

SwissCore Synopsis Research

November-December 2006

2006 / 5

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Adoption of the 7th Research Framework Programme

On 18 December, the Council of Ministers adopted the 7th Research Framework Programme 2007-2013 (FP7). After the positive vote of the European Parliament on the FP7 proposal on 30 November, this final adoption by the Member States representatives closed the co-decision procedure required for the Research Framework Programme.

After a first reading which took over a year and officially ended on 25 September with the Council of Ministers' Common Position on the FP7 proposal, the second reading lasted only about three months. This fast progress was made possible by a series of "trialogue" meetings between the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission taking place during autumn. In these dialogues, the three institutions were able to iron out the differences that remained after the first reading. The political pressure to close the legislative procedure before the end of the current 6th Framework Programme (FP6) and to allow a gapless transition to FP7 on 1 January 2007 have certainly contributed to speeding up the adoption process.

Despite the political will for a timely start of FP7, certain issues have been strongly debated as the FP7 proposal was shuttled forth and back between Parliament and Council during the co-decision procedure. Whilst the first reading was mainly dominated by budgetary battles and ethical debates regarding stem cell research, the discussions during the second reading converged essentially on the following open issues:

- The European Research Council (ERC): The key point concerned the legal structure of the ERC. The two structures that had been proposed, a simple Executive Agency or a public-private partnership based on Art.171 of the Treaty would not give the European Parliament the right of co-decision on its establishment. The solution found in the dialogues consists in a possible modification of the FP7 proposal after review of the ERC. Such a modification underlies the co-decision procedure between Council and Parliament. Another contentious point was the limitation of the ERC's administrative costs. The three institutions finally agreed to set the ceiling for such costs to 5%.
- The budget for the Energy Theme: The European Parliament had voted an amendment in the first reading which foresaw the allocation of 2/3 of the budget for the Energy Theme to renewable energy and energy efficiency. As a result of the dialogues, the wording has been changed to "a major part of the budget", making it acceptable to the other two institutions. Indeed, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission were opposed to allocating a fixed amount to these fields to preserve flexibility.
- The Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF): This new instrument faced opposition in the European Parliament and, as a result, the €1billion foreseen by the Council and the Commission were split in two instalments of €500 million, the second one to be granted only after an evaluation of the RSFF in 2010. The aim of the RSFF is to pool matching funds from FP7 and the European Investment Bank to provide for up to 6 times the allocated amount in bank loans for research infrastructures and projects.

After these issues were solved in the dialogues, both the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers were able to adopt the FP7 proposal without major opposition.

The dialogue discussions on the Rules for Participation to FP7 took place in parallel, thereby allowing the two institutions to adopt the proposal for the Rules in one reading at the same time as the FP7 proposal (see article below).

The last set of legislative documents belonging to the FP7 "package", the Specific Programmes, are planned to be adopted by the Council of Ministers on 20 December. The European Parliament, which is only consulted on the Specific Programmes, had adopted its position on these on 30 November.

Following the completion of the legislative process, the Commission will issue the first calls for proposals on 22 December, with first deadlines for submission in April 2007. However, many documents necessary for the proper implementation of FP7 (Model Grant Agreement, Financial

Guidelines, Guide for Applicants) have not yet been finalised. The uncertainty linked to the absence of these documents could lead to problems for the applicants during the drafting of their proposal. It is to hope that the European Commission will publish the final versions of these important documents in the middle of January, in order to minimise such potential problems.

The Council of Minister's press release on the adoption of FP7 can be found under:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/misc/92236.pdf

◆ **News in Brief** **7th Framework Programme (FP7)**

Joint Technology Initiatives: selection criteria and prime candidates for 2007

A new scheme in FP7, Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs) would be set up as a public-private partnership between the relevant industry and private stakeholders on the one hand, and the Member States and the Commission on the other hand. Article 171 of the Treaty allows the European Community to grant a substantial financial contribution to such public-private partnerships to perform R&D activities. Such funding for R&D activities would be allocated through a legal entity established by the JTI, and participation from industry, academia and SMEs is foreseen. Every single JTI has to be adopted by the Council of Ministers by qualified majority, based on a proposal made by the European Commission.

On 21 November, Viviane Reding, the EU Commissioner for Information Society and Media, announced at an ICT Conference in Helsinki that the project on embedded systems ARTEMIS would be the first Joint Technology Initiative to be launched in 2007. In an information note presented to the Council of Ministers at the Competitiveness Council meeting of 4 December 2006 the European Commission also identified ARTEMIS, as well as the Innovative Medicine Initiative (IMI, see Synopsis Research 2006/4), as the most advanced JTI projects. However, it attenuated Commissioner Reding's announcement by stating that "no final decision has been taken" on which JTI projects would be included in a proposal to be presented to the Council of Ministers in early 2007.

The Commission's information note also refines certain criteria which are considered to be central to the success of any JTI:

- "Additionally": How will the setting up of a JTI lead to additional efforts by industry?
- Market failure: Does the extent of the market failure in the area of the JTI justify the intervention of public authorities at European level?
- Governance: How are the decision-making and management bodies of the JTI legal entity organised?
- Role of Member States: The role of Member States in the JTI decision-making process must be clarified (i.e. no national financial return).

Only those JTI projects which will be able to fulfil these criteria will be considered by the European Commission. In addition, the Commission Services are currently performing a socio-economic impact analysis of the six JTI projects which had been identified in the FP7 proposal. In the light of this analysis, the Commission will identify the projects to be proposed to the Council of Ministers.

At its recent meeting on 14-15 December, the European Council (Heads of State and Government) voiced its support to the JTI scheme and hoped for a rapid implementation of the first JTI projects. This statement follows the line of the Council of Ministers, which had included the implementation of the JTI in its priorities for innovation adopted at the Competitiveness Council meeting on 4 December (see article below). With such a strong support from the Member States, the JTI projects should rapidly take steam. The choice of the few JTI projects to be proposed next year will however remain a political issue, as the interest of individual Member States in one or the other JTI project differs substantially.

The Commission's information note to the Council can be found under:
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st15/st15504.en06.pdf>

Rules for Participation: adoption and implementation

On 18 December, together with the FP7 proposal, the Rules of Participation were adopted by the Council of Ministers, thereby closing in a single reading the co-decision procedure required for this legal document. The Rules for Participation, which define the legal and administrative framework guiding the implementation of FP7, had already been voted on by the European Parliament on 30 November. A series of trialogue meetings between Parliament, Council and Commission had preceded this adoption, in order to discuss the contentious issues between the three institutions. These were:

- Evaluation and selection criteria: The European Parliament insisted for these criteria to be stated in the text of the Rules for Participation. The evaluation criteria are:
 - Scientific and technical quality of the proposal;
 - Relevance to the objectives of the Framework Programme;
 - Likely impact;
 - Quality of the implementation (management).
- Redress procedures: These procedures, introduced during the dialogues, will allow applicants and participants who feel that they have been arbitrarily treated to appeal against a decision of the Commission services.
- Role of the coordinator: In the views of the European Parliament, the coordinator should be more than a simple link between the consortium and the Commission services. Therefore, in the final version, it is stated that the coordinator has to “monitor the compliance by participants (...) with their obligations”. This wording gives the coordinator the legal duty to ensure, for example, that certain deliverables and reports are handed in on time.
- Overhead rate for indirect costs: This important point of debate was extensively discussed during the dialogues. The disappearance of the Additional Cost (AC) model of FP6 put many universities and similar institutions in a difficult situation, as they often cannot identify their indirect costs. In addition, the percentage proposed by the Commission (about 20%) would not have compensated for the reduction of the reimbursement of the direct costs from 100% under FP6 AC to 75% in FP7. To palliate this potential loss of funding, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers agreed to set the flat-rate for indirect costs to 60% for these types of cases. This rate will be revised in 2010, but will not be less than 40%.
- Simplified method for indirect costs: In addition to the flat-rate described above, there is the possibility for institutions to use a “simplified method” to calculate their overhead costs. It is not clear yet in which cases this “simplified method” will be applicable and how it will work.
- Audit certificates: A main goal of the Parliament and the Council was the simplification of the administrative procedures, including the financial audit rules. As a result of these discussions, the number of required audit certificates will be reduced: only a final certificate will be required for European Community contributions up to €375'000 or for projects lasting less than two years.
- Participants Guarantee Fund: The establishment of such a fund allows forsaking of the collective financial liability. A maximum of 5% of the total European Community contribution will be retained from all participants and a minimum of 4% returned to them at the end of the project. The interest generated by this fund should cover for defaulting participants; in case this is not high enough, up to 1% of the actual fund can be used. The ex-ante verification of the financial capacity will only apply to coordinators and to participants asking for a Community contribution of €500'000 and more.
- Transfer of intellectual property rights to affiliates: As a result of the dialogues, it is now stated in the Rules for Participation that the affiliates of a participant have the same access rights to the foreground and background as all the participants in the consortium, unless stated otherwise in the Grant Agreement or the Consortium Agreement.

With these issues solved and the Rules for Participation adopted in a single reading by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, it is now up to the European Commission to finalise another legal document necessary for the implementation of FP7, the Model Grant Agreement with its many annexes and forms. In addition, several guides to help applicants deal with administrative and financial issues still await publication. These documents are expected to be tabled in mid-January.

Operational details of FP7 projects

In the past two years, the European Commission had given strong signals that the participation to the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) would be largely simplified. Now that the FP7 legislative package (including the Specific Programmes and the Rules for Participation) is adopted and that the content of the implementation documents like the Work Programmes are known, it is time to look at the planned operational details of FP7 and to assess the simplifications that have been introduced at this level:

- Annual Work Programmes: new Work Programmes will be drafted every year for the following year. The work programmes and the calls for proposal will include detailed information about the forms of grants, the expected size of the consortium and the expected objectives of the research. The aim is to reduce the number of submitted ineligible proposals.
- Submission: all submissions should be done electronically, using the EPSS (Electronic Proposal Submission System). For the time being, most calls will use a one-stage submission procedure.
- Unique Registration Facility: a central registration facility will be set up to collect data on the individual participants and on the organisation they are part of. The data will include the proof of legal status. This information would consequently be submitted only once for the entire 7 years of the programme.
- Evaluation: Remote evaluations will be increasingly used. A redress procedure has newly been introduced to solve procedural errors. New calls for evaluators have been issued in mid-December and it is encouraged for women to apply, as the number of female evaluators is still too low. A reminder will be sent to current evaluators from FP6 to reapply for FP7. This re-inscription is needed to update the evaluator database of the Commission.
- Evaluation criteria: four evaluation criteria are established in the Rules for Participation (see article above) and will be adapted to each funding scheme and thematic area. However, only three criteria will be assessed by evaluators, as the fourth criterion of relevance is planned to be “integrated” into the other ones:
 - Scientific and technical quality of the proposal;
 - Likely impact;
 - Quality of the implementation (management).
- Procedural Rules: for submission and evaluation, as well as for negotiations and verifications of legal status, a set of procedural Rules will be adopted and published by the European Commission to ensure consistency of treatment.

Notwithstanding the changes above, a number of the procedural steps will newly be handled by an Executive Agency that is currently being set up (see article on the reorganisation of DG RTD in Synopsis Research 2006/4). This Agency will fully manage the Marie Curie Actions and the SME-specific actions, as well as the Security and Space actions from DG ENTR and the Energy and Transport actions from DG TREN. In addition, the Executive Agency will provide services across all programmes, for example running the Unique Registration Facility and the EPSS, as well as managing the evaluations. This streamlining of the procedures, coupled with the simplifications introduced in the Rules for Participation, will hopefully ease the participation of researchers to FP7. However, the devil lays in the details, and many of those have not been sorted out yet. Only when all details will be fixed and the first experiences with the novelties will be made will the extent of the simplifications become apparent.

A roadmap for European infrastructures

On 19 October, the Chair of the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), John Wood, presented the first European roadmap for new infrastructures. ESFRI consists of a group of independent experts appointed by the European Commission, with the mission to identify the research infrastructures to be built or upgraded which are in their views of prime importance for research in Europe. By including 35 infrastructure projects, the recently published Roadmap defines a common European approach, in order to set priorities and pool financial resources. So far, the building of research infrastructures had been based mostly on national or intergovernmental initiatives and led to a certain fragmentation and lack of focus at the European level.

Under FP7, European Community support for the construction of new research infrastructures and the upgrade of existing ones will be restricted to the projects identified by the ESFRI Roadmap. However, a listing on the Roadmap is not a guarantee for funding; indeed, each individual project for the construction of a new infrastructure will be carefully examined by the European Commission. Only those infrastructures with strong support from the Member States including sound financing beyond the construction phase are likely to get the avail of the European Commission.

The legal basis of each infrastructure could be different, and the European Commission foresees the possibility to base such proposals on Article 169 (Community support to research initiatives carried out by several Member States) or Article 171 (Community support for public-private partnerships) of the EU Treaty. Besides their legal status, the critical point for the new infrastructure projects will be their financial support, as the Community funding for such projects is planned to be restricted to €5 million per project.

Both ESFRI and the European Commission insist on the flexible nature of the ESFRI Roadmap. In accordance with this, the first revision of this Roadmap is planned for 2007. However, it remains to be seen how many of these planned infrastructures will finally be realised. Indeed, it is questionable if Europe will have the financial capacity to fund the projects already included on the current Roadmap.

The ESFRI Roadmap Report 2006 can be found under:

ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/esfri/docs/esfri-roadmap-report-26092006_en.pdf

FP6 Monitoring Report

In the recently published 2005 Monitoring Report of the 6th Framework Programme (FP6), a panel chaired by Prof. G. Leon of the Technical University of Madrid examined the progress achieved by the European Commission on the implementation of the Work Programmes of FP6 as well as the integration of the societal dimension and the dissemination of results.

Concerning the implementation, the panel estimates that the difficulties initially encountered in the definition and setting up of the Networks of Excellence have been reduced. However, one of its main concerns is the oversubscription and low success rates of certain instruments, especially the Marie Curie Actions. The panel welcomes the introduced simplifications, but believes that the IT tools should be improved. It further recommends extending the use of two-stage submission and evaluation procedures. Two major problems remain the low participation of SMEs and the lack of a coherent international cooperation strategy.

According to the report, there is no progress in the integration of the socio-economic dimension and science and society aspects in the project evaluation process. The panel therefore recommends to include these “horizontal” aspects directly into the work programmes, and to assess these dimensions in the same rigorous way as the scientific and managerial aspects during evaluation.

The panel is “positively surprised” by the dissemination of the results carried out by the Commission Services. Nevertheless, it identifies a weak point in the dissemination and communication by the participants of project results to a public beyond the research community.

The contractual requirement for dissemination is positively assessed, but this obligation ends with the project, preventing the tracing and evaluating of the dissemination of the results beyond that point.

Some of the recommendations laid out in the panel's report have already been taken up by the Commission Services and have been integrated to a certain extent in the implementation procedures for FP7. This should notably be the case for the simplifications in the administrative procedures. However, the panel's concerns about international cooperation remain unanswered and have recently been echoed by a similarly critical report from the European Research Advisory Board (see Synopsis Research 2006/4). It also remains to be seen whether the measures introduced in FP7 to increase SME participation will bear their fruits.

The FP6 Monitoring Report 2005 can be found on the SwissCore website:
http://www.swisscore.org/fs_poldocs.htm

State Aid Framework adopted by European Commission

After two rounds of public consultation (see Synopsis Research 2006/4) the European Commission adopted a new State Aid Framework for Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I) on 22 November. State Aid ("any publicly funded support measure for commercial enterprises") is in principle prohibited, to prevent distortion of fair competition. However, certain types of State Aid can be authorised by the European Commission if they support a common interest and do not distort competition in large manner. This is currently the case for State Aid for research and development.

To adapt the State Aid Rules to the Lisbon agenda, the new Framework now also includes innovation activities. It defines under which conditions the provision of State Aid for R&D and innovation can be allowed and the maximal level of state support a commercial enterprise can receive to perform such R&D&I activities. The authorised types of measures newly include aid for:

- Young innovative enterprises (up to €1 Mio allowed);
- Process and organisational innovation in services;
- Innovation advisory and support services;
- Innovation clusters.

Another novelty is the definition of a "three-part test", to check whether State support for R&D&I is conform to the State Aid Rules:

- The aid should address a well defined market failure;
- The aid should be well targeted and should be proportionate to the problem;
- The distortions of competitiveness resulting from the aid must be limited.

The new Framework also introduces a detailed assessment for cases involving large aid amounts, which are most likely to distort competition.

With these refined guidelines and a larger catalogue of authorised measures, the European Commission hopes to help Member States to channel a larger share of their total State Aid budgets towards R&D and Innovation and this way encourage additional investments by private firms in these activities. The concomitantly adopted "Communication on Tax incentives for R&D" (see article below) should further support this strategy. The new State Aid Framework for R&D&I is due to apply from 1 January 2007.

The State Aid Framework for R&D&I can be found under:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state_aid/reform/rdi_en.pdf

Tax incentives for R&D

Tax incentives have become one of the major instruments used by Member States and other countries to increase business R&D. However, this increased usage has been accompanied by an increasing complexity of the R&D tax treatment, hindering trans-European collaboration.

A Communication of the European Commission published on 22 November addresses the issue of tax incentives for R&D. It makes concrete recommendations to improve R&D tax incentive

schemes and to attain a more effective use of it. The Communication stresses that tax incentives which target specific groups or sectors have to be compatible with State Aid rules (see article above). The set of concrete recommendations include issues like the broad accessibility of such measures, the simplification of administrative procedures and the need for such incentives to be delivered in a timely, efficient and predictable way.

The Communication on the use of tax incentives for R&D can be found under:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0728en01.pdf

ITER agreement signed

On 21 November, representatives of China, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, USA and the EU met at the Elysée in Paris to sign the agreement establishing the international organisation that will implement the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). The ITER reactor is planned to use nuclear fusion to produce high levels of energy without accumulating radioactive waste.

The agreement sets out the organisational details and the legal basis of ITER. In June 2005, the ITER parties had agreed to locate the site of the experimental reactor in Caradache in southern France. The reactor will start to be constructed in 2008 and should be operational by 2016. Funding for the construction of ITER comes partially from the EURATOM Framework Programme 2007-2011; close to €2 billion have been set aside for this project. Through its association to the EURATOM Framework Programme, Switzerland is also taking part in ITER.

More information on ITER can be found under:
<http://www.iter.org/index.htm>

The European Defence Agency's research programme

On 13 November, the Steering Board of the European Defence Agency (EDA) agreed on a new joint research and development programme with a budget of €54.23 million for 3 years. Eighteen countries of the EU25 have decided to take part in this programme. Norway has signed a cooperation agreement to be included in the programme, and both Turkey and Switzerland are interested in signing a similar agreement.

This programme has the aim of increasing the protection for armed forces and will include:

- Collective survivability;
- Individual protection;
- Secured tactical wireless communication systems;
- Data analysis;
- Mission planning and training.

More details on the European Defence Agency's research programme can be found under:
<http://www.eda.europa.eu/randt/randt.htm>

EU Innovation Policy

The Council of Ministers' take on innovation

Innovation was one of the declared priorities under the Finnish Presidency of the EU, which is to end on 31 December. On 4 December, at the last Competitiveness Council meeting of this year, the Council of Ministers held a policy debate on a broad-based innovation strategy for the EU and adopted the following strategic priorities, based on the Commission's Communication of 13 September (see Synopsis Research 2006/4):

1. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).
2. Creating a proactive standard-setting policy.

3. Making public procurement work for innovation.
4. Launching Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI).
5. Boosting innovation and growth in lead markets.
6. Enhancing closer cooperation between higher education, research and business.
7. Helping innovation in regions.
8. Developing a policy approach to innovation in services and non-technological innovation.
9. Risk capital markets.

Interestingly, the Council of Ministers has removed the establishment of the European Institute of Technology (EIT), which was one of the 10 priorities in the Commission's September Communication on innovation, and replaced it by a rapid setting up of the Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI). This somewhat confirms the scepticism certain Member States have regarding the EIT (see article below). As a result, the EIT has been incorporated as one of the measures under point 6, "Enhancing closer cooperation between higher education, research and business".

Under most points, the Council invites the Commission to present Communications addressing the subject in the course of next year. Moreover, the Ministers want these strategic priorities to be included in the Community Lisbon Programme and regularly assessed. The Council plans to regularly update these priorities and monitor their implementation.

The conclusions of the Council of Ministers can be found under:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/intm/91996.pdf

Latest developments on the European Institute of Technology

After the publication of the Commission's proposal for the establishment of a European Institute of Technology (EIT) on 18 October (see Synopsis Research 2006/4), the Council of Ministers undertook to discuss the EIT proposal in an ad-hoc working group. In addition, the European Parliament's Committee for Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) has held an exchange of views on the EIT and has appointed Reino Paasilinna (Socialist, Finland) to be the rapporteur on the subject.

From these discussions, a few key issues have resurfaced and seem to be up for debate again, despite the assertions in the Commission's proposal:

- Budget: this remains the central issue. It is still unclear at this stage where the budget of the EIT will come from. The Commission's proposal had foreseen to scoop off €1.75 billion from the "unallocated margins within Heading 1A" - in clear, this means the "unused" money from the major programmes of the EU like FP7 and the CIP. This proposal was firmly opposed by the European Parliament and the Council, and a declaration was added to the FP7 legislative act that no money would be drawn away from FP7 to finance the EIT.
- Other sources of financing: in its proposal, the Commission stressed that different sources would be tapped to finance the EIT, like money from IPR. However, cashable patents stemming from the work of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) within the EIT will only be available after an extended period of research.
- Industry participation: How industry would participate to the EIT is still very unclear. Indeed, the advantage gained by industrial partners in the KICs is not evident, even more so considering that the EIT plans to finance its operations through IPR revenues, which might be conflicting with industry's interests.
- Degrees: The EIT will most likely only award joint degrees with the involved universities, or even just issue an EIT label.
- Governance: the setting up of KICs as separate legal entities might cause problems for certain institutions wishing to participate to the EIT.
- Participation of Third Countries: Although their participation is foreseen in the Commission's proposal, the modalities of such participation are still unclear.

These many open points give the impression that the proposal from the Commission was unable to dissipate the doubts regarding the EIT. At the Competitiveness Council (Council of Ministers) of 4

December the Ministers stated in their conclusions that the Commission should “clarify the outstanding issues, in particular, the budgetary implications of establishing the EIT”. Moreover, the Council did not take up the EIT on the list of its strategic priorities for innovation, unlike the Commission in its Communication of 13 September (see article above).

Despite the strong political will behind the project – the EIT seems to be Commission President Barroso’s favourite initiative – it remains to be seen if the Commission will be able to convince the Council and Parliament.

Key messages from the Competitiveness Report 2006

In a Communication published on 14 November, the European Commission summarises the key messages that stem from the European Competitiveness Report 2006. This report, which is the 9th of its kind, is currently being finalised by 8 European economic research institutes and is commissioned by DG Enterprise.

The present Communication “Economic reforms and competitiveness: key messages from the European Competitiveness Report 2006” addresses various aspects relating to innovation, amongst them the financing of innovation through tax incentives and risk capital measures as well as the concept of “lead markets” in innovation policy. These two points had already been set forth in the report of a high-level expert group led by the former Finnish prime minister Aho (the “Aho report”, see Synopsis Research 2006/1) and had been taken on board by the Commission’s Communication on innovation published in September (“Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU”, see Synopsis Research 2006/4).

In relation with innovation policy, the Competitiveness Report points to the need for supporting early-stage venture capital, especially for cross-border operations. Moreover, more attention should be given to facilitating the financing of innovation through loans.

The report closes by analysing the competitiveness of two key industries for Europe, the Information and Communication Technologies sector and the Pharmaceutical sector. While in essence completely different, these two sectors show similar weaknesses, like the marked deficit in R&D intensity and the relative lack of young innovative firms. This comforts the Commission in the idea that besides sector-specific measures, more horizontal reforms are needed, for example in innovation financing, overall business environment, research and education.

The recent Communication on competitiveness of the Commission can be found under:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0697en01.pdf

◆ Publications

First calls under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme

After the final adoption of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013 (CIP) by the Council of Minister on 12 October and the publication of the legal text of in the Official Journal on 9 November, a first call concerning “Services in support of business and innovation” was launched on 15 December. This call also foresees support for the continuation of the Euro Info Centres (EIC) and the Innovation Relay Centres (IRC) currently operating under FP6.

The final version of Competitiveness and Innovation Programme can be found under:

<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:310:SOM:EN:HTML>

The text of the call on “services in support of business and innovation” can be found under:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_306/c_30620061215en00170023.pdf

Eurostat’s “Science, technology and innovation in Europe: 2006 edition”

On 20 November, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) published a panorama 2004 of science technology and innovation in Europe. This publication reports on where

the EU stood in these fields in 2004, and how its position has evolved in recent years. It covers a range of R&D data, including:

- R&D expenditure;
- R&D personnel;
- Patents;
- Venture capital;
- High-tech external trade.

From this wide range of data, a few key points can be highlighted:

- Germany and France together employ 40% of the EU's research personnel.
- 53% of R&D personnel is employed by the business sector, while the higher education (31%) and the government (14%) sectors account for the other half.
- The highest venture capital investment is found in Sweden and the UK.

The publication from Eurostat can be found under:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-76-06-203/EN/KS-76-06-203-EN.PDF

Europe4Researchers Newsletter

In September, a new Newsletter, Europe4Researchers, was launched on the European Commission's European Researcher's Mobility Portal. This newsletter displays all the latest news concerning the mobility of researchers in Europe, as well as insights into national initiatives to improve trans-national mobility and information on schemes like EURYI and the Marie Curie Actions. A third section displays success stories of European mobility, including interviews of Marie Curie grant awardees.

The Europe4Researchers newsletter can be found under:

http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index_en.cfm?11=23&CFID=5682825&CFTOKEN=93a4363116e43060-2DAE7E55-B5B4-1B38-22680537846476EE

SwissCore Küche

Swiss networking in Brussels: 12th SwissCore apéro

For its traditional networking apéro, SwissCore welcomed on 16 October 2006 around 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.

SwissCore Seminar on the implementation details of FP7

As previously announced the SwissCore Seminar took place on 23-24 November in Brussels and focused on the implementation practicalities in FP7. Officials from the European Commission presented the current state of the Framework Programme 7 and detailed its new or reorganised parts: the European Research Council, International Cooperation, the Marie Curie Actions and the new initiatives under the Capacities programme (Regions of Knowledge, Research Potential). The first day was rounded off by a discussion with A.-E. Kervella from CNRS on the durable integration of Networks of Excellence, which has recently been the cause of some trouble.

Insight was also given into the status of the Rules for Participation and the implementation practicalities and procedures of FP7. The Seminar ended with a presentation on the newest initiative of the Commission in the field of Research, Education and innovation, the European

Institute of Technology. The SwissCore Seminar gives participants the opportunity to discuss and ask questions directly to the experts of the Commission.

The SwissCore Seminar was preceded on 22 November by a workshop on the administrative, legal and financial issues in the Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowships (EIF) and Research Training networks (RTN). The participants were able to get first hand information from K. Berkouk and R. Santoriello of DG Research on the sometimes complicated procedures pertaining to such issues as deadlines for reports, allowances, additional income of researchers and fellowship suspension within the two aforementioned Marie Curie Actions.

Two new collaborators to join SwissCore next year

Next year, two new collaborators will join the SwissCore office. Maryline Maillard will take over from Danièle Rod Wiesner as Head of Office starting in February 2007 and André Odermatt will reinforce the office as a European Officer. This increase in personnel will allow SwissCore to increase its activities in the field of innovation, SME support measures and vocational training. Danièle Rod Wiesner will leave SwissCore to work for the newly set up Dedicated Implementing Structure of the European Research Council, as a national expert detached by the Swiss National Science Foundation. We wish Danièle all the best for her new position and we look forward to seeing her regularly at the SwissCore Events.

