

European science & research news

Public consultation raises ambition for the European Research Area

Universities and research institutions, companies, non-governmental organisations and individuals from across Europe and beyond have sent in more than 800 contributions to a public consultation on the future of the European Research Area (ERA). The consultation identified key issues for the future of the ERA, including public investment, globalisation of research, private sector investment, the emergence of new scientific powers and the specialisation of research activities at European Union (EU), rather than Member State, level.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1451&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

The current status of women in science in Europe

Europe is still far away from gender balance in science and research. According to the latest EU statistics, "She Figures 2006", women make up more than 50% of EU students and earn 43% of EU doctoral degrees but on average only get to 15% of senior academic and decision-making positions.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/eu-fails-potential-highly-qualified-women-scientists/article-166419>

Corporate research and development investment continues to grow

According to the results of the 2007 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard Study published by the European Commission on 5 October 2007, corporate research and development (R&D) investment within the EU increased by 7.4% in 2006, which was up on the 2005 score of 5.3% growth.

http://iri.jrc.ec.europa.eu/research/docs/2007/sb_2007.pdf

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/steady-increase-eu-private-sector-rd-investment/article-167441?Ref=RSS>

EU Researchers are poorly paid compared to their counterparts in the USA, Japan, Australia and India

A study on the salaries of researchers reveals substantial differences between the average salaries of researchers working in the EU, compared with their counterparts in countries including the US, India and Japan. According to figures released by the European Commission, the average salary for a researcher in the EU was €40,126 in 2006, far below the figure of €62,793 for researchers in the USA, and €61,991 for those in Japan. EU researchers were also beaten by their counterparts in Australia (€62,342) and India (€45,207).

http://www.ec.europa.eu/eracareers/pdf/final_report.pdf

Slovenia approves tax incentives for R&D

Slovenia's Government has approved a decree allowing regional tax incentives for research and development.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=28761

EU policy developments affecting science & research

Joint Technology Initiatives

Ministers have endorsed plans to set up four Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs) for research and development in Europe at the Competitiveness Council meeting on 23 November 2007. Ministers agreed a 'general approach' on proposed JTIs in the areas of embedded systems (Artemis), nano-electronics (ENIAC) innovative medicines (IMI) and environmentally friendly aeronautics (Clean Sky). The European Council has already made a proposal for a fifth JTI in the area of hydrogen and fuel cells.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/eu-technology-initiatives-crawl-step/article-168584>

European Commission to release EUR 100 Million to help SMEs involved in research

Proposals for a new EU-funded programme to support research and development by SMEs were adopted by the European Commission on 12 September. The new programme, known as Eurostars, will fund research projects led by SMEs using a combination of both national and EU money. For this purpose, a total of EUR 100 million will be provided from the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) up to 2013.

<http://www.eurostars-eureka.eu/>

European Commission promotes research partnerships between universities and businesses

€38.5 million of new funding is being made available for projects to encourage innovative partnerships between academia and industry. 41 projects have been selected for funding. The final budget figures and project details are subject to negotiation which started in October 2007.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/398&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

EU reaches agreement on Galileo funding

EU ministers have agreed to the full public financing of the Galileo satellite system and the brand new European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), as part of a deal on the EU's €120 billion budget for 2008.

Following the collapse of talks between the companies involved in the public-private partnership responsible for the deployment phase of Galileo, Member States agreed on 23 November to fund the project from the Community budget. http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=28756

Negotiations start on first FP7 social sciences and science in society projects

As of 24 October 2007, negotiations are underway for the first projects to be funded under the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) and Science in Society (SiS) thematic areas of the FP7. It is expected that the first grant agreements will be concluded by the end of the year.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index_en.htm?CFID=10099435&CFTOKEN=91fb4b7328cf56e6-00206AEE-FD69-0412-941C40167F418FE6

Europe at cutting edge of nanotechnology development

The Commission has now become the largest single public funding agency of nanotechnology and significant funding increases are expected over the duration of the FP7. The European Commission is seeking to develop a code of conduct for responsible nano research. Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potocnik hopes to present the code of conduct in spring 2008. The EU is also looking at developing international partnerships with third countries in the area of nanotechnology. In this context, a joint EU-India nanotechnology research fund was announced in November 2007, with EUR 10 million to enable institutions in India and the EU to work together in this field.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1738&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EU Ministers adopt Framework for Joint European Strategy in Defence R&T

On 19 November, EU governments adopted the [framework for a joint Strategy on Defence Research & Technology](#). The framework describes why and how they intend to invest collectively in technologies that are crucial for future military capabilities and industrial capacities in Europe.

<http://www.eda.europa.eu/newsitem.aspx?id=287>

Commission launches new generation of research projects for greener, more competitive air transport

The European Commission unveiled the results of the first EU-wide call for research proposals in aeronautics and air transport under the EU FP7. The 36 projects selected, aim to bring important advances in greener, safer, more secure air transport and improved cost efficiency in aeronautics – FP7's research priority themes. €217 million is available for this first batch of projects, out of a total of €2.1 billion for aeronautics research in the years 2007 to 2013.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/news/article_5995_en.html

Developments in thematic areas of potential relevance for Australia

New forum established for sustainable nuclear energy research

In September 2007, a Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform was launched in Brussels. This Technology Platform brings together researchers and industry to define and implement a Strategic Research Agenda and corresponding Deployment Strategy. This strategy should assist in preparing for the future and maintain European leadership in this sector.

<http://www.snetp.eu/scripts/home/publigen/content/templates/show.asp?L=EN&P=114&vTicker=alleza&ITEMID=3>

Making Europe more attractive to highly skilled migrants and increasing the protection of lawfully residing and working migrants

The European Commission has adopted two legislative proposals in the area of economic migration. The first proposal aims at establishing a Framework Directive for the purpose of admission of highly qualified migrants to the EU, creating the EU Blue Card. The second proposal is a Directive establishing a single application procedure for a single residence and work permit and a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in one of the Member States.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/422&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

15 Member States have not implemented the "Researchers' visa" Directive

12 October marked the passing of the deadline to put into national law the 2005 Directive setting out a specific procedure for allowing third-country nationals into the EU for the purposes of carrying out scientific research, or "researchers' visa". 19 member states could now be taken to the European Court of Justice for failing to grant third-country nationals entry to their territory to carry out scientific research.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1499&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/member-states-hesitant-welcome-foreign-researchers/article-167646>

Highlights on upcoming science and research events

4-9 May 2008: Nuclear Engineering Science and Technology – education and training (NESTet 2008) conference Budapest, Hungary. <http://www.euronuclear.org/e-news/e-news-18/nestet2008.htm>

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