

Brussels, 20 November 2009

## **Agreement to host Maltese students at the Joint Research Centre**

**The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST), the University of Malta and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) have concluded today an agreement to host Maltese doctoral and post doctoral students in the various JRC Research Institutes. Areas of collaboration have been identified on the basis of mutual interest and include environment, biotechnology, information and communication technologies (ICT), energy, food safety and maritime affairs.**

*"It will be an asset for the JRC to count on a higher number of Maltese students in its laboratories. I am sure they will actively contribute to the excellence of the EU research and will take full advantage of the wealth of knowledge and infrastructure which is available at our seven specialised institutes"* affirmed Roland Schenkel, JRC Director General.

*"The JRC offers very good opportunities to students particularly because it is a reference centre of science and technology for the European Union and is very close to the EU policy-making process of Europe-wide research"* added Dr. Ing. Nicholas Sammut, chairman of the Malta Council for Science and Technology.

The Memorandum of Understanding has been signed in the framework of the Open Day held today in St Julian's with the objective of finding further ways forward for research cooperation. High profile speakers both from JRC and Malta institutions took part in the event. This event builds on the longstanding cooperation between JRC and MCST, the national advisory body on science and technology. The collaboration with the University of Malta will also be enhanced.

European and Maltese counterparts have already identified several areas of research that are relevant for the JRC work programme and the scope of the research areas of the MCST and the Malta University. They include the following, although the list can be extended:

- Environment (in particular water and soil)
- Climate change
- Biotechnology (including GMO analysis)
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and security
- Clean energy technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Food safety and quality
- Maritime affairs and fisheries.

In the framework of this reinforced cooperation, it is also established that access to large infrastructures and user laboratories will be granted to Maltese researchers.

Candidates for grants funded by Malta's national programmes will be nominated by MCST or the University of Malta, and pre-selected candidates will be approved by the JRC. Maltese candidates to the EU grants will need to follow the common JRC grants procedures or apply for a Marie Curie fellowship.

## The Joint Research Centre

The JRC has seven scientific institutes, located at five different sites in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, with a wide range of laboratories and unique research facilities.

Its mission is to provide customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of EU policies. As a service of the European Commission, the JRC functions as a reference centre of science and technology for the Union. Close to the policy-making process, it serves the common interest of the Member States, while being independent of special interests, whether private or national.

## Links

Joint Research Centre (JRC): [www.jrc.ec.europa.eu](http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu)

Grantholders at the JRC: <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=4790&lang=en>

Marie Curie fellowships: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/action/fellow\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/action/fellow_en.html)

Malta Council for Science and Technology: <http://www.mcst.gov.mt/>

University of Malta: <http://www.um.edu.mt/>