

## PRESS RELEASE

**The European Commission and Serbia:****Towards full association to the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Framework Programme for Research and Development  
Success stories to-date and opportunities ahead**

*Today, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007, the European Commission and the Serbian Ministry of Science organised an information event on the opportunities offered by the recently launched 7<sup>th</sup> EU Programme for Research and Technological Development 2007 - 2013. Several experts from the European Commission's Directorate General for Research (DG Research) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) outlined the opportunities and practicalities for participation in various EU research programmes. Serbia is in the process of associating to the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, with signing of the agreement to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007 in Brussels.*

*The focus of the event was also on enhancing collaboration with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, whose mission is to provide scientific and technical support to EU policies. The JRC has a cooperation and training programme directed at the Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries, including Serbia, to assist them in the uptake of scientific and technical bases of EU legislation in areas such as environment, food safety, energy and security. In 2006 a total of 82 Serbian experts participated in some of the 100 specialised workshops and training courses on various scientific and technical aspects of EU policies that have been organised by the JRC.*

*Ana Pešikan, Minister of Science of the Republic of Serbia; Roland Schenkel, Director General, European Commission's Joint Research Centre, Esmeralda Hernandez Aragonés, European Commission's Delegation to the Republic of Serbia, participated alongside key representatives from Serbian academia, research and industry.*

*"Today's large participation demonstrates the interest of Serbia's research community to maximise opportunities offered by association to the 7th EU Programme for Research and Technological Development in the support from the JRC" said JRC Director General Roland Schenkel. "EU research policy can only work when it has the appropriate links. The 7th Framework Programme is the most significant ever and I encourage the scientific community to actively participate in close cooperation. The association agreement will offer the research community in Serbia the chance to benefit from FP research funding."*

During the event, which took place in the Sava Centar in Belgrade, participants were given detailed insights into opportunities offered by the newly adopted Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological development (FP7), 2007 – 2013 with a total budget over seven years of over EUR 50 billion.

FP7 includes several programmes whose principal aim is to fund R&D co-operation in the EU. FP7 also includes the JRC programmes whose focus is to provide scientific and technical support to policies, including EU enlargement.

The conference included in-depth discussions on priority areas such as environment, agriculture, food, nuclear safety and safeguards as well as explanations on practical aspects of participation in FP7 calls for research proposals.

Under the 6th Framework Programme (2002-2006) Serbian partners have participated in a total of 86 projects and have received 12 million Euros from the Framework Programme, and at the same time gained access to research resulting from more than 170 million Euros worth of projects. Following the request of Serbia to become associated to FP7, it is expected that the association will be signed by Commissioner Potočnik in Brussels tomorrow, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007. This will allow for great research opportunities with the EU partners as from the first calls for proposal under FP7.

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| <b>Further Information</b> |
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**For more information:** on the activities of DG JRC: <http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

**Media enquiries:** Aidan Gilligan, JRC Internal and external communication unit; Tel: +32 (0)2 2986482; Fax: +32 (0)2 2996322; Email: [aidan.gilligan@ec.europa.eu](mailto:aidan.gilligan@ec.europa.eu)

## Background information:

### The Joint Research Centre – Structure, Role and Activities

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) is a Directorate-General of the European Commission under the responsibility of Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Research. Its Board of Governors assists and advises the Director General on matters relating to the role and the scientific, technical and financial management of the JRC.

The JRC is one of the largest Directorates General of the European Commission with 2650 scientific and support staff located on five separate sites in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. It works with some 1000 public and private organisations such as research centres, universities, regulatory bodies, national, regional and local authorities, industrial associations and companies within 60 networks which underpin its institutional work, including many organisations from Candidate Countries. Furthermore, DG JRC has partnerships with 1500 research teams in the framework of 250 project consortia.

JRC's annual budget of over € 300 million comes from the Commission's research budget. Additional income is gained through participation in collaborative projects and work for third parties including industry and regional authorities.

The JRC is a source of independent scientific and technical reference for policy-makers, serving the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and the EU Member States. The aim is to help create a safer, cleaner, healthier and more competitive Europe.

The Seven Institutes of DG JRC are:

- The Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (IRMM: promotes a common measurement system supporting EU policies on internal market, environment, health, and consumer protection).
- The Institute for Transuranium Elements (ITU: helps protect the citizen by contributing to the safety and security of the nuclear fuel cycle, including evaluation of methods to extend the life of fuel and to improve waste management for very long-term storage of spent fuel).
- The Institute for Energy (IE: supports policies on the security of energy supply and safe energy production).
- The Institute for the Protection and the Security of the Citizen (IPSC: supports EU policies in the areas of: cyber-security and anti-fraud; natural, technological and economic risk; humanitarian security; nuclear safeguards).
- The Institute for Environment and Sustainability (IES: investigates the level and fate of contaminants in the air, water and soil; assesses the effects of these contaminants upon the environment and individuals; promotes the sustainable management of our environmental resources).
- The Institute for Health and Consumer Protection (IHCP: carries out research to improve the understanding of the health risk posed by the food chain, chemicals, drugs and biochemical systems in order to support the development and implementation of EU policies in these areas).
- The Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS: carries out techno-economic foresight analysis to help EU policy-making).

In support of the European Research Area, JRC strives to develop a Community-wide base for harmonised measurements. To this end, it participates in selected European and global networks in order to share competences, acquire new knowledge and build synergies.

The JRC activities focus on three main pillars:

- food, chemical products and health;
- environment and sustainability; &
- nuclear safety and security.

These are supported by competences in:

- techno-economic policy studies;
- reference materials and measurements; &
- public security and antifraud.

JRC has an established track record in fields of direct importance to EU policy-makers, including:

- **Safety and quality of the food chain** - re-establishing confidence in food production by analysis of food quality and safety, and support for the implementation of food legislation
- **Genetically modified organisms** - enabling GMO detection in food stuff and performing risk assessment
- **Chemical safety** - assess risk of new and existing products, study exposure to chemicals and validate alternative testing methods
- **Combating fraud** – from cybersecurity to agriculture
- **Reference measurements and materials** in support of the completion of the internal market and the growth of trade
- **Climate change** - keeping the EU at the forefront of efforts to combat a global threat
- **Emissions and air quality** - avoiding adverse impacts on health and the environment
- **Sustainable energy** - security and safety of energy supply and renewable energies
- **Water quality** - helping prevent pollution
- **Nuclear safeguards** - helping prevent diversion from energy applications to illicit use, of nuclear material, equipment or technology
- **Nuclear safety** - reducing risks from nuclear operations as well as improving management and storage of waste.

Future DG JRC priorities, which are presently under discussion for the Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7), reflect the policy orientations of the new European Commission. These can be summarised by the words: “prosperity, solidarity and security”.

This would imply a new emphasis on:

- Support to the **Lisbon process** (aiming at making Europe’s economy the most competitive in the world) e.g. by contributing to development of a knowledge based society, studying digital divide, developing econometric tools, understanding the interplay between innovation and regulation, developing standards and references in support of growth.
- Increasing internal and external **security**, e.g. by addressing terrorism threats, protecting critical infrastructures, combatting proliferation of CNRB, support border control, analyse global aspects, etc.
- Understanding of the relationship between **environment** and **health**, e.g. exposure to potentially harmful agents (especially with respect to children), epidemiological studies, public health studies, enviro- and toxico-genomics, chemical stressors.

- **Sustainable agriculture** e.g. integrated use of agricultural resources, protection of the agri-environment and of the landscape, social issues, monitoring impact of changes in the use of the European land.

## JRC's Active Support to Enlargement and Integration

### Next steps

It is expected that the information day will generate a number of concrete proposals for joint research activities further linking the JRC and, DG Research with Serbian organisations and other possible EU partners within policy area of prime concern for European citizens (environment, food quality, agriculture, etc). These proposals will be prioritised according to their relevance and potential impact on common objectives between the European Commission and the Serbian government.

### This includes the following opportunities:

- **Collaboration in R&D projects:** Over recent years, JRC was involved in 60 new successful proposals per year. Interested organisations take up direct contact with the relevant JRC Institute (and vice-versa) to discuss topics of potential common interest.
- **Visiting Staff:** JRC currently hosts some 250 staff from new Member States and Candidate Countries at its Institutes on temporary contracts. Open calls are published in the below mentioned Internet site.
- **Workshops and Training Courses:** JRC organises, every year, some 100 "enlargement" workshops involving over 4000 experts from EU Member States and Candidate Countries, including Serbia. The focus of these workshops is on the scientific and technical aspects of EU legislation and its implementation.
- **Extension of JRC Projects.** Some 20 projects of the JRC work programme (<http://projects.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>) have been extended to focus on the specific needs of the Enlargement countries. These range from launching measurement campaigns on air quality monitoring, to monitoring illicit discharges in the Black Sea, and simulating fuel behaviour in Russian-type nuclear reactors.