

SwissCore Synopsis

January 2010

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◆ Seen from Brussels

Brussels on ice, Spain in the sun

As winter is overstaying its welcome in Brussels, the European Commission seems frozen in expectation of a new College of Commissioners to start on 10 February. Following the first series of hearings (see below), the Bulgarian Commissioner-designate had to be replaced, leading to a few extra weeks of delay. In the meantime, most upcoming initiatives are on ice and Brussels is truly waiting for spring.

The thawing will certainly profit from the fact that Spain took over the Presidency on 1 January.

After a Swedish Presidency focused on Grand Challenges in research and how to address them, the current Spanish Presidency, which will be in office until July, puts the emphasis on tackling innovation and to strengthen its links with research. Under the motto “Science for recovery and economic growth”, the Spaniards have set their attention on creating an integrated vision of science and innovation, notably by addressing the future developments of the Public-Private Partnerships and the potential synergies between the research (FP) and innovation (CIP) programmes. Other major topics include the Partnership for researchers, Joint Programming, access to infrastructures and the simplification of the FP7 rules. The three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) that have been selected before Christmas (p.8) will certainly help to cement the bridge between research, innovation and education.

Regarding the latter, Spain intends to bring education at the centre of the new EU 2020 strategy. According to the responsible Spanish Minister, education is a major way to overcome the economic crisis and an indispensable vehicle for equality, well-being and social cohesion. Next to research and innovation, it represents one of the essential pillars of the knowledge society. The Spanish Presidency intends to work around four objectives: putting into practice lifelong learning and mobility, improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training, promoting equality, social cohesion and proactive citizenship, as well as fostering creativity, innovation and the spirit of enterprise.

A concrete step in education policy under the Spanish Presidency will be the association of Switzerland to the Lifelong learning Programme (LLP) and Youth in Action Programme (see Synopsis 2009/8); the Council of the EU has ratified the association agreement on 25 January and the formal signature by Spanish Education Minister Gabilondo and Swiss Federal Councillor Burkhalter is planned on 15 February in Brussels. We will report in more details about the consequences of this association in the next issue and we look forward that Switzerland will have its place in the sun also in the field of education.

After an intense grilling, the Commissioners-designate have time to cool down

Between 11 and 19 January, Brussels and Strasbourg witnessed more or less lively “ping-pong games” between MEPs and the Commissioners-designate. Facing one, two or sometimes even three committees, each Commissioner-designate had a strictly limited time to answer numerous questions which were fired at them, on their views, policies, political convictions or financial affairs.

No need to say that some offered a more dazzling performance than others. But even those who are very likely to have succeeded had to wait longer than foreseen to take office. This delay in the process is due to the poor performance, accompanied by problems associated with her declaration of financial interests, of the Bulgarian Commissioner-designate, who decided to resign before being refused by the European Parliament. As a result, Bulgaria proposed a new candidate, who was grilled on 3 February. The European Parliament will approve the full future College on 9 February and the Commissioners will take office on 10 February.

Even if not yet in office, the future Commissioners did not wait to take up their portfolios. At least, the portfolio for Research, Science and Innovation is certainly already swinging into action. For Maire Geoghegan-Quinn made it very clear during her hearing: she is not a civil servant, but a

politician, a doer, a woman of action! Most likely, she will not create new instruments, but use those available to deliver concrete results. During her mandate, she intends to focus on completing the creation of the ERA, addressing societal grand challenges and creating an innovation research culture. She insisted on the cross-cutting and overarching character of innovation, explaining that she will work in tight collaboration with other Commissioners. However, she will still take the lead in this domain and chair the group of Commissioners whose portfolio involves innovation. This will require a great deal of talent for coordination, since innovation touches upon no fewer than 16 portfolios. The Commissioners she will probably have most to do with are Antonio Tajani (Industry and Enterprise), Neelie Kroes (Digital Agenda), Günther Oettinger (Energy) and Androulla Vassiliou (Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth).

All four Commissioners referred more or less directly to innovation during their hearings. One of the priorities outlined by Günther Oettinger – the “decarbonisation” of energy supplies – is clearly linked to the EU’s innovation potential in that area. Antonio Tajani qualified climate change as a good opportunity for innovation, especially for the car industry. He also stated that the new horizontal approach to European industry should be in line with the future EU 2020 strategy and enhance growth, knowledge and innovation.

Since innovation is very much linked to Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), Maire Geoghegan-Quinn will work in close cooperation with Michel Barnier (Internal Market and Services) for patent-related issues, as well as with Neelie Kroes, whose ultimate aim is to create a truly single online market. According to her, this is the only way to ensure copyright protection. Neelie Kroes failed to convince her audience and had to go for a second grilling, which allowed her to better meet the expectations of the MEPs.

Finally, Cypriot Commissioner-designate Androulla Vassiliou committed herself to strengthen the well-known Knowledge Triangle (Research - Education - Innovation). She will put much effort into further supporting and developing the Marie Curie actions (which have been newly transferred to her portfolio; see Synopsis 2009/10), and use them as best practice for other programmes. She will also use the EIT to make sure that education is closely linked to research and innovation. Moreover, she insisted on the importance of increasing mobility, especially for adults, teachers and vocational training students, of erasing disparities in education among Member States, of ensuring respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and of using sport – on which the EU now has a formal competence – as a medium to improve citizens’ lives.

If Maire Geoghegan-Quinn confirms her reputation as “doer”, and if Antonio Tajani, Günther Oettinger, Neelie Kroes and Androulla Vassiliou live up to their expectations, the five upcoming years are likely to be very interesting in the area of research, innovation and education.

You can find more detailed information about the hearings on the website of the European Parliament: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/default.htm?language=EN>

◆ **Research**

7th Framework Programme (FP7)

ERC: Results of the second Advanced Grants call and upcoming institutional changes

On 14 January, the European Research Council (ERC) published the results of the second call for Advanced Grants (AdG). These grants are awarded to excellent scientists that are already established in their field of research. Out of the 1584 proposals submitted, 236 were selected for funding, leading to a success rate of 15% (13% in the first AdG call). To note is the above average success of proposals in the Life Sciences (32% of submitted, but 38% of funded proposals). The percentage of women awardees increased slightly in comparison to the first call, from 12 to 15%. The average age of the scientists is 53, close to the 51 of the first call. In the present call, 58 grants are going to scientists at host institutions in the UK (25%), followed by France (34; 14%), Germany (31; 13%) and Switzerland (29; 12%), a result that mirrors the first call.

While the recurrent good outcome of Switzerland is pleasing, one should note that like in the first AdG call, only one quarter of funded scientists at Swiss host institutions are nationals; the majority of them are Europeans residing in the country. Switzerland is an exception in this, as in most other host countries the proportion of nationals amounts to two-thirds to three-quarters. This fact underscores the attraction of the research environment in Switzerland for European scientists and helps to explain the large proportion of grants going to Swiss host institutions. In line with this analysis, the proportion of grants awarded to Swiss nationals is rather average.

Changes in the ERC's top management

On 6 January, the European Commission published the post of Director of the ERC Executive Agency (ERCEA), as a first measure to implement the recommendations set forth by the Expert Group that reviewed the ERC last year (see Synopsis 2009/7). In its response to the experts' report, the Commission had proposed to merge the functions of ERCEA Director and ERC Secretary-General (see Synopsis 2009/9) and fill the post with a "distinguished scientist with robust administrative experience". The EU Member State national that will fill this post will take over the responsibility for the Executive Agency, and is foreseen to cumulate this function with that of ERC Secretary-General once the current holder of the post, Prof. Mas-Colell, will step down, at the latest at the end of 2011. The deadline for applications is 5 March 2010.

In addition, on 22 January, the President of the ERC and Chair of its Scientific Council, Prof. Fotis Kafatos, resigned from his post as of 1 March. The Scientific Council will designate a new Chair and ERC President amongst its members; rumour has it that Prof. Novotny, currently ERC Vice-President, could step up. Prof. Kafatos has done a fantastic work in setting up the ERC and positioning it as the only pan-European funding agency that supports frontier research throughout Europe; fortunately, he will remain a member of the Scientific Council.

The statistics of the second ERC Advanced Grant call can be found under:

http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/Statistics_AdG09.pdf

The announcement for the position of ERCEA Director can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/human-resources/documents/com2009_10222_en.pdf

New changes in FP7 Grant Agreement

On 18 December, the European Commission adopted a modification to the FP7 Model Grant Agreement that allows "non-profit public bodies, secondary and higher education establishments, research organisations and SMEs" that are eligible to apply the 75% reimbursement rate for direct costs and the 60% flat rate for indirect costs to continue to use these rates for the whole duration of the project, even if their status changes during this time. Moreover, to ensure equal treatment for all such participants, the Commission will apply this new provision retroactively in a tacit way (i.e. without a modification of the Grant Agreement) to all already signed Grant Agreements.

The modifications to the FP7 Model Grant Agreement can be found under:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/chronology-modifications_en.html

EU Research Policy

New role of the advisory body CREST in the ERA

One of the priorities of the Spanish presidency is to revise the mandate of the Scientific and Technical Research Committee (CREST). Set up in 1974, CREST is an advisory body – in which Switzerland has an observer status – that assists the European Commission and the Council in performing tasks in the sphere of research and technological development. With the increasing prominence of research on the EU agenda, CREST activities have gained increased importance over the last years.

During the Competitiveness Council of 3-4 December 2009, a resolution on the enhanced governance of the European Research Area (ERA) was adopted. Since CREST is seen as having an important role to play in enhancing the ERA governance, the resolution addresses among other things the role of new CREST: it should be strengthened "in the strategic

development of ERA”, as well as have a more important monitoring role, also at an early stage of policy initiatives. This strengthened role could prove very important, since the Lisbon Treaty gives new competences to the EC to propose specific ERA initiatives and regulations. Moreover, having early inputs of CREST in the legislation process could avoid negotiations at a later stage. The new role of CREST, which is likely to be renamed ERA Committee, still need to be further discussed and the revised mandate should be approved by the Council by mid-2010.

The Council resolution of 3 December 2009 on the enhanced governance of the European Research Area (ERA) can be found under:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:323:0001:0004:EN:PDF>

Policy drivers of international cooperation in research

On 14 December, the European Commission published the final report of a study undertaken by experts from the Technopolis Group and the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research entitled “Drivers of international collaboration in research”. The study sought to examine the rationales why countries and their science communities enter into cross-border S&T collaborations and what policy considerations are made when establishing and implementing such linkages.

The experts found a growing policy attention for international S&T collaborations. Indeed, such collaborations can be used for goals going beyond the exchange of scientific expertise and the pooling of resources. Often, they are used as a way to improve national competitiveness, tackle global societal challenges, create stable diplomatic relationships or support less developed countries by developing S&T capabilities. The other main trends identified in the report are:

- The policy drivers follow either a ‘narrow paradigm’, stemming from the dynamics of science and research with the collaboration often initiated by the researchers themselves, or a ‘broad paradigm’, which is based on additional policy objectives that use S&T collaborations as a mechanism to achieve supplementary goals (such as diplomacy, development aid). However, the diverse sets of drivers are often not coordinated in a formal way.
- International S&T collaboration policies and programmes that combine various policy drivers (e.g. research excellence combined with a diplomatic choice for geography) usually have very fuzzy goals and the envisaged outcomes and impacts are not well defined. This makes the setting up of a coherent set of indicators very difficult.
- Policy makers and research funders apply many assumptions regarding how international S&T collaboration has an effect on various policy goals; these are rarely specified in the implementation of the instruments. Particularly in the ‘broad paradigm’, the causal relationships between the desired effect and the contribution of the S&T collaboration programmes cannot be established.
- Given the multitude of actors involved in implementing S&T collaborations and the diversity of drivers and strategies, it is not likely that the EU Member States can easily develop a coherent evaluation and indicator framework.

The study also attempts to define a series of ‘model indicators’ that could be used when evaluating international S&T collaboration policies and programmes. As far as the coordination at EU level is concerned, the authors propose a stepwise learning and coordination approach, based on the set of indicators mentioned above.

With all its annexes and references, this report should be an excellent source of information for all actors involved in the definition and implementation of international S&T collaborations.

The report can be found under: http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/drivers_sti.pdf

SME participation in FP7 yields mixed results

The European Commission has set the goal for FP7 that at least 15% of the funding available under the Cooperation part should go to SMEs. According to the most recent figures, published in autumn 2009, 13.4% (or €850 million out of €6’337 million) of the budget has been granted to

SMEs within the Cooperation programme. On average, SME participants receive €268'000, which is €53'000 less than non-SME participants.

Although the 15% target applies to all ten themes in Cooperation, it is obvious that some themes, such as NMP (SME participation of 22.5%), lend themselves more easily to the participation of industry (including SMEs) than others, such as Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (3.2%). Apart from NMP, Transport (15.4%) and Security (19.2%) are the two other themes that achieved an SME participation of more than 15%. All the other themes are below, e.g. Health (10.8%), ICT (14.5%) and Energy (14.2%). According to the report, the NMP theme exceeded the 15% target largely due to specific SME-targeted calls. Those calls, taking place on an annual basis, only involve 13% of the NMP budget.

In the SME specific programme Research for the benefit of SMEs (Capacities) 170 grant agreements have been signed as of 30 September, involving 1574 participations, out of which 1000 are SMEs (64%). In Marie Curie, as of 30 September 174 grant agreements have been signed, involving 1180 participants out of which 158 SMEs.

The report on SME participation in FP7 can be accessed here:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/sme-techweb/pdf/fp7_report_autumn_2009.pdf

Special report of the European Court of Auditors on Executive Agencies

By Andreas Ledergerber, Euresearch ETH Zürich

A newly published report on the European Commission's (EC) Executive Agencies raised the attention of the policy community in Brussels and abroad. Its author, the Court of Auditors, is the European Union's external auditor or, as the Court puts it itself, the "independent guardian of the financial interests of the Union's citizens."

In this function, the Court publishes reports focusing on specific issues on a regular basis. It took on the topic of the Executive Agencies (EA) that have been set up by the EC in recent years, among others the EAs related to research and FP7: the Research Executive Agency and the ERC Executive Agency. The six currently running agencies together count a staff of 1339 people and are managing an impressive budget of roughly € 28 billion for the period 2007-2013. In this special report, the Court asked whether delegating the implementation of tasks to EAs is a successful option in terms of "implementing the European budget":

- First, the Court found that the main driver for setting up EAs were restrictions and shortages both in terms of staff hiring and resources at the EC.
- Second, the report specifies that there are clear cost savings coming from the lower salaries paid by the EA to their contract staff. While the EC calculates with savings of roughly 50% when it comes to salary costs, the Court puts these figures into perspective with the need for new supervisory functions at the EC and the overhead costs related to horizontal functions in each agency. However, due to a lack of information about the ex-ante situation (when all tasks had been fulfilled by EC staff), an exhaustive accounting is not possible.
- Third, the Court states that the services provided by the EA are of better quality due to the high degree of specialization: reduced "time-to-contract", simplification of processes and increased external communication.

While we acknowledge the Court's in-depth know-how and efforts to check the efficient use of taxpayers' money, it is so far difficult to judge the appropriateness of criteria used for evaluating the quality of services. For example, it remains to be seen whether the EAs will put in place more simplified processes than the EC in the future.

The report "Delegating implementing tasks to Executive Agencies: a successful option?" can be found under:

<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/3336297.PDF>

ERC: Updated Guide for Peer Reviewers

The European Research Council (ERC) has recently published an updated Guide for Peer Reviewers (dated September 2009). The guide provides information on the evaluation system, the evaluation criteria, the panel structure, as well as the role of the different reviewers. It is applicable to the ERC Starting Grant (already closed) and Advanced Grant (currently open) Call 2010.

The Guide can be found under: http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/GuideForERCPeerReviewers_AdG.pdf

New report on research careers in Europe

In 2007, the European Science Foundation (ESF) launched a joint platform for the exchange of views and development of strategy concepts in the field of research careers. The ESF Member Forum on Research Careers (ES MO Forum) set up three working groups focused on research career structure and development, gender issues and transferable skills. They identified five fields in which joint actions need to be taken: structuring of research careers; improving the attractiveness and competitiveness of European research careers; providing equal playing fields for researchers of all backgrounds; supporting the development of portfolio careers; developing and implementing European policies for research career development.

The conclusions and recommendations of the ESF MO Forum are presented in the newly published report “Research Careers in Europe Landscape and Horizons”. The report should help identify the best strategies to enhance the attractiveness of research careers – an issue that also seems to be a priority for Research Commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn – and hence ensure the competitiveness of the ERA.

The report can be found under:

http://www.esf.org/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&file=fileadmin/be_user/CEO_Unit/MO_FORA/MOFORUM_ResearchCareers/ResearchCareers_60p%20A4_13Jan.pdf&t=1264776771&hash=95cc0a3985d427aca6f95bc71f817cd8

Public consultation on Commission's late payment problems

On 12 January, the European Ombudsman, Nikiforos Diamandouros, opened a public consultation on the problems with the European Commission's late payments. In the last 15 years, the Ombudsman has conducted no less than 63 investigations regarding such late payments. Moreover, he initiated three own-initiative investigations into measures taken by the Commission to improve the situation. While he finds that matters have improved in the past few years, further improvements could be envisaged. The current public consultation, which will be opened until 31 March, is a way to receive feedback from concerned parties on what the Commission could and should do to further reduce late payments. Please note that the aim of the consultation is not to solve individual cases; these can be submitted via the online form on the Ombudsman's website.

More information on the consultation can be found under:

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/cases/correspondence.faces/en/4500/html.bookmark>

New petition for simplified EU research funding launched

A website supporting a new way of considering research on the European level was launched on 3 February. The initiative aims at raising awareness on this topic and “asks the European Council (sic) and Parliament to urgently simplify the financial and administrative provisions related to the Framework Programme and other European funding instruments considering their important leverage effect for the competitiveness of the European Research Area.”

You can find the petition under: www.trust-researchers.eu

ETH Zurich will participate in the EIT Climate-KIC

On 16 December the Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) presented in Budapest the selection of the first three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), following the preparatory work and the first call of the EIT in April 2009 (see Synopsis 2009/8, 2009/7, 2009/5, 2009/3, 2009/2). According to the three call topics the chosen KICs will cover three areas: climate change mitigation and adaptation (Climate-KIC), sustainable energy (KIC InnoEnergy) and future information and communication society (EIT ICT Labs).

KICs will be the operational part of the EIT and bring together leading actors from the field of higher education, technology, research, business and entrepreneurship. This broad partnership will be driven by an entrepreneurial mindset. It aims at producing new innovations as well as new innovation models, generating impact in terms of new business creation, entrepreneurship, education and social benefit.

The Climate-KIC addresses the challenges of climate change with the mission of accelerating and stimulating the related innovation, especially the transformation of the economy. The Climate-KIC will initially focus on achieving excellence in four areas: assessing climate change and managing its drivers, transitioning to low-carbon resilient cities, adaptive water management and zero carbon production. These fields were selected for their mitigation-adaptation potential as well as innovation and job creation opportunities.

ETH Zurich will be among the 16 core partners of the Climate-KIC and will form one of five co-location centres. The other co-location centres are London, Berlin, Paris and Randstad. The consortium requested €120 million from the EIT, whereas further €630 million will be taken from their own funds. All in all, the Climate-KIC will dispose of a budget of €750 million for the next four years.

Finally the KIC InnoEnergy has the objective of enhancing the innovation in the field of sustainable energy. It covers some of the areas of the Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan) and will be organised and managed as a business (installation as a European Company, SE). Co-location centres are Karlsruhe, Grenoble, Eindhoven/Leuven, Barcelona, Krakow and Stockholm.

The EIT ICT Labs focuses on internet-based services, covering the entire value chain in the ICT sector. It will build upon five co-location centres – Berlin, Eindhoven, Helsinki, Paris, and Stockholm – and turn these existing clusters and their partners into a world-class network, able to attract top talents and investors from around the world.

The KICs will start their activities at the beginning of 2010 and are expected to become fully operational very quickly. In order to speed up their activities, they will get a start-up grant of €3 million from the EIT.

More information about the selected KICs as well as on the activities of the EIT can be found on the website of the EIT:

<http://eit.europa.eu/press/news-archive/single-view/article/the-european-institute-of-innovation-and-technology-eit-launches-its-first-three-knowledge-and-inn.html>

More detailed information on CLIMATE KIC and EIT ICT Lab can be found here:

www.climate-kic-proposal.org

www.eitictlabs.eu

Still a long march to an EU patent?

It has become usual that outgoing EU presidencies claim considerable success in the creation of an EU patent (see Synopsis 2009/4). Also the Swedish Presidency, in this regard no exception, is mentioning a breakthrough for an EU patent. Indeed, the EU Member States agreed on 4 December on some elements that could become the base of a future EU patent and of a single European Patent Court.

What the ministers have agreed upon is to think of creating a centralised European patent litigation system. However, on other issues such as the language regime, fees and governance, only little success has been made.

An EU patent would mean that people can apply for a patent to be valid in the entire EU. Protection in 13 Member States currently costs 11 times more than a patent in the United States and an EU patent would therefore help to considerably save money.

The Council conclusions also contain main elements of a single European Patent Court that will try cases on both the EU patent and existing European patents. This will bring about a considerable improvement compared to the current fragmented system where patent processes have to be conducted in each individual Member State, although they apply to the same invention.

The next step will be for the European Parliament as well as for the European Court of Justice to take a stand on the proposal. In particular, the Court will have to provide an assessment of the legal feasibility of creating a Central Appeal Court to hear related claims.

More information on the EU patent can be found on the website of the Swedish Presidency:

http://www.se2009.eu/en/the_presidency/about_the_eu/competitiveness/facts_eu_patent

The Council conclusions of 4 December on the EU patent can be found here:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/111744.pdf

Publications

New report on the knowledge-based economy

An expert group, in which Professor Dominique Foray from EPFL takes part, published a report on the role of Community research policy in the development of the knowledge-based economy. Among others, the report recommends to set a new EU 3% target, called “knowledge investment target”, so that by 2020 1% of Europe’s GDP is spent from public funds on R&D and 2% of Europe’s GDP on higher education. Other recommendations are to create stronger coordination between R&D funding and Lead Market instruments, to strengthen and expand the remit of the ERC and the EIT, to continue the Europeanization of research infrastructures, to move quickly to a Community patent system, to use more Structural Funds for innovation as well as to use cohesion policies to select the most appropriate smart specialisation pattern on which regional development can thrive best.

The full report can be found here:

http://www.earto.eu/fileadmin/content/07_News_public_/KBE_Final_ReportRev-3.pdf

What do we know about R&D-intensive SMEs?

The Institute for Prospective Technology Studies (IPTS), an Institute of the EU Joint Research Center (JRC), has just published its most recent Working Paper on Corporate R&D and Innovation. The paper is dealing with R&D-intensive SMEs in Europe. It typifies different groups of R&D-intensive SMEs according to their inputs into the innovation process and makes recommendations how they can be supported most efficiently. For example the type of fast growing SMEs, called “Gazelles”, do in fact grow, but struggle with the high capital investment needed to become and remain large. In this case the paper recommends to privilege support measures which tackle their weakness (physical expansion) rather than to support their strength (knowledge production through R&D). Another type of small or medium sized firms, called “corporate laboratories”, does not seem to have significant problems in finding investors at all.

The integral study on R&D-intensive SMEs can be accessed on the JRC website:

http://iri.jrc.ec.europa.eu/papers/15_IPTS_WP_JRC52424.pdf

European Competitiveness Report 2009

Once a year, DG Enterprise and Industry publishes the European Competitiveness Report. The 2009 edition looks at the possible implications of the economic downturn, the evolution of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the role of high-skilled migration, the extent and conditions under which training and education can boost productivity, and the role of product and labour market regulations in influencing ICT investment. As the report focuses on the EU,

Switzerland is only marginally included. The report concludes that Switzerland (together with Australia, Canada and the US) has a larger share of foreign-born in the high-skilled group than the EU-15. EU patents originating from outside the EU mostly come from the US, Switzerland, Canada and Japan.

The three volumes of the 2009 edition can be found on DG Enterprise and Industry's website: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?lang=de&item_id=3908

◆ Education

Countries' investment in training during recession

Despite the economic downturn, EU Member States seem committed to supporting the development of skills. This was recently revealed by a CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) survey on the countries' investment in training. Everywhere in Europe, great efforts are made to maintain skill-levels. Some Member States have even increased their education and training budget. The survey shows that there is a consensus among governments and social partners in trying to keep people in work. As a result, many Member States provide public funds and come up with several short-term measures to support work-based training and fight unemployment. For example, Belgium, Portugal, Slovenia and Finland have increased funding to encourage employers to hire young people; whereas Sweden has put more money into securing sufficient Vocational Education and Training (VET) places for adults. It seems that Member States also take long-term measures to respond to the crisis that are in line with national skills development strategies. As a result, some Member States, like the UK, encourage development of skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; whereas others like the Czech Republic emphasizes the importance of generic skills.

In any case, there seems to be a growing perception that investment in VET is profitable, the value of work-based learning is increasingly recognized and all Member States are willing to develop national qualification frameworks that go in line with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Nevertheless, the future effects of the current recession on education and training are not yet clear. Only time will tell whether the economic downturn will act as a hurdle or a catalyst towards the reforms undertaken.

The results of the CEDEFOP survey are summarized in the briefing note "Learning in a crisis": http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/572/9017_en.pdf

EUA reports on the DOC-CAREERS study and launches a new major project EUIMA

The European University Association (EUA) presented the results of the study "DOC-CAREERS: From innovative doctoral education to enhanced career opportunities" in a very interesting and comprehensive report.

The DOC-CAREER project (see Synopsis 2009/6) concentrates on various collaborative doctoral programmes, involving interaction between a university, a company and a doctoral candidate. The study examines three fields of knowledge in particular – science engineering and technology, biotechnology medical and life sciences, economics and social sciences – and addressed the employability and mobility of doctoral holders, the transferability of skills, the nature and extent of collaborative doctoral programmes, the views of stakeholders, data tracking, as well as the role of government. Some of the interesting conclusions highlighted in the report are following:

- The employability perspectives of holders of collaborative doctorates are in general broader, however inter-sectoral mobility (especially from industry to academia) is still reduced and often hampered by barriers such as the loss of salary security or promotion opportunities;
- Universities and industries actually share the same concerns and views on university-industry cooperation;

- Wherever the collaboration initiative comes from, public support is absolutely essential to this type of initiatives.

This report should help feed the policy debates on the issue of university-industry cooperation and will hopefully be acknowledged by the new Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation. A follow-up project (DOC-CAREERS II) will be carried out between 2010 and 2012 to disseminate good practices on collaborative doctoral projects and collect case studies from universities working with partners within their region.

Moreover, part of the EUA project “European Universities Implementing Modernization Agenda” (EUIMA) will also be based on the results of the DOC-CAREERS project. This new major project combines two elements of the modernization agenda for European universities put forward by the Lisbon strategy: financial sustainability (EUIMA – Full Costing) and collaboration with non-academic partners (EUIMA – Collaborative Research). EUIMA – Full Costing aims at developing full costing initiatives, among others through the organization of workshops that should help highlight best practices in that area. EUIMA - Collaborative Research will address the specificities of regional contexts and try to create indicators to assess university-based collaborative research.

The call for Expressions of Interest for the EUIMA Project can be found here:

<http://www.eua.be/eua-news/view-item/article/983/>

The EUA DOC CAREERS report “Collaborative Doctoral Education: University-Industry Partnerships for enhancing knowledge exchange” can be found under:

<http://www.eua.be/research/doctoral-programmes/doc-careers/>

Publications

Creativity and innovation are valuable qualities

To close the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, the European Commission presented at a conference in Stockholm the results of a survey which assesses creativity and innovation in European schools. Carried out by the European Schoolnet (EUN), together with the Institute for prospective technological studies (IPTS), the survey included around 10'000 teachers.

The preliminary results are very positive: 94% teachers are convinced that creativity and innovation are qualities that must be developed and 96% believe that it could be done in all areas of learning. Moreover, innovative teaching methods are spreading, since more and more teachers are trained in this way.

The preliminary results of the survey are summarized in the following brochure:

http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC55645_Creativity%20Survey%20Brochure.pdf

New guide on Comenius Assistantships

A guidebook on Comenius Assistantships was drafted by the European Commission, together with National Agencies for the Lifelong Learning Programme and teachers who participated in the programme.

Every year, up to 1500 future teachers spend between 3 to 10 months abroad to assist with teaching and support with school projects. This is a great opportunity for them to learn about other European education systems, as well as to improve their teaching and language skills. They often teach their native language, hence increasing the pupils' motivation to learn languages and to get familiar with another country and culture. The guide provides a series of teaching tips and gives advice on how to adapt to various teaching situations. This compendium of good practices should contribute to making every Comenius experience a lasting contribution to the school's life and to the career of future teachers.

The guide is available in 6 languages (FR, EN, DE, IT, ES, PL) and can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/assistant_en.pdf

Erasmus in figures

The European Commission has recently published a statistical overview of the decentralized actions of the Erasmus Programme. The report concentrates on the academic year 2007/2008 and examines student and staff mobility, Erasmus Intensive Language Courses and Intensive Programmes. Detailed figures about the countries of destination, the length of the stays, as well as the recognition of the mobility experience can be found in the report, which altogether highlights the continuing growth of student mobility and the increase of staff mobility.

The report “Lifelong Learning Programme, Statistical overview of the implementation of the decentralized actions in the Erasmus Programme in 2007/2008” can be found under:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/0708/report.pdf>

◆ SwissCore Küche

New trainee at SwissCore: Elisa Ravasi

Elisa Ravasi joined the SwissCore team on the 1 February after concluding her bachelor in Political Sciences and Public Law at the University of Zurich with a thesis on the Lisbon Treaty. She grew up in Ticino and spent one semester at the Lawrence High School in Michigan (US) during her secondary school. During her studies she worked as assistant for several chairs at the University of Zurich and did an internship for a research and development initiative – the Making Commitments Matter Initiative – at the UN in Geneva. These experiences had a decisive influence on her interest for research and education. In fact, she sees the traineeship at the SwissCore as the perfect match between her interests in research policy, European affairs as well as their relation to Switzerland.

After the traineeship for SwissCore she will continue her studies with a master in European Affairs, pursuing her career goals in the field of cooperation between Switzerland and the EU.

Professor Chen from ETH presents Climate-KIC at SwissCore event

On 2 February, Professor Peter Chen from ETH Zurich joined the IGLO informal meeting on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The event, organised by SwissCore and held in the Mission of Switzerland to the EU, brought together more than 70 people.

Professor Chen presented the Climate-KIC (see article above), whereas G rard de Nazelle, Director of the EIT, gave an overview of the current actions and the next steps of the EIT. Both speakers were able to explain, in a very convincing manner, the vision and mission behind the EIT, stressing that real impact on a world scale will be the only criterion for the success of this ambitious project.



Prof. Peter Chen, ETH Zurich,
Climate-KIC partner



G rard de Nazelle, Director of the EIT