

# SwissCore Synopsis Research

## April-May 2006

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### **The shaping of the European Institute of Technology**

After the Commission's Communication of 22 February proposing the creation of a European Institute of Technology (EIT), the European Council agreed at their meeting of 23-24 March on the general principle of such an Institute and asked the Commission to refine the project in a further Communication, to be presented at the European Council meeting in June.

The proposal of the Commission foresaw the structure of the EIT to be composed of a Governing Board with an attached management and administrative structure, responsible for strategic and budgetary matters, as well as of "Knowledge Communities" composed of networks of teams detached to the EIT but working at existing institutions on selected strategic topics (See Synopsis Research 2006/1).

This proposal was received with criticism by many observers. One of the concerns was that the detachment of the best research groups to the EIT would weaken the universities. Moreover, since the source of the financing of the EIT was not defined in the Communication, it was feared that the necessary funds could be diverted from the FP7 budget, for example from the European Research Council. The broad focus of the planned institute on research, education and innovation was also a matter of concern, as it seemed to be just one more initiative of the Commission to globally address the competitiveness problem without being properly focussed on the real problems.

To address these concerns, the Commission invited stakeholders to a meeting on 18 May, to gather input for a second Communication on EIT. In addition, on 30 May, the Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) published a position paper on EIT. The contentious points of the different positions include the following:

- The main focus of the future institute should be on innovation, since it is the area where the biggest added value can be obtained and which would be the most complementary to the activities of the ERC. This view is shared by many universities and by MEP Chatzimarkakis, who sees the EIT more as a gigantic technology transfer office for the European Technology Platforms.
- The Governing Board of the EIT should be independent, in a way similar to the Scientific Council of the ERC and should be assisted by an Advisory Council composed of representatives of academia, industry and other stakeholders.
- Whereas for the Commission and the ERC Scientific Council, the Knowledge Communities should mainly consist of teams from universities, other exponents would rather see a stronger involvement of industry.
- The question of human resources is still very much debated – there could be different degrees of commitment to the EIT, from direct employment, different types of detachment (with or without "return clause"), up to dual affiliation. The ERC Scientific Council supports the latter model, based on the model of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.
- The relationship between the Knowledge Communities and the EIT has to be clarified. The Knowledge Communities could be own legal entities, or the EIT could organise itself in a "bottom-up" way between the Communities. This question would be crucial for the award of degrees and for human resources aspects.
- The EIT should not award undergraduate degrees, but should concentrate on postgraduate education, a view shared by many universities and the ERC Scientific Council.
- Concerning the budget of the EIT, the Commission expects that the EIT will need considerable public funding at the beginning, with progressively more private funding coming in. According to Commission officials, funds will not be diverted from the research, education or innovation programmes but could be liberated in the frame of the revision of the Financial Perspectives in 2008. The ERC Scientific Council foresees around 20 Knowledge Communities with €20 million per year for each of them, leading to a rough total of €0.5 billion per year, not including administrative costs. For other exponents, the budget of the EIT should come mainly from private sources.
- The ERC Scientific Council would like to change the name to European Technological Institute (ETI), to avoid the association with the MIT.



The Commission's revised maximal budgets for the Community Programmes can be found here: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/213&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

### **Intense debate on the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme proposal**

After the Council's "partial general approach" on the FP7 proposal last November, any substantial discussion in the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of Ministers has been blocked for months by the absence of a budgetary frame for the programme. After the Inter-Institutional Agreement of 4 April, the maximum budget for FP7 is now known (see article above). Following this agreement, the Committee for Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) of the European Parliament adopted the report of MEP Jerzy Buzek on FP7 on 30 May. The discussion had been quite intense, since no less than 1700 amendments had been submitted. The amendments adopted by the Committee concerned mainly the following points:

- Support to SMEs: if the SME-specific instruments of FP7 should become oversubscribed, MEPs want the financing of other instruments to be redirected towards these.
- Autonomy of the ERC: the Committee wants the ERC to be set up as an Executive Agency only for a short transition period, after which it should become an independent structure, to be put in place after an independent review of the ERC in 2008. The Commission is asked to present a proposal - underlying the co-decision procedure - for such a "permanent, legally independent structure".
- Ethical issues: the Committee supports the continuation of the ethical rules applied in FP6. The use of embryonic stem cells should be subject to strict licensing and control in accordance with the laws of the involved Member States.
- Thematic priorities: in line with the Council, the Committee is for the splitting of the Thematic Priority "Space & Security" into two separate ones.
- Review of the programme: due to its increased duration, the Framework Programme should be evaluated not just once in 2010, but twice, namely in 2009 and 2011. In the second phase, the research fields should be evaluated in the light of scientific progress, specifically in ethically delicate subjects.

One of the main remaining discussion points concerns the budgetary repartition within FP7. The ITRE Committee wants to redistribute the extra €300 million for FP7 (see article above) in a different way than the Council of Ministers, which agreed on the budgetary repartition at the Competitiveness Council meeting of 29-30 May. Although the divergences are rather small, they are spread throughout the Framework Programme budget. The different budget lines in million € and real prices are as follows:

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| a) <u>Cooperation programme</u> :   | Council 32,315; EP 32,492 |
| - Health  | Council 6,000; EP 6,134   |
| - Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology                                       | Council 1,935; EP 1,935   |
| - Information and Communication technologies                                | Council 9,120; EP 9,020   |
| - Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies | Council 3,505; EP 3,467   |
| - Energy  | Council 2,300; EP 2,385   |
| - Environment (including Climate Change)                                    | Council 1,900; EP 1,886   |
| - Transport (including Aeronautics)   | Council 4,195; EP 4,150   |
| - Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities                                | Council 610; EP 657       |
| - Space   | Council 1,430; EP 1429    |
| - Security  | Council 1320; EP 1429     |
| (b) <u>Ideas programme (ERC)</u> :  | Council 7,460; EP 7,560   |
| (c) <u>People programme (Marie Curie Actions)</u> :                         | Council 4,728; EP 4,777   |
| (d) <u>Capacities programme</u> :   | Council 4, 267; EP 3,944  |
| - Research infrastructures  | Council 1,900; EP 1,708   |
| - Research for SMEs   | Council 1,336; EP 1,328   |

- Knowledge regions Council 126; EP 126
- Research potential Council 370; EP 320
- science in society Council 280; EP 329
- Coherent development of research policies Council 70
- International cooperation Council 185; EP 133

(e) Non-nuclear activities of the JCR: Council 1,751; EP 1,751

These differences will have to be settled in negotiations between the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, which should take place in July, after the plenary vote of the EP on the FP7 proposal on 15 June. The Commission will also present a revised FP7 proposal integrating the proposed changes, most likely on 28 June.

The two other FP7 key legal documents, the Specific Programmes and the Rules for Participation, are currently being discussed in Parliament and Council. The report of the rapporteur on the Rules, MEP Busquin, is scheduled for adoption by the ITRE Committee on 13 July, and a vote in the EP plenum is planned on 5 September. The Specific Programmes are debated in Council, as they do not follow the co-decision procedure (the Parliament is only consulted).

A rapid second reading during the autumn of the FP7 proposal together with the other two key documents should then allow for a timely start of the Framework Programme on 1 January 2007.

The report of the rapporteur, MEP Buzek, and the complete list of amendments can be found under:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/organes/itre/itre\\_20060515\\_1830.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/organes/itre/itre_20060515_1830.htm)

### ***FP7 Rules for Participation: proposal for a new model for the reimbursement of indirect costs***

In our last edition, we had presented a summary of the main changes foreseen by the FP7 Rules for Participation as they are currently discussed by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers. Since then, there has been an interesting development with regard to the reimbursement of indirect (overhead) costs in FP7.

First and foremost, following animated discussions on the consequences for public research bodies and universities of the changes in the reimbursement of costs system, the European Commission has elaborated an attractive alternative for organisations which have until now participated under the Additional Cost model. According to the proposal, participating institutions that cannot identify their indirect costs will have two options under FP7:

- 1) Use a flat-rate that still needs to be determined (its is currently still under discussion whether 20-30% of the total EU contribution minus subcontracting) or
- 2) Use of “the best possible approximation” of their institution’s indirect costs.

This second point would mean that institutions could define themselves the level of indirect costs approximately incurred (based on their experience and averages) and be reimbursed that amount by the European Commission for all their FP7 projects. This overhead rate would have to be defined once and for all at the beginning of FP7 and could not be revised unless major changes happen in the institution. An institution having chosen this approach would then not be allowed to go back to a flat-rate scheme. For larger institutions or universities, the level of overhead rate would have to be broken down and different institutes and faculties would need to each calculate their own level of overhead, given the possibility for massive differences between departments. Should an FP7 research project be audited by the European Commission, the approximated overhead rate defined and applied will of course also be checked.

These approximated overhead levels would have to be certified by an auditor (internal or external) before this model can be used. Although this information is still not final, institutions which currently apply the Additional Cost model should start thinking about the possible application of this model and the certification of their approximated indirect costs levels.

Please do not hesitate to contact SwissCore if you have any questions about this possibility.

### **European Research Council (ERC): strategy of the Scientific Council publicised**

At its meeting on 26-27 April 2006 in Vienna, the Scientific Council of ERC finalised and published its ERC launch strategy. The Scientific Council's role is to decide on the scientific strategy, monitor and control the quality and performance and establish a communication strategy for the ERC. The Scientific Council decided that the ERC should have two main funding instruments:

- ERC Starting Grant: to support the first step of young excellent researchers towards an independent career
- ERC Advanced Grant: for projects of individual teams led by experienced investigators at all stages of their career.

According to the Scientific Council's strategy note, the "ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant (ERC Starting Grant)" will provide for up to 5 years of funding to investigators who are working, or intend to work, in the EU or Associated Countries and have obtained their PhD less than 10 years before applying. The grant will be at pre-set discrete levels, between €100'000 and €400'000 per year, depending on team and project type. This amount will cover salary costs of the investigator and of team members, as well as the purchase of equipment. A real financial commitment from the host institute will be expected, in a spirit of shared responsibility; thus the overhead costs will be limited to 20% of the direct costs of research. It is planned that around 200 of such grants could be awarded annually; for a total amount of €300-350 million per year. For the evaluation, the excellence of the project as well as that of the candidate will be taken into account. The basis of the peer review evaluation process will be a structure of high-level panels. Only one application will be possible per person and per year, and at least one year must elapse before reapplication. However, the ERC Starting Grant holders will be able to apply to the ERC Advanced Grants during the last year of their Starting Grant.

The Scientific Council wants to give priority to the ERC Starting Grant scheme; therefore this action is scheduled to start as early as January 2007. The ERC Advanced Grant scheme will be phased in during the course of next year and will be the scope of a future strategy note.

At the end of the same meeting, the Scientific Council published an open call with a deadline for applications and nominations on 31 May 2006 for the position of Secretary General of the ERC, whose role will be to lead the strategy of the ERC and to support the Scientific Council.

The ERC launch strategy of the Scientific Council and the strategy note on the ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant can be found here:

[http://europa.eu.int/erc/pdf/launch-strategy\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/erc/pdf/launch-strategy_en.pdf)

[http://europa.eu.int/erc/pdf/sir-grant-strategy\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/erc/pdf/sir-grant-strategy_en.pdf)

### **New website for the European Research Council**

A new web portal for the Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) was set up by the Commission services in the first week of May. Besides the strategy of the Scientific Council and the details of the first funding scheme for young researchers (see article above), the site displays the mission statement, organisation and history of the Scientific Council of the ERC, as well as the list of its members and their biographies. The dates and places of the next Scientific Council meetings are also given.

The website of the Scientific Council of the ERC can be found under: <http://erc.europa.eu>

### **Consultation on socio-economic sciences in FP7**

On 26 May, the Commission has launched a consultation on the draft research agenda for the thematic priority "socio-economic sciences and the humanities" in FP7. With this consultation, the Commission seeks invited parties to provide comments on the research agenda document that lays out the planned activities in the following topics:

- Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society

- Combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European perspective
- Major trends in society and their implications
- Europe in the world
- The citizen in the European Union
- Socio-economic and scientific indicators
- Foresight activities

The consultation will be open until the end of June 2006 and can be completed online. The link to the consultation can be found under:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=SSHinFP7>

The draft research agenda can be found here:

<ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/citizens/docs/draft-research-agenda-theme-8.pdf>

### **Intellectual property management under FP7**

As reported in the last Synopsis, the proposed FP7 Rules for Participation foresee a change in the rules governing the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). A summary of the Commission's intentions regarding the IPR provisions for FP7 can be found in a recent article of the IPR Helpdesk Newsletter (see link below). In this article, Commission officials provide explanations on the role generally played by IPR in Framework Programme projects as well as an analysis of the problems encountered during FP6 and the changes proposed for FP7. Given that the FP7 Rules for Participation are still debated in the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, this paper should be considered informal and provisional. Nevertheless, it gives a good overview and clarifies the intentions behind a number of proposed changes.

The article "Intellectual Property (IPR) management in FP7" projects can be found under:

[http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/newsletter/25/pdf/EN/N25\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/newsletter/25/pdf/EN/N25_EN.pdf)

## ***EU Innovation Policy***

### **The European Parliament concludes its first reading on the CIP**

On 1 June, the European Parliament (EP) adopted the report of MEP Jorge Chatzimarkakis on the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). This vote closes the first reading of the Parliament on this programme (see also Synopsis Research 2006/1), which brings together three existing EU programmes and new actions which share the overarching objectives of enhancing competitiveness and innovation. The total budget for the CIP, which will run from 2007 to 2013, is €3.6 billion. The three programmes of the CIP and their respective budgets for 2007-2013 are:

- The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (MAP) (€2166 million, including €430 million for eco-innovation and €1000 million for the financial instruments managed by the European Investment Fund)
- The ICT Policy Support Programme (€728 million)
- The Intelligent Energy-Europe Programme (€727 million)

The text adopted by Parliament states that the Commission will publish a user-friendly User Manual presenting the general principles for participation in a clear and simple way, in order to facilitate the participation of SMEs. More importance was also given to eco-innovation, and the monitoring and evaluation aspects of the implementation of the CIP were enhanced.

Following this adoption by the EP, the amended CIP proposal is now going to the Council of Ministers, which had already agreed unanimously on a partial general approach for this programme. Moreover, according to Chatzimarkakis, an agreement between the Council and himself on the 145 compromise amendments of the EP should allow the CIP to be adopted in a single reading. This adoption by Council is expected in the next few weeks, allowing a timely start of the programme on 1 January 2007.

The final report of MEP Jorge Chatzimarkakis and can be found under:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2006-0180+0+DOC+PDF+V0/EN&L=EN&LEVEL=0&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>

### **Report on innovation evaluation**

At the request of the European Commission's DG Enterprise, a High-Level Expert Working Group published a report at the end of March 2006 on the evaluation of innovation policies of seven countries and regions. This study identified three different cultures of evaluation:

- The most advanced (Finland, Scotland, and Sweden) routinely use evaluation as a tool to improve their innovation programmes and support policies.
- In the second group (Germany), evaluation is used as a learning tool, but is limited to the assessment of programme design and delivery, rather than being built into the policy drafting steps.
- In the third set of cases, (Hungary, Spain, Wallonia) evaluation is regarded as important but has yet to be developed or implemented.

One problem identified by the report is that evaluations are often performed once a programme has been completed; a combination of ex ante and ex post evaluations will give far more rigorous results. In addition, it is sometimes hard to single out the effects of certain policies in the context of many intertwined policy measures, a phenomenon the report refers to as "overdetermination".

In order for the study to have effects beyond those usually associated with conventional reports, the High Level Expert Working Group prepared two additional outputs:

- A Practical Guide for Evaluating Innovation Programmes called "SMART INNOVATION", presented as a user-friendly question-and-answer handbook, with the aim of helping to build a culture of evaluation.
- A Pilot Initiative establishing the networks in the domain of innovation evaluation and a methodology to develop self-assessment and peer-review of evaluation practices, amongst others measures.

The report can be found under:

[ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/innovation-policy/studies/smeip\\_finalreport\\_master2.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/innovation-policy/studies/smeip_finalreport_master2.pdf)

The SMART INNOVATION guide can be found under:

[ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/innovation-policy/studies/sar1\\_smartinnovation\\_master2.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/innovation-policy/studies/sar1_smartinnovation_master2.pdf)

### **Innovation in public procurement**

One of the key measures proposed in the Aho report published earlier this year (see Synopsis Research 2006/1) to boost innovation in Europe was the creation of a market for innovative goods and services, for example through the ambitious use of innovative public procurement. A study published in April by Germany's Fraunhofer Institute on behalf of DG Enterprise assessed the public procurement systems in 19 countries, the EU-15, Australia, Canada, Norway and the USA.

The aim of the study is to provide examples of good practices for concrete procurement activities; however, in many cases, the Fraunhofer Institute finds that a generalised policy with strategic objectives is lacking. Based on its analysis, the study highlights two criteria for successful policies: the first one, intelligence-gathering, requires an extensive user-producer interaction and interactive learning, and the second one, risk-sharing, allows a prototype to be tested by the procurer before the full implementation of the system. A complex project can be divided into separate components, for each of which several suppliers will offer solutions and work together with the procurer to develop an innovative and well-suited solution.

Innovative public procurement is particularly important in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) field. An ICT ad-hoc expert group convened by the Commission came to similar conclusions than the Fraunhofer study and presented a model of "pre-commercial procurement of innovation" in a report that was presented on 23 March. In this model, potential suppliers present ideas for solutions, and the selected suppliers work together with the procurer through all pre-commercial stages of R&D, and therefore have a competitive advantage in the commercial phase, where other suppliers can also present full solutions. According to the

authors, this model ensures that the risk is shared between the supplier and the procurer, but also that this pre-commercial public procurement is conforming to WTO and State Aid Rules. Such an approach would foster public investment in R&D and lead to more innovative products on the market.

Fraunhofer's study on innovative public procurement can be found under:

[ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/innovation-policy/studies/full\\_study.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/innovation-policy/studies/full_study.pdf)

The report of the ad-hoc expert group can be found here:

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/research/key\\_docs/documents/procurement.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/research/key_docs/documents/procurement.pdf)

## **EU Research Policy**

### **The Commission's recommendations for modernizing European universities**

In a Communication from 10 May, the Commission laid out its plans for modernising the European universities to enable them to make their full contribution to the Lisbon strategy. This document, jointly presented by Education Commissioner Figel and Research Commissioner Potocnik, responded to a request made at the informal European Council meeting in Hampton Court in October 2005. Despite their enormous potential, the European universities suffer from various rigidities and hindrances. To overcome these, the Commission proposes changes in nine areas, which cover the European universities' delivery of education, research activities, and potential as innovation drivers:

1. Break down the barriers around universities in Europe, e.g. by boosting the proportion of students spending a semester abroad or in industry.
2. Ensure real autonomy and accountability for universities. New internal governance systems have to be put in place and universities need to overcome their fragmentation into faculties, departments, etc. This has to go in parallel with full institutional accountability to society.
3. Provide incentives for partnerships with the business community. Structured partnerships with SMEs and other businesses will improve the sharing of research results as well as favouring the transfer of graduates between university and industry.
4. Provide students with the right mix of skills for the labour market through innovative curricula and teaching methods. An entrepreneurial mindset should be stimulated amongst students and researchers. The challenge of lifelong learning should be faced by universities.
5. Make funding work more efficiently in education and research and reduce the funding gap. Funding should be focused on relevant outputs rather than inputs; a right mix of core, competitive and output-based funding is required.
6. Enhance interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity by focussing less on scientific disciplines and more on research areas (e.g. "life sciences" instead of "biology") both in teaching and research.
7. Share knowledge with society by reinforcing the dialogue with all stakeholders through broader communication strategies (e.g. conferences, "open house") and by providing lifelong learning opportunities.
8. Reward excellence at the highest level. Competition should be increased, so that universities are in a position to recruit the best academics and researchers through open, flexible and transparent procedures.
9. Make European education and research more visible and attractive in the world by making European degrees more easily recognised outside Europe and by developing more structures international cooperation.

To achieve these goals, all sources of EU funding should be mobilised for the modernisation of universities, including the different programmes in the field of research, education and innovation, as well as the Structural Funds and loans from the European Investment Bank. On top of this, the Commission stands ready to support the modernisation process of European universities through a process of identifying and sharing good practice. With this contribution of the Commission, it is now up to the Member States, but also to the universities themselves, to make these goals a reality.

The Communication of the Commission can be found here:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comuniv2006\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comuniv2006_en.pdf)

### **The role of philanthropy in European research**

In a report published in January 2006, an expert group appointed by the Commission examined the role played by philanthropic foundations in supporting research in Europe. The authors formulate a set of clear and practical recommendations to fully realise the potential of foundations promoting research for public benefit. In this report, research foundations are defined as non-profit private entities, independent of government and industry, serving public goals; such foundations have a strong potential to support high-risk research, or research in not well investigated fields (“orphan research”). The authors find that the existing level of funds devoted by foundations to research in Europe remains low, both relative to governmental or industrial investment into research, as well as compared to the funds devoted by foundations in the US.

The recommendations made by the experts are targeted at a number of players, not least at the foundations themselves, and include:

- To increase the visibility and information about the role and the importance of philanthropy as a source of funds for research;
- To improve the tax and regulatory environment for foundations;
- To enhance mechanisms for leveraging funds for research, e.g. by introducing a system of “matching funds”;
- To promote good governance, transparency and accountability practices of foundations;
- To encourage universities and research institutes to become more proactive in order to attract additional funds for research;
- To foster a more conducive EU-wide environment for foundations to allow internationalisation of the foundations’ activities.

The most immediate goal set forth by the report is to establish a “European Forum on Philanthropy and Research Funding” in order to share experience, review best practices and promote co-operation among foundations funding research. The European Foundation Centre intends to set up and organise such a Forum. The precise modalities of this Forum are still being discussed.

Another immediate action proposed by the report was a series of follow-up conferences, the first of which took place on 27-28 March 2006 in Brussels, bringing together around 200 participants from foundations, universities, industry, European Institutions and public authorities. The discussed issues mirrored the recommendations of the report and strong support was given to the planned Forum. Conference participants also outlined the advantages of a European Foundation Statute; the Commission was encouraged to consider the idea of such a legal statute, as an instrument to promote the cross-border activities of foundations. The next follow-up conference should take place later this year, or in the beginning of 2007.

The report of the expert group can be found under:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download\\_en/rec\\_5\\_7800\\_giving\\_4\\_051018\\_bat.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/rec_5_7800_giving_4_051018_bat.pdf)

### **Towards a European Space Policy**

The European Commission and the European Space Agency (ESA) are currently working on the development of a comprehensive European Space Policy, to be presented in a Communication from the Commission in early 2007. This future policy’s research part will be covered by the new thematic priority “Security and Space” of the Cooperation part in FP7. The Council of Ministers favours the division of this priority into two, which would allow the “Space” part to obtain its own budget, estimated so far at about €1.4 billion for the duration of FP7, or ~€200 million per year. According to the Director General of ESA, Mr. Praet, a large part of this budget would be allocated to the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme. This initiative of the EU, developed in partnership with ESA, will combine ground-, sea- and space-based observations to develop an integrated environmental monitoring capability. The total costs of the project amount to €2.3 billion; the part not funded by FP7 being covered by ESA programmes and additional utilisation budgets. The first European-wide GMES services should

be available in 2008, using existing satellites. The ESA's own GMES satellites are to be placed in orbit from 2012 on.

The public applications of GMES were the scope of a conference on 19-20 April in Graz, focussing on how a market for GMES services can be created. In the Graz Declaration adopted at the close of the conference, GMES appears essentially as a public infrastructure for the benefits of European citizens, albeit suited for public-private partnership. It therefore relies on a well identified governance structure to preserve the interests of all involved stakeholders. A European Space Regions Conference will be created to ensure the development of GMES markets. In margin of the meeting, Commissioner Verheugen announced a naming competition for GMES to increase the awareness of young people for this programme, which is also open to Swiss school classes.

The site for the Graz conference and the Graz declaration can be found under:

[http://www.bmvit.gv.at/en/eu\\_rat/innovation/events/space.html](http://www.bmvit.gv.at/en/eu_rat/innovation/events/space.html)

[http://www.bmvit.gv.at/en/eu\\_rat/innovation/downloads/gmes\\_grazdeclaration.pdf](http://www.bmvit.gv.at/en/eu_rat/innovation/downloads/gmes_grazdeclaration.pdf)

### **Draft of the new State Aid Rules for R&D presented**

At the informal Competitiveness Council (Council of Ministers) of 21 April, EU Commissioner for Competition Neelie Kroes presented a draft of the new State Aid rules framework for research, development and innovation (RDI). To prevent distortion of fair market competition, the State Aid rules set the frame of the maximal level of state support a commercial enterprise can receive to perform RDI activities. In the light of the Lisbon goals, a revision of these rules was deemed necessary, to aim for "less but better targeted State Aid" (see also Synopsis Research 2005/4). A stakeholders' consultation on the measures needed for the future State Aid rules to better help addressing the EU's innovation gap was performed last year, the results of which have been incorporated into the present draft, which includes the following novelties:

- First, the list of activities automatically considered as State Aid, i.e. not distorting the market, has been extended to:
  - Project aid and feasibility studies for SMEs up to €5 million
  - Aid for intellectual property costs for SMEs
  - Aid for young innovative undertakings
  - Aid for innovation advisory and support services
  - Aid for the loan of highly qualified personnel
- In addition, the bonuses applicable to the basic aid intensities (100% for fundamental research, 50% for industrial research, 20% for pre-competitive development) have been revised:
  - A distinction has been made for aid given to SMEs between medium-size (+10%) and small size (+15%) industries
  - A top up of 15% may be added for collaboration between undertakings, or with a public research body, or if the results of the project are widely disseminated

These new bonuses will allow the cost reimbursement for SMEs to be increased to 75% in FP7.

The draft has been sent to Member States experts, and the Commission is expected to adopt the new State Aid rules framework by the end of this year.

The draft version of the revised State Aid rules framework can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state\\_aid/others/action\\_plan/rdi\\_frame\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state_aid/others/action_plan/rdi_frame_en.pdf)

### **Increasing the importance of women in research**

The most recent figures of the Commission on women in science and technology ("She-Figures 2006") still show a large disparity between men and women working in research: Although female participation in research is increasing, only 29% of researchers are women across the EU as a whole. Moreover, in higher education, only 15% of women accede to the highest academic rank (professorship); in engineering and technology, the gender imbalance at senior grade is even higher (only 5.8% women).

According to the new report on women in science and technology (“WIST-report”), giving greater importance to the promotion of women in the industrial science and technology sector would enable businesses to improve their economic performance. This report, prepared by a group of twenty company representatives and five socio-economics experts, was presented, together with the aforementioned She-Figures, at a conference on gender policy in industrial research organised on 15 May in Vienna by the Austrian Presidency. Another recommendation made by the WIST-Report is to improve the cooperation between European research projects and gender equality initiatives.

This is one of the goals set forth by the recently launched European Platform for Women Scientists (EPWS). This association is partially financed by a Specific Support Action of FP6 and is designed as a “network of networks” of women scientists across Europe. By acting like a structural link between women scientists and policymakers, it will coordinate the EU support activities for women scientists and be directly involved in the research policy debate. Its main activities will include assisting the preparations of FP7 to integrate research by, for and about women, promoting the understanding and inclusion of gender issues in science and supporting the awareness for women in industrial research.

The She-Figures of the Commission can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/she\\_figures\\_2006\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/she_figures_2006_en.pdf)

The WIST report can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/wist\\_report\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/wist_report_final_en.pdf)

More information on the European Platform for Women Scientists can be found under:

<http://www.epws.org>

### **Consultation on transnational research collaboration**

On 17 May, the Commission launched a public consultation on possible measures to improve the transnational research cooperation and knowledge transfer between public research organisations and industry. Despite efforts of the Member States to improve the transfer between industry and public research organisations, only the national perspective was considered in most cases. This fragmentation is often due to differing views on the ownership of publicly-funded research results and complications related to the contractual agreements between public research organisations and industry.

On the basis of the responses to the consultation, the Commission will prepare a communication on how to foster cooperation between industry and public research organisations across borders, in order to facilitate knowledge transfer in Europe.

The consultation on transnational research cooperation is open until 19 July 2006 and can be found here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=KTconsultation>

## **Publications**

### **The European institutions switch their websites to .eu**

As of 9 May 2006, the web addresses of the European institutions will switch from .eu.int to the new .eu domain. This symbolic date commemorates the presentation of the Schuman Plan on 9 May 1950, which led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community four years later. It is also known as “Europe Day”.

The institutions’ current .eu.int addresses will continue to be accessible for a transition period of one year. Many website addresses have also been simplified and grouped under the europa.eu domain.

European Commission: <http://www.ec.europa.eu>

Council of Ministers: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>  
European Parliament: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/>

### **Report on scientific publication system**

The European Commission published a study carried out by a consortium led by Prof. Mathias Dewatripont of the Université Libre de Bruxelles”, which analyses the developments in the field of science publishing and makes recommendations for policy actions in this domain. As scientific journals fulfil the double role of certification and dissemination, the conditions governing the access, exchange, dissemination and archiving of scientific publications should be monitored closely.

The report recommends guaranteeing public access to publicly-funded research, shortly after publication, but also in the long term through non-for-profit digital archives. On the other hand, the future of the scientific publishing industry is also addressed in the report, and recommendations are set forth to promote the development of electronic publications, for example through a reduction of VAT rates.

The Commission has been calling for reactions to this study from interested parties until 1 June 2006 and will organise a conference on this same topic this autumn.

The study can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/scientific-publication-study\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/pdf/scientific-publication-study_en.pdf)

### **Eurostat pocketbook on Science and Technology in Europe**

This new publication from Eurostat provides statistical information on the evolution and composition of science and technology in Europe and its position with regard to partners. The displayed figures, spanning the years 1990 to 2004, are based on a number of data sources available at Eurostat, but also include some data from OECD’s “Main Science and Technology Indicators”. Although it focuses on the 25 EU Member States, data for the IEE members and Switzerland, China, Japan and the US have been included, when available, to allow for international comparisons.

The Eurostat pocketbook can be found here:

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-EA-06-001/EN/KS-EA-06-001-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-EA-06-001/EN/KS-EA-06-001-EN.PDF)

### **Publication on New and Emerging Science and Technology**

As a follow-up to the New and Emerging Science and Technology (NEST) conference of 20-21 September 2005, the Commission has published a brochure giving an overview of the conference, including the seven key messages coming out of the discussions. The NEST initiative was a pilot activity under FP6 to develop investigator-driven research, with the aim of paving the way for the “frontier research” covered by the European Research Council in FP7.

The brochure on the NEST conference can be found under:

[ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/nest/docs/nest\\_brochure\\_20060130.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/nest/docs/nest_brochure_20060130.pdf)

### **Manual of good practices for innovation policy makers**

The Pilot Action of Excellence on Innovative Start-ups (PAXIS) has been launched five years ago by the Commission with the aim of building a network of 22 regional innovation leaders. This networking has led to the identification, validation and transfer of outstanding examples of innovation policies and concepts across Europe. The results of this cooperation have now been published in the form of the “PAXIS manual”, which provides examples to learn from for policy makers working in the field of innovation.

The “PAXIS manual for innovation policy makers and practitioners” can be found under:

[ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/paxis/docs/paxis\\_manual.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/paxis/docs/paxis_manual.pdf)

### **Study on the relation between EUREKA and the Framework Programmes**

In a recently published document, "EUREKA – a cornerstone of the European research and innovation area", the complementary that exist between EUREKA and the Framework Programme are illustrated. This report stresses the importance of Member State support for cooperation between EUREKA and R&D and innovation programmes, in particular for SME support (Eurostars Programme) and for collaboration between EUREKA clusters and Joint Technology Initiatives.

The report "EUREKA – a cornerstone of the European research and innovation area" can be found on the SwissCore website.

### **Annual report 2005 of the Joint Research Centre published**

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Union has recently published its annual report for the year 2005. The JRC is a network of laboratories that carry out research activities for the European institutions and are located in different Member States of the European Union. Its foundations were laid out in the Euratom Treaty of 1957, but it has substantially extended its activities beyond the nuclear field since.

In 2005, a new Director-General, Roland Schenkel, has been appointed, and two new infrastructures have been set up, the Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Test Facility and the Storage Building for Reference Materials. For an annual budget of €299 mio, the JRC employed 1708 staff members and has received 947 visiting scientists, leading to 1581 scientific publications.

The annual report of the Joint Research Centre can be found under:

[http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/download/ar/dg\\_jrc\\_ar\\_2005.pdf](http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int/download/ar/dg_jrc_ar_2005.pdf)

### **Commission launches EU Health Portal**

On 10 May, the Commission launched a new EU Health web portal as part of the Community Public Health Programme 2003-2008. This site provides the public, the policy-makers and health professionals with information on EU law and programmes, events organised by the Commission as well as health-related publications and studies. The portal also gives expert users access to statistical databases relevant to public health.

The new EU Health Portal can be found under: <http://health.europa.eu>

## **SwissCore Küche**

### **Swiss networking in Brussels: 11th SwissCore apéro**

For its traditional networking apéro, SwissCore welcomed on 26 April over 20 newly arrived and more established Swiss expats working for European institutions, lobby organisations or the media. SwissCore and the Swiss Mission to the EU presented their activities to reinforce the presence and the visibility of Switzerland in the field of research and education in Brussels. As usual, this was the opportunity to network amongst Swiss actors in Brussels, but also to give those who are soon returning to Switzerland a flavour of how Swiss institutions can network and lobby in the European capital.