

European Science, Engineering and Technology Highlights¹ MAY 2013

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¹ Note: If you would like additional information or background, please feel free to contact either Carine Polliotti at cpolliot@nsf.gov or Ana Helman at ahelman@nsf.gov



1 Euroscience Open Forum Calls for Proposals

Over the six days of June 21st-26th June 2014, Copenhagen will host the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) 2014 "Science building bridges". The program tracks of ESOF 2014 will create a platform where researchers, journalists, policy makers, students and organizations can meet and debate European research and global challenges. Alongside ESOF 2014, a major science festival – Science in the City - will take place. The call for Scientific session proposals and the Expression of interest in Science in the City for ESOF2014 are published and will close on 9th of May 2013.

More information available at: <http://esof2014.org/calls-for-proposals>



2 Science Europe releases the "Principles for the Transition to Open Access to Research Publications"

For the first time since the debate on Open Access to scientific publication has taken off, the major European Research Funding and Performing Organizations have agreed on a common set of 'Principles' that should guide the transition to Open Access to research publications. Science Europe's 51 Member Organizations are all committed to ensuring that results of publicly-funded research and innovation in Europe are available through an unrestricted, online access system, and have identified a list of ten principles that will ensure consistency and coherence in their efforts towards Open Access.



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The Principles are detailed in Science Europe's latest Position Statement '*Principles on the Transition to Open Access to Research Publications*'. Amongst other principles, Science Europe's members "*advocate that research publications should either be published in an Open Access journal or made available or be deposited as soon as possible in a repository*". They also "*expect publishers to apply institutional, regional, or country - based reductions in journal subscriptions, in line with increases of contributions paid by author(s) or institution(s)*"; hence discouraging situations where institutions pay twice for accessing scholarly articles (so - called 'double - dipping').

"The benefits of Open Access are clear: it improves the pace and the efficacy of research, it facilitates interdisciplinary research and strengthens the dissemination of scientific breakthrough", said Paul Boyle, President of Science Europe. *"However, we are all aware that the transition towards such a system presents some challenges and a collective approach will be the most effective way to accomplish rapid change".*

Each organization will be able to implement policies according to their needs, but these principles will be the basis for co-operation and exchange of experience and information.

Full article including press release available at: <http://www.scienceeurope.org/News>



3 EU's Chief Science Advisor Gives Shale Gas Go-ahead

The EU's Chief Scientific Advisor, Anne Glover, has said that evidence allows the go-ahead for extracting shale gas, the energy source at the center of a European policy tug-of-war. The EU launched a green paper on 27 March, setting out Europe's energy and climate aims for 2030, with Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger taking a favorable position on shale gas. *"I am in favor of producing shale gas, particularly for safety reasons, and to reduce gas prices,"* he said. *"In the United States, which is a big producer of shale gas, the price of gas is four times less than in Europe."* Shale gas has triggered an

industrial revival in the United States, which the International Energy Agency expects to become almost self-sufficient in oil and gas by 2035. But crippling production costs, exploration closures, and government-level environmental concerns have seen the industry's expansion in Europe waver. EU Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard has adopted a less favorable tone on shale gas, believing its extraction in Europe bears little comparison with the United States. "We do not expect that it will be so easy in Europe: geological conditions are different, and so are environmental rules and the activity of soils," she told reporters at the launch of the Commission green paper last month. But Anne Glover, the chief scientific adviser to Commission President José Manuel Barroso, contradicted this view and gave a scientific green light to shale. Speaking at a debate on science and policy-making in Brussels on 9 April, she said: "As with all energy production, there will be risks involved whether that is wind or coal power," Glover told the audience at the debate, organized by the European Policy Centre, a think tank. "We should not go into a denial phase. From my point of view the evidence will allow us to go ahead [with shale production]. But in terms of extraction and production there are non-scientific issues to be debated," Glover said.

Full article available at: http://www.euractiv.com/science-policymaking/eu-science-adviser-clears-shale-news-519031?utm_source=RSS_Feed&utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=EurActivRSS

[↗](#)

4 €150 Million for Brain Research Launches EU 'Month of the Brain'

The European Commission has earmarked some €150 million (USD 195 million) of funding for 20 new international brain research projects. It will bring the total EU investment in brain research since 2007 to over €1.9 billion (USD 2.5 billion). The 'European Month of the Brain' will highlight European research and innovation in the area of neuroscience, cognition and related areas through over 50 events across Europe this May. The initiative aims to showcase the latest achievements in the field, but also to urge a more decisive effort to combat brain diseases. It also aims at highlighting how studying the brain can revolutionize computing. The initiative comes as the profile of brain research has been raised recently with ambitious new projects in the EU (FET Flagship Human Brain Project) and the US (BRAIN project).

The 20 projects which are shortlisted for EU funding are expected to deliver new insights and innovations in key areas such as traumatic brain injury, mental disorders, pain, epilepsy and paediatric conduct disorders. While the projects cannot be named before the grant agreements are finally concluded, all are expected to start from this summer. Industry and small business partners will have a particularly strong involvement in three of the areas - mental disorders, epilepsy and paediatric conduct disorders – to fuel innovation and real-life solutions.

Full article available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-380_en.htm?locale=en

Full list of events and countries involved in the EU "month of the Brain":

http://ec.europa.eu/research/conferences/2013/brain-month/index_en.cfm

[↗](#)

5 Mapping the vulnerability of Europe's seas

The seas are Europe's lifeblood. With the highest ratio of shoreline to land area of any continent, Europe is very much a maritime continent. Now, an EU-funded tool called EMIS (Environmental Marine Information System) allows policymakers and citizens to monitor those seas at the click of a button. This online database was created by the European Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre (JRC). Using data from satellites and computer models, EMIS provides current and historical data on all of Europe's seas, including surface temperature, salinity, and presence of plankton. By transforming raw data into a visual display, the software makes it easy for policymakers and the public to spot areas of concern and pick out trends over time.

Full article available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/star/index_en.cfm?p=ss-procas&calledby=infocentre&item=Infocentre&artid=29934

Additional information available at: EMIS - http://emis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index_fullscreen.php



6 Science Europe Statement on Personal Data: Reconciling the Protection of Individual Rights to Privacy with the Needs of Scientific Research

With the European Union (EU) institutions currently debating the proposal for an EU Regulation on data protection, Science Europe has just released a Position Statement highlighting the need to reconcile the protection of individual rights to privacy with the safe processing of personal data for scientific research. The Statement, which is accompanied by an Opinion Paper by the Science Europe Scientific Committee for Medical Sciences, highlights how research depends heavily on access to and use of personal data; for this reason, academic research is already conducted in well-recognized secure environments, preventing the identification of individuals when possible or otherwise balancing risks and benefits through application of well-established ethical safeguards, without creating additional administrative burden. Science Europe is an association of 51 Research Funding and Performing Organizations from 26 countries. It was founded in October 2011 with the aim of promoting the collective interests of members and providing them with a platform to collaborate at both policy and activity level.

Full article and document available at: <http://www.scienceeurope.org/news>



7 Academy of Finland Research Funding EUR 327 Million in 2012

In 2012, the total value of the Academy of Finland's funding to scientific research came to EUR 327.4 million (USD 426.4 million). The Academy distributed the funding between 61 fields of research at Finnish universities and research institutes. Of the funding, a total of EUR 104.4 million (USD 135.9 million) went to natural sciences and engineering research, followed by culture and society research with EUR 79 million (USD 102 million) biosciences and environment research with EUR 64.7 million (USD 84.2 million), and health research with EUR 55.5 million (USD 72.2 million). The Academy's funding decisions are based on peer reviews of applications and on science policy deliberation by the Academy's research councils. Foreign experts accounted for more than 90 per cent of the peer reviewers used by the Academy.

The success rate of all applications received for Academy Project funding was 17 per cent, and of the total amount of all applications only 16 per cent could be granted. These figures highlight the disparity between demand and supply in Finland, which has been widening especially in the case of Academy Projects. The Academy's research programs received EUR 41.3 million (USD 53.8 million) and research infrastructures EUR 10.4 million (USD 13.5 million).

Full article available at: <http://www.aka.fi/en-GB/A/Academy-of-Finland/Media-services/Releases/1/Academy-research-funding-EUR-327-million-in-2012/>



8 Italy: New Research Minister Faces Huge Obstacles

A bioengineer has been appointed minister of education, universities, and research in Italy's newly formed government. Maria Chiara Carrozza, 47, is a professor at the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa and a member of Parliament for the center-left Democratic Party, which is about to lead a new government formed as a result of February elections. Observers anticipate broad support for Carrozza's appointment, while noting that she faces huge obstacles. Italy spends just 0.8% of its gross domestic product on universities, compared with an E.U. average of 1.3%. As part of a package of austerity measures brought in by the Monti government, university funds were cut by €300 million (USD 392

million) last year alone. Alberto Baccini, a political economist at the University of Siena, also points out that several thousand students in Italy have not received scholarship support to which they are entitled to attend university simply because government funding is insufficient.

Full article available at: <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/04/italy-appoints-new-research-mini.html?rss=1>



9 Russian Scientists Decry New International Funding Rules

Russian researchers are up in arms over a government decree issued last month which turns the process of issuing research grants into a bureaucratic nightmare for international foundations. The decree introduces new regulations according to which any organization that wants to award grants to Russian researchers must obtain permission from the Ministry of Education and Science for every grant. Under the new decree, organizations will have to apply to the ministry for every grant and complete a bulky set of forms that include the bank details of the organization and the would-be grantee, the subject of the research, the purpose of the support, and so on. If the project to be funded is not in line with the main priorities of basic research and R&D in Russia approved by the government, the ministry may decline the request and the organization will not be allowed to award the grants.

Full article available at: <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/05/russian-scientists-decry-new-int.html?rss=1>



10 Cumulative R&D cuts do not bode well for the future of Spain

For the fourth consecutive year, resources allocated by the Spanish Government to R&D have been reduced. To assess its real impact, we need a detailed analysis. However, facts already speak for themselves. The 2013 annual budget approved by the Spanish Parliament reveals the government's actual policy regarding R&D. To say the least, it is not always in line with politicians' statements in the media. We outline below the conclusions from a study on the Spanish R&D policy commissioned by COSCE, the confederation of Spanish scientific societies. Research funding for 2013 has been reduced by 461.37 M€ (M\$ 595.61), which represents 7.22% of the 2012 R&D budget. The economic crisis seems to be leading to an overall budget decrease to which research funding is not immune. This contrasts with the public statements by politicians, stressing that R&D and innovation are the way to lead the country to recovery, in the long run.

Full article available at: <http://euroscientist.com/2013/05/cumulating-rd-cuts-does-not-bode-well-for-the-future-of-spain>

