

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATE

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG RESEARCH, DIRECTORATE D MONTHLY INFO FLASH ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

POLICY

First Meeting of SIRIC

The first meeting of the inter-service Coordination Group on International Cooperation on Research and Innovation will take place on 2 March. This group, which will be chaired by Anneli Pauli and include representatives from the research family, user and external policy DGs, will: contribute to the general strategic orientations for international cooperation in research and innovation; ensure coherence of international cooperation activities in FP7 and with other EU policies and instruments; ensure consistency and complementarity between the different policy dialogues with third countries; and share and review information on the implementation of the EU international cooperation activities in research and innovation.

For more information, contact Laurent Bochereau

G8 Summit preparations

The Preparations of the G8 Summit under the FR Presidency are underway. The meeting will take place in Deauville France on May 26-27. The agenda is not yet set, but in addition to points on Peace and Security and the Internet, it is very likely to include a point on Green Growth and Innovation. The Summit will also include an outreach session to meet with selected African leaders.

For more information, contact Mary Kavanagh

Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) - review

In December 2009 Council decided that all ERA-related groups (SFIC; Joint Programming Group-GPC; Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility-SGHRM; ERAC Working Group on Knowledge Transfer) should be reviewed. The European Research Area Committee (ERAC)

launched the process at its meeting on 9-10 December by circulating a questionnaire to its members. ERAC sees the review as a vital element in underpinning its ability to contribute effectively to policy formation and to ensure the effective delivery of the ERA in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and in particular the Innovation Union Flagship Initiative. An ERAC opinion is expected by the end of February.

For more information, contact Heiko Prange-Gstoehl

International research trends

Our science counsellors have been providing an external perspective for the forthcoming impact assessment for the new framework programme. They have delivered wide ranging reports on issues such as S&T policy trends (expenditure, research priorities, policy debates, centres of excellence, etc); the perception of European S&T seen from a third country vantage point and details of research assessments carried out in their respective countries. This information is being compiled and will provide an overview of national trends and a 'snap shot' of current activity covering the USA, Japan, the BRICs, Egypt and Israel. The 'horizontal report' will be submitted to the Impact Assessment Coordination Group in January at which time it will also be available as an internal document.

For more information, contact Callum Searle

AGREEMENTS

Iceland accession talks

Within the framework of preparation of the accession of Iceland to the EU, DG RTD has completed the technical screening of the *acquis* related to the science and research chapter of the Agreement. As Iceland has been associated to the Framework Programmes since the entry into force

of the agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994 and has the necessary legal safeguards and requirements, the screening exercise demonstrated that Iceland is well prepared to take on the obligations of EU membership under the science and research chapter of the agreement.

For more information, contact Emanuele Sanguineti

New EU-Canada Trade Agreement to include research and innovation

Strengthened S&T collaboration was discussed in January during the latest round of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. CETA is intended to liberalise trade and investment further, leading to benefits worth up to EUR 20 billion to both economies. While the principle of including S&T issues has been discussed in previous rounds, a draft text was proposed for the first time by the Canadian Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade. While acknowledging the main framework of the existing S&T cooperation agreement, the draft text contains noteworthy new elements, jointly agreed. These include the wish for collaboration on innovation, the introduction of possible roles for the provincial and territorial levels of government within Canada, and the desirability of private sector involvement. It is hoped that the CETA negotiations will be finalised during 2011.

For more information, contact Errol Levy

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Russian Government in Brussels

Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin and a number of Russian Ministers will visit the European Commission on 24 February. A plenary meeting with President Barroso and the College is foreseen, together with bilateral meetings between Commissioners and their ministerial counterparts. A meeting between Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn and Science and Education Minister Andrey Fursenko is planned as part of the visit.

For more information, contact Martin Penny

Review of S&T cooperation with Argentina

The EU-Argentina S&T Cooperation Agreement is currently under review, in view of its renewal for another five years. An on-line survey of all project partners involved in FP6 and FP7 projects with Argentinean partners is on-going to combine bottom-up views with more top down policy oriented analysis. The review report will be

examined at the next steering committee meeting which is foreseen in June-July.

For more information, contact Cornelia Nauen

Brazil's new Science and Innovation Minister

The newly elected President Dilma Rousseff has chosen Senator Aloizio Mercadante, as the new science minister. In his speech on taking office, Mr Mercadante stated that he would like to mirror the Lisbon Strategy in Brazil, focusing on education, scientific research, innovation and social inclusion, and raising R&D investment in the next decade to 2.5% from the current 1.25%. Research in aerospace and nuclear issues were highlighted as specific strategic areas.

*For more information, contact Angel Landabaso Alvarez,
Brasilia Delegation*

Brazilian Blue Paper on S&T

The Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology launch a so-called 'Blue Paper' on 22 December to guide its future science policy. The paper states that national science policy should be guided by the key areas of innovation and sustainable development. Other goals include investment in under-researched areas central to the country's development, such as marine sciences and the Amazon, and in the public awareness of science and attracting more young people to scientific careers. The paper also explores the relationship between universities and the private sector, proposing the creation of institutions that can facilitate public-private dialogue.

For more information, contact Luis Samaniego Moffre

African Union research grants

The African Union (AU) Research Grants Programme has opened a [call for proposals](#). This Programme is one of the flagship projects identified as an early deliverable in the Partnership No.8 on Science, Information Society and Space of the EU-Africa Joint Strategy and its Action Plan, and has received EUR 15 million of financing from the 10th European Development Fund. The objectives of the programme are: to build the capacity of the AU Commission in creating a sustainable system of competitive research grants at pan-African level; to put in place procedures and processes to manage grants within the AU Commission with the aim of gaining experience to develop a future African Framework Programme for Research; and to promote intra-Africa and international cooperation in research, technology and innovation. The African Union Commission is seeking research proposals on the following thematic priorities: (a) Post-harvest

and Agriculture, (b) Renewable and Sustainable Energy, and (c) Water and Sanitation in Africa.

For more information, contact Fadila Boughanémi

BMBF Mediterranean call: open for proposals

A [regional call](#) launched in June 2010 by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), is still open for applications. The call targets research and innovation partnerships, in the priorities of Union for Mediterranean (UfM), between German organisations and institutions from the North African and Middle Eastern countries that are members of the UfM. This call is open until the end of 2013, and offers funding for the preparation of FP7 and CIP proposals, BMBF proposals, as well as the creation of innovation partnerships and networks with the UfM.

*For more information, contact Kareem Abdel Monem,
Cairo Delegation*

PROJECTS

EU-US co-operation in aeronautics research

The FP7 support action 'CooperatEUS' aims to establish and foster communication and cooperation between US and EU research stakeholders in civil aeronautics, assisting in fighting segmentation and responding to global challenges. CooperatEUS gathered the interest of many relevant US participants including NASA officials and the NASA administrator, at the [recent AIAA Conference in Florida](#); the representatives of US manufacturing industry, laboratories and academia were positive about the gains to be attained by mutual collaboration. CooperatEUS and the Commission are currently following up on specific expressions of interest.

For more information, contact Pablo Perez-Illana, Dir H

Launch of the CONCERT-Japan project

The FP7 CONCERT-Japan 'international ERA-NET' project aims to enhance EU-Japan S&T cooperation through the coordination of Member State and Associated Countries' S&T activities towards and with Japan. The project consortium is made of 13 participating organisations including the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Japan S&T Agency, and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and is coordinated by the Turkish S&T Research Council (TÜBİTAK). At the kick-off meeting held on 17-18 January in Istanbul, participants started discussions on the preparation of pilot joint calls for EU MS/AC-Japan joint research and innovation

activity to be launched in 2012. In 2011, they will concentrate on the analysis of existing bilateral and multilateral activities and the elaboration of a joint strategy to coordinate S&T programmes of EU MS/AC with Japan.

For more information, contact Yves Maisonny

ERAWATCH international

In December 2010, the Commission signed a contract with the ERAWATCH Network to ensure the maintenance and expansion of the coverage of third countries' Science, Technology and Innovation policies, programmes and organisations on the [ERAWATCH on-line information platform](#). When complete, it will cover 21 third countries, including all of those with which we have an S&T agreement. This is in addition to the coverage of Member States and Associated Countries.

For more information, contact Mary Kavanagh

ERA-WIDE in the Euro-Mediterranean Area

Ten new projects have been signed with seven Mediterranean Partner Countries (Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine, Syria, Morocco, Egypt and Lebanon) under the new ERA-WIDE scheme, for a total amount of EUR 4.5 million. The aim of ERA-WIDE is to reinforce the capacities of research centres and support the development of research strategies in scientific areas related to FP7. The new projects include key deliverables on innovation related issues and so could form an interesting test case for the application of the policy orientations of the Innovation Union. The European Investment Bank and the World Intellectual Property Office have expressed their interest in supporting the research centres involved in the projects in their development of business plans for the valorisation of research.

For more information, contact Aurélie Pancera

EVENTS

Multilateral research cooperation seminar

The Forum for European-Australian S&T Cooperation (FEAST) will hold a symposium on 24-25 March in Brisbane, in partnership with the University of Queensland entitled 'Enhancing interoperability in the emerging global research order'. The event will gather key experts to discuss the interoperability of different national research systems on the international stage. The idea for the seminar stems from the experience of structural problems encountered by Australian researchers involved in formal international collaborative projects (including FP7). The seminar will examine

how these issues could be mitigated in the future through appropriate interoperability policies.

The symposium will aim therefore to: (i) refine and develop the notion of interoperability as a new strategic objective for facilitating international S&T cooperation; (ii) consider the geopolitical implications of international S&T cooperation for delivering enhanced interoperability; (iii) develop and propose improved policy stances to balance the inherently international role of public science against the national competition-driven emphasis on innovation; (iv) explore new contractual templates to facilitate interoperability; and (v) agree a joint stakeholder statement and action plan to refine and demonstrate the interoperability-based approach in a politically sensitive geopolitical context.

For more information, contact Tarik Meziani

Marie Curie Actions: international dimension

A workshop on the Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme and the international dimension of the Marie Curie Actions took place in Brussels on 14 December. The participants included science counsellors from the EU delegations and from missions to the EU, as well as some IRSES project coordinators. The workshop provided a unique platform to analyse and discuss the results of the first three IRSES calls for proposals, and the participation of non European countries in the Marie Curie actions. The presentation of IRSES success stories gave the opportunity to focus on the real impact of this type of action to foster global collaboration among research institutions. To date, IRSES has involved more than 700 non European organisations in 255 proposals retained for funding. All eligible third countries, except Libya, have applied for IRSES.

For more information, contact Luisa Maggio, DG EAC

ERC activities at the Indian Science Congress

The CNN-Indian Broadcasting Network recently featured an ERC Starting grantee, Dr Ramesh Pillai, researcher at the EMBL in Grenoble, in the context of the largest science event in India: the 98th Indian Science Congress. The Congress took place in Chennai from 3-7 January 2011, with presentations

by Dr Pillai and ERC representatives of the ERC funding opportunities for Indian researchers. Currently, four ERC grantees are of Indian origin. Similarly to the EU, India sees 2011 as a year of 'Innovation and Excellence'; the Government view that scientific research is key for tomorrow's generation and India's place in the world. India will have a 'Year of Science' in 2012-2013, aiming to inspire more researchers and young scientists to take part in research projects within India and abroad.

*For more information, contact Philippe de Taxis du Poët, or
Indraneel Ghose, EU Delegation to India,
or Massimo Gaudina, ERCEA*

Cooperation in nanotechnologies with Russia

On 13 January a [NANORUCER](#) workshop, jointly organised by the Fraunhofer Society and the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), was held at the EU Delegation in Moscow involving primarily Russian stakeholders in order to discuss and propose concrete actions. The main objective of the NANORUCER support action is to carry out a survey of main Russian research infrastructures active in nanotechnology and nano-structured materials as a basis for initiating future cooperation between the EU and Russia. A strength and weakness analysis of the Russian nanotechnology innovation system will be made, based on a performance analysis using bibliometrics and patent statistics and a mapping of nanotechnology and nano-structured materials research activities in Russia. A systematic comparison with respective EU R&D activities in nanotechnology and nano-structured materials will allow identifying opportunities for future cooperation between the EU and Russia. These will be specified by thematic fields in order to detect areas of common interests with most benefits for cooperating partners. The workshop, which was attended by the major Russian research institutes working in the area, covered areas such as nano-optics, -electronics, -materials, -mechanics, -magnetics and nano in the life sciences.

*For more information, contact Hans Hartmann Pedersen,
Dir. G or Manuel Hallen, Moscow Delegation*

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS (JANUARY – APRIL 2011)

Joint Committee Meetings			Other Meetings		
22 March	China	Brussels	25 February	Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) Meeting	Brussels
1 April	India	Brussels	2 March	SIRIC Meeting	Brussels
			28-29 March	EU-LAC Senior Officials Meeting	Brussels