes</i>	
Summer 2006	<i>Decision on FP7</i>	
End 2006	<i>First Calls under FP7</i>	

Public consultation on a new EU Framework Programme for Competitiveness and Innovation

What had emerged only very vaguely during the summer and early autumn months has now become more concrete: the European Commission is preparing for a new framework programme for competitiveness and innovation, CIP, to run from 2007 until 2013. In this context, the Commission has now published a consultation paper presenting the broad ideas of this new programme.

The paper starts by summarising the main challenges which the EU is currently facing (e.g. promoting information and communication technologies as means to improve productivity; helping SMEs getting access to financial resources; increasing the entrepreneurial spirit in the EU Member States). The Commission argues that “the market will provide most responses to these challenges”, but that some market failures can best be tackled by public interventions. These could occur on the levels of “regulatory framework”, “policy shaping and definition of strategies” and “Community programmes”. It is in this latter area that CIP - together with the framework programme for research and technological development and the education and training programmes - should occupy a visible place.

CIP would integrate the multi-annual programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, in particular SMEs (MAP), the programme on Intelligent Energy for Europe, certain Innovation Actions from the RTD Framework Programme, activities on the promotion and demonstration of environmental technologies covered by the Life programme; and the ICT focussed programmes Modinis, eContent, and eTEN.

The objective of CIP would be “to unlock and facilitate action in certain targeted areas”, embracing four objectives:

1. encourage innovation and the sustainable use of resources,
2. ensure the mastery and best use of ICT,
3. improve SMEs’ access to finance,
4. economic and administrative reform for more entrepreneurship and a better business environment.

The Commission suggests a wide range of instruments for the implementation of CIP, like preparatory measures for policy and strategy definition; projects (incl. pilot activities to encourage

technology transfer); Community financial instruments (e.g. loans by the European Investment Fund); support for local networks (comparable to Euro-Info-Centres, etc.); and studies, conferences and awareness-raising activities.

This new framework programme would fit nicely into the new “Knowledge for Growth Pact”, which the new Commissioner for research, Janez Potočnik, launched in late November. In the triangle of creation, dissemination and use of knowledge, the EU framework programmes in research, education and innovation should create relevant synergies.

All interested stakeholders are invited to comment on these first ideas for CIP; deadline of the consultation is 7 February 2005.

“Stakeholder consultation on the framework Programme for Competitiveness and Innovation (CIP)” by DG Enterprise, including the consultation paper, an internet form for feedback and further relevant links:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/consultation.htm

Commissioner Potočnik’s speech introducing the „Knowledge for Growth Pact“ can be found under:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/490&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Commission launches a debate on its future Information Society strategy

On 19 November, the European Commission published a communication on “Challenges for the European Information Society beyond 2005”. There it identifies the issues it deems essential in terms of the future of information and communication technologies (ICT) in Europe such as: content and services in ICTs, eInclusion and citizenship, Skills and work or ICT as an industrial sector.

Given that the current ICT strategy of the EU (eEurope 2005) will come to an end next year, this paper launches a consultation and debate on the achievements so far and the measures to be taken in the future. In 2005, the Commission plans to consult stakeholders and institutions on its future plans (a consultation has been opened until 16 January 2005 on the website below) and will consolidate results into a new policy agenda by next year.

The text of the Communication can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/doc/all_about/new_chall_en_adopted.doc

The public consultation can be accessed under:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/all_about/2010_challenges/index_en.htm

Forum established on university-based research

This autumn, the European Commission created a forum of experts to help define an EU framework for EU policies “promoting the necessary changes and reforms for universities in building the European Research Area (ERA) and achieving the Lisbon and Barcelona goals”.

This group, which represents a follow-up measure to the “Europe of Knowledge 2020” Conference that took place in Liège in April 2004, will meet 4 times (the first two meetings took place in September and December) and will publish a report on its conclusions by the summer 2005. The content of this report will without any doubt be fed into the FP7 discussions.

More details about the mandate, members and meetings of this Forum can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2004/univ/followup_en.html

EURAB advocates again for more attention to Social Sciences and Humanities

In January 2004, the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) had published a range of recommendations advocating for measures to create “an appropriate framework in which to

develop a European policy towards the social sciences and humanities in the context of building the European Research Area”.

However, EURAB felt that during the discussions in the last months on the remaining part of FP6 and on the future proposal on FP7 “Social Sciences and Humanities”, including “Science and Society”, do not yet seem to be given required attention or due consideration”.

For this reason, EURAB decided to voice its concern that focus seems to be only geared towards the natural sciences, technological development and innovation and to advocate again for more and coherent action with respect to Social Sciences and Humanities.

The follow-up to the EURAB Recommendation on January 2004 can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/eurab/index_en.html

6th Framework Programme (FP6)

How to write a Good Gender Action Plan for FP6 projects

This autumn, the European Commission’s Women and Science Unit compiled a document called “Gender Action Plan in Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence – A compendium of best practices”. The goal of this document is to give guidance to proposers and help them find ideas to elaborate actions and activities to promote gender equality within their research project.

It is important to note that gender equality in EU research projects goes beyond the encouragement of women’s participation. It is also important that any gender aspect linked to the content of the research and with consequences on the scientific excellence of the project is taken into account.

Besides explanations on what the Commission expects from proposers, the document also gathered good examples of Gender Action Plans from FP6 projects that have been financed in a wide range of thematic priorities.

http://www.swisscore.org/Policy%20docs/general_research/gap_best_practices_112004.pdf

Guidance note on how to launch and manage competitive calls within NoEs and IPs

On 26 October, the Commission published a guidance note for the attention of Integrated Projects (IPs) and Networks of Excellence (NoEs) coordinators who are planning to launch competitive calls within their projects. Indeed, in FP6, coordinators of IPs and NoEs have the possibility to reserve a part of their budget for specific tasks to be carried out by contractors to be selected after the start of the project. This guidance note provides insight into the preparation and management of the call procedure to select these contractors.

ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/fp6/docs/guidance_note_en.pdf

Instrument-specific guides for the proposers in competitive calls are also available from:

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm>

Financial guidelines for FP6 available in German

The Helmholtz Association has taken the initiative to have the financial guidelines for FP6 translated into German. Copies can be ordered from: bruessel@helmoltz.de. The price is 30 € for universities and research institutes and 60 € for private firms and individuals.

Any questions on mobility activities?

The Commission has updated its set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Marie Curie Schemes. It can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/information/faq_en.html

Science and Society Forum to be organised in Brussels in March 2005

The European Commission is preparing a large Science and Society conference, which will be held in Brussels from 9 to 11 March 2005. The main themes of the conference will be 1) Science and Society and the Lisbon Strategy, 2) Science, Technology and Democracy, 3) Towards a culture of communication of science in society and 4) Fostering diversity and inclusiveness in research.

A preliminary programme as well as a registration form can be found below:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2005/forum2005/index_en.htm

Publications

Innovation Scoreboard 2004 is available online

On 24 November, the Commission had published its Innovation Scoreboard 2004. Its results are now available online under the link below.

Overall, the findings of the scoreboard show that the innovation gap between the EU and the USA is not reducing. Although most participating countries are seen to be “catching up” or “moving up” (positive trends though), some of Europe’s leaders in terms of innovation are seen to “lose momentum” (e.g. Finland and Sweden) and some are “falling further behind”. On the 30 countries participating, 9 show a negative trend, 1 remains the same and 20 show a positive trend.

The Innovation Scoreboard also includes Switzerland, which is doing well, placing itself on the 5th place of the “Summary Innovation Index”.

More details can be found under:

<http://trendchart.cordis.lu/scoreboards/scoreboard2004/index.cfm>

EU scoreboard for industrial research 2004

This Scoreboard drawn up by the Institute for Prospective Technology Studies in Sevilla (a Joint Research Centre of the European Commission) lists the “research investments of the top 500 EU and top 500 non-EU corporate R&D investors, calculated at the consolidated group level (i.e. companies whose ultimate parent is registered either inside or outside the EU), based on annual audited company reports and accounts published up to 31 July 2004”.

This Scoreboard thus provides for comparisons between companies, sectors, and geographical areas, as well as gives a picture of the competitive situation of EU firms in the global R&D environment. It shows a worrying trend as the overall investment in R&D of these EU 500 firms has dropped by 2% last year.

The scoreboard can be found under:

<http://eu-iriscoreboard.jrc.es/index.htm>

Guide on how to successfully communicate research and results

In order to help project coordinators of EU projects -but it can be useful for researchers working on projects from other sources too- to deal with increasing requirements to better communicate on their research and disseminate their results, the Commission has recently published a guide as well as a website dedicated to communication for researchers.

This “Guide to successful communications” addresses issues such as:

- How to define key messages;
- How to establish target audiences;
- How to select appropriate modes of communication;
- How to tailor information;
- How to build good relationships with the media;

- How to maximise exposure of results;
- Which external resources to make use of.

The guide and related website can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/science-communication/index_en.htm

EU “dialogue workshops” in the Social Sciences and Humanities

Since 2000, the Commission’s Unit for Socio-economic research has been organising “dialogue workshops” with the aim to facilitate the exchange of views and information between researchers in social sciences and humanities and policymakers, business, non-governmental organisations and citizens.

They have already taken place on a number of topics and the report below summarises the discussions and findings of the workshops that took place between 2000 and 2003.

Report “The Dialogue Workshops: An Experiment in Citizens Knowledge” under:

http://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/citizens/docs/dialogue_en.pdf

More information about future and past workshops:

http://www.cordis.lu/citizens/dial_works.htm

ERA-NET project synopsis on projects selected in second call for proposals

As it had done with the first series of ERA-NET projects, the Commission has published a synopsis giving details on all projects that have been financed under the second ERA-NET call for proposals closed in March 2004. Out of 117 projects submitted, the Commission selected 23 (18 Coordination Actions and 5 Specific Support Actions). Details of the coordinators and partners are also mentioned for each project.

The call for proposals that closed in October 2004 is still being processed by the Commission services. Further deadlines planned are 2 March 2005 and 4 October 2005.

Project synopsis for ERA-NET second batch:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/pdf/era-net_serie2_en.pdf

ERA-NET website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/coordination/era-net_en.html

NEST publishes synopsis of projects financed in 2003

NEST (New and Emerging Science and Technology) is a part of FP6 dedicated to new and emerging areas that offer real potential and that cut across or lie outside the thematic priority areas funded elsewhere in FP6. In spite of having only a modest budget of 215 million euro at its disposal, NEST is proving to be a successful experiment. According to Cordis, “the number of projects proposed in response to calls for proposals has been high, top researchers are participating in the programme’s projects, the research community has applauded its user-friendliness, while project evaluators, independent observers and the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) have commended the initiative and called for a higher budget for such research in the next framework programme.”

Amidst such praise, NEST has just published a synopsis on the projects funded under NEST in 2003. The synopsis can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/nest/pdf/nest_project_factsheets2003a.pdf

Conclusions of the Brain Gain Conference (Den Haag, 29-30 September 2004)

The Dutch Presidency has recently published the official conclusions it drew from the Brain Gain conference it had organised in Den Haag this autumn. These conclusions, which have been presented to the Council and Commission, insist on the following points:

- Europe needs to attract more talents from all over the world and remove barriers to the mobility of these badly needed resource;
- Europe needs to make careers in research and development more attractive in order to motivate its own youth to follow this path but also to make Europe a more attractive place to do science.

The conclusions can be found under:

<http://www.braingain-instruments.nl/docs/BrainGainConclusionsfinalversion.doc>

◆ **SwissCore Küche**

Event to present “Swiss Houses” concept in Brussels

Claudio Fischer, Head of International Affairs at the Swiss Science Agency and former Science Counsellor at the Swiss Mission to the EU, was in Brussels on 17 November to explain how and why Switzerland is creating outposts for Swiss science in the US and Asia. The Swiss Houses are a unique and flexible concept that generated much interest from the Brussels science policy community at a time where the EU is looking at possible ways to better (inter-) connect its scientific diaspora.

We were pleased to see that this event, which was jointly organised by the Swiss Mission to the EU and SwissCore, attracted around 80 persons and proved to be a very good way to keep Swiss best practices present in Brussels.



Martina Weiss (right), Head of SwissCore, moderated the discussion following the presentation by Claudio Fischer (left).

Cordis Article about the Swiss Science Luncheon:

http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:22940

SwissCore Seminar 2004 – 18-19 November 2004

With around 40 participants, the SwissCore Seminar was another highlight of SwissCore’s November activities. We were happy to see that not only the Swiss information network on EU research programmes and our Swiss base SNSF and OFES were very well represented but that our seminar also attracted science actors from other organisations such as the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology, the Swiss Science and Technology Council, the Department of Defence or the Swiss Academy of Sciences.

As always, the SwissCore Seminar aimed at giving its audience an in-depth view of the latest developments in EU research policy and programmes. Given the current discussions, this year’s seminar was centred around the preparations of FP7 and new topics that are coming up in this context. The presentations on the current views of the Commission on FP7, on the establishment of a European Research Council, on the concept of Technology Platforms and on a Security research activities were some of the highlights of the two-day event.

The programme, all the speakers' presentations (.ppt) and some pictures can be found on our website:

http://www.swisscore.org/fs_events.htm



Presentation by Clara de la Torre, European Commission, on the current state of FP7



Beat Butz, SNSF and Ingrid Kissling-Näf, Swiss Academy of Sciences



Presentation by Peter Kerr, European Commission, on Technology Platforms



Cédric Höllmüller, Daniela di Mare, Kurt Kamber and Maddalena Tognola, Euresearch

