

SwissCore Synopsis

January 2008

2008 / 1

♦ Seen from Brussels

- 2008: A year full of surprises? 2

♦ Research

7th Framework Programme – FP7

- Unforeseen steering of the early phase of the JTI by the European Commission 2
- Two new Executive Agencies for DG RTD 3
- ERC: Results of the first Starting Grant call 4
- Commission promotes exchange between Academia and Industry 5
- The first two ERA-NET Plus started 5
- Albania and Montenegro join the EU Research Framework Programme 6

EU Research Policy / Publications

- The evaluation of the EU research programmes criticised by the Court of Auditors 6
- ERC: Open Access guidelines published 7
- Report on the role of philanthropy for university research 7

♦ Innovation

- Options discussed for the pilot project “Erasmus for young entrepreneurs” 7
- The role of cross-boarder investments by venture capital funds for innovative SMEs 8
- A new attempt to make the knowledge triangle functional? 8

Publications

- Work Programme 2008 of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) 9
- Lisbon Strategy: Only partial success with regard to EU R&D spending 9
- Lead market initiative shall become part of European innovation strategy 10
- SME Update newsletter 10
- Report on Manufuture conference 10

♦ Education

- Priorities of the Slovenian Presidency on education and youth 10
- High level experts on mobility in the EU 11
- Platform for doctoral education launched by the European University Association 11

Publications

- Strikingly positive results in recent study about Comenius Programme 11

♦ SwissCore Küche

- Science Business Policy Bridge discussed ideas for EU research spending 12

This edition of the SwissCore Synopsis as well as previous editions are available on our website.

SwissCore - Contact Office for European Research, Innovation and Education, Rue du Trône 98, B-1050 Bruxelles
Tel +32-2-549 09 80, Fax +32-2-549 09 89, infodesk@swisscore.org, <http://www.swisscore.org>

♦ Seen from Brussels

2008: A year full of surprises?

Last year saw not only the launch of FP7, but also the debate on a Green Paper for the future development of the European Research Area (ERA) and, at the end of the year, the adoption of the first JTI (see below), the awarding of the first grants by the newly established European Research Council (ERC) (p. 4), as well as the setting up of two new Executive Agencies to manage substantial parts of the research Framework Programme (p. 3). A question could arise in view of this impressive list: what new initiatives and programmes will be proposed this year? Unlike previous Framework Programmes, FP7 is set to last seven years which means that even the mid-term review of the programme will not start until next year.

But, as usual, the European Commission is keeping research, innovation and education high on its agenda; first, there will be several proposals tabled this year as follow-up from the ERA Green Paper. A Communication on a "European researchers' passport" and one on "joint programming of research" should be tabled during spring. These will be complemented by a Recommendation on the management of intellectual property by public research institutions. In the second half of the year, during the French Presidency, a Regulation on a "dedicated legal framework" for research infrastructures and a strategy for international S&T cooperation should round up the picture.

Another proposed European initiative whose adoption process needs to be finalised is the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). After the political agreement on this somewhat disputed new "flagship" project in November (see SwissCore Synopsis 2007/9), a common position of the Council of the EU on the proposal of the European Commission was finally adopted on 21 January 2008. According to the co-decision procedure applying to this proposal, it is now in the hands of the European Parliament to ensure a swift second reading and a subsequent adoption by the Council before summer. It remains to be seen whether the "flagship" benefits from clement winds and is able to keep the speed it picked up last fall.

♦ Research

7th Framework Programme (FP7)

Unforeseen steering of the early phase of the JTI by the European Commission

On 18 December 2007, the Council of the EU adopted the first four proposals for Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI). This new scheme under FP7 is aimed at combining the R&D efforts of industry and the public sector in a public-private partnership, to implement the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) set by the involved industrial sector. Since the adoption, it has been rather quiet around the JTI; some of them, notably IMI, had planned to issue indicative pre-calls before the end of last year, but no information is available so far.

This delay is in part due to a change in the article on preparatory actions (Art. 16) introduced by the Council into the four different Regulations setting up the Joint Undertakings (JU) that will implement the JTI. Under European Community law, a JU is the legal form of a public-private partnership such as the JTI. Art. 16 newly foresees that the responsibility for the JU lies with the European Commission until they are fully independent. As a result, staff detached from the relevant Directorates-General (DGs; Research for IMI and Clean Sky, INFOS for ARTEMIS and ENIAC) will take care of the management of the JU and a Commission official will act as interim Executive Director for each JU. The people from DG Research rumoured to take the lead are Liam Breslin, Head of Unit in the Transport Directorate (Dir. H) for Clean Sky, and Alain Vanvossel, Head of Unit in Directorate B for IMI. This steering by the Commission of the early phase of the JTI is expected to last until the end of the year, at which point the JU shall be deemed to be independent. Nevertheless, the Commission will send the respective Directors-

General (Silva Rodriguez and Colasanti) to sit in the Governing Board of the JU, even after they have gained independence.

The timeline for the operations of the JTI looks now as follows: In February, launch events for the different JTI should be held (the one for Clean Sky took place on 5 February in Brussels). However, no decisions or communication can be made by any of the JU without the avail of the respective Governing Board; these Boards should have their constituting meeting sometime in February-March. First calls for proposal are then expected at the end of April or beginning of May, while indicative pre-calls could already be issued right after the first meeting of the Governing Board. Executive Directors for the JU will be recruited during the summer, as well as additional staff later in this year.

From this planning, it looks like the preparations to reach the state of independence are progressing, but at a much slower pace than originally foreseen by some of the industrial partners in the JU. This will most likely lead to a delay for the start of the research projects funded by the JTI, with the risk that some companies may decide to go ahead with their projects without any public partners.

More information on the JTI can be found under:

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

<http://www.cleansky.eu/>

<http://www.artemis-office.org/>

<http://www.eniac.eu/>

Two new Executive Agencies for DG Research

On 14 December 2007, the European Commission (EC) formally established two new Executive Agencies that will manage research projects funded through FP7. According to the respective Commission Decisions, both agencies will be located in Brussels and will be running for a period of 10 years. Executive Agencies of the EC are set up under a specific Council Regulation to perform a variety of management tasks; they are not supposed to do policy work.

By concentrating such tasks to the new agencies, the Directorate-General (DG) Research expects to improve the efficiency of the FP7 project management cycle, thus providing a better service to the research community. Indeed, both agencies will manage areas of FP7 where there are large numbers of relatively small grants with little policy input:

- The Research Executive Agency (REA) will administer the Marie Curie grants and fellowships as well as the “Research for the benefits of SMEs” scheme. Moreover, the REA should take over the parts of the Space and Security Themes currently managed by DG Enterprise. In addition to these specific tasks, it will provide evaluation and other support services for the entire Framework Programme. By the end of the year, the REA should count 274 staff; this number should increase to 558 by 2013.
- The European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA) will handle the Starting and Advanced Grants of the ERC and will de facto replace the extant Dedicated Implementation Structure (DIS). Some of the staff currently working for the DIS will however be transferred to the ERCEA, in order to ensure continuity. A small team of Commission staff will remain inside DG Research to handle the tasks that cannot be externalised to the agency, for example the handling of the “Ideas” Programme Committee. The ERCEA is expected to have a staff of 220 by the end of the year; by 2013, it should count 389 people. According to the plans of the agency, they will be organised in three main departments, responsible for scientific management, contract management and support services. A unit for the support of the Scientific Council, one for communication and one for internal audit will complete the work of the departments. The total administrative costs of the ERCEA are budgeted at 3.5% of the total budget allocation for the ERC, 1.5% below the maximum stated in the Decision establishing FP7.

With the legal establishment of these two agencies, DG Research expects substantial savings in administrative costs. Indeed, it should allow DG Research to handle the substantial budget increase foreseen in the second half of FP7 even without the otherwise necessary increase in

number of Commission officials. Besides these welcomed benefits, two questions however remain:

- Will the outsourcing to the agencies really lead to a better service for the researchers? The involvement of these agencies in addition to the concerned DGs might lead to increased complexity rather than a streamlining of the procedures. The transition period will also be difficult to manage: for example, researchers who currently have an FP7 project in one of the domains covered by the agencies will see their Project Officer change. However, all the systems currently in use (CORDIS, EPSS, URF, NEF) will not change.
- Will the independence of the ERC be guaranteed also at the level of the agency? One of the key reasons for outsourcing the “Ideas” programme to an executive agency is to realise its independence from the Commission, which had been repetitively demanded by the Council of the EU and the European Parliament during the FP7 adoption process. Whilst the independence of the Scientific Council seems to be a given, it is yet unclear which organisation, the ERCEA or DG Research, will have the task to concretise some of the decisions of this body of scientists and to advise them in their choices. For the moment, it looks like this task would be performed by the ERCEA, therefore stretching to its limits the competences given by the Council to such agencies.

The two Executive Agencies are currently being built up by small teams working inside DG Research; they are expected to be operational at the beginning of 2009. Most recruiting will be done during the summer and the fall, to reach the predicted staff numbers by the end of the year. Only once these agencies have been running for a while will we know whether the choice of externalising certain parts of FP7 will indeed lead to a benefit for the whole research community.

The Commission Decisions establishing the two new Agencies can be found here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=L:2008:011:0009:0011:EN:PDF>
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=L:2008:009:0015:0017:EN:PDF>

ERC: Results of the first Starting Grant call

On 14 December 2007, the European Commission announced that the European Research Council (ERC) will award its first Starting Grants to “about 300 up-and-coming research leaders”. Together with this announcement, the statistics based on the 300 top-scoring awardees show that most of these researchers are between 3 and 9 years after their PhD, 26% of them are women and the average age is 35. Most of the Starting Grant awardees have chosen a host institution in the UK (~19%), before France (~13%), Germany (~11%), Holland and Italy (both ~9%). 5% of them opted for a Swiss institution. If these numbers are put in relation to the population of the country, Switzerland gets the second highest percentage (~2.2%) after Cyprus (~2.6%).

On 25 January 2008, the ERC published the list of awardees and their host institutions. The first 201 proposals on this list are certain to be funded (“priority list”) from the planned budget of the Starting Grants call. The ones on the “reserve list” should get funded in rank order up to the exhaustion of an additional source of budget requested for this purpose. The ERC expects about 300 proposals to be funded; the exact number will depend on the number of awardees in the first batch that will sign the Grant Agreement and on the amount of the additional budget.

To prepare the signature of the Grant Agreement, the ERC has issued guidance notes for the awardees on 14 January 2008. These guidelines, albeit complicated, should allow the prospective grant holders to get an idea of the administrative workload incumbent on them. Unlike the typical FP7 collaborative projects, it is stated that most of the correspondence from the grant holder (the Principal Investigator, PI) will be handled by an Administrative Officer of the ERC. Only modifications to the content of the project (the Description of Work, DoW) should be handled by the Project Officer.

Statistics on the ERC Starting Grant awardees can be found under:

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

The list of the Starting Grant awardees can be found under:

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

The guidance notes for preparing the Grant Agreement can be found under:

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ERC_GuidNotes.pdf

Commission promotes exchange between Academia and Industry

On 14 January, the first Marie Curie Partnerships and Pathways conference for Industry and Academia (IAPP) has been held by the European Commission in Brussels. The IAPP scheme has been established under the specific programme “People” of FP7 in order to open and foster dynamic pathways between public research organisations and private commercial enterprises (SMEs). It aims at stimulating mobility between the public and private sectors and to promote staff exchange through joint research partnerships. The Commissioner for Research, Janez Potočnik, pointed out the importance of such a relationship for the creation and application of knowledge in his opening speech. The conference, mainly attended by researchers, private companies (including SMEs) and multipliers, showcased the success of previous industry/academia partnerships as well as pointed out the benefits of such a consortium for both sides. Industry would profit from access to the intellectual and material resources of academia, while academia would benefit from ideas and material support at the same time as gaining experience and insight into management practice – a win win situation. Furthermore, the opportunity to examine barriers that still burden such staff movement between the public and private sector has been taken and workshops were being held in order to help the participants to design top quality research partnerships and to optimise projects and contracts.

The IAPP scheme is the follow-up of the successful “Transfer of Knowledge Industry Academia Partnership” scheme under FP6. It is the only platform in which one single SME, together with one single university, can apply for Community research funding. The scheme will distribute € 400 million between now and 2013 for staff exchange projects, while the funding will cover up to 100% of the costs of the project for an average duration of four years. The second IAPP call for proposals is now open until 25 March 2008 with a budget of € 45 million.

The IAPP is “one of the sharpest arrows [in FP7]” emphasized Janez Potočnik “so I’m looking forward to seeing many new successful IAPP ‘marriages’ in the months and years to come.”

All documents related to the IAPP conference can be downloaded under:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/people/home_en.html

The first two ERA-NET Plus started

The European Commission announced on 4 January 2008 that it will provide €30 million in funding for two new joint research programmes in the areas of metrology and research into the Baltic Sea ecosystem. These two initiatives are the first ERA-NET Plus projects to start, which is a new kind of action under FP7.

- iMERA-Plus brings together the national metrology institutions of 32 countries to carry out a joint research programme about the science of precise and reliable measurements. Many areas of scientific progress depend on a solid metrological basis, e.g. the manufacture of technical products or the delivery of modern healthcare. This Action will receive €21 million from FP7, while the Member States will contribute a further €42 million.
- BONUS-plus, the Baltic Sea project, will receive €9 million from the EC whereas the eight involved EU Member States as well as Russia have allocated €18.7 million to the initiative. This joint project aims to develop an ecosystem-based approach to the management of the Baltic Sea and should enhance the understanding of and predictive capacity about the Baltic Sea ecosystem’s response to past, current and future changes caused by both nature and human induced pressures.

The ERA-NET scheme was established under FP6 to coordinate different national or regional public research programmes in order to develop and implement joint programmes and activities. EC funding was available only to cover costs for coordination and not to fund R&D, unlike the

initiatives launched under the new ERA-NET Plus scheme in FP7, which will receive a financial top-up of a single joint call.

Both iMERA-Plus and BONUS-Plus are potential candidates to develop into initiatives under Article 169 during FP7. Article 169 provides a legal basis for the EC to support the integration of national or regional research programmes undertaken by several EU Member States in order to define a joint research programme. So far, two projects (EUROSTARS and Ambient Assisted Living, AAL) have been proposed by the Commission based on this Article. Converting the two ERA-NET Plus projects into Art. 169 initiatives would allow a large increase in Commission funding, but it would also demand an increasing financial and legal commitment of the Member States towards the joint research programme.

More information about BONUS-Plus can be found under <http://www.bonusportal.org>

The information flyer of iMERA can be downloaded under:

http://www.euromet.org/projects/imera/open/docs/EUROMET_flier_2005.pdf

Albania and Montenegro join the EU Research Framework Programme

Albania and Montenegro have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Commission which allows their full participation in FP7. As of 1 January 2008, this status of Associated Country allows the two Western Balkan countries to send observers to FP7 Programme Committees as well as the participation of local researchers in all calls for proposals. This agreement can be seen as an important step towards the process of applying for EU membership. All countries of the Western Balkan, except Bosnia and Herzegovina, are now involved in the common European Union research effort.

EU Research Policy / Publications

The evaluation of the EU research programmes criticised by the Court of Auditors

On 19 December 2007, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a special report that strongly criticises the way the European Commission evaluates the performance of the Research Framework Programmes (FP). As the supreme financial control authority of the EU, the ECA analysed whether the Commission's approach to assessing the results of the three past Framework Programmes (FP4, FP5 and FP6) was adequate and found that the observed lack of an explicit intervention logic, poorly defined programme objectives and weak performance measurements undermined effective monitoring and evaluation. According to the Court, the lack of coordination between the so-called "research Directorates-General" (DG Research, INFSO, TREN, ENTR, FISH and JRC), the inadequate guidance for the FP evaluation expert groups and the premature timing of these evaluation exercises further hampered the quality of the assessment of the FPs. To remedy this, the Court proposes the following actions:

- The intervention logic should be rendered explicit, i.e. the link between scientific and socio-economic objectives clarified and appropriate performance indicators developed.
- A comprehensive evaluation strategy should be developed by the "research DGs", leading to a consistent approach for FP evaluation. Moreover, a joint evaluation office should be set up by these DGs.
- The data requirements should be assessed and more extensive use should be made of other existing source of data (e.g. from national ministries). The reporting requirements for FP participants should be rationalised. Finally, evaluation methodologies and techniques should be developed and expanded to suit the specific needs of FP evaluation.

As a result, the Court's recommendations should lead to the establishment by the Commission of a type of evaluation for the FPs that can be used to better shape the research programmes and that should contribute to policy decision-making.

The report from the European Court of Auditors on FP evaluation can be found under:
<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/651520.PDF>

ERC: Open Access guidelines published

On 17 December 2007, the Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) issued guidelines concerning the open access to scientific publications coming out of ERC funding. These guidelines follow up on the “ERC Scientific Council Statement on Open Access” of December 2006, which foresaw that ERC-specific guidelines for mandatory deposit of scientific data and publications in open access repositories would be issued:

- All peer-reviewed publications from ERC-funded projects have to be deposited in open-access repositories within six month of publication.
- Primary data (e.g. sequences or epidemiologic data in life sciences) should also be deposited in relevant open-access databases as soon as possible, and no later than six months after publication.

Notwithstanding these current guidelines, which will be binding for ERC grant holders, the Scientific Council is considering to shorten the currently accepted “blackout period” of six months in the future.

The Open Access Guidelines of the ERC can be found under:

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/ScC_Guidelines_Open_Access_revised_Dec07_FINAL.pdf

Report on the role of philanthropy for university research

In December 2007, the European Commission published the final report of an expert group on university research funding from philanthropic donations. The report analyses the current situation in Europe and compares it to the one overseas, e.g. in the US. The report makes recommendations grouped under three headings:

- Fundraising fundamentals: Universities should include fundraising from philanthropy as part of their overall strategy, build up internal fundraising competences and make fundraising one of the core responsibilities of university leadership.
- University environment: Accounting and management practices should be reviewed at universities and advantage should be taken from increased university autonomy. Possibilities for the creation of university foundations should be explored.
- External environment: Introduction of a “matching funds” system by governments and review of the fiscal rules to facilitate fundraising. The right of philanthropic transfer within the EU should be claimed, and a culture of giving and asking should be created.

This report might provide some interesting insight into philanthropy to university managers and public administrators; the comparisons found in the report might be especially useful.

The report of the expert group can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/final_report_v2_en.pdf

Innovation

Options discussed for the pilot project “Erasmus for young entrepreneurs”

On 17-18 December, more than 140 representatives from different business stakeholders (national ministries, business associations and support organisations, etc.) met in Brussels to discuss the establishment of the pilot project “Erasmus for young entrepreneurs”. An early stage entrepreneur – indicative age of 18 to 40 years – would spend a period of time within a host SME in another Member States to share learning experience on a specific topic. The discussions held during the conference allowed to identify a number of crucial success factors for the future pilot project, such as:

- An efficiently organised matching of visiting and hosting entrepreneurs;
- A strong focus on the needs and interests of businesses;
- A highly flexible and decentralised implementation scheme which would facilitate the development and undertaking of a business relationship between international entrepreneurs.

The European Commission should play an active support role in the pilot action, such as:

- Facilitating a network;
- Specifying the policy and contractual requirements of the business relationship;
- Participating in the promotion of the pilot action.

So far, 18 Member States are involved; the participation of Switzerland is not foreseen yet. As a funding scenario, a general agreement states that there should not be a financial incentive to host entrepreneurs to participate, but that a contribution to key overhead costs, paid by the EU, could be considered. The emerging options for structuring the pilot action will be discussed in the next months.

The working paper presenting the “Design and Implementation of the pilot project Erasmus for young entrepreneurs” can be downloaded as a PDF document:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/erasmus/erasmus_wp2.pdf

All other documents of the meeting can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/erasmus/stakeholdersmeeting/

The role of cross-boarder investments by venture capital funds for innovative SMEs

Venture capital is a very important source of external finance, in particular for research intensive and innovative start-up companies. Seen the importance of venture capital for R&D performing companies but also with regard to the frequently lamented lack Europe has in that respect compared to the US, the European Commission proposed a bundle of measures, presented in a Communication on 21 December 2007. This document is a follow-up of an earlier Communication published in June 2006 proposing different general measures to improve innovative SMEs access to finance. One of the proposals was to foster cross-boarder investment in venture capital. This option, which is based on the principle of free movement of capital as a fundamental Treaty freedom, is examined more closely in the new Communication.

However, cross-boarder activities of venture capital funds encountered some obstacles so far, mainly due to different national regulations. The Commission therefore proposes a close partnership between Member States in order to overcome fragmentation and to create an integrated European venture capital market. Concretely, Member States are invited to facilitate in their legislation cross-boarder activities of foreign venture capital funds and to consider mutual recognition of venture capital funds. Other measures concern regulatory and tax obstacles, such as double taxation. In some Member States, pension funds are not allowed to invest in venture capital funds; the extension of the so-called “prudent person rule” would allow them to invest in such funds.

According to a recent study undertaken by the European Venture Capital Association (EVCA) and referred to in the Communication, companies in the EU receiving venture capital and private equity created one million jobs between 2000 and 2004. According to this study, venture capital supported companies spent per employee six times more money on R&D on average than the EU-25 top 500 R&D companies, and almost half of their total expenses are invested in R&D.

The Communication on cross-boarder operations by venture capital funds can be found here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/financing/publications.htm>

A new attempt to make the knowledge triangle functional?

On 28 June 2007, the Directorate-General Education and Culture (DG EAC) published a call for proposals for pilot networks for cooperation between academia and industry (see Synopsis 2007/5). The goal of the call is to identify best practices for partnerships between European institutes of technology and partners from industry, in order to later use the knowledge gained during the setting up of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European

Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), but also in the planned Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI). As a result of the evaluation of about 50 proposals, undertaken by officials of DG EAC, four projects have been selected for funding (for a total budget of €5 million):

- SUCCESS (Searching Unprecedented Cooperation on Energy and Climate to Ensure Sustainability), coordinated by Professor Hans-Jörg Bauer, head of the institute for Thermal Turbomachinery (ITS) at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. SUCCESS counts 18 partners and 28 associated partners from science and industry, among them companies like Siemens.
- GAST (Green and Safe Road Transportation), which is coordinated by the consultancy company Inno Germany (Karlsruhe), in close cooperation with the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. Partners of GAST come from Germany, Czech Republic, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Austria and Sweden. Industrial partners are engineering companies, vehicle manufacturers and automotive suppliers.
- BRIDGE (Bridging biomaterials research excellence between industry and academia across Europe). Partners are Stockholm Science City, INEP (Porto), University College London, Semmelweis University (Budapest), Groningen University Hospital, BioMade (Groningen), Centre for Economic and Business Research CEBR (England), Uppsala University (Department of material chemistry and engineering sciences) and Uppsala University Innovation, which is responsible for the project coordination, together with its key partner, Avedas Innovation Management (Karlsruhe).
- ComplexEIT (from nano to large electronic systems). Partners are Airbus, Thales, Bosch, STMicroelectronics, GAIA (SME association), CEA, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, IMEC (Interuniversity Microelectronics Centre, Leuven), Digiteo, Polish Academy of Science, Sciences Po (Paris), University College Cork, New University of Lisbon, University of Pisa, INPG, cities of Dresden, Cork and Grenoble.

The selected projects, having a running time of two years, are not primarily supposed to deliver scientific progress in their area, but to test new models for cooperation between public and private research institutions, such as the partnerships which are planned within the EIT or the JTI. The projects are also supposed to give a response to complex questions concerning the legal status of a network, the ownership of innovation within a network, as well as the freedom of research in public-private partnerships.

Publications

Work Programme 2008 of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP)

The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) is the first pillar of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) which has started in 2007. It contains twenty implementing measures. The biggest part, about €143 million, will be used for the financial instruments, operated by the European Investment Fund (EIF). Another €74.2 million will be contributed to the newly established network for services in support for business and innovation. The remaining measures will get the rest of the 2008 budget (about €46 million).

The EIP Work Programme for 2008 is now available on the website of DG Enterprise:

http://ec.europa.eu/cip/docs/eip_wp2008.pdf

Lisbon Strategy: Only partial success with regard to EU R&D spending

Discussed at the meeting with all EU Commissioners in Strasbourg on 11 December 2007, the annual strategic progress report on the Lisbon Strategy gives, among other results, also some indications of the R&D spending of EU Member States, which will most likely not reach the targeted 3% of their GDP by 2010, but only 2.5%. In 2006, the EU average was 1.8% (in comparison, Switzerland reached in 2004 2.94%). Another conclusion of the report is, as usual, the low level of private R&D investment in Europe.

The main text of the progress report on the Lisbon Strategy can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/european-dimension-200712-annual-progress-report/200712-annual-report_en.pdf

Lead market initiative shall become part of European innovation strategy

Already presented in the last Synopsis (2007/9), the Communication of the lead market initiative (LMI) is now available on the Commission website. The LMI foresees six main areas, where a global leadership of European industry shall be achieved by encouraging those markets, mainly through public procurement. The six lead markets are: eHealth, sustainable construction, technical textiles, bio-based products, recycling, and renewable energy.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0860en01.pdf

SME Update newsletter

The SME Update newsletter published its first issue in January 2008. It has an online format and is providing news, call results, analyses, policy and points of view in all areas of European research for SMEs. This Issue contains, amongst others, articles about the Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP) (see p. 5) and the results of the first SME specific call of FP7:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/sme-techweb/newsletter/issue1/index_en.html

Report on Manufature conference

Delegates of 35 countries met at the fifth Manufature conference held in Porto on 3-4 December 2007. The gathering of Europe's manufacturing industry technology platform focused this year on the sustainability and global positioning of European manufacturing. A summary of the outcomes of the conference can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/industrial_technologies/articles/article_3914_en.html#1

Education

Priorities of the Slovenian Presidency on education and youth

Until the end of June, the Slovenian Presidency wants to address a set of priorities on education.

- The future beyond 2010 of the Lisbon Strategy concerning the education (Education & Training 2010) will be raised among the Member States. In that context, the role of education, training and lifelong learning should be strengthened in the “knowledge triangle” of research-innovation-education.
- Within the Bologna Process, special emphasis will be put on introducing lifelong learning in higher education and on the modernisation of universities in order to promote European competitiveness in the worldwide knowledge economy. Two conferences on these topics will be organised in Brdo: 10-11 March “Universities and lifelong learning” and 12-13 June “Meeting of Directors General for Higher Education”. Furthermore, Slovenia will organise meetings of the Bologna Follow-up Group – including two meetings of its Board – to discuss the implementation of the 2007–2009 Work Programme adopted during the Portuguese Presidency.
- Special attention will be paid to the second generation of the Erasmus Mundus scheme, which aims at extending mobility activities for academic staff and students (see Synopsis 2007/6). To start the programme on time in 2009, the legislative process (co-decision between the European Parliament and Council) should be pushed ahead during the year.
- Slovenia wants to establish a Euro-Mediterranean University to develop a ‘Euro-Mediterranean higher education and research area’.

Certain priorities are mainly concerning youth:

- Young people represent a demographic segment with considerable economic and social potential. Therefore concrete recommendations on youth employment are foreseen with the goal of implementing the European Youth Pact, which should efficiently combine youth

inclusion in education, employment and society, in order to help reaching the goals of the Lisbon Strategy.

- During the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, multilingualism and intercultural exchanges among youth will be promoted, as a means of increasing their employability, mobility and social inclusion.

More information on the priorities is presented on the website of the Slovenian Presidency:

http://www.eu2008.si/en/Policy_Areas/Education_Youth_and_Culture/index.html

The related events of the Slovenian Presidency can be found under:

http://www.mvzt.gov.si/en/novinarsko_sredisce/events/#c16867

High level experts on mobility in the EU

A new High Level Expert Forum on Mobility has been set up by the European Commission on 24 January 2008 to discuss future mobility in the EU. The Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Figuel, stimulated the establishment of this forum due to the great success of the Erasmus university exchange programme during the past years. Its main task will be the further extension of the Erasmus exchange programme, which is focusing on enhancing the exchange of young people by improving support for mobility in vocational training or adult learning, including by young artists, entrepreneurs (see article above p. 7), and volunteers. The High Level Expert Forum, which consists of 11 members with expertise in relevant fields, will deliver a short strategic report to the Commission in mid-2008.

Platform for doctoral education launched by the European University Association

End of January, the European University Association (EUA) announced that it will launch the EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE): the first Europe-wide platform for institutions offering doctoral education. The new service will aim at developing and advancing doctoral education and research training in Europe. Membership will be open to EUA full members and to other non-member universities awarding doctoral degrees. Further details on membership (criteria and costs) will be published in due course.

More information can be found on the EUA website:

[http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=48&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=467&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=1](http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=48&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=467&tx_ttnews[backPid]=1)

Publications

Strikingly positive results in recent study about Comenius Programme

On 24 January, a study on the impact of European school partnerships funded through Comenius has been published, showing that participating in school partnerships brings clear advantages to pupils, teachers and schools involved.

Comenius is one of the four sub-programmes of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), which is running from 2007-2013 and supports exchange and cooperation between schools in different countries. It covers pre-schools through upper secondary level and promotes the involvement of at least three million pupils in joint educational programmes until 2013 (see Synopsis 2007/6_Special).

The study aimed at analysing the impact of these Comenius School Partnerships both on teachers and pupils as well as on the participating school as a whole. It has been commissioned by the European Commission in 2007 and involved nearly 8'000 establishments that have been participating in the Comenius Programme over the last six years.

The results were remarkably positive:

- More than 70% of the pupils boosted their social skills as well as their ability to work in teams. Furthermore, two-thirds of the pupils gained specialised knowledge and ICT competences. As for the teachers, 75% improved their capacity to work in interdisciplinary teams.
- The survey showed a boost in languages competencies, with 62% of the pupils and two-thirds of the teachers improving their proficiency in English. Moreover, 23% of the students and about one third of the teachers gained better skills in a language other than English.
- 60% of respondents noticed an improvement of the school climate and a boost in interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, e.g. project work.
- Finally, an increased inter-cultural awareness could be seen. 80% of the teachers reported that their pupils became more interested in other countries and cultures which leads to more tolerance towards foreigners and other countries.

Further information on the study: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/impact_en.html
 Information on Comenius: http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/comenius/index_en.html

SwissCore Küche

Science Business Policy Bridge discussed ideas for EU research spending

On 17 January, SwissCore participated in the event “How should the EU spend its R&D money?”. Organised by the news service Science Business and hosted by the Mission of Switzerland to the European Union, the roundtable brought together two main keynote speakers of the European Commission involved in R&D strategy, Zoran Stančić, deputy director-general for DG Research, and Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, secretary general of the European Research Council. The meeting gave the participants the opportunity to exchange on their proposals for the future of R&D funding.

The discussion highlights are published on the Science Business website.
<http://bulletin.sciencebusiness.net/ebulletins/showissue.php3?page=/548/art/9765>