

# SwissCore Synopsis

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## ♦ Seen from Brussels

### **“Harvest time” for DG Research**

After a busy 2007 filled with calls to be issued and implementation details to be fixed, it seems that it is now time for DG Research to harvest the fruits from the seeds it planted last year. Indeed, the results of the first calls seem quite encouraging (see p. 3) and there have been no major drawbacks with FP7 that could have spoiled the yield. Even the Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI) might bear their fruits this summer after they have been patiently nurtured by the European Commission, somewhat to the dismay of the involved industry which would have liked to see the fruit ripen at a much faster pace (see article below).

The European Research Council (ERC) is also reaching maturity as the first call for the Advanced Grants (for engineering and physical sciences) has closed. Surprisingly, early reports speak of a low number of applications for this call (only around 1000). This could be explained by the specificities of this scientific domain, where cooperation with industry might render additional grants for basic research somewhat redundant, or by the reluctance of certain well-established scientists to present only a half-baked project to the peer-review panels, maybe fearing the negative effect of a rejection on their reputation. For the Starting Grant applicants, the need to gain independence might have overcome such fears, resulting in a larger number of applications. The low success rate for the Starting Grants (3%) might also have a deterrent effect on scientists who already have substantial available support for their research, considering the targeted potential applicants for the Advanced Grants. The number of proposals submitted in response to the two remaining calls (social sciences and humanities, closing on 18 March, and life sciences, closing on 22 April) might support or invalidate some of these hypotheses.

The cruise of the flagship European Institute of Innovation of Technology (EIT) goes full steam ahead. The European Commission appointed a four-person identification committee to search for the future members of the EIT Governing Board, and the European Parliament seems keen to accept the EU Council's common position without amendments, which would equate to factually adopting the EIT proposal (see p. 6). In addition, the proposals for the planned Art.169 initiatives Ambient Assisted Living (AAL; see p. 4) and Eurostars are steadily sailing through the co-decision procedure and should be adopted already this summer, if the clement winds prevail.

Regarding innovation, DG Enterprise successfully launched the new Enterprise Europe Network, which will replace the former Innovation Relay Centres and Euro Info Centres while combining their tasks into a “one-stop-shop” (see p. 8).

## ♦ Research

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

#### **Some JTIs still grounded while CleanSky takes off**

After publication of the relevant Regulations in the Official Journal of the EU, the Joint Undertakings (JU) set up to implement the first four Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI) ARTEMIS, ENIAC, IMI and CleanSky were legally established on 7 February 2007. JTI are public-private partnerships between industry and the European Community to implement a Strategic Research Agenda defined by the industry in a specific field. Based on Art.171 of the Treaty, every JTI involves the creation of a Joint Undertaking between an industry association, the European Commission and in some cases individual Member States.

As reported (see Synopsis 2008/1), the European Commission is solely responsible for the implementation of the JTI until the JU are deemed to be “fully independent”. It is therefore in the hands of the Commission staff to make progress on the implementation details required for the

start of the research projects financed by the JU. According to the European Commission, four legal documents are still needed for this:

- The financial rules of the JU have to be laid down in a Financial Regulation decision; indeed, rules differing from the standard financial regulations for EU programmes can be set up if needed;
- Along the same lines, new Rules of Participation are still to be defined, as they might differ from the ones applying to FP7;
- Consequently, a separate Model Grant Agreement for each JU is required;
- Finally, the Executive Director (or someone being vested with this function *ad interim*) of the JU has to be in office, in order to sign the Grant Agreements for the JU.

The decision on all four legal acts has to be taken by the Governing Board, whose members will represent the different partners in the JU. The Commission will appoint two of its Directors-General to sit on the different JU Boards, while the representatives from industry (and from the involved national states in the case of ARTEMIS and ENIAC) are not yet known.

As a result, the progress on the implementation of the four JTI has been quite different:

- CleanSky has been officially launched at a well-attended event on 5 February. While certain people at the launch deplored the slow pace of the Commission, the general feeling was rather optimistic. Liam Breslin (DG Research) should be confirmed as the interim Executive Director of CleanSky after the first Governing Board meeting.
- ARTEMIS and ENIAC will share a common implementation structure and the different JU bodies (Governing Board, Public Authorities Board) are currently drafting most of the implementation documents cited above. The first meeting of the ARTEMIS and ENIAC Governing Boards took place on 22 February. The interim Executive Director for ARTEMIS will be Constantinos Glinos, and for ENIAC Dirk Beernaert (both from DG INFSO).
- IMI has postponed its launch event foreseen on 21 February to an ulterior, not yet defined date. Some information on the calls and on the evaluation process has been published on the industry's IMI website, but not on the one from the Commission. Alain Vanvossel from DG Research is foreseen as interim Executive Director of IMI. A specific sector for the implementation of IMI has been created in his Unit, with Irene Norstedt in the lead.

In general, it is expected that calls will be launched this spring with deadlines towards the end of the year. In view of the legal implementation details still to be fixed, it is however questionable if first grant agreements will be signed before the end of the year.

The text of the Regulations setting up the Joint Undertakings can be found under:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ%3AL%3A2008%3A030%3ASOM%3AEN%3AHTML>

Information on the CleanSky launch event can be found under:

[http://www.cleansky.eu/index.php?arbo\\_id=52&item\\_id=6](http://www.cleansky.eu/index.php?arbo_id=52&item_id=6)

### **A look on the results of FP7's first year**

On 13 February, a few high-ranked officials of the European Commission were invited by Vittorio Prodi, member of the European Parliament (and brother of Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister), to take part in an informal assessment meeting of the first year of FP7 organised by the Foundation Interface Europe, an R&D consultancy.

The Commission summarised the achievements made under FP7 so far and presented some ongoing progress, which was then discussed with the audience and panel members. The main points were:

- Calls for proposals: 96 calls have been published so far (42 in Dec. 2006, 32 in Nov. 2007 and 22 during the year), of which 56 are now closed, while 40 are still open. The total budget of all calls was €5.75 bio. Some workshop participants advocated better focussed calls.
- Participation: About 25'000 proposals have been submitted for the first calls (including the 9000-odd ERC Starting Grant proposals), bringing together not less than 126'000 participants. From these, 1500-2000 will be funded, which represents a success rate lower than 10%.

- **Evaluations:** The reduced number of evaluation criteria (down to 3 from 5 in FP6) had a mixed impact: while a large majority of evaluators appreciated the simplification, it nevertheless led to a high number of proposals with the same mark, putting even more weight on the evaluators' final ranking of proposals. The criteria used for this ranking are not always entirely clear; the Commission intends to specify the weight of the different evaluation criteria already in the calls.
- **Budget:** The management of the budget has so far been exemplary; from €3.7 bio so-called "commitment appropriations" for 2007, 99.84% had been implemented until end of December.
- **Information to participants:** The general "research inquiry system" (Europe Direct system) for all "research-family DGs" seems to work well according to the Commission and provides a simple single entry point for participants in FP7, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and other related programmes. No less than 8500 questions have been processed so far. Participants lauded the improvements in the Cordis information system; it is now much easier to find the relevant documents there.
- **SME participation:** The target of 15% SMEs has been exceeded, with final figures approaching 20% for the first calls. The Commission explains this with the increased funding rate for SMEs under FP7 (75% instead of 50% in FP6).
- **Marie Curie programme:** This programme still suffers from high numbers of applications, and consequently low success rates. Furthermore, the Industry-Academia Partnership Pathways need to be improved by increasing relations between these two worlds.
- **Redress procedure:** only 6% of participants asked for redress after submitting a proposal, but only 4 proposals were re-evaluated in the end (0.07%). The redress procedure is managed by a specific redress committee for each call and is coordinated by the Redress Office (in DG RTD A1). As a rule of thumb, the scientific judgment of the evaluators cannot be questioned.
- **Administrative procedures:** The keyword here is "simplification": there are less ex-ante checks in FP7 and the standard reporting period will be increased from 12 to 18 months. However, the new funding schemes aimed at collaboration with industry (Joint Technology Initiatives) or with national funding agencies (Art. 169 initiatives) will issue their own rules, leading to a certain increase in complexity of FP7 as a whole. Divergences in the way the rules are applied by different Commission officials should be communicated in writing to the hierarchy or to the central services.
- **Contacts with Commission officials:** Some participants pointed to the fact that Commission officials are not always ready to discuss proposals before the submission deadline, depending on the Directorate or the Unit. The Commission can unfortunately not accommodate all these requests and the way to deal with them is often left to the appreciation of the Director or the Head of Unit.
- **Complementarities with other EU programmes:** The main point at the meeting concerned the complementarities of FP7 with e.g. the CIP or the Structural Funds. The Commission has issued a Communication on this topic last August and a guide for choosing the right programmes should be published this summer.

In addition to this look back on the first year of FP7, the Commission officials already hinted at what the future could look like. While the European Research Council (ERC) is focussed on academic researchers, the rest of the Framework Programme would become more open to other types of organisations (e.g. SMEs, research centres or civil society organisations) and industry would get involved through the JTI. In the end, there will be a balance between the highly applied research supported by the JTI and the bottom-up frontier research funded by the ERC. We can paraphrase here Research Director-General Silva Rodriguez's bold statement in front of the Industry Committee (ITRE) of the European Parliament last year (see Synopsis 2007/7): European research is moving towards the ERC on one side and to the JTI on the other– a first outlook on FP8?

### **European Parliament's Industry Committee examines AAL**

The planned research programme Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) is an EU initiative within FP7 which should bring information and communication technology at the disposal of elderly people to access public services more easily. Twenty EU member states as well as Israel, Norway and

Switzerland will participate in AAL. The overall budget of AAL is expected to amount to €300 million, with €150 million coming from FP7 and another €150 million from the AAL Member States. AAL has a running time from 2008 to 2013.

The proposal of the European Commission has been recently discussed by the European Parliament's Industry Committee (ITRE). The main conclusions are summarised in a report:

- Contributions of Member States and Associated countries to AAL should be above €150 million for the duration of FP7. National commitments should be in total greater than 20% of total national research funding for AAL related activities.
- It should be considered that the needs of elder people are very different, according to their age (i.e. the group of those aged 65-75 compared with the group of those older than 85).
- Older people should be included in the design phase from the very beginning, in order to make products as easy to use as possible.
- The view that the consumer segment of elderly people has a high purchasing power was criticised. Costs of new products should be kept low in order to make them affordable for everybody.
- Proposals submitted for AAL should not only meet the criteria of scientific excellence, but should also prove that they are adapted to the needs of elderly people and that they respect their privacy and dignity. Additionally, technical support for independent living shall also increase social participation by the elderly.

The European Parliament's first reading of the AAL proposal is expected on 10 March 2008. The Council's decision is planned for 29 May.

The report of ITRE can be found here:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2008-0027+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

## *EU Research Policy*

### **A new Code of Conduct for nano-research**

As stated in the mid-term review of the Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies Action Plan 2005-2009 (see Synopsis 2007/8), a 'Code of Conduct for responsible Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies research' has been adopted by the European Commission on 8 February. This code should serve as a good governance basis for managing research in the field of Nanosciences and Nanotechnologies (N&N).

Nanotechnology focuses on manipulating and manufacturing of matter on the atomic and molecular scale and is expected to have a major impact on the economy, the society and the environment. However, gaps in the knowledge of the effects of these technologies exist, primarily concerning human health and environment. With this Code of Conduct, the EC hopes to calm some of these fears.

The Code of Conduct is based on seven principles:

- Meaning: N&N should be comprehensible to the public and respect fundamental rights for the well-being of individuals and society.
- Sustainability: Research activities should be safe, ethical and respecting sustainable development. They should not harm or threaten humans, animals or plants.
- Precaution: N&N research activities should anticipate potential environmental, health and safety impacts.
- Inclusiveness: Governance of N&N research activities should be guided by the principles of openness and transparency to all stakeholders.
- Excellence: N&N should aim at meeting the best scientific standards.
- Innovation: Governance of N&N should encourage creativity, flexibility and planning ability for innovation and growth.

- Accountability: Researchers should stay responsible for the social, environmental and human health impact of their work.

However, the Code will not be legally binding and is rather a set of general principles and guidelines that Member States, universities, research institutes and industry will hopefully adopt voluntarily in order to achieve good governance.

The Code of Conduct for nanosciences and nanotechnologies research can be found under:

[ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/nanotechnology/docs/nanocode-recommendation-pe0894c08424\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/nanotechnology/docs/nanocode-recommendation-pe0894c08424_en.pdf)

### **Study on researchers' mobility in Europe**

A report on "Indicators on researcher's stock, career and mobility" has been released by the European Commission in January 2008. The survey has been designed to gather information about possible factors inhibiting mobility, since the Commission is eager to reduce obstacles to the movement of researchers across Europe and promote mobility. The survey focuses on ten indicators:

- Two indicators on researchers' stock and career, e.g. the number of researchers in the EU;
- Six indicators on researchers' mobility, e.g. the number of researchers recruited under a permanent contract in R&D, the number of researchers leaving and entering Europe as well as the circulation of researchers between the public and the private sector
- Two Indicators on the researchers motivation and satisfaction (qualitative), measured by asking about the motivation for R&D careers and the satisfaction of researchers with their jobs and careers.

The main findings of the study are the following:

- In 2005, 28'000 out of 487'000 doctoral candidates have the nationality of a different EU Member State (MS).
- 11'500 doctoral candidates were counted in the UK in 2005, which is the highest number of candidates having the nationality of another MS. Most other countries have less than 2'000 doctoral candidates with another European nationality.
- 9% of doctoral candidates in life science, 8% in engineering and 7% in social science are EU nationals working in another EU27 country.

The survey "Indicators on researcher's stock, career and mobility" can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/pdf/indicators\\_on\\_researchers\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/pdf/indicators_on_researchers_en.pdf)

## **Innovation**

### **The EIT in search of Governing Board members**

On 21 January 2008, the Council of the EU (Council of Ministers) legally adopted the common position defined at the Competitiveness Council meeting of 22-23 November 2007 on the Regulation setting up the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The common position was subsequently transferred to the European Parliament for a second reading that all the protagonists hope to be quick.

As a reminder, the EIT is planned to be set up as a virtual institute composed of different Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), as well as a small administrative centre. The KICs would be built up as networks of several research groups and institutes located in different universities, research centres and companies. The EIT will be steered by a Governing Board (GB) of 18 distinguished members coming not only from the field of research and higher education but also from industry, in order to focus the activities of the EIT on innovation and the transfer into industrial application of the acquired knowledge.

Education Commissioner Figel, who is in charge of the EIT project, has appointed a four person identification committee for the EIT GB on 5 February, whose members are:

- Prof. Günter Stock, president of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences;
- Prof. Miklos Boda, advisor to the Rector at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics;
- Cecilia Schelin Seidegard, chairwoman of the Royal University of Technology in Stockholm;
- Prof. Ronan Stéphan, director for industrial affairs and technology transfer of the CNRS.

The European Commission expects the GB identification process to be spread over four months from the appointment of the identification committee; if all goes according to plan, the GB members should be nominated before summer. This process will include two consultation phases:

- The identification of selection criteria, planned to last one month, will allow the main stakeholders to give their opinion on the criteria used to select the EIT GB members. A report will be sent to Parliament and Council for information.
- The identification of potential candidates should last about two months and stakeholders will be asked to suggest names of candidates.

Based on these inputs, the identification committee will then select 18 candidates. This short-list will then be forwarded to Parliament and Council, which will have one month to “take cognisance of the outcome of the selection process”. What this last step implies in reality is somewhat nebulous at this stage.

The whole selection process, as well as further steps in the establishment of the EIT, is newly managed by a specific “EIT task-force” within DG Education and Culture, under the direct responsibility of the Director-general, Ms. Odile Quintin. This seems to reflect the importance of this project for DG EAC.

While these preparations are going on, Parliament and Council will still have to finalise the political adoption process of the EIT. The Committee for Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament voted in favour of the Council’s common position without any amendments on 19 February; a vote in the plenary is expected for the March session. As foreseen by the co-decision procedure, the regulation will be deemed to be adopted if the Parliament does not make any amendments to the Council’s common position.

This timeline would allow the EIT to be set up this year and the first KICs to start their activities in 2009. The Governing Board should initiate the selection process for the first 2-3 KICs shortly after its establishment. In addition, the seat of the EIT central administration will have to be decided within 12 months after the entry into force of the EIT regulation, a decision that will be very delicate on the political level.

More information on the members of the identification committee can be found here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/188&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

### **Innovation Platform for knowledge intensive services launched**

The European Platform for knowledge intensive services (KIS-IP) is a new initiative by Europe INNOVA and was launched at a workshop, organized by DG Enterprise and Industry in Brussels on 4 February.

The goal of the platform is ambitious, as KIS-IP aims at facilitating the creation of more European innovation champions in the field of services. The planned support mechanism targets in particular young technology-oriented service companies with high growth potential, the so-called “gazelles”. But KIS-IP should also foster non-technological innovation in services. The support services which will be developed and tested in KIS-IP could be implemented later on through the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), and in particular through the Enterprise Europe Network of the CIP (see article below).

KIS-IP will have three sectoral networks. Each of them should support the specific needs of service companies:

- ACHIEVE MORE in the field of ICT (software) plans to bring together 50 business incubators, 15 ICT clusters and 5 finance organisations.

- KIS PIMS would support services that cover the whole life of new technologies for renewable energy. Innovation vouchers, issued by national agencies, should be tested through 5 clusters in Austria, Finland and France.
- KIS4SAT would stimulate the launch and development of potentially high growth service ventures in the field of satellite downstream applications, bridging together 25 regional clusters. Like KIS PIMS it is also based on a voucher system.

Additionally, a horizontal support action should provide a platform for learning from each other and facilitate access to finance and research results. The redaction of a handbook on organisational innovation in services and a business club of 100 young and high potential service companies in Europe are also part of the horizontal support action.

Based on a one-stop-shop approach, the three named sectoral networks will offer integrated support packages to young promising growth firms active in knowledge intensive services. The networks will be established on the basis of public-private partnerships connecting different actors from different countries in research, incubation, financing as well as in relevant clusters. This way, KIS-IP would help innovative service companies to better exploit research results and to facilitate the search for investors and business partners.

More information on KIS-IP can be found on the Europe INNOVA website:

<http://www.europe-innova.org/index.jsp?type=page&cid=9284&lg=en>

### **Enterprise Europe Network shall offer “business support at your doorstep”**

As a part of the European Commission’s policy to boost entrepreneurship and company growth in Europe, Günter Verheugen (Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry) launched the Enterprise Europe Network on 7 February. This new network will combine the previous Euro Info Centre and the Innovation Relay Centre networks. It will be the largest network in Europe providing expertise and services for business, with more than 500 local contact points and almost 4000 staff. Switzerland will also be covered.

Enterprise Europe will mainly offer the following services:

- Advising companies about EU funding possibilities, especially the research programmes;
- Providing feedback to the European Commission about SMEs’ view of EU policies and initiatives;
- Helping SMEs’ with technical issues such as intellectual property rights, standards and EU legislation, and ensuring SME’s access to innovative technology;
- Assisting SMEs’ to build technology partnerships by helping to identify partners in other countries and foster SMEs’ involvement in cross-boarder trade and investment.

The Enterprise Europe Network will follow the ambitious concept of the “no wrong door” or “one-stop shop”, which means that SMEs’ should find the whole range of information about research and innovation supporting measures at one single point. Enterprise Europe is open to international cooperation and could exceed the borders of Europe in the future.

The network will be managed by the former Executive Agency for Intelligent Energy Europe, which is now called Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI), led by Patrick Lambert. EACI should also be in charge of the implementation of the new Intelligent Energy Europe programme, of Marco Polo and of the Eco-Innovation theme in the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP).

More information can be found on the website of Enterprise Europe Network:

[http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm)

## ***Publications***

### **European Innovation scoreboard 2007: Switzerland in second position**

The 2007 European Innovation scoreboard published on 14 February ranks Switzerland among the innovation leaders, together with Denmark, Finland, Germany, Israel, Japan, Sweden, UK

and US. With regard to the overall innovation performance, Switzerland holds the second position, just behind Sweden.

The full report is available at:

<http://www.proinno-europe.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=275&parentID=51>

## **Education**

### **Education Council: Discussion on the progress made towards the Lisbon goals**

Mid February, the European Ministers for Education, Culture and Youth met in Brussels. The main education-related points on the agenda were the following:

- Adoption of the 3<sup>rd</sup> interim progress report on the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme entitled "Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation", which underlines the lack of progress in five key benchmarks in the area of education. The Council especially pointed out the high percentage of early school leavers and the low achievements in reading literacy. Concerning the future after 2010 of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme, the Commission will submit by the end of 2008 a proposal for an updated strategic framework for EU cooperation, which should be negotiated under the Czech Republic presidency in 2009. The proposed measures for further improvements that are made in the progress report set the base of the key messages to the Spring European Council mentioned below.
- Adoption of key messages to be addressed at the upcoming European Council on 13-14 March. These messages emphasize the central role of education and training in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy, namely for promoting creativity, innovation, for making the transnational mobility common practice in higher education and in the field of vocational education and training. Strong appeal to Member States was made for a concrete implementation of the lifelong learning strategies.
- Formal adoption of a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF-LLL, see Synopsis 2007/9). The aim of the recommendation is to provide a common language to describe qualifications in order to increase transparency and comparability and to facilitate the recognition of different qualifications acquired under the various EU education and training systems.

Furthermore, the Council decided to concentrate on the next steps of the implementation of the European Pact for Youth adopted in March 2005, which is part of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. This adoption underlines the importance of integrating young people into society and working life as well as of using better the potential they represent.

Finally, the Council gave the green light to the Commission to start negotiations for a bilateral agreement with Switzerland on its participation to the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and the Youth in action activities, which could be entered into force in 2010.

For information, the EQF-LLL and other of the above mentioned EU education priorities will be tackled during the first SwissCore Education Seminar that will take place in Brussels on 18 April (see p. 11).

The decisions of the Council can be downloaded under:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/98734.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/98734.pdf)

The progress report on the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme can be found under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html)

## **New structure implemented in DG Education and Culture**

As mentioned above in the article about the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) (see p. 6), the Directorate-General for Education and Culture has recently changed its structure. The newly implemented Task Force for the EIT has been removed from Directorate A and is now reporting directly to the Director-General, Ms Odile Quintin. Two Directorates are taking care of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP): Directorate A is now focusing on the horizontal issues of the Lisbon policies and on international affairs, while Directorate B is mainly dealing with the different actions of the LLP.

The new organigram can be downloaded under:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/organi\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/organi_en.pdf)

## **Study shows thoroughly positive effects of Leonardo da Vinci programme**

A recent study funded by the European Commission on the impact of the Leonardo da Vinci vocational training programme shows that people participating in such mobility projects benefit from a personal, linguistic, social and professional development. It is not only an enriching experience, but it also brings substantial social and economic benefits.

Leonardo da Vinci is one of the four sub-programmes of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), which is running from 2007-2013 and offers young trainees a chance to gain training and work experience abroad (see Synopsis 2007/6-Special).

The studies findings were predominantly positive:

- Significant benefits related to employability are obvious: 58% of unemployed people received a job after their training abroad, 32% found a job in another country and 27% improved the quality of their job.
- The enhanced linguistic and language skills of 83% of the participants manifest in the overwhelming interest of former Leonardo movers in seeking employment abroad (86%).
- As for the personal development: 70% are more self-confident upon return and 72% increased their proficiency in intercultural communication. Moreover, it boosts the adaptability (73%) and the capacity for teamwork (62%).
- The only objection concerns the duration of placement: participants complained in 48% of cases that the stay was too short.

The evaluators of the study concluded that the success of the project is mainly dependent on the project design, the organisation of the placements by the coordinator person and the contact person in the host country and on the quality of pedagogical, linguistic and cultural preparation.

Further information on the study can be found under:

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

## **First European University/Business Forum held in Brussels**

A forum to foster and facilitate the exchange between universities and business, launched by the European Commission, has been held on February 28-29. The Forum is a platform for dialogue, exchange, sharing and learning and will be held on a regular basis. The Forum brought together 250 people from Higher Education Institutions, companies and business associations in order to discuss the following four main topics:

- Curricular development and how it can approve the employability
- Continuing education and how to improve common training/retraining programmes
- Modernisation of governance structure within universities, assisted by business expertise
- Development of mobility between academia and business for students, researchers and teaching staff

These topics are in line with the Commission's goal to continue the modernisation of Europe's universities, stated in the 2006 Communication "Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation" (see Synopsis Education 2006/2).

## **Forecast reveals higher demand for professional skills and qualifications by 2015**

On 21 February, a report on “Future skill needs in Europe: medium term forecast” has been published by CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. As the title of the project forebodes, the demand for high skills in the European economy will grow across all sectors due to a transition away from the primary and manufacturing sectors towards the service sector. Since the continuing shift has not yet been completed – especially new Member States are still going through this process – the demand for high skills has not yet peaked.

According to the report, the sectoral move will change the EU economy by 2015 in the following way: Employment in the primary sector will decline by 2 million (from 12 million workers in 2006 down to 10 million in 2015) and in the manufacturing sector by half a million (34.5 million compared to 35 million in 2006). However, there will be big growth in the service sector. The EU economy should generate over 13 million new jobs by 2015 in business and services (9 million), transport and distribution (3.5 million) and education, health and social work (three million).

The impact of this shift towards the service sector has serious implications on employment. One consequence will be a growing requirement of skills and qualifications at all levels, given the fact that today, 80 out of 120 million European workers are already in highly skilled, non-manual jobs. Between 2006 and 2015, there will be 12.5 million additional jobs at the highest qualification level and Europe will gain 9.5 million new jobs at the medium level whereas jobs for workers with low qualifications will decline by 8.5 million. This means that in 2015, 50% of the working population would need medium-level qualifications, 30% professional skills and only 20% would be able to work with low level qualifications. This also implies that new workers will need higher qualifications to perform the same kind of job than their predecessors.

This study, which includes 25 EU Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland, underscores the importance of continuing investments in education and professional life-long training in order to cope with the upcoming demand for skills.

The study is available at:

[http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information\\_resources/Bookshop/485/4078\\_en.pdf](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/485/4078_en.pdf)

## **SwissCore Küche**

### **The SwissCore Education Seminar: A new SwissCore event focusing on education**

For the first time, SwissCore organises an event focusing on the education priorities of the European Commission. The SwissCore Education Seminar 2008 will take place in Brussels on 18 April, allowing the main Swiss education actors from universities and ministries, evaluation institutions as well as delegates from the cantonal educational structures to get first-hand information on the latest European education policy developments, such as the interim progress report on the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme, the implementation of the Action Plan for Adult education and the coordination of the different Qualification Frameworks. As for the SwissCore Seminar mainly focused on research and organised every year in November, this new event will give the participants the opportunity to discuss and address questions directly to the experts from the Commission.

### **State Secretary Mauro Dell’Ambrogio host of the SwissCore Annual Event 2008**

On 9 April, SwissCore will host its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Event, a reception to thank its Brussels colleagues and contacts for the good collaboration over the past years. This year’s host will be Mauro Dell’Ambrogio, the new Swiss State Secretary for Education and Research. During his first visit in Brussels, State Secretary Dell’Ambrogio will meet high level representatives from the European Commission, such as Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potocnik.