

# SwissCore Synopsis

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## ◆ Seen from Brussels

### **Towards a reform of the European Research Area**

Yesterday, the European Commission published a Green Paper on the reform of the European Research Area (ERA). Since the idea of a “single market” for research was proposed by Commissioner Busquin in 2000, some progress has been made towards the goals set forth at the time. However, much remains to be done, and this is clearly stated in the Green Paper, which has the goal to re-launch the debate and to serve as a basis for a large public consultation on the future of the ERA. The consultation will be opened from 1 May to 31 August 2007, and this occasion should be seized by all stakeholders and research actors to contribute to the debate (see p.5).

Foreseen as a cornerstone of the future ERA, the European Institute of Technology is intensely being discussed in Brussels, and both the German Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the relevant Committees in the European Parliament have given their own spin to the Commission’s EIT proposal of last October (see p.7).

Another new set of initiatives, the proposals for the first Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI), are still in the Commission’s pipeline and are expected to be tabled during the month of April. These initiatives will be proposed under Art. 171 of the EU Treaty and each of them will have to be individually adopted by the Council of Ministers. The JTI on innovative medicine, IMI, and the one for embedded systems, ARTEMIS, are likely to be the first JTIs to be proposed (see Synopsis 2007/1). The two runner-ups, the nanoelectronics initiative ENIAC and Clean Sky (aeronautics) are following closely, and could even be proposed at the same time. Still awaited are also a new set of proposals for joint programmes under Art. 169 (e.g. Eurostars, Ambient Assisted Living)

Formally established at the end of February and officially inaugurated by the German Presidency at a high-level conference in Berlin, the European Research Council is heralded as a main step forward for European research. After the deadline of the first call closes on 25 April, it will be the time for this new institution to deliver the results everyone expects from it. This will not be an easy task: Some key issues remain to be solved, and the total number of proposals that will be received is the object of many speculations (see below).

Meanwhile, the details of the procedures and the implementation tools for the 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme are gradually being finalised. The Electronic Proposal Submission System is up and running (besides some minor bugs) and the different Model Grant Agreements and Guides (financial, IPR, consortium agreement checklist) should be published mid-April. However, the Unique Registration Facility will most likely only be functional in the second half of the year.

With all this, we look forward to an exciting month of April!

## ◆ Research *7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP7)*

### **ERC: More details on the Starting Grants**

After the formal establishment of the ERC at the end of February, the Scientific Council (ScC) and the Dedicated Implementation Structure (DIS) of the ERC have worked at high speed to keep on track with the goals laid out in the Work Programme 2007, whose final version was published on 26 February. With the first submission deadline for the ERC Starting Grants approaching, the two main bodies of the ERC have been busy refining the participation modalities relating to this first funding stream:

- Eligibility: The Starting Grants will be awarded to Principal Investigators (PI) who are in the process of setting up or consolidating an independent research team. They should be between 2-9 years from the award of their PhD, with time extensions granted for career breaks. Equivalent degrees other than a PhD can be recognised under certain conditions, which are laid out in a new document published by the ERC on 30 March.

- Guide for Applicants and FAQ: All eligibility criteria and details about the application and evaluation process can be found in the Guide for Applicants, whose final version was published on the ERC website on 30 March. In addition, a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) with the official answers from the ERC can also be found on its website.
- ERC Evaluation Panels: After being hand-picked by the ScC based on reference lists from research councils, learned societies and scientific academies throughout Europe, a list of the Panel Chairs was published on the ERC website. Among them is Prof. Susan Gasser, Director of the Friedrich Miescher Institute in Basel, who will chair the Life Sciences Panel 1 for molecular, cellular and developmental biology. A complete list of the ERC Evaluation Panel members will be published soon.
- ERC Model Grant Agreement: The Unit of the DIS in charge of the logistical aspects of the Starting Grants is currently finalising this important implementation document, in which most of the concrete legal and financial rules relating to the Starting Grants are laid out. The Grant Agreement itself will be signed by the European Commission and the host institute of the grant holder; a secondary agreement between the host and the PI will fix all further modalities (e.g. the salary and benefits of the PI or the rooms and equipment put at the disposal of the PI by the host).
- Portability: The precise rules under which a PI is able to take his grant along when moving away from the host institution have so far not been set. A consensus is currently forming on the idea of obliging the PI to stay at the host institution for at least 2 years.
- Salaries: The ScC has set up a special working group to look at the issue of salary levels. In the views of Prof. Kafatos, the ERC grants should also serve as an example to encourage European institutions to increase the salary levels of their scientists. Therefore, a set salary level might be put in place (as for Marie Curie), or certain guidelines based on national salary levels might be issued (e.g. local salary of an associate professor multiplied by a certain factor). Due to time limitations, this important issue might not yet be solved for the first round of Starting Grants and the conditions would then be changed at a later stage.

One major uncertainty with this first round of Starting Grants remains the total number of applicants. One week after the opening of the Electronic Proposal Submission System, more than 1600 applications had been deposited. A large number of applicants could lead to an overload for the evaluation panels and to the erroneous rejection of high quality applicants. The real challenge of the ERC Panels might therefore be to identify the real “frontier” research amongst the wealth of excellent proposals it might receive.

The degree equivalence policy of the ERC can be found under:

[http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/phd-and-equivalent-doctoral-degrees-the-erc-policy\\_en.pdf](http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/phd-and-equivalent-doctoral-degrees-the-erc-policy_en.pdf)

The Frequently Asked Questions can be found under:

<http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=43>

The list of the Evaluation Panel chairs can be found under:

[http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/panel-chairs-stig\\_en.pdf](http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/panel-chairs-stig_en.pdf)

All other documents can be found under:

<http://erc.europa.eu/>

### **Security research in FP7**

On 26-27 March, the new European security research programme was launched at a conference in Berlin. This programme is based on the previous Preparatory Action for Security Research, which ran from 2004 to 2006 with a budget of €45 million, and is now an integral part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP7) as one of the ten Themes in the “Cooperation” part. It will have a budget of €1.4 billion for 2007-2013. A first call for proposals has already been launched on 22 December 2006, with an indicative budget of about €80 million.

Due to the special nature of this type of research, a few special conditions apply on top of the regular rules for participation:

- Financing: Unlike the rest of FP7, projects in the Security Theme can get up to 75% of their costs reimbursed, irrespective of the nature of the participants. To get this increased reimbursement rate, participants have to demonstrate in their proposal that the required conditions (limited market size, risk of “market failure”, need for accelerated development in response to new threats) apply.
- Classified information: Such type of information should not be included in the proposal, but just a reference to it. Evidence of appropriate clearance must be submitted, as well as a Security Aspect Letter (SAL) indicating the required classification level. In addition, any proposal considered sensitive by the evaluators will be flagged to be scrutinized by national authorities. The Programme Committee will also play a regulatory role in assessing the sensitivity of the proposals past the evaluation stage.
- Dissemination and IPR: A set of special clauses limiting the dissemination and access to research results will be included in the specific grant agreement. Moreover, the consortium agreement should also address classification and security clearance issues.

These special conditions should allow a proper management of this special Theme, which is under the responsibility of the Directorate General Enterprise (DG ENTR).

To advise DG ENTR in the strategic orientation of the security policy of the EU, a new “European Security Research and Innovation Forum” was created, consisting of 50-60 experts in the field. One of the European Commission’s priorities will be the swift adoption of a Directive on the protection of European critical infrastructures. The current interest for security policy is due to the increasing importance of this theme in today’s European society.

More information on the protection of European critical infrastructures can be found under:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/477&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **Descartes Prize 2007**

On 7 March 2007, the winners of this year’s Descartes Prize were announced. Sometimes regarded as a “little Nobel prize”, this award is supported by the Marie Curie part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP6) since 2000 and will be continued under FP7. Two different categories of prizes are currently in place:

- The Descartes Prize for Research, awarded to outstanding trans-national European research projects. The prize of €1 million can be shared by up to five winning teams, while five more finalists receive €30’000 each. The Research Prize 2007 goes to the following three teams:
  - The HYDROSOL project developed a method to produce hydrogen from water-splitting using solar energy, enabling production in an environmentally-friendly way.
  - The High Energy Stereoscopic System (HESS) substantially improved existing astronomical observation techniques by using four telescopes in Namibia.
  - The APOPTOSIS project broadened the understanding of programmed cell death, thereby contributing to a better understanding of cancer.
- The Descartes Prize for Science Communication, awarded for outstanding achievements in the communication of science to the public. The €250’000 prize, which was started in 2004 to complement the Descartes Research Prize, is divided amongst up to five laureates, while €5000 each is given to five additional finalists. This year’s awardees are:
  - The producers of the weekly Eureka science magazine for children;
  - The documentary series “Europe: A Natural History”;
  - The City of Science project in Naples;
  - The MAR-ECO network for involving the general public in their census of marine life;
  - The project “Science Made Simple” to get teenagers interested in science.

More information on this year’s Descartes Research Prize can be found under:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=newsalert&lg=en&year=2007&na=na-070307-2>

More information on this year’s Descartes Science Communication prize can be found under:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=newsalert&lg=en&year=2007&na=na-070307-1>

### Green Paper on the European Research Area

On 4 April, the European Commission published a Green Paper on “new perspectives in the European Research Area”.

The concept of a European Research Area (ERA) was developed in 2000. It is based on the observation that the individual governments of the EU Member States distribute nationally about 95% of the total public money allocated to research in Europe, whereas the funds distributed at EU level only represent 5% of total public spending. In addition, this system is highly fragmented and lacks coordination. The creation of a single European Research Area should permit the free flow of researchers between the different countries and the optimal and coordinated usage of the individual public research funds.

Despite some progress towards the establishment of the ERA since 2000, it is “still far from being a reality” according to the European Commission. The present Green Paper focuses on the six following points:

- “Realising a single labour market for researchers”: The shortcomings of the current labour market for researchers are set out in this chapter, and a series of measures are proposed, mostly concerning the working and hiring conditions for scientists as well as the barriers hindering their transnational mobility. The education and training needs of the researchers are also addressed.
- “Developing world-class research infrastructures”: The Commission intends to continue the pan-European assessment of research infrastructures through the work of the European Strategic Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and considers defining a legal framework for “research infrastructures of pan-European interest”. The existing infrastructures should be strengthened through Science and Technology programmes associated with them and industry investment in infrastructures should be encouraged through a set of policy and legal measures.
- “Strengthening research institutions”: Under this heading, the Green paper lays out the major points which should be tackled to improve the performance of different research institutions (including universities). Key points are increased managerial autonomy, shared criteria for funding and assessment between Member States and increased collaboration with industry. In this context, the integration of different research institutions into virtual centres of excellence is also foreseen.
- “Sharing knowledge”: The Commission makes a series of proposals to improve the dissemination of knowledge and its transfer into application, like the creation of a “European framework for knowledge transfer”. In addition, measures to improve public access to scientific publications (see Synopsis 2007/1) as well as teaching and communication of science are also proposed.
- “Optimising research programmes and priorities”: One of the main goals of the European Research Area, the coordination of national research programmes is addressed here. The foreseen measures include the opening of national research programmes to non-nationals and the development of common principles for evaluation. The establishment and testing of principles and modalities for joint programming of research, bringing together funding from various sources (EU, national, regional, private) is proposed.
- “Opening to the world: international cooperation in S&T”: The Commission is planning to work more closely together with the Member States to define and adapt the priorities and modalities of the international cooperation in Science and Technology, in order to focus on specific objectives and to ensure a coordinated use of the instruments and resources.

All these suggestions and propositions are phrased as questions, since, like all Green Papers, this document is foreseen to be the basis for an open public debate and a large stakeholder consultation. Based on the results of this process, the Commission will make concrete proposals in 2008. To accompany the debate, the advice of external experts will also be sought and focused events will be organised. Furthermore, the role of the European Union Research Advisory Board

(EURAB) will be reassessed, with part of its mandate being to assist the Commission in convening a regular “assembly” of all stakeholders in European research.

The Green Paper “The European Research Area: new perspectives” can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era\\_gp\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era_gp_final_en.pdf)

All accompanying documents, as well as the link to the consultation questionnaire, can be found under: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/consultation-era\\_en.html#greenpaper](http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/consultation-era_en.html#greenpaper)

## **Publications**

### **European registry for human embryonic stem cells**

On 29 March, the European Commission has given green light to the creation of the world’s largest registry of human embryonic stem cells, to be operated jointly by two centres, one in Barcelona and one in Berlin. This new initiative, which is funded through the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP6) with a budget of €1 million for 3 years, will provide extensive information on the extant cell lines on a publicly accessible internet site.

The registry can be accessed at: [www.cellnet.org](http://www.cellnet.org)

### **Renewable energy technologies project catalogue**

The European Commission has published a catalogue of project synopses in the field of renewable energy technology supported by the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP6). The projects are grouped under three different headings corresponding to different types of renewable energy technologies, namely photovoltaics, biomass and other renewable energy sources (i.e. wind, geothermal, ocean, concentrated solar thermal). A fourth chapter looks at the socio-economic tools and concepts for energy strategy. This catalogue will be helpful to researchers to identify potential FP7 project partners working in a specific field and will give policy makers an overview on the state of the art of research in these fields in Europe.

The catalogue of FP6 projects on renewable energy technologies can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/pdf/synopses\\_res\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/energy/pdf/synopses_res_en.pdf)

### **Global change and ecosystems – catalogue of FP6 projects**

In the recently published project compendium “Global Change and Ecosystems: EU Research for the Environment”, the Environment Directorate of DG RTD summarises all the calls of the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP6) issued in the Global Change and Ecosystem Sub-Theme of the Thematic Priority 6. Besides some statistical data on the number of proposals submitted and funded, this project catalogue also displays short project fiches for all the funded projects. This project catalogue might be useful for policy makers looking for data on the EU-funded research in this field, as well as for researchers looking for potential partners.

The FP6 Project catalogue for the “Global Change and Ecosystems” theme can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/pdf/global\\_change\\_ecosystem.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/pdf/global_change_ecosystem.pdf)

### **EU research into the Polar environment and climate**

On 5 March, to mark the launch of the International Polar Year, the European Commission published a scientific report on the polar environment and climate, which brings together the results of all research on this topic funded under the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP5 and FP6). It contains information on over 60 projects, accounting to over €200 million in funding from the Community budget.

Organised jointly by the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the International Polar Year is a campaign to stimulate the interest in the changes affecting Polar Regions and to coordinate different scientific projects.

The scientific report on research into the Polar environment and climate can be found under:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/pdf/Polar\\_catalogue\\_final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/environment/pdf/Polar_catalogue_final.pdf)

### **Eurostat Yearbook 2007**

On 13 March, Eurostat published the 2007 edition of “Science, technology and innovation in Europe”, a compendium of statistical data and indicators on these fields. It aims at providing the reader with statistical data on the evolution of science and technology in Europe, and its position with regard to its partners. The pocketbook is divided into three main parts with following sub-chapters:

- Investing in R&D: Government investments in R&D, General R&D expenditure;
- Monitoring the knowledge workers: R&D personnel, Human resources in S&T;
- Productivity and competitiveness: Innovation, Patents, High Technology, Background Data

This publication will certainly be an invaluable tool for research policy analysts and government officials.

The Pocketbook “Science, technology and innovation in Europe” 2007 can be found under:  
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-AE-07-001/EN/KS-AE-07-001-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-AE-07-001/EN/KS-AE-07-001-EN.PDF)

## **Innovation**

### **The European Parliament’s take on the EIT proposal**

Concomitant to the examination of the European Commission’s proposal for the establishment of a European Institute of Technology (EIT) by the Council of Minister under the leadership of the German Presidency (see Synopsis 2007/1), the European Parliament (EP) is currently discussing the EIT proposal, as foreseen by the co-decision procedure which applies in this case. No less than two parliamentary Committees, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) are examining the proposal together, through an enhanced inter-committee cooperation procedure. The ITRE Committee has appointed the Finnish MEP R. Paasilinna to be the rapporteur on the EIT and MEP E. Hennicot from Luxembourg to draw the co-report for the CULT Committee. A first exchange of views was held on 19 March, where the MEPs were mostly starting to define their positions on the subject. On 27 March, an independent impact study commissioned by the EP was presented to the ITRE Committee. The authors of the study, amongst them P. Tindemans, former chairman of the OECD Megascience Forum, Prof. L. Soete, director of United Nations University-MERIT, and Prof. A. Zehnder, President of the ETH Board, criticised the Commission proposal and generally judged the current project to be unsustainable, due to the following reasons:

- The EIT would require more direct financial support from the EU. Indeed, the European Commission plans to directly fund about 1/8 of the EIT budget and the authors of the study estimate that it will be hard to attract funds from industry and other private sources amounting to the other 7/8.
- Several initiatives to support innovation and cooperation with industry are currently being set up or already existing (e.g. the Joint Technology Initiatives or the EUREKA Clusters). The EIT would thus be in competition with these initiatives when looking for industrial partners. Moreover, industrial partners might prefer more flexible and time-limited instruments, rather than investing in a long-term institution like the EIT.
- The planned EIT joint degrees with participating universities are unlikely to bring any added value when compared to a degree awarded by the university alone. Moreover, the study considers that the proposed network structure of the EIT would be detrimental to a good learning environment, which a top higher education institution on a single location would be able to provide.

- The strongest criticism concerns however the core mission of the proposed EIT. Indeed, the authors point out that based on all available examples, innovation is ideally to be supported at the regional level through the formation of strong local academia-industry-SME clusters. It remains to be demonstrated that a network structure like the EIT will be able to fulfil its mission of increasing innovation and knowledge transfer between these different actors.

After trying to demonstrate the inadequacy of the EIT proposal, the authors of the study presented a new Cluster EIT model. Their model foresees the establishment of several EITs based on existing local clusters, each working on a specific field. Each EIT would be selected from the proposals of competing clusters.

Most of the ITRE Committee members reacted positively to the report and agreed with its conclusions. The rapporteur, MEP Paasilinna, saw the report as a good basis for a total revision of the Commission proposal whereas the Chair of the Committee, MEP A. Niebler even proposed to look for a totally new concept for the EIT.

With both the ITRE Committee of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers (see Synopsis 2007/1) moving towards a complete redraft of the Commission proposal, it seems unlikely that the goal of an adoption of the regulation establishing the EIT before the end of the year will be reached.

The independent impact study can be found under:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/dv/ip\\_a\\_itre\\_st\\_2006\\_/ip\\_a\\_itre\\_st\\_2006\\_11.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/ip_a_itre_st_2006_/ip_a_itre_st_2006_11.pdf)

The draft report of the ITRE Committee on the EIT can be found under:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/pr/650/650590/650590en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/pr/650/650590/650590en.pdf)

### **Implementation details on the CIP**

After the adoption of the “Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013 (CIP)” on 12 October 2006, the first call under this new EU programme was issued on 15 December by the Directorate-General Enterprise (DG ENTR).

With a total budget of €3.621 billion, the CIP is a novel Framework Programme combining not less than nine previously running programmes. It is divided into three pillars:

1. Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP): This programme combines the former Multi-Annual Programmes of DG ENTR, the eco-innovation parts of the LIFE programme of DG Environment (DG ENV), as well as the innovation aspects of the 6<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP6). The EIP has a total budget of €2.166 billion, of which €1.129 are planned to be allocated to financial instruments like venture capital and investment risk coverage for bank loans. These instruments will be managed by the European Investment Fund, under the supervision of DG Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN). Another €433 million are reserved for eco-innovation. More than half of the remaining €600 million will support the new Business and Innovation Support Services covered in the first call. The remaining amount will finance policy analyses as well as innovation projects.
2. ICT Policy Programme (ICT): Combining the eTEN, eContent and Modinis programmes and with a budget of €728 million, ICT will be managed mainly by DG Information Society (DG INFSO). Through a mix of pilot projects, best practice exchange and networking, as well as policy analysis and promotion activities, this part of the CIP aims at a wider uptake and better use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
3. Intelligent Energy Europe Programme (IEE): This pillar combines the STEER, SAVE and ALTENER programmes. With €727 million in budget, the IEE is integrated in the CIP to cover the innovation aspects of energy technologies. For this, pilot and market replication projects, as well as promotion and dissemination activities will be supported. This pillar will be managed by the IEE Executive Agency and supervised by DG Transport and Energy (DG TREN).

To overcome the complication of having five different DGs involved in the management of the CIP, an Executive Agency dedicated to the CIP will be gradually set up to manage large parts of the programme. For this, the mandate of the already existing IEE Executive Agency will be extended and its activities expanded.

Like in most parts of FP7, there will be annual Work Programmes for the CIP, which detail the scope of the different calls. The Work Programme 2007 for the EIP has been published on 8 March 2007 and the one for IEE on 30 March. The ICT Work Programme 2007 still awaits its adoption by the pillar-specific Programme Committee.

However, unlike FP7, the CIP will not have any general Rules for Participation. The modalities for participation will be detailed individually in each call and in the respective Work Programme. In addition, there will be no project negotiations and it is not foreseen that the programme committees will give their opinion on the list of selected projects. In an attempt to facilitate the participation of the SMEs to the CIP, the European Commission is currently preparing a User Guide giving an overview of the whole programme.

With the SMEs as main target of the CIP, the European Commission hopes to foster more innovation in this type of companies. However, SMEs will only rarely be the direct beneficiaries of the different actions, albeit the final one in most cases.

Switzerland is currently not associated to the CIP and it is yet unclear if participation by Swiss SMEs on a case-by-case basis will be supported through national funding.

The recently published EIP Work Programme can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/cip/docs/eip\\_wp2007.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/docs/eip_wp2007.pdf)

More information on the CIP, as well as all the future Work Programmes and calls can be found under: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/cip/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/cip/index_en.htm)

## ◆ Education

### European Youth Summit in Rome

In parallel to the festivities of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Union, more than 200 young people from the 27 EU Member States gathered in Rome on 24-25 March in the very buildings where the Treaty of Rome had been signed 50 years earlier, to sign their own "Declaration of Rome". This event, organised by the EU institutions and the European Youth Forum, was attended by Commissioners Figel and Wallström, amongst other EU personalities.

The young authors of the Declaration of Rome acknowledge the challenges ahead of them and made recommendations on the following issues:

- The future of the EU Constitutional Treaty: such a Treaty is widely supported, as well as a reform of the EU institutions towards more democracy.
- Sustainable development: The commitments taken in the frame of the Kyoto Protocol (climate change) and the Millennium Development Goals should be fulfilled.
- Youth and Education in the EU: Access to education, recognition of non-formal education and the place of Europe in education curricula are the main points here.
- The EU's role in a globalised world: A strong Common Foreign and Security Policy and development aid are supported.
- The social and economic model of the EU: The full implementation of the European Youth Pact is demanded, as well as the participation of civil society organisations in the decision-making process on these societal issues.
- Building democracy and civil society in Europe: Youth organisations and their participation in political processes at all level should be recognised. Lowering the vote age to 16 is also proposed as a measure under this heading.

With this formal declaration in such a historical location, young people would like their voice to be more heard on the European level. This call was well received by the EU institutions: the Commissioners present at the event applauded the document, while the European Parliament (EP) wants to use it as a working document in its Committee on Culture and Education (CULT). The President of the EP however deplored that the document omits to mention innovation, competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

The Declaration of Rome can be found under:

[http://europa.eu/50/docs/rome\\_youth\\_declaration\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu/50/docs/rome_youth_declaration_en.pdf)

### **Informal Education Council meeting**

On 1-2 March, the Education Ministers of the EU and of Associated and Candidate Countries met in Heidelberg for an informal meeting of the Council of Ministers and discussed the following points:

- Pre-primary education: This point was discussed on the initiative of the German Presidency, in order to identify priority actions that governments should take and to develop broader strategies in this area, which is seen as a “window of opportunity” to develop children into willing learners.
- Adult learning: The recognition and validation of learning outcomes, the removals of barriers to participation and the quality assurance mechanism for teacher training were the main points discussed.
- Common European history textbook: In margin of the official agenda points, the idea of a common European history textbook was discussed. On this rather sensitive topic, Commissioner Figel is said to prone a cautious approach: he proposed that support be given to a network of academics and school teachers in Europe in order to generate ideas on this topic. Such a network could be supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 (LLL).

The next (formal) Education Council (Council of Ministers) will take place on 24-25 May in Brussels.

### **Quo vadis Tempus**

On 5-6 March 2007, delegates from 53 EU and Tempus partner countries attended a conference in Brussels hosted by the European Commission to discuss the design of the next phase of the programme, Tempus IV, which should run from 2007 to 2013 with a budget of approximately €50 million.

Tempus is an EU funding programme that promotes the modernisation of higher education in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region (the “European neighbourhood”) through cooperation with similar institutions in the EU Member States. Based on the outcome of the above conference, the European Commission is currently developing the programme’s detailed features, as well as setting up a similar meeting with students benefiting from Tempus. The first calls for proposals under Tempus IV are foreseen for the second half of 2007.

More information on Tempus can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html)

### **eTwinning prizes 2007**

On 23 February, Commissioner Figel awarded this year’s six eTwinning prizes for the best school partnerships over the Internet. Participation in the eTwinning action, which supports such school collaboration through ICT, more than doubled in 2006, after just two years of operation. It was launched in 2005 as part of the eLearning programme, which ended in 2006. eTwinning differs from other action programmes of the European Commission: it provides free access to a computing infrastructure, the eTwinning portal, which facilitates the establishment of partnerships between schools in Europe. The schools are free to decide on the type and duration of the cooperation. The eTwinning action will continue from this year on as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 (LLL).

More information on eTwinning can be found under:

<http://www.etwinning.net/ww/de/pub/etwinning/index2006.htm>

### **The enlarged SwissCore team**

At the beginning of April André Odermatt joined the SwissCore team as European Advisor. He studied contemporary history at the Universities of Bern and Paris IV-Sorbonne and made an internship at the Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland – Second World War (ICE) in Bern. He completed his studies with a master thesis about the institutionalisation of research funding in Switzerland. Afterwards he worked for the Swiss Federal Statistical Office where he was responsible for the inquiry on R&D spending in the Swiss business enterprise sector. At SwissCore André Odermatt will principally focus on innovation policy.



The SwissCore Team (f.l.t.r.): Maryline Maillard (Head of Office), Thomas Marty (European Advisor), André Odermatt (European Advisor), Katelijne Kenis (Assistant)