

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATE

July 2011

Issue Fifteen

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DG DIRECTORATE D: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

MONTHLY INFO FLASH ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

POLICY

Latest news from SFIC

The Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) held its 10th meeting on 20 June. Riitta Mustonen, Vice President for Research of the Academy of Finland, was elected as the new SFIC Chair for the next two year period. SFIC adopted its 2011-12 work programme as well as a report and series of recommendations from the workshop on 'Approaching China' which was organised in May. The meeting initiated the preparation of a SFIC opinion on the ERA Framework, to be finalised by mid-October and which will serve as input to the ERAC opinion on the ERA Framework. SFIC members also discussed progress in the India pilot initiative, the work on approaching USA, as well as information on the Joint Committee meetings with Japan, Russia and the USA. The Commission also reported on the EU-LAC Senior Officials meeting, a planned conference for cooperation with Mediterranean countries, and the ASEAN-EU year of science 2012. The Polish delegate presented information on the upcoming Presidency programme.

For more information, contact Sofie Norager

BILATERAL RELATIONS

First EU-Japan S&T Committee meeting

The first Joint Committee meeting on S&T cooperation between the EU and Japan was held on 16 June in Tokyo. The meeting was co-chaired by DG RTD Director-General Robert-Jan Smits and Makoto Yamanaka, Ambassador for S&T Cooperation in the Japanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and addressed key areas of mutual interest with a view to strengthening and deepening EU-

Japanese S&T cooperation. The Committee had a fruitful discussion towards cooperation in areas of low carbon societies/technologies, such as photovoltaic cells and the storage of energy, and critical raw materials. Both parties also discussed such areas as natural hazard prevention, climate change research, ICT, large research infrastructures including accelerators, as well as the international mobility of researchers. The Committee also welcomed cooperation efforts in the field of aeronautics, in which a coordinated call for proposals between the European Commission and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will be published later this month. Topics in this call include: aeronautical communications; anti-icing systems; surface heat exchangers for aero-engines; engine ceramic bearings; and high-speed aircraft.

For more information, contact Emanuele Sanguineti or Barbara Rhode, EU Delegation, Japan

FP7 and Asia: Building Research Bridges

The European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) held a conference on 21 June entitled '[FP7 and Asia: building research bridges for a sustainable future](#)', organised with the support of DG RTD, the [EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation](#) and the [Europe Enterprise Network](#). The conference, which was chaired by Reinhard Bütikofer MEP, gathered around 100 participants to discuss the international dimension of FP7, in particular with respect to the greater participation of Asian companies. Speakers including ITRE Members, senior representatives from Samsung Electronics and Bosch and David Harmon from the Cabinet of Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn shared the view that the current FP7 system should be simplified, notably the process for submission of calls. It was noted that cultural differences between

Europe and Asia could mean that an FP7 success rate that was seen as sufficient in Europe may be negatively perceived in Asia.

For more information, contact Pierrick Fillon-Ashida or Jean-Michel Sers

First EU-Japan Technology Development Project

The first joint EU-Japan project, under the S&T Cooperation Agreement, on highly efficient solar cells, was launched in Madrid in June. This project, co-funded by Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation (NEDO) and the European Commission, is developing photovoltaic cells that aim to achieve a cell conversion efficiency of more than 45%: which is the highest efficiency in the world. The project involves industrial, academic and public research institutes in Japan and six European countries, with both sides providing ca 5.5 million euro of funding.

For more information, contact Gilles Lequeux, DG RTD, Dir. K or Barbara Rhode EU Delegation, Tokyo

EU/MS Information campaign in India

As part of the SFIC India Pilot Initiative, an awareness raising and information campaign took place in India from 13-24 June coordinated by the EU Delegation in Delhi together with Science Counsellors from nine Member States. Some 26 European speakers animated 27 half-day information events throughout India reaching out to over 3,000 participants: a mix of researchers, S&T students and SMEs with R&D activities. An innovative element of this campaign was the combination of efforts by Member States and the Commission to promote both national bilateral schemes as well as the European dimension of research cooperation with India.

For more information, contact Philippe de Taxis de Poet, EU Delegation, Delhi

EU-Australia Innovation Policy Dialogue

A delegation of officials from the Australian [Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research](#) (DIISR) visited Brussels on 8 June for a joint workshop on innovation with the Commission and the EEAS. The meeting was co-chaired by Ken Pettifer, Head of the Innovation Division in the DIISR and Isi Saragossi, Director for International Cooperation in DG RTD. Issues of mutual interest were discussed in the areas of innovation performance measurement and IPR protection and both sides agreed to continue discussions in the next EU-Australia S&T joint committee meeting. Australia is considered to be ahead of Europe in several sectors such as social innovation and smart specialisation, whilst Europe stands on a better footing in innovative government procurement.

For more information, contact Pierrick Fillon-Ashida

Third EU-Korea Joint S&T Committee Meetings

The third meeting of the Joint Committee established under the EU-Korea S&T Cooperation Agreement will take place in Seoul on 8 July. The meeting is very timely, taking place just after the entry into force (1 July) of a new Framework Agreement with the EU and the first ever EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with an Asian country. The meeting will encourage a renewed approach in EU-Korea STI cooperation, which is considered to be below potential, given the excellence of Korea in many areas of research. The main areas of discussion will be on increasing the scale and scope of EU-Korea cooperation in ICT, energy, nanotechnology, materials and production technology research as well as increasing the mobility of researchers. The meeting will also look at the optimal methods for funding cooperation and to increase the reciprocal opening of both Korean and EU programmes.

For more information, contact Pierrick Fillon-Ashida

ITER Council meets in Aomori, Japan

The ITER Council, the Governing Body of the ITER Organisation met for its eighth meeting on 14-15 June in Aomori, bringing together representatives from the seven ITER Members. Discussion included maintaining the schedule of the ITER project within the level of approved funding, including mitigating the effects of the Japanese earthquake on the manufacturing of critical components. A strategic plan aiming at schedule performance recovery will be developed by the beginning of October 2011. The Council also reaffirmed the importance and the necessity of fusion energy, which is safe, abundant and environmentally benign, and encouraged continued strong cooperation among the seven Members in the implementation of the ITER project.

For more information, contact Alejandro Zurita, DG RTD Dir. K or Barbara Rhode EU Delegation, Tokyo

Linking the EU and Argentina

The 6th Steering Committee of the EU-Argentina S&T Cooperation Committee took place, by video-conference, on 31 May and 1 June. Initial exchanges between thematic directorates and Argentinean thematic FP7 contacts were followed by the political part of the meeting, which was co-chaired by Agueda Menvielle, Director for International Relations in the Argentinean Ministry for Science, Technology and Innovation, and Isi Saragossi, Director for International Cooperation of DG RTD. Both sides updated each other on policy developments, including the increase in R&D investment in Argentina and the [RAICES programme](#), which has encouraged more than 800 senior researchers to

return to Argentina, and developments in EU policy related to the Innovation Union and the Common Strategic Framework. Following a favourable evaluation of the last five years of the Agreement (which will be formally published shortly), the tacit extension of the Agreement for a further five years was welcomed by both sides.

For more information, contact Cornelia Nauen

Joint Meeting of European and African Union Commissions

On 31 May-1 June the African Union Commission and the European Commission convened in Brussels for their annual College-to-College meeting, in the context of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Partnership. The plenary session, during which Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn delivered a speech, focused on consolidating democracy, including developments in Northern Africa, consolidating socio-economic growth and enhancing industrial development in Africa. Thematic sessions allowed for exchanges of view on topics related to the [eight Partnerships](#), including science, technology and innovation in the cluster animated by Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn and her AU counterpart, Commissioner Jean-Pierre Ezin. Discussions aimed at strengthening the political and technical cooperation between the two institutions; provide fresh impetus to the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and elements for the future political agenda. The latter will include the launch of the first Senior Officials Meeting of the Africa-EU STI High Level Policy Dialogue.

For more information, contact Fadila Boughanemi

Renewed priority for science in Egypt

The second phase of the EU-funded Research Development Innovation (RDI-2) Programme was launched in Cairo on June 20th, in the presence of Egypt's new Prime Minister, seven Egyptian ministers, and other distinguished guests. RDI-2 is supported under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument with a budget of 20 million euro over four years. Science is now a national priority for Egypt and the country plans to boost its GERD to 2% by 2015, from the current level of 0.4%. The new budget allocated for research in 2011-2012 has increased by 25% from 404 million dollars to 505 million dollars. Over the next three years, the government intends to create 50,000 research posts for young researchers, most of which will be government jobs at universities and research institutes. It is planned to organise an 'EU-Egypt Year of Science' in 2012 to enhance STI cooperation between EU Member States and Egypt and to provide

an opportunity for Egyptian researchers and researchers in other Mediterranean countries to promote their research capacities in Europe.

*For more information, contact Georges Papageorgiou,
EU Delegation, Egypt*

PROJECTS

International cooperation activities: Outcome of the evaluation of the 2011 calls

Three calls for proposals were published in the 2011 Capacities work programme: ERA-WIDE, INCO-LAB, INCO-HOUSE. The calls closed in March 2011 and were evaluated in May 2011. The ERA-WIDE call, which aims to reinforce the research capacities of laboratories in European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries, received 168 proposals; from which 101 were favourably evaluated and 32 should be selected for funding. Some 34 proposals were submitted to the INCO-LAB and INCO-HOUSE calls. These calls aim to open, to additional European researchers, the joint institutes and centres which have been established by EU Member States and Associated countries in third countries. A total of 21 proposals were favourably evaluated and one proposal for each target country (Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia and USA) should be selected for funding.

For more information, contact Philippe Froissard

EVENTS

Kazakhstan: Stakeholder conference on 'evaluation approaches in S&T policy'

The FP7 International Cooperation Network Central Asian and South Caucasus (IncoNet CASC) aims to strengthen EU-CASC bi-regional policy dialogue on scientific cooperation, to assist in the joint identification of topics for collaboration in FP7 and to enhance the participation of CASC research entities in FP7. In conjunction with the Kazakh Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, the project organised a Policy Stakeholders Conference on 26-27 May, in Astana, which was attended by 150 S&T policy makers and high ranking experts. The focus of the conference was on analytical methods for policy advice such as the evaluation of research institutions, international benchmarking processes and the joint assessment of political strategies and concepts. Conference participants backed a proposal from the project consortium members to draft a strategic White Paper to develop a shared vision for joint S&T actions for the EU, its eastern neighbours and Central Asia. This Paper will be presented at a conference to

be held in Warsaw on 15-16 November, with the support of the Polish Presidency.

For more information, contact Yves Maisonnay

ACCESSRU – 2nd Round Table

The [FP7 ACCESSRU project](#) aims to increase awareness and facilitate access for European researchers and research organisations to participate in Russian national research and innovation programmes. A second round-table event under the project was held on 31 May in Moscow to discuss in more depth existing access mechanisms and to finalise the strategic recommendations for facilitating the access to Russian national programmes for European researchers. Participants at the round table included representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Economic Development as well as Russian research funding and performing organisations and universities.

There are mainly three possible avenues for EU researchers to access Russian programmes: (i) the Russian Federal Targeted Programmes which are viewed to be the most difficult to access for foreign applicants, (ii) all bilateral (Russia-EU Member States) and multilateral programmes which represent the easiest way option, as the financing of the foreign partner usually goes through the respective country's budget, and (iii) new Russian initiatives such as the programme 'Measures to Attract Leading Scientists to Russian Educational Institutions' or the 'Skolkovo project' which are easier to participate in because their design has been based on the idea to attract foreign specialists. The Round-Table participants discussed suggestions for improving information delivery, simplifying procedures, etc. which will be compiled in an 'ACCESSRU Green Paper' to be published by the end of 2011.

For more information, contact Yves Maisonnay or Maria Putseleva, EU Delegation, Moscow

Cooperation with Western Balkan Countries

A meeting of the Western Balkan Countries (WBC) steering platform took place on 26 May in Ohrid, FYRoMacedonia, back to back with meetings of the [WBC IncoNet](#) and South-east Europe (SEE) [ERANET Plus](#) projects. The meetings brought together representatives from the Ministries of

Science in Balkan Countries, the EU Presidency, the Commission, several Member States, as well as other stakeholders involved in strengthening the research capacity in the Balkan Region, to take stock of the actions taken by the WBC on research and innovation policy and how the WBC could further align with ERA and contribute to the Innovation Union. All WBC expressed interest in learning more about the Innovation Union and how they could contribute to it. Under the WBC INCO.NET, work has already started to map innovation capacity. During the events, the OECD presented a study on how to bring academia and private sector closer and the Zagreb Institute of Economics presented a survey on how innovation is addressed in the region. The increase in FP7 participation of all WBCs was noted but all countries requested that support for research capacity building would continue in both the Common Strategic Framework, as well as the next EU Pre-Accession Instrument. Turkey, which is also a member of the Steering Platform asked for close cooperation between all enlargement countries. There was great interest shown in extending cooperation to jointly address the challenges identified in the Danube Strategy and in this context the [SEE.ERA.NET](#) and SEE.ERA.NET Plus projects were considered very good actions to structure research efforts at regional level.

For more information contact Tania Friederichs or Michele Genevose

ERC awareness campaign in Beijing

A delegation, lead by European Research Council (ERC) Scientific Council member Alain Peyraube, visited Beijing on 15-17 June, to raise awareness of the ERC and to increase the number of successful Chinese ERC grantees. They gave presentations to audiences at the Institute of Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, as well as Tsinghua, Peking and Renmin Universities. A final information session was organised at the EU Delegation for representatives from EU embassies and funding agencies, the media, and researchers.

For more information, contact Samantha Christey ERCEA or Jessica Mitchell, EU Delegation Beijing

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS (JULY – SEPTEMBER 2011)

Joint Committee Meetings		
8 July	Korea	Seoul
Mid-September (date tbc)	USA	Brussels
28 September	Morocco	Rabat