

## European science & research news

### Seventh EU Research Framework Programme (FP7) 2007-2013 adopted and to start in January 2007

On 30 November, the European Parliament gave its approval to the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) for 2007-2013. The decision still requires the EU Council's formal approval. This should clear the way for the timely start of FP7 in January 2007. At a total of EUR 54.6 billion, the FP7 budget is significantly higher than previous Framework Programmes. It includes new elements such as the funding of basic research through the European Research Council and the industry-led Joint Technology Initiatives. Researchers from Australia can participate in FP7 projects on a self-financing basis. The work programmes for FP7 will be published in December 2006 and the first calls are expected to be launched on 22 December.

See: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/> and [http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/home\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/home_en.html)

### European Roadmap on Research Infrastructures identifies 35 priority research infrastructure projects

On 19 October, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) presented the first European Roadmap for new, large-scale research infrastructures. The ESFRI Roadmap is the result of an intensive two-year consultation and peer review process. It identifies 35 large scale European and international infrastructure projects at various stages of development in seven key research areas, including environmental sciences, energy, material sciences, astrophysics, astronomy, particle and nuclear physics, biomedical and life sciences, social sciences and the humanities, computation and data treatment. For more information see: <http://cordis.europa.eu/esfri>

### European Commission seeks advice on how to improve European science education

The European Commission announced the creation of an expert group to formulate policy recommendations on how to improve science education in Europe. The group will be chaired by former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard and includes four distinguished European scientists with a particular expertise in science education. The European Commission has created this expert group in response to growing evidence that shows that young people across Europe are losing interest in key science studies. Source: <http://ec.europa.eu>, Media Release is available on request

### Swedish Government to increase research funding

The newly elected Swedish Government announced in October that it will increase research funding by one percent of GDP over the next four years. It will also undertake a number of reforms in the tertiary education system that will focus on quality and internationalisation. For further information see: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2063>

### New statistics on Science, Technology and Innovation in the EU-25

The latest panorama of *Science, Technology and Innovation in Europe*, published by Eurostat, the EU Statistical Office, covers a wide range of R&D data, including R&D expenditure, R&D personnel, patents, venture capital and external trade and other indicators. The figures show that:

- In 2004, the EU-25 spent EUR 195 billion on R&D, an annual growth rate of 3.4% compared to 2003. Most R&D is carried out in Germany (EUR 55.1 billion), France (EUR 35.6 billion) and the UK (EUR 30.6 billion).
- In 2004, R&D expenditure as a share of GDP in the EU-25 decreased slightly to 1.90%. The gap with regard to R&D expenditure in Japan (3.15% in 2003) is widening, while the gap with the US (2.59%) is closing.
- The leading EU-25 Members in terms of R&D intensity were Sweden and Finland with 3.74% and 3.51% of GDP devoted to R&D. Other EU-25 countries with R&D intensity rates above the EU average of 1.90% are Denmark (2.61%), Germany (2.49%), Austria (2.26%), France (2.16%) and Belgium (1.93%).
- Within the EU-25, Finland (1.03%) and France (1.01%) had the highest proportions of government budgeting spent on R&D as a proportion of GDP. At the other end of the scale Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Romania and Malta showed ratios no higher than 0.3% of GDP.

For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>

## EU policy developments affecting science & research

### European Council agrees on Strategic Priorities for Innovation Action at EU level

The EU Competitive Council on 4 December approved guidelines for an EU innovation policy defining nine strategic priorities: 1) Improvement of protection for intellectual property rights (e.g. patents); 2) Enhancing standardisation; 3) Promoting innovation through public procurement; 4) Joint Technology Initiatives; 5) Boosting innovation and growth in so-called lead markets; 6) Co-operation between research institutions and industry; 7) Promotion of innovation in regions; 8) Development of policies to support innovations in services and non-technical innovation; and 9) Development of risk capital markets. The guidelines that closely follow the European

Commission's ten point priority programme on innovation (see ESR News No. 5/2006) will be integrated into the Lisbon Strategy and the European Commission will report annually on their progress. The ministers will hold a regular strategic debate on innovation and a Council working group will monitor progress. See: <http://eu.2006.fi>

#### European innovation stakeholders outline 20 priorities for a more innovation-friendly Europe

Delegates at the Europe Innova Conference held from 26-28 November adopted the Valencia declaration on innovation policy, a 20-point action plan calling for a better intellectual protection system, the removal of obstacles to researcher's mobility and for creative business-academia collaboration. See: <http://www.europe-innova.org>

### **Developments in thematic areas of potential relevance for Australia**

#### First FP-7 Work Programme for ICT launched at IST 2006 Conference in Helsinki

On 21 November, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Viviane Reding, launched the First ICT Work Programme for FP7 at the IST 2006 Conference in Helsinki, one of key European events in the field of Information Society Technologies. With a 75% increase in investments in ICT under FP7, ICT receives the highest budget of all thematic areas in FP7. See: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/>

#### Launch of European Network of Living Labs

The European Network of Living Labs was launched at an EU conference in Espoo, Finland on 20 November. The Network concentrates on the development of new information society services, businesses, technologies and markets. The aim is to link the separate Living Labs innovations and innovators around Europe to a common European network. The network enables the development of innovation services and methods and testing environments and Europe-wide provision of those for local and international companies and public administration. For more information see: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item\\_id=3000](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=3000)

#### EUR 15 million funding for security research to combat terrorism

The European Commission has announced on 13 October that will be allocating EUR 15 million for 15 new security research projects aimed at addressing threats posed to European transport systems. To improve the security of EU citizens the European Commission will fund a research project to improve the detection of explosives, including liquids, at airports. Another selected project will aim at improving the protection of the drinking water supply against bio/chemical terrorism. Other projects selected include: the development of an information management tool to improve security of humanitarian operations and rescue tasks in support of the external policies of the EU, the urgently needed interoperability and standards for border security and new methods against money laundering/financing of terrorist organisations. For more information see: [http://europa.eu.int/enterprise/security/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/enterprise/security/index_en.htm)

#### EUR 28.3 million for new research into avian and pandemic flu

The European Commission announced on 17 October to provide EUR 28.3 million for new projects into avian and pandemic influenza. The new projects cover human and animal health, and address research needs identified by organisations such as the World Health Organisation, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the Food & Agriculture Organisation of the UN. Nine of the selected projects include partners from outside the EU, such as Russia, China, Vietnam, Australia, US, Canada and Croatia, several of which have been directly affected by recent outbreaks of avian influenza. Source: <http://ec.europa.eu>; Media Release is available on request

#### EMBL Advanced Training Centre for life sciences research to be built in Germany

Construction recently began on the Advanced Training Centre (ATC) of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg, Germany. The initiative is undertaken by several European countries to provide young European researchers with cutting-edge facilities in the area of life sciences. See: <http://www.embl.org/aboutus/atc/>

### **Reports on science and research events attended by DEST Europe**

#### Norden Research Conference, 16-18 October, Copenhagen

A DEST Brussels representative attended the conference on *Investing in Research and Innovation - Exchanging European Experiences in a Nordic Context* held by the Nordic Council of Ministers (Norden) together with the European Commission in Copenhagen from 16-18 October. The purpose of the conference was to build momentum for investing in research and innovation in light of the upcoming Seventh EU Framework Programme and to learn from the experiences of the Nordic region in this context. Conference Programme and Conclusions are available upon request

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