

SwissCore Synopsis

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◆ Seen from Brussels

The achievements of the German Presidency in research and innovation policy

As this issue of the Synopsis is coming out, the Presidency of the European Union will have passed from the Germans to their Portuguese colleagues. Now is the time to look back at the achievements of the German Presidency in the fields of research and innovation and compare them to the goals they had set to themselves.

The compromise attained on the proposal for a European Institute of Technology can certainly be regarded as a success. By proposing a two-step approach to the project, the Germans were able to reach a political agreement at the last Competitiveness Council (Council of Ministers) on 25-26 June (see p.7). Even Member States like Sweden or the UK, which had always looked upon the proposed EIT with a critical eye, finally agreed to the Presidency's compromise. This should allow the European Commission to go ahead with the EIT project, but leaves Member States, and also the European Parliament, a tight control over the process. The German two-step approach might be criticised by proponents of the EIT as being half-baked, but a proposal to go full speed ahead with this project would have most likely ended in an unwanted clash between the Council of Ministers and Commission President Barroso, who is at the origin of the EIT proposal.

Even if the political process for the adoption of the 7th Research Framework Programme had been closed under Finnish leadership at the end of last year, the perfectly orchestrated launch of FP7 on 7 February and the formal establishment of the European Research Council in Berlin a few weeks later can also be accounted to the German Presidency. Nevertheless, the Germans somewhat failed to deliver on the proposed Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI), which were planned to be adopted under their leadership. The responsibility for this delay however lays more with the European Commission, as the first two JTI proposals were only tabled mid-May, and two more in June (see p. 4).

In the field of innovation, the Germans had put a high priority on revising the framework for Intellectual Property. As already discussed earlier (Synopsis 2007/3), the Commission highlighted in a Communication on knowledge transfer the importance of improvements in the field of Intellectual Property (IP). Under the German Presidency, the Communication from 4 April became in some areas more concrete as Germany proposed a Charter on IP. The Charter provides guidelines, albeit voluntary, for good management of IP at universities and public research institutions. It was unanimously adopted at the last Competitiveness Council meeting. The final decision on the Charter is expected for next year and there is some hope that at a later date also companies will sign it.

In conclusion, Germany has reached most of the goals it had set itself in the field of research and innovation policy and can now look back on a successful Presidency of the EU.

◆ Research *7th Framework Programme (FP7)*

European Commission proposes research initiative on ICT and ageing

The European Commission published on 14 June an action plan in order to react to the fact that Europe's population is ageing and that the foreseeable demographic change will pose significant challenges to society and economy. In the action plan, the Commission is not only thinking about how the quality of live of older people can be improved, but it wants also to open up new perspectives for Europe's businesses. At the same time, the Commission proposed a research initiative named "Ambient Assisted Living" (AAL) on the same topic.

Outlooks on the demographic development say that in 2020 about 25% of Europe's population will be over 65. Currently, only 10% of older people use the Internet and only a minority takes advantage of online services and low cost communication. The Commission sees in the continuously growing group of older people an important target group for ICT related industries. It

enumerates some interrelated fields where action needs to be undertaken in order to facilitate the integration of older people:

- understanding older users
- market visibility and transparency
- regulatory barriers
- technical barriers
- basic access barriers and lack of adequate solutions
- other barriers

In order to implement the action plan, the Commission counts on the support of Member States, regional and local authorities, user organisations and businesses. In particular they should help to increase the digital competencies among older people and facilitate them the access to ICT for ageing through broadband. The Commission has planned to publish recommendations for Member States on the privacy aspects of radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies.

With regard to research on ICT and ageing, the proposed AAL initiative would have Article 169 of the Treaty as its legal basis. This article allows the Community to take part in research and development programmes undertaken by several Member States. AAL aims at coordinating Member States research programmes on ICT for ageing. It is a market-oriented research funding instrument, filling the gap between research performed in FP7 and projects undertaken in the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP). The overall budget of AAL is expected to amount to €600 million.

More information about the action plan and AAL can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/policy/ageing/launch/index_en.htm

The proposal for the Art. 169 initiative AAL can be found under:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0329en01.pdf

Eurostars: a programme to stimulate international R&D cooperation among SMEs

On 31 May, the Eurostars Funding Agency Conference took place in Brussels. The Eurostars Programme is a European funding and support programme dedicated to research-performing SMEs. It is open to SMEs who dedicate at least 10% of their annual turnover or their full-time employment to R&D. In a Eurostars project, at least two partners from different Eurostars participating countries must be involved. It is expected that in a typical project two or three SMEs, one larger company and one research institution or university will take part.

One of the main aims of Eurostars is to have a short project life cycle (three years maximum) and that the product resulting from the research is ready for market introduction no more than two years after completion of the project.

Like for “Ambient Assisted Living” (AAL) (see article above), Eurostars will be an initiative under Article 169 of the Treaty. Until now 27 countries are interested in participating in Eurostars, among them Switzerland. Other non-EU-Member States include Iceland, Israel, Norway and Turkey. The budget for seven years amounts to €400 million, of which €100 million come from the European Commission. It is estimated that about 560 projects could be funded with the average funding sum of €1.5 million per project.

Even if the evaluation of the projects will be done in a centralized manner in Brussels, each country will finance its projects by itself, with the Commission adding up of 30%. That subsidy can be used by the countries within Eurostars in a flexible way. For instance it can be used to finance another Eurostars project which otherwise would not be supported. The flexibility which is related to that kind of funding scheme is not fully supported by all of the countries interested in Eurostars, with some of them arguing that it results in a financial insecurity when planning the budget.

The evaluation will be performed in two steps. First, two technical experts will independently examine the project and write a report on it. Both of them will be chosen from the Commission’s FP7 expert database. Based on these two reports, an Independent Evaluation Panel composed of six persons will compile a ranking. Only projects with 20 points or more will be selected. As the requested budget of the top ranked projects is not known but the Commissions overall contribution is fixed, there is no guarantee that all of the top-ranked projects will get the Commissions topping

up of 30%. Either on 18 September or 2 October, the first call for proposals is planned to be issued and at the same time a high-level but unofficial launch event would take place in Brussels.

For more information on Eurostars please use the following link:

http://www.eurostars-eureka.eu/tiles/main_alternate.html

The European Commission proposes two more Joint Technology Initiatives

On 13 June, the European Commission adopted two more proposals for Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI), Clean Sky and ENIAC. The two first proposals, for the JTIs Artemis and IMI, had been adopted by the College of Commissioners in May (see Synopsis 2007/4). JTIs are private-public partnerships established under Art. 171 of the EU Treaty. They foresee the establishment of a “Joint Undertaking”, a type of joint venture of the Community with the industry in a specific sector. The Joint Undertaking will have the role to implement the Research and Development (R&D) programme set forth in the JTI’s Strategic Research Agenda, a 10-year plan compiled by the industry in the concerned sector which addresses its shortcomings in R&D.

- The JTI “Clean Sky” is aiming at increasing the competitiveness of the European aeronautics industry and at reducing the environmental burden of air transport. The Joint Undertaking is planned to be alimented by €800 million from FP7’s “Transport” Theme, while another €800 million will come from the other participants in the public-private partnership, mainly private companies in the aeronautics sector and their affiliates and subcontractors. The public funds from the Community are planned to be distributed according to a set scheme: €600 million will directly go to the so-called Integrated Technology Demonstrator (ITD) leaders and their affiliates, while the remaining €200 million will be awarded to external project partners from Member States or Associated Countries on the basis of competitive calls for proposals. Despite this pre-allocation, not more than 50% of the total costs of a project will be borne by the European Commission; in addition, a precise repartition key between different research topics is already foreseen in the proposal.
- The JTI for nanoelectronics “ENIAC” is based on a former EUREKA cluster and has the goal to improve the competitiveness of industry in the nanoelectronics field. It would bring together the major industrial players in this field through the association AENEAS, which is planned to be the main partner of the European Commission in ENIAC; different Member States could also become part of the Joint Undertaking. Surprisingly, it is foreseen that membership in ENIAC will also be open to Third Countries, even if they are not associated to FP7. The European Commission would provide €450 million to the JTI, coming from the ICT Theme of FP7. Of this amount, €10 million are foreseen to cover the running costs of the Joint Undertaking (together with industry contributions); the remaining €440 million would be combined with Member States financing (which should amount to 1.8 times the Community funding) and in-kind contributions from participants to fund the planned R&D activities. Eligible participants would have to come from ENIAC member states, or from EU Member States and countries associated to FP7, provided these have established “administrative arrangements” with the ENIAC Joint Undertaking. To be funded, a minimum of three partners from three different ENIAC member states are required.

As for their predecessors, it is planned that the two new Joint Undertakings will have their seat in Brussels, turning the capital of the EU into a kind of “epicentre of research funding”: besides the €55 billion EU Framework Programme, the four JTI would be administered from there.

According to Art. 171, the Council of Ministers will decide on the four JTI proposals after consulting the European Parliament. These proposals were presented by the European Commission during the last Competitiveness Council (Council of Ministers) meeting of 25-26 June in Luxemburg. The deliberations in Council are planned to take place this autumn, with an earliest expected start of the JTI in the beginning of 2008.

The European Commission’s proposal for the Clean Sky JTI can be found under:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0315en01_01.pdf (main text)

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0315en01_02.pdf (annex II)

The European Commission's proposal for the ENIAC JTI can be found under:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0356en01.pdf

New association agreements signed

Five countries have recently signed agreements to associate to the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7). On 13 June Croatia, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey officially signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the European Commission that allows researchers from these countries to fully participate in FP7, with the same rights as their colleagues from EU Member States. Switzerland signed a similar Memorandum during the Competitiveness Council (Council of Ministers) meeting in Luxemburg on 25 June. In addition to these now Associated Countries, Israel, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina are expected to join soon. The remaining Western Balkan State, Montenegro, has requested to become associated to FP7 as well, but the decision will be taken only once the negotiations for the Stabilisation and Association Agreement will have advanced. This Agreement is part of the process to acquire full membership of the EU; the negotiations with Montenegro had started when this country was still politically linked to Serbia, and the need for separate agreement has set back the process.

As a reminder, the European Economic Area (EEA-EFTA) States Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are associated to FP7 through the EEA Treaty.

EU Research Policy

Study on the remuneration of researchers

End of April, the Research Directorate-General of the European Commission published a study on the remuneration of researchers in public and private commercial sectors in the EU-25 and Associated Countries. The main objective of the report is to give a clear idea of the existing differences between researcher careers in Europe. Following the Frascati manual of the OECD, a researcher is any person who devotes at least 50% of her or his time to carry out research activities. Other areas of interest addressed in the study are the existing differences between research and other similar professions, and differences between researchers working in Europe and those in Australia, China, India, Japan and the United States. High differences exist in the remuneration of researchers throughout the EU-25 and Associated Countries, although the gap between the salary levels in each country reduces when the costs of living is considered. As a result only Austria, The Netherlands, Israel, Switzerland and Luxembourg have an average remuneration similar to that of the United States. Sadly in most of the countries, the remuneration for men is higher than for women.

The results of the study support the Commission in the validation of the reference rates applicable to the "Marie Curie" Actions, as well as in the context of other elements of the Framework Programme.

The full report can be downloaded under: http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/pdf/final_report.pdf

Key Figures for R&D 2007: Europe still lacking behind the United States

Since the publication of the last Key Figures in 2005 new actions have been undertaken by the European Commission and Member States to strengthen research in Europe and in particular to reduce the gap between Europe and US in R&D spending. The launch of FP7 with its considerably higher budget than FP6 is certainly the most important.

Of course it is much too early to evaluate the impact of the recently started actions. Nevertheless the recently published Key Figures show that EU still lag behind the US for most of the indicators, while competitors such as China or South Korea are rapidly catching-up. According to the Key Figures 2007, China will overtake the EU in R&D intensity if it manages to maintain its current pace by 2009. This grim outlook for the EU seems to be due to a weakness that already existed for more than a decade: the Key Figures mention the stagnation in Europe's R&D intensity since the mid-

nineties in this context. Currently only Sweden and Finland spend more than 3% of their GDP on R&D (in 2004 Switzerland reached an R&D intensity of 2.93% of GDP) and are therefore conform to one of the main aims of the Lisbon Strategy. The general average for EU-25 in 2005 was 1.84% of GDP.

The Key Figures for R&D 2007 can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/monitoring/statistical01_en.htm

Publications

Science and Society mid-term assessment

On 12 June, the European Commission published the final version of the mid-term assessment of the “Science and Society” programme under FP6. This programme which had a funding of €71 million was newly introduced in FP6 and will be continued in FP7 under the name “Science in Society”.

The review panel that authored the report was chaired by Pierre Papon, honorary Chairman of the French “Observatoire des Sciences et des Techniques”. The panel draws overall positive conclusions from the Science and Society programme, as it has been able to establish a forum for science and society in Europe and created networks of partners established in different European countries. Negative points identified by the report are the scope that was too narrowly defined, the lack of dissemination of results and the predominantly academic participation in the programme. The panel therefore recommends FP7’s “Science in Society” programme to put more weight on the planned dissemination activities of the submitted projects and to encourage more diversity in project partners (e.g. to include more NGOs and Civil Society Organisations). More coordination with similar activities at national level is also requested. It will be up to the new programme under FP7 to pick up these challenges and develop its activities in the way put forward by the review panel.

The final mid-term assessment report on the FP6 “Science and Society” programme can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/1-mta-report-22032007_en.pdf

New nanotechnology website

The European Commission has recently put online a new overarching website on nanotechnology, which includes all the EU policy information on this subject, as well as links to the (many) involved Directorates-General and EU Agencies. The most recent policy papers of the EU on nanotechnology, the 2004 Strategy for Nanotechnology and the Action Plan 2005-2009, can be found there. This site should be a good source of information for scientists working in the nanosciences as well as for policy makers dealing with nanotechnology and its effects on society.

The nanotechnology website of the Commission can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/nanotechnology/index_en.html

Innovation

The EIT gets the Council’s blessing

At the Competitiveness Council (Council of Ministers) meeting of 25-26 June, the research ministers of the EU agreed on a general approach (political agreement) on the highly debated proposal for the establishment of a European Institute of Technology (EIT). The two-step approach of the German Presidency has convinced even the most reticent Member States and led to an agreement, albeit not formal, on the most contentious issues, which were:

- **Budget:** This major issue was resolved in an elegant way by the Council, which agreed on a maximal budget of €308.7 million for the first phase of the EIT (until 2013), but carefully avoided defining where this money would be drawn from. It is now up to the European Commission to find the sources of financing within the current EU budget (“unallocated margins”), or to propose to amend the Financial Perspectives accordingly, most likely during the planned revision in 2008-2009.
- **Degrees:** The consensus was found that degrees would be awarded by partnering institutions, while the EIT would only provide a label. The latter is necessary to provide visibility for the EIT within and especially outside of Europe.
- **Location:** It is foreseen that the location of the administrative office of the EIT (most likely taking the form of an Executive Agency) will be decided upon within 12 month after entry into force of the Regulation (the legal text establishing the EIT). Several Member States have already more or less strongly proposed to host the EIT “main office”.
- **Linguistic regime:** This became a sensitive issue during the Council meeting and was solved by the introduction of an article stating that all “official documents” of the EIT would have to be translated in all 23 Community languages.
- **Themes for the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs):** They are not formally set in the text of the Regulation, in order to respect the autonomy of the Governing Board in selecting the KICs. However, it is mentioned in the introduction that they would have to fit to EU policy issues – therefore climate change and energy would be leading the list, except if unforeseen policy needs emerge until 2010, when the first KICs would be started.

According to the co-decision procedure applying to the EIT proposal, the European Parliament should handle the subject in priority. Therefore, the political agreement taken by Council will only be consolidated to a legally binding common position once the report of the Parliament is forwarded to the research ministers. The Parliamentary Committee in charge, ITRE (Committee for Industry, Research and Energy), should vote on its report on 9 July in Strasbourg, while the vote in the plenary is foreseen on 26 September. This would allow Council to reach a common position in November-December. If an agreement between the political institutions of the EU can be reached in one reading, the future Governing Board of the EIT would be starting its work in early 2008.

A summary of the Council’s conclusions on the EIT proposal can be found under:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/intm/94967.pdf

CIP: Details on the ICT Policy Support Programme

The ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) is the second pillar of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). It has a budget of €730 million, whereas the CIP has a global budget of €3.6 billion. In former editions of the Synopsis (see Synopsis 2007/4 and 2007/2), the structure and content of the first and second pillar of the CIP (Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme EIP and Intelligent Energy Europe IEE) had already been presented. The purpose of the ICT PSP is to improve the development of an information society and to help to create a lead market for innovative ICT in the public area. It is therefore strongly related to the EU ICT policy framework i2010 initiative (see Synopsis 2007/3).

The work programme of ICT PSP is divided in three main themes. The first one concerns efficient and interoperable eGovernment services. The second one deals with ICT for accessibility, ageing well and social integration, whereas the third theme addresses ICT for sustainable and interoperable health services.

In order to reach its objectives, the ICT PSP will provide complementary tools, especially the following three types:

- **Pilot A:** building on initiatives existing in Member States or Associated Countries in order to ensure the EU-wide interoperability of ICT solutions launched by Member States. An example would be the EU-wide implementation of eHealth services to support continuity

of transnational care (ePrescription). The participants are national authorities and at least six Member States are going to test the project during a period of 36 months.

- Pilot B: stimulating the uptake of innovative ICT to support their implementation. Examples are the accessibility for ICT for all, or ICT for ageing (see article on the action plan for ageing well in the information society in this edition p.2). A project will run from 24 up to 36 month and needs at least the participation of 4 Member States.
- Thematic Networks: forum for stakeholders to exchange their experiences on ICT policy implementation. The participants should be at least 7 key stakeholders from 7 Member States and the project will last 24 months.

For the ICT Policy Support Programme go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/library/ref_docs/docs/cip_ictpsp_wp.pdf

Publications

Call for cooperation between European technology institutes

On 28 June, the Directorate-General Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission published a call for proposals for pilot projects for cooperation between European Institutes of Technology. With a total budget of €5 million, this call, which is based on a line added by the European Parliament in the 2007 budget, foresees to fund 3-5 projects over 2 years with the goal of designing, implementing and testing new models of cooperation leading towards integrated partnerships of technology institutes. According to Commission officials, this call should not prefigure in any way the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the future European Institute of Technology (EIT); however, it could be that certain models of partnership developed in response to this call will serve as a blueprint for future KICs. Unfortunately, the text of this call does not foresee participation from institutions from non-EU Member States, which means that, based on the current situation, Swiss institutions would not be eligible for funding and not even for participation at own costs. The option of being included as a kind of “shadow partner” in a network of technology institutes responding to this call nevertheless remains.

The call text can be found under:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/c_143/c_14320070628en00090012.pdf

Last edition of “European Innovation”

In the last edition of “European Innovation” a wide range of topics are discussed. One of the articles is about the PRO INNO Europe initiative, which aims to foster the collaboration between Member States but also regions across Europe in the field of innovation policy, with the goal of improving innovation policy in Europe. Another article gives a summary about the 5th European Business Summit, where representatives of business encouraged the Commission to go ahead with the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda and to create favourable conditions for enterprises. One article covers the problem of innovative SMEs to find funding and expertise. The article is related to four workshops organized by the European Commission on that topic. “European Innovation” used to be published six times a year.

The last and some of the previous editions of “European Innovation” can be found under:

http://cordis.europa.eu/aoi/list_publ.cfm?Pub=1&r=1

Rocard Report on science teaching

On 12 June, the “High Level Group on Science Education” delivered its final report to Janez Potocnik and Jan Figel, Commissioners for Research, and for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, respectively.

Created six months ago, the expert group was chaired by the Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Michel Rocard, former French Prime Minister. MEP Rocard contacted Commissioner Potocnik in April 06 to draw attention to the current declining interest for science topics among young people. Mr. Rocard was therefore invited to chair a small group of experts to see what action could be taken to increase young people's interest – with special attention to girls – in science and mathematics. The report states that for Europe, stimulating interest for science and technology is an important issue for its future capacity to innovate and its need for more scientists. Moreover, the quality of European research would depend on the choice being made at schools across Europe today, and the key analytical skills that are developed there.

The main recommendation is breaking radically with the current teaching methods: students should learn by undertaking experiments, carrying out investigations and solving problems. According to the expert group, using inquiry-based science-teaching pedagogy would provide the means to increase interest in science among young pupils. The expert group also encourages an effective collaboration between Europe and national programmes which should accelerate the pace of change through the sharing of know-how. The report is being widely disseminated to stimulate a debate as well as a commitment for real action among policy makers at the highest levels within the European Union.

The report can be downloaded at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/report-rocard-on-science-education_en.pdf

Third European Youth Week

The third European Youth Week took place in Brussels from 3 to 6 June 2007 with debates and festivities organised by the European Union programme “Youth in Action!”. This programme is running from 2007 to 2013 with a budget of € 885 million to encourage the involvement of young people (from 13 to 30 years old) into European activities.

Ahead of the youth week, the European Commission (EC) had published a Eurobarometer survey that had been carried out among 19,000 young people aged between 15 to 30 years old.

One of the results of the survey was that 81% would like to be more involved into political decision-making. The European Commission welcomes this positive result as it wants to encourage young people to be more involved especially in the “Youth in Action!” programme.

The relevant issues addressed during the European Youth Week were social inclusion and diversity in areas such employment, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, volunteering, active citizenship and non-formal learning.

In different workshops and forums, the participants discussed seven themes dealing with youth issues focused on inclusion and social diversity. These were:

- The future of Europe – an inclusive Europe
- Active citizenship for a more cohesive society
- Intercultural dialogue and diversity
- Equal opportunities and anti-discrimination
- Employment and social inclusion
- Volunteering as a tool for inclusion
- Between commitment and job recognition: the missing link

As a result of these working groups, youth people asked the European Commission to be more recognized and involved into every day life of Europe. To this end, they asked to enhance

dialogue and interactivity through tools like youth exchange programme, new policies, platforms like “Youth information” and campaigns like the “Year of Intercultural Dialogue”.

The conclusions of the “European Youth Week” can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/doc/eyw_conclusions_final_en.pdf

◆ **SwissCore Küche**

SwissCore Annual Event

On 19 June, SwissCore hosted its 12th Annual Event, a reception to thank its Brussels colleagues and contacts for their good collaboration in the past years. This year’s host was Prof. Dr. Hans Weder, Rector of the University of Zurich and President of the Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities. SwissCore welcomed around ninety invitees from the European Commission, from IGLO and from other research and education organisations in Brussels, confirming the good contacts that SwissCore is keeping in its working networks. It was the opportunity to present the new SwissCore brochure, which had been redesigned due to the new partnership with the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology which started in April 2007.

