

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UPDATE

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

POLICY

International dimension of future research and innovation funding

A consultation event on the international dimension of future research and innovation funding policy and programmes will be held in Brussels on 17 May, as part of the current consultation on the Green Paper on the Common Strategic Framework for research and innovation funding. The event will be opened by Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn and will include a round table discussion with a range of high-level speakers, including representatives from a large international company, a research-based SME, the university sector and international research programmes to examine ways in which the EU can engage more effectively with international partners for the advancement of science, solving global societal challenges and promoting mutually beneficial industrial cooperation. It is expected that the audience will include approximately 100 EU and third country ambassadors, MEPs and representatives from international research organisations.

For more information, contact Laurent Bochereau

First meeting of SIRIC

The new inter-service group Strategic International Research and Innovation Cooperation (SIRIC) met for the first time on 2 March. This group was established to contribute to the reinforcement of co-ordination between the Research DGs, policy DGs, and the EEAS.

At the meeting, DG RTD Director for International Cooperation, Isi Saragossi recalled the rationale behind the establishment of SIRIC: due to the increased role of new and rising economic and STI

powers more efforts will be needed to improve the impact of EU's international cooperation. These efforts will require analysing the strengths and weaknesses of our activities in order to increase the focus, scale and scope of cooperation and on working strategically with specific countries and regions. International STI cooperation is not an end in itself but rather a means to: increase STI excellence, economic and industrial competitiveness; tackle global societal challenges; and support EU external policies. It is also a cornerstone of the Innovation Union.

It is planned that SIRIC will meet in plenary four times a year. In addition, dedicated SIRIC meetings will be convened to discuss topics of interest to a limited group of DGs and services.

For more information, contact Minna Wilkki

SFIC India pilot initiative

At the 8th SFIC India Group meeting, held on 3 March, good progress was made on the India Pilot Initiative. Member State representatives welcomed the proposal from Denmark to host an EU-Member State-India ministerial meeting where Ministers would endorse a common research and innovation agenda and road map. The proposed Ministerial would take place back-to-back with the Competitiveness Council of May 2012.

The plans, under the 2012 work programme, for a coordinated call with India on 'clean and safe drinking water and integrated management of water resources', were presented, together with the development of a large scale integrating project with India on biotechnological waste water treatments.

Some Member States – notably Germany and Denmark – proposed new models for more integrated cooperation with India. These are based on the opening up of national bilateral programmes to other MS willing to fund their national institutions and researchers to participate in projects involving multi-country consortia. These constructive proposals to develop the partnership will be further discussed in SFIC over the coming months.

For more information, contact Diego Sammaritano

EU-LAC STI Senior Officials Meeting

The first Senior Officials Meeting under the EU-LAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation took place in Brussels on 28-29 March to advance the implementation of the research and innovation part of the Madrid Summit Action Plan. The meeting adopted a road map and set up working groups to develop enhanced bi-regional cooperation in priority areas: bio-economy, biodiversity and climate change, and ICT, and to explore similar cooperation in energy. Best practices for combining or aligning funding mechanisms at national and regional levels will be also identified. 20 LAC and 12 EU countries, COM and EEAS were represented, co-chaired by Chile and the Commission. The JRC, EAC and several directorates of the research and development cooperation families provided valuable contributions.

For more information, contact Cornelia Nauen

AGREEMENTS

Adoption of four international S&T agreements

On 10 March Council adopted decisions authorising the conclusion of four international S&T cooperation agreements between the EU and Japan, Jordan, Ukraine and the Faroe Islands respectively. The S&T Cooperation Agreements with Japan and Jordan provide a new framework for bilateral S&T cooperation between the EU and each of these countries. The agreements will help to identify common research priorities and areas of common interest in which to implement joint research efforts and enhance S&T cooperation. The extension of the existing S&T Cooperation Agreement with Ukraine was also adopted. The fourth agreement associates the Faroe Islands to FP7: bringing the number of associated countries to 13. This association will further promote the involvement of the Faroe Islands with ERA.

For more information, contact Emanuele Sanguineti

BILATERAL RELATIONS

EU-Indian collaboration in the 'Decade of Innovations'

Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn met with the Adviser to the Indian Prime Minister on Public Information Infrastructures and Innovations, and Chair of the Indian Innovation Council, Sam Pitroda on 3 March in Brussels. Mr Pitroda has the status of a Cabinet Minister in India and leads the Indian 'Decade of Innovations 2010-2020' initiative. The Commissioner noted the similarities between the Indian Decade on Innovation and the Innovation Union, notably on the important role of clusters as drivers for innovation. Mr Pitroda expressed strong interest for increased collaboration with Europe, especially in the areas of agriculture, health, energy and the creative sectors. The next EU-India Joint Science and Technology Meeting (scheduled for 1 April) was recognised as an important step to strengthen the EU-Indian partnership in research and innovation.

For more information, contact Jean-Michel Sers

Information campaign in India

A series of information seminars will be organised from 13-24 June in 27 cities, innovation clusters and S&T hot spots in India to raise awareness among the Indian research and innovation stakeholders on the opportunities that the EU and its Member States can offer for cooperation with India. Speakers from the Member States, the ERC, the European Business and Technology Centre, Euraxess Links India, and the EU Delegation in India, which is organising the campaign, will present the national and EU schemes.

*For more information, contact Philippe de Taxis du Poët,
EU Delegation New Delhi*

French-German African joint research call

Within the EU-Africa Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the French Agency for Research for Development, with the French Ministry for Higher Education and Research and the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, have [published a joint call](#) for proposals for funding joint exploratory and preparatory measures for trilateral German-French-African research initiatives in Sub-Sahara Africa. Proposals should be based on existing bilateral German-African or French-African measures in: health; agriculture/food safety; environment; applied mathematics/computer science.

For more information, contact Fadila Boughanémi

Canada reinforces its FP7 Contact Point network

Following the addition of new FP7 Contacts in the areas of Health and Space, Canada held its first annual meeting of Canadian NCPs on 5 March. Organised by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Ottawa, it gathered the existing NCPs in the themes of ICT, FAFB, Health and Space. Supported by the coordinator of the FP7 funded ERACAN II BILAT project, experiences and best practices were exchanged, with a goal to boost further the quantity and quality of Canadian participation in European-level research activities. The Commission presented the latest developments in Canadian participation in FP7 and the post-FP7 potential for collaboration in research and innovation. Two European NCPs provided insights into the well-developed Italian and German NCP networks. Similar support was provided to a follow-on meeting on 6 March, aimed at prospective Canadian NCPs, which could lead to the further extension of the network.

For more information, contact Errol Levy

Cooperation with Australia and New Zealand

Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn met Senator Kim Carr, the Australian Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and Wayne Mapp, the New Zealand Minister of Science and Innovation on 10 March. Discussions centred on establishing a more strategic approach to research and innovation cooperation including through regional and multilateral initiatives. The discussion also covered New Zealand's interest to reinforce cooperation in the bio-economy area, through the potential establishment of a specific fund to support New Zealand scientists working with European counterparts. Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn will probably visit the region in spring 2012, in reply to invitations received from Australia and New Zealand. President Barroso is also scheduled to visit the region this September; his visit may also touch upon reinforcing cooperation in the areas of research and education.

For more information, contact Pierrick Fillon-Ashida

EU-China S&T Cooperation steering committee

The 9th meeting of the EU-China S&T Cooperation Steering Committee took place on 22 March in Brussels, co-chaired by Director-General Robert-Jan Smits and the Chinese Vice-Minister for S&T, Mr CAO Jianlin. During the Joint Steering Committee, the discussion focused on establishing a new structure for the Steering Committee with the establishment of task forces to help strengthen the scale and scope of research and innovation

cooperation in areas of common interest. The creation of the ad hoc Task Force on "Food Agriculture and Biotechnologies" was formally adopted. It will be under the responsibility of Mr GONG Xifeng, Deputy Director General of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Ms Maive RUTE Director of "Biotechnologies, Agriculture, Food" RTD Directorate. Further task forces in other research areas could be created, subject to common interest for collaboration.

The Committee reviewed the current state of play in research cooperation and forthcoming initiatives from both sides to strengthen research and innovation for growth and jobs. The Committee took place immediately after the Joint Steering Committee on the 'EU-China Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy' Agreement and the Information Society Dialogue'. The three meetings were organised back-to-back in order to structure and further strengthen all aspects of EU-China research and innovation cooperation activities.

For more information, contact Mario Catizzone

Research and innovation for a new Egypt

The Prime Minister in Egypt's new transitional government, Dr Essam Sharaf is the founder of the NGO 'Age of Science' which aims to promote research and spread scientific culture in Egypt. In past interviews Dr Sharaf has argued that scientific research should be an issue of national security in Egypt because it carries solutions to fundamental challenges, such as food and water security. Similarly, the new Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Technology, Dr Amr Salama, has recently stressed the importance of science in addressing Egypt's social needs. Egypt, as well as other countries in the region undergoing the current historical changes, is looking for ways to address the demands of the young population for vibrant democratic societies that ensure sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs and improved well being. A significant and well focused support by the international community in research and innovation will undoubtedly help many countries of the Mediterranean region in their transition process.

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

PROJECTS

EU INDIA cooperation

The EU-India 'NEW INDIGO' ERA-Net, which was launched in January 2009 aims to promote the coordination of EU and Member States research policies towards India, and to develop new joint calls.

The first joint call prepared with the Indian Department of Biotechnology was successfully launched in 2010. Thirteen multilateral networking projects have been selected for funding and officially started in September 2010, covering three topics: biomarkers and diagnostics; bioinformatics for health; and structural biology for health.

A new joint call EU-India is now being prepared with the Indian Department of Science and Technology. The two topics for this call are: waste water management and green chemistry applied to water purification. It is planned that the call will be published on 18 April, with projects selected by the end of November and potentially starting in January 2012.

For more information, contact Armand Beuf

Increasing EU-Korean collaboration

The EU-Korea KORRIDOR (ACCESS4EU) project held two information days in March in Bonn and Paris, to promote opportunities available to European researchers in Korean funded R&D programmes. Over 130 people from the German and French research communities attended the events, learning about current opportunities for European-Korean research cooperation and from the experience of past successful projects. Information on current research calls under the international cooperation programmes funded by the Korea Institute for Advancement of Technology, the Korean National Research Foundation and the Korea Institute of Energy Technology Evaluation and Planning is available through the project [website](#).

For more information, contact Yves Maisonnny

Launch of the FP7 ERA.Net RUS pilot joint call

The FP7 ERA.Net RUS project aims to enhance EU-Russia S&T cooperation through the coordination of EU Member States and FP7 Associated Countries' S&T activities towards and with Russia. A [call for collaborative S&T projects](#) has been launched by the project, with the following participating countries: Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. The call budget is ca €6 million. The objective is to create long-term research collaboration between EU MS/AC and Russia. Projects have to address one of the following thematic fields: innovative materials and cutting edge technological processes, environmental research and climatic change, research on serious human health problems and contemporary socio-economic studies.

For more information, contact Yves Maisonnny

EVENTS

ERC and the American Association for Cancer Research

The ERC will attend for the first time the [annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research](#) (AACR) which will be held in Florida, from 2-6 April. The AACR is the oldest and largest scientific organisation in the world focused on cancer research, with programmes to foster the exchange of knowledge and new ideas among scientists dedicated to cancer research, provide training opportunities for the next generation of cancer researchers, and increase public understanding of cancer. The ERC will attend the conference together with the EURAXESS Links officer based in the US.

For more information, contact Samantha Christey ERC Executive Agency

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS (APRIL – JULY 2011)

Joint Committee Meetings			Other Meetings		
1 April	India	Brussels	17 May	CSF International Consultation event	Brussels
7 April	Turkey	Ankara	17 May	2 nd SIRIC meeting	Brussels
5 May	Switzerland	Brussels	Regional Meetings		
29 June	Russia	Brussels	5 May	Eastern Partnership Platform Meeting	Brussels
7 July	Korea	Seoul	12 May	EU-ASEAN SOM	Cambodia
14 July (tbc)	Israel	Tel Aviv	26 May	Western Balkan Countries Platform	Ohrid
			26 May	Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD (MoCo) Meeting	Budapest