

European Science and Technology Highlights National Science Foundation Europe-Eurasia Office 2013



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1 Europe

1.1 European Unitary Patent approved

The European Parliament has ended decades of wrangling over how to streamline the European Union (EU) patent system. On December 11 it approved an 'EU patent package', an agreement among 25 member states to roll out a new unitary patent that will be valid in all signatory nations and will be overseen by a single patent court. The unified patent court will have bases in Paris, London and Munich. The European Commission hopes that a unified patent will make it cheaper to protect intellectual property in the EU. Companies wishing to patent their innovations in Europe must apply separately to each country, racking up an average cost of €36,000 (US\$47,000) in taxes and fees, according to the Commission. That compares with about €2,000 for a patent application in the United States and €600 in China. Under the new framework, a patent issued by the European Patent Office will be automatically valid in 25 countries, and its cost is expected to drop to an average €4,725. Europe has been trying to set up such a patenting framework since the mid-1970s.

But the unified patent is not pleasing everyone. Spain and Italy have refused to sign up, miffed that the patents will only be issued in English, French or German. And some intellectual property experts have criticized the system for being far too complex.

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Source: <http://blogs.nature.com/news/2012/12/european-unitary-patent-approved.html>

1.2 European Research Council funds 11 projects with €126 million

The European Research Council (ERC) announced the winners of its first competition for the 'Synergy Grants', introduced last year on a pilot basis. In this call, 11 projects have been selected to receive funding for up to six years. With a total budget of €126 million (\$166 million) allocated, on average a Synergy Grant is worth €11.5 million (\$15 million) and each project unites two to four Principal Investigators. 38 excellent scientists are being supported through these 11 grants. More than 700 applications were submitted and assessed following an evaluation procedure specifically designed for this purpose. The high demand attests to a very substantial interest from the scientific community. In contrast to consortia, the Synergy Grant targets individual investigators whose complementary skills, knowledge and resources enable them to take risks and address questions, which push the boundaries of frontier research in novel ways.

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More information available at:

http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/press_release/files/ERC_Press_Release_SyG_results_2012.pdf

1.3 European Commission to fund top research chairs in less-developed regions

Grants of up to €2.4 million (\$3.1 million) will be awarded to universities or research institutions in less developed regions in Europe, under a pilot program of the European Commission. The aim of the so-called ERA Chairs initiative is to attract outstanding academics to places that want to be on the international map for top research. Operating with €12 million drawn from the budget of the current seventh framework program for research (2007-2013), the pilot stage for ERA Chairs will test the concept. If successful, the Commission proposes to fund a much larger number of ERA Chairs, depending on the size of the budget for the future framework program Horizon 2020 (2014-2020).

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Source: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1374_en.htm?locale=en

1.4 Drive to integrate the gender dimension in science

Disparities in gender equality in science and innovation constitute a major issue as women in science are under-represented in almost all European countries. However, the European Commission has set up a

number of initiatives to change this and encourage more women in science. These include 'Science in Society', which provides financial support to research organizations for establishing gender equality plans. Whilst the European Research Council (ERC) are working to inspire female talent to apply for grants. Likewise, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MCA) are research grants that encourage women to work in research while also helping to address the balance between career and family life. Through this initiative, nearly 40 % of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows funded so far under the EU's current research Framework Program (FP7) are women.

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Source:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/headlines/news/article_12_12_21_en.html&item=Infocentre&artid=28773

1.5 US and European patent offices launch a global patent classification system

The European Patent Office (EPO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) launched the Cooperative Patent Classification scheme (CPC), a global classification system for patent documents. The system is the result of partnership between the EPO and the USPTO in their joint effort to develop a common, internationally compatible classification system for technical documents, in particular patent publications, which will be used by both offices in the patent granting process. The CPC is an ambitious harmonization product that incorporates the best classification practices of both offices.

"The launch of the CPC constitutes a significant breakthrough in efforts to achieve greater harmonization in the patent system at international level," said EPO President Benoît Battistelli. "It is a major step forward on the path to improved efficiency in the patent system for the benefit of the global economy, and key to securing effective patent protection through a quality-based patent system. The work accomplished in a very short period by the project teams and patent examiners of both offices deserves the recognition of the entire intellectual property community."

"Today's formal launch is a tremendous accomplishment, representing the collaborative efforts of both offices to create a bilateral classification system that will result in significant benefits to the global innovation community," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO David Kappos. "CPC will foster patent harmonization efforts by enhancing our ability to leverage and use work through an integrated network of intellectual property offices."

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Source: <http://www.epo.org/news-issues/news/2013/20130102.html>

1.6 Spending cuts create innovation divide in Europe

Without more private R&D spending, Spain, Italy and others in the south may continue to lag as national governments and the EU are slashing money earmarked for research and innovation. Critics of government cuts say these risks are creating a vicious circle, discouraging business.

The Spanish government chopped fully 25% off its research and development budget last year and will trim a further 7% in 2013, leaving it at under 6 billion euros (\$8 billion). The German government, by contrast, is increasing spending on R&D by over 6% this year to close to 14 billion euros and France is finding 1.2% more. In 2010, OECD figures show, only 242 international patents were filed from Spain, compared to over 5,600 from Germany. Where the private sector accounts for over two thirds of total German R&D spending, in Spain it provides less than half.

But Spain is not alone. As France, Britain, Germany and others in the north fund more research to fend off competition from Asia, Italy has also scaled back its government R&D budget. Without more private R&D spending, Spain, Italy and others in the south will continue to lag behind.

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Source: http://www.euractiv.com/science-policymaking/national-eu-spending-cuts-create-news-517080?utm_source=RSS_Feed&utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=EurActivRSS

1.7 European Research Council funding of €680 million to 302 top researchers

The European Research Council (ERC) is awarding €680 million (US\$ 864 million) to 302 senior research leaders in 24 different countries across Europe in the latest competition for its prestigious 'Advanced Grants'. With up to €2.5 million per project, the funding allows these scientists to pursue their most ground-breaking ideas at the frontiers of knowledge together with their own teams.

ERC President Professor Helga Nowotny commented: "I am proud that the ERC succeeds in finding and funding the very best research leaders with the most creative ideas in Europe. This funding gives new impetus to frontier research, and will also allow these scientists to build their own teams. Advanced Grantees on average employ seven team members. Overall, estimates show that by the end of 2013 the ERC will have provided support to more than 15,000 doctoral and postdoctoral researchers as team members. The ERC thereby helps support a new generation of top scientists in Europe."

In this Advanced Grant competition, some 2,300 applications were submitted to the ERC, which is a slight rise from that of the last year (4.5%). The call budget of €680 million also saw a minor increase. The number of researchers selected for funding rose slightly, from 294 to 302, while the success rate continues to be stable at 13%. Just over 15% of selected researchers are women, which is a rise from last year's 12%. The average age of the researchers to be funded is 51 years.

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More information including the list of grantees available at:

http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/press_release/files/press_release_adg2012_results.pdf

1.8 Graphene and Human Brain Project win European Commission's largest research excellence award in history

The European Commission announced on January 28 the winners of a multi-billion euro competition of the Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) Flagship program. The winning "Graphene" and "Human Brain" initiatives are set to receive one billion euros each over a 10 years period. The winners will initially receive up to €54 million each from the European Commission's Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) 2013 Work Program. Further funding is expected to be coming from the Horizon 2020 programme (2014-2020) which is currently negotiated in the European Parliament and Council, universities, industry and European Member States.

"Graphene" is led by Prof. Jari Kinaret, from Sweden's Chalmers University. The Flagship involves over 100 research groups, with 136 principal investigators, including four Nobel laureates. Graphene looks to become as important as steel or plastics in the long-term. Research on graphene is an example of an emerging translational nanotechnology where discoveries in academic laboratories are rapidly transferred to applications and commercial products. Graphene and related materials have the potential to make a profound impact in ICT in the short and long term: integrating graphene components with silicon-based electronics, and gradually replacing silicon or enabling completely new applications. Beyond ICT, graphene research will significantly impact energy and transport, and also health.

"The Human Brain Project" involves scientists from 87 institutions and is led by Prof. Henry Markram of the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland. The project will collect and integrate experimental data, identifying and filling gaps in our knowledge of the human brain. In medicine, the project's results will facilitate better diagnosis, combined with disease and drug simulation. In computing, new techniques of interactive supercomputing, driven by the needs of brain simulation, will impact a range of industries, while devices and systems, modeled after the brain, will overcome fundamental limits on the energy-efficiency, reliability and programmability of current technologies, clearing the road for systems with brain-like intelligence.

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More information available at: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/programme/fet/flagship/>

1.9 The Future for Science in Europe is Bright – and full of clouds!

The Helix Nebula consortium held an event at the European Space Agency's European Space Research Institute in Frascati, Italy, to review the success of the project's proof-of-concept phase. Helix Nebula aims to pave the way for the development and exploitation of a European wide cloud computing infrastructure. While initially based on the needs of Information Technology-intense scientific research organizations in Europe such as the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), Helix Nebula intends to also serve governmental organizations and industry.

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Full article available at:

<http://www.isgtw.org/feature/future-science-europe-bright-%E2%80%93-and-full-clouds>

1.10 Fully Fund Research, European Industrial Leaders Say

Researchers have a new set of allies in the campaign to stave off possible cuts to the European Union's research budget. On 30 January, the European Research Council (ERC), which funds top basic research, issued a joint letter with the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), a group that includes several dozen chief executives of Europe's largest companies. The letter calls for European leaders to approve the proposed € 80 billion ((US\$108 billion) budget for Horizon 2020, the research funding program slated to run from 2014 through 2020.

"Europe's future can only be built on its brains," says the letter, which was cosigned by ERT chair Leif Johansson, chairman of the board at telecommunications giant Ericsson. "Any reduction in the funding to support excellent research will result in Europe having limited means to attract outstanding talent in a highly competitive global market."

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Full article available at:

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/02/fully-fund-research-european-ind.html?ref=hp>

1.11 First Latin America, Caribbean and European Union Academic Summit Held in Chile

Universities, institutes, research centers and academics of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union (EU), met in Santiago de Chile on January 22-23 2012 for the 1st Academic Summit LAC-UE. Around one-thousand participants analyzed the status of university cooperation in the current context of profound changes in the society and the challenges it means to the educational mission and knowledge generation and prospects of cooperation between higher education institutions and research centers of both regions. The forum ended with the presentation of the Declaration of Santiago, a document that includes the analysis, conclusions and recommendations for Higher Education institutions and policy makers in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe which are:

- Develop the Euro-Latin American space for higher education, science, technology and innovation , creating regulatory and financial conditions needed
- Strengthen integration higher education systems through
- Promote integration of scientific research and innovation systems and
- Raise collaboration between institutions of higher education and its relations with society and the industry.

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Additional information available at: <http://www.cumbreacademica-alcue.cl/en/index.html>

1.12 Reducing the EU's dependency on raw materials: European Innovation Partnership launched

European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship, launched today, together with his colleagues Maire Geoghegan Quinn European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, and Janez Potočnik European Commissioner for the Environment, the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on raw materials, bringing together Member States and other stakeholders to help make Europe a world leader in raw materials exploration, extraction, processing, recycling and substitution by 2020. To this end, the Commission proposes concrete targets to be achieved by 2020 to reduce Europe's dependency on imported raw materials, to replace rare materials with substitutes and to set up innovative pilot actions, e.g. pilot plants for exploration, mining, processing, collecting and recycling. Raw materials are the lifeblood of EU industry: at least 30 million jobs in the EU depend upon access to them. But much of Europe's industry is heavily dependent on international markets to secure the raw materials it requires. To turn this trend and to reduce cost for raw materials, today's initiative is part of the European Commission industry strategy launched in autumn 2012 to make Europe an attractive place for industry investment.

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Full article available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-92_en.htm?locale=en

1.13 Great interest from ERC grantees in hosting early-career top US talent

The recent initiative between the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and European Research Council (ERC) has been taken a step further since last summer. The agreement, which provides opportunities for early-career NSF researchers to join ERC-funded teams in Europe, seems to resonate with ERC grantees. In November last year, the ERC launched an expression of interest to ERC grantees, of which some 760 answered positively to hosting NSF scientists. The majority of the interested ERC grantees hold Starting Grants (485). They are based in 23 different countries in Europe, and hold 42 different nationalities. Amongst them, there are 24 US nationals who currently have ERC grants.

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More information available at: <http://erc.europa.eu/>

1.14 US A Key Market for Companies Participating in EUREKA Programs

EUREKA is a European intergovernmental network launched in 1985, to support market-oriented research, development and innovation projects by industry, research centers and universities across all technological sectors. It is composed of 41 member countries, and includes the European Community. An important export market for companies participating in EUREKA projects are the United States. Many technological research projects labeled by EUREKA have also seen an important investment by American companies: NVIDIA, a world-leader in making graphic processors is participating in the Eurostars GEPEU project aiming at the development of a revolutionary hardware technology for high computational speed. In a joint statement released on February 13, US President Barack Obama, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy launched a new round of negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which would offer to the United States and the European Union the opportunity to expand trade and investment across the Atlantic. An important evolution in EU-US relations President Obama had already announced in his State of the Union address the day before.

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More information available at: http://www.eurekanetwork.org/about/-/journal_content/56/10137/1944353?refererPlid=10195

1.15 New Science Body to Advise European Commission President

The European Commission has set up a science advisory body that will report directly to its president, José Manuel Barroso. The Science and Technology Advisory Council will identify areas where research and innovation can contribute to Europe's growth—with a particular focus on benefits and risks of science and technology advances and how to communicate these. The group, similar to one advising President Barack Obama in the United States, held its first meeting in Brussels on February 27. It is made up of 15 members drawn mostly from academia, including Hans-Joachim Schellnhuber, an influential climate scientist from Germany; French mathematician Cédric Villani, who was a Fields medalist in 2010; and Israeli crystallographer Ada Yonath, who received the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 2009. The council's creation follows Barroso's appointment of the European Commission's first chief scientific adviser, Scottish microbiologist Anne Glover, who started in January last year.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: March 2013

Full article available at: <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/02/new-science-body-to-advise-europ.html?rss=1>

More information including the list of members available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-168_en.htm?locale=en

1.16 Promoting Africa-EU Research Infrastructure Partnerships

The high-level conference “Promoting Africa-EU Research Infrastructure Partnerships” to be held in Brussels on March 7-8 2013, will present the outcomes of the PAERIP (Promoting African European Research Infrastructures Partnerships) project, funded under the EU's Seventh Framework Program (FP7). Over the past two years PAERIP undertook an extensive analysis of Africa-EU research infrastructure partnerships, including best practices which could be identified from current cooperation and the formulation of recommendations to enhance collaboration. In this context PAERIP considered cooperation activities such as how to enhance transnational access to research infrastructures for African and European researchers, and the promotion of networks integrating African and European research infrastructures.

The conference is taking place at a crucial time for the development of new cooperation instruments for Africa-EU cooperation including for collaboration in science, technology and innovation. These instruments include, for example, the new EU Horizon 2020 Framework Program for Research and Innovation, the EU Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Development Fund. Within this context, one of the highlights of the conference will be the presentation of PAERIP's recommendations on how research infrastructure partnerships could best be promoted as part of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

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Full article available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=events&eventcode=11FCB5EE-D5C7-457C-EBEDB19FEAC872C5>

1.17 €50 million (USD 65 million) EU Research Grants in 2013 to Develop '5G' Technology

European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes announces €50 million (USD 65 million) for research to deliver 5G mobile technology by 2020, with the aim to put Europe back in the lead of the global mobile industry. "I want 5G be pioneered by European industry, based on European research and creating jobs in Europe – and we will put our money where our mouth is," Kroes said.

By 2020 worldwide mobile traffic alone will reach a 33 times increase compared to 2010 figures. In this time Internet access will become dominated by wireless devices such as smartphones, tablets, machines and sensors, requiring more efficient and ubiquitous technology to carry the data traffic.

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Full article available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-159_en.htm

1.18 Parliament Rejects EU Budget

The European Parliament has rejected with a large majority the multiannual financial framework proposed by the European Council. The Parliament voted with a majority of 506 of a total 690 votes in favor of vetoing the budget. The Council proposal's minor increase for research and innovation funding was quoted by many Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) as their main reason for rejecting the proposal.

"We cannot stop at the 2013 level with research spending," said Anne Jensen, a Danish liberal MEP. "We have to increase spending in this area to deliver on Europe's targets of boosting competitiveness and creating growth."

The Parliament seemed convinced that its rejection would force the member states in the Council to revisit their budget of €960 billion (USD 1.24 trillion) for 2014-2020, which compares to €865 billion (USD 1.12 trillion) for 2007-2013.

MEPs called for greater flexibility to adjust the EU budget as time passes and shift money between the three budget lines—cohesion, agriculture and competitiveness—as needed. Furthermore, MEPs have demanded a mid-term review of the entire budget in 2016 to top up budget strands that need more money, and revisit spending priorities.

The rejection of the budget proposal means that the Council will have to renegotiate. A series of meetings between Council and Parliament, facilitated by the European Commission, are now in the planning according to a Commission spokesman.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: March 2013

Full article available at:

http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_news&template=rr_2col&view=article&articleId=1303160

1.19 Open Access to Research Data Without Barriers

The Research Data Alliance (RDA) is a newly formed organization whose goal is to accelerate international data driven innovation and discovery by facilitating research, data sharing and exchange, use and reuse, standards harmonization for specific communities and across scientific disciplines. These goals are achieved through the development and adoption of infrastructures, policies, practices, standards and with the support of a structure that includes a council, plenary, secretariat, non-governmental structures (NGSs), and working groups. The Research Data Alliance is being brought into existence initially by three research funding organizations: the Australian Commonwealth Government through the Australian National Data Service, supported by the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy Program and the Education Investment Fund (EIF) Super Science Initiative; the European Commission through the iCordi project funded under the 7th Framework Program; the United States of America through the RDA/US activity funded by the **National Science Foundation**.

The RDA Launch Event and its First Plenary took place on 18-20 March 2013 in Gothenburg, Sweden, and it followed the First RDA Planning Meeting held in Washington DC, 13 October 2012. The event is launched by the European Commission, the U.S. Government and the Australian Government and leaders in the data community.

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More information available at: <http://rd-alliance.org/>

1.20 Scoreboard Shows EU More Innovative, but Gap between Countries Is Widening

Innovation performance in the European Union (EU) has improved year on year in spite of the continuing economic crisis, but the innovation divide between Member States is widening. This is the result of the

European Commission Innovation Union Scoreboard 2013, a ranking of EU Member States. While the most innovative countries have further improved their performance, others have shown a lack of progress. The overall ranking within the EU remains relatively stable, with Sweden at the top, followed by Germany, Denmark and Finland. Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia are the countries that have most improved since last year. Drivers of innovation growth in the EU include SMEs and the commercialization of innovations, together with excellent research systems. However the fall in business and venture capital investment over the years 2008-2012 has negatively influenced innovation performance.

A comparison with other European countries confirms Switzerland's position as the overall innovation leader that continually outperforms all EU countries. This year's results also again show that South Korea, the US, and Japan have a performance lead over the EU.

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Full article available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-270_en.htm

The full report of the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2013 is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/facts-figures-analysis/innovation-scoreboard/index_en.htm

1.21 EU and US Step Up Cooperation in eHealth IT

The European Commission's Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have agreed on a roadmap to strengthen transatlantic cooperation in eHealth and Health information technologies (IT).

This builds on a Memorandum of Understanding on this topic, signed in 2010 under the auspices of the Transatlantic Economic Council.

Over the next 18 months the new roadmap will guide the activities of the collaboration focusing on two high priority areas:

- Standards Development: DG CONNECT and HHS – through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) – will develop an action plan to create standards to advance the development and use of internationally recognized standards which support transnational interoperability of electronic health information and communication technology;
- Workforce Development: DG CONNECT and ONC are working to develop and expand a skilled health IT workforce in Europe and the US.

The Standards Development action plan is aimed at identifying common vocabularies, message structures and tools suitable for the international exchange of electronic health records. The goal of the Workforce Development action plan is to identify eHealth competencies and to create a draft joint curriculum that can be used in both the US and Europe to help enhance healthcare and related professional workforces.

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Full article available at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=9976

1.22 Report Shows Women Still Under-Represented in EU Research

Although the proportion of female researchers in Europe is increasing, the under-representation of women in scientific disciplines and careers still persists. This is the message of the latest edition of the "She Figures", published today by the European Commission. Women represent only 33% of European researchers, 20% of full professors and 15.5 % of heads of institutions in the Higher Education sector. European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn said: "Despite some advances in recent years, women in research remain a minority, and a glass ceiling is in particular blocking women from top positions. This is a serious injustice and a scandalous waste of talent. The Commission is focused on fostering gender equality in our research programs, and working to change a deeply-rooted institutional culture."

According to the report presented today, women represent around 40% of all researchers in the Higher Education Sector, 40% in the Government Sector and 19% in the Business Enterprise Sector. While in all sectors their number has been growing faster than that of their male counterparts (+5.1% for women annually compared with +3.3 % for men from 2002 to 2009), female researchers still struggle to reach decision-making positions with, on average, only one woman for every two men on scientific and management boards across the EU.

In 2010, the proportion of female students (55 %) and graduates (59 %) exceeded that of male students, but men outnumbered women among PhD students and graduates (respectively 49 % and 46 %). Furthermore, climbing up the ladder of the academic career, women represented 44 % of the researchers with a PhD at the first grade of an academic career and only 20 % of the researchers at the top grade of an academic career. The under-representation of women becomes even more striking in fields such as science and engineering.

Promoting gender equality is one of the key priorities set by the Commission for the achievement of the European Research Area (ERA). The Commission has asked Member States to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers. The Commission is also seeking to address gender imbalances in decision-making.

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Full article available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-303_en.htm

1.23 Should We Turn a Blind Eye to Science Policy in Europe?

More than a hundred years ago, the journal Nature called for “a scientific approach to government” in a series of editorials calling for politicians to borrow the methods of science for the common good. Now, advocates of successful randomized controlled trials (RCTs) say the time has come to put aside the political rhetoric and see what actually works by conducting experiments on a societal scale in areas from international development to employment.

“RCTs are the only method that we can hope to generate a bias free answer,” says David Torgerson, Director of the York Trials Unit in the University of York, UK, and co-author of a policy paper championing the benefits of the approach. “There is an almost limitless number of questions that could be answered by using RCTs that presently remain unknown,” he says. The case for countrywide RCTs has been building for some time. In the UK, regions taking up back-to-work employment schemes were compared with others maintaining the status quo. The results revealed a new program was an expensive flop; it was halted early, saving the taxpayer millions of pounds. Similarly, a study in Switzerland found that randomizing girls into girl-only classes versus mixed classes increased maths scores among girls.

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Full article available at: <http://euroscientist.com/2013/04/should-we-turn-a-blind-eye-to-science-policy-in-europe/>

1.24 EU Grants USD 6.4 Million for New Climate Models to Preserve Europe's Historical Buildings

Europe and the Mediterranean contain more World Heritage sites than any other global region. These sites include hundreds of museums, churches, houses and castles that capture Europe’s rich history over the centuries. Preserving these cultural assets will become increasingly complicated, however, as the climate in Europe changes. Temperature and humidity inside these buildings are often carefully controlled to protect their contents, which range from tapestries and wall frescoes to woodwork and structural elements. This climate control is complicated and expensive: it is not unusual for big museums to spend more than €500,000 (USD 656,000) per year on energy bills, and this is likely to increase in the future. Since internal building conditions are primarily driven by the outside climate, climate change will demand new strategies for temperature and humidity control. To predict the effects of climate change on historical buildings, the European Commission has granted €4.9 million (USD 6.4 million) to the research project

Climate for Culture, which comprises 27 partners from all over Europe and Egypt. The researchers are developing simulation tools to understand how climate influences buildings' external and internal conditions. With the assistance of these simulations, building managers of historic sites will be better able to protect priceless artifacts and minimize cost.

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Full article available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/headlines/news/article_13_04_17_en.html&item=Infocentre&artid=29693

1.25 EU Launches the Second Edition of the Women Innovators Prize

The European Commission has launched the second edition of the Women Innovators Prize to reward three women who have achieved outstanding innovations and brought them to market. The Prize aims to raise awareness of the need for more female entrepreneurs and to inspire other women to follow in their footsteps. The first prize is worth €100 000, the second prize €50 000 and third prize €25 000. The contest is open to all women who have founded or co-founded their company and who have at some point of their careers benefitted from the EU's research framework programmes or the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme. The deadline for applying is 15 October 2013. An independent panel of judges from business and academia will examine and select the three winners who will be announced in spring 2014.

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Full article available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=newsalert&year=2013&na=na-150413>

1.26 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.

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

1.27 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.

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.

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

1.28 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.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: May 2013

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

1.29 €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.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: May 2013

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

1.30 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.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: May 2013

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

1.31 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.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: May 2013

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

1.32 EU, US and Canada Launch Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance

The European Union, the United States and Canada agreed to join forces on Atlantic Ocean research. The agreement focuses on aligning the ocean observation efforts of the three partners. The goals are to better understand the Atlantic Ocean and to promote the sustainable management of its resources. The work will also study the interplay of the Atlantic Ocean with the Arctic Ocean, particularly with regards to climate change. The EU and its Member States alone invest nearly two billion euro on marine and maritime research each year. The 'Galway Statement on Atlantic Ocean Cooperation' was signed today at a high level conference at the Irish Marine Institute in Galway.

The agreement recognizes that Atlantic research will in many areas be more effective if coordinated on a transatlantic basis. Areas identified for potential cooperation under the agreement include:

- Ocean observation
- Sharing of data, such as on temperature, salinity and acidity
- Interoperability and coordination of observing infrastructures, such as measurement buoys and research vessels

- Sustainable management of ocean resources
- Seabed and benthic habitat mapping
- Promoting researcher mobility
- Identifying and recommending future research priorities

The launch event in Galway was attended by Taoiseach Enda Kenny, the Prime Minister of Ireland, Simon Coveney, the Irish Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Kerri-Ann Jones, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs; Senator David Wells of Canada, who represented Edward Fast, Canadian Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway; EU Commissioners Damanaki and Geoghegan-Quinn; other representatives of the EU Atlantic Coastal States; and representatives from research and industry.

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Full article available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-459_en.htm

1.33 European Commission and CERN Support Major Research Facility in the Middle East

The European Commission and CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) agreed to support the construction of SESAME (Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East), one of the most ambitious research facilities in the Middle East. SESAME is a synchrotron light source, functioning in effect like a giant microscope. It will allow researchers from the region to investigate the properties of advanced materials, biological processes and cultural artefacts. SESAME is a unique joint venture based in Jordan that brings together scientists from its members Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority and Turkey. Alongside its scientific aims, the project aims to promote peace in the region through scientific cooperation.

Construction of SESAME started in 2003. Like CERN, SESAME was established under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO). A key impetus to launching SESAME was the donation of components from the BESSY laboratory in Berlin. Since then, a growing community of local scientists has been working closely with partner facilities from around the globe, and several other laboratories have contributed to making the SESAME facility world-class.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: June 2013

Full article available at: <http://home.web.cern.ch/about/updates/2013/05/ec-and-cern-support-major-research-facility-middle-east>

1.34 Intergovernmental Agreement on Future Support for the Human Frontier Science Program

A new agreement on a three year budgetary framework will extend the avenues for interactions within the global scientific community. At an Intergovernmental Conference hosted by the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium on June 11th, representatives from the governments that support the Human Frontier Science Program came together to confirm a financial framework for the Program from 2014-2016. The meeting resulted in a joint communiqué, signed by all participating countries, setting out the financial contributions.

Note: The Human Frontier Science Program (HFSP) is an international program of research support, funding frontier research on the complex mechanisms of living organisms. Research is funded at all levels of biological complexity from biomolecules to the interactions between organisms. U.S. participation is supported by the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.

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Press release available at: <http://www.hfsp.org/about-us/press-and-media-centre/news-items/intergovernmental-agreement-future-support-hfsp>

1.35 Europe Approves Open Data Regulations

The EU has formally approved rules on open data, which will allow the re-use of public sector information including research results. The official sign-off on the legislation came on 13 June, when the European Parliament passed the proposal during its plenary session in Strasbourg. This followed an earlier agreement by the Council of Ministers. Approval of the new directive means private companies and individuals will be able to access existing data generated by public bodies, including research results and information from libraries, weather data and maps. “We’re basically sitting on a goldmine,” said the commissioner for the digital agenda, Neelie Kroes, who believes the economic benefits from allowing data re-use could equate to “tens of billions of euros”. However, the commissioner was keen to emphasize the benefits will not be purely economic. “This is an amazing raw material for innovation,” said Kroes. Having more data openly available will help to address societal challenges, as well as improving the transparency of public institutions and enhance evidence-based policymaking, according to the Commission. Kroes proposed the open data directive in December 2011, with the aim of benefiting academics and entrepreneurs, amongst other data users.

The majority of data will be available for free, or for a minimal charge at most. This will be particularly useful to small and medium-sized enterprises which lack the resources to collect the data themselves, says the European Parliament. Member states will now be required to transpose the rules into national laws, within 24 months from the Directive’s date of entry into force.

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Full article available at:

http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_news&template=rr_2col&view=article&articleId=1336216

1.36 Budget Negotiations Concluded over the Next EU Multi-Year Program for Research and Innovation - Horizon2020



After months of discussions, an agreement was reached on the European Union’s next seven year funding program for science and research. The so-called Horizon 2020 program will have a budget of €70.2bn (US\$ 91.5 billion) over the next seven years (2014-2020). This is a 23% increase over the previous Framework Program 7, which started in 2007 and ends this year. Throughout months of political wrangling,

research funding has been relatively protected from cuts—but the R&D budget will drop next year, before rising again in 2015. The total amount is some 13% less than the European Commission had proposed and 30% less than European Parliament had wanted. But with crisis-stricken E.U. countries tightening their belts, the Parliament accepted a smaller budget and pushed through other demands, including more flexible spending rules.

The new deal retains a simplified funding model that is favored by most Member States and the Commission. It foresees that all participants in Horizon 2020 will be paid the full direct research costs plus a 25% flat-rate to cover indirect expenses, including the use of large research facilities such as synchrotrons. However, Members of the European Parliament argued that the one-size-fits-all approach may disadvantage institutes that depend on such facilities, possibly making participation in EU-funded research projects unaffordable to some. Several research organizations, including the European University Association and the German Fraunhofer Society, lobbied for an exemption to this flat-rate model — giving the full costs instead to organizations with extremely high overheads, which sometimes even exceed their direct costs. The indicative budget proposed by the Commission is subject to final agreement on the Multi-Financial Framework (MFF)

Following “long and challenging” negotiations, EU officials have agreed the percentages of three key “pillars” within the Horizon 2020 program

- 'Excellent Science', which includes funding for the European Research Council (ERC), infrastructure and future and emerging technologies, receives 37%.
- 'Industrial Leadership', containing specific support for SMEs and for key enabling industrial technologies, receives 22.5%.
- 'Societal challenges', designed to point research towards growing problems associated with an ageing society and environmental blight - receives 38%.

A separate instrument within the Horizon program will recognize the role of SMEs and pledge that 20% of Horizon 2020 will be directed towards these smaller companies.

The EU program for education, training, youth and sport, named "Erasmus+", which is funded separately, has a proposed budget of 16 billion. Erasmus+ has three main components: Education and training, Youth, and Sport. Of the total financial envelope, 77.5% will be allocated to the "education and training" sector, and an additional 3.5% will go to a new Loan Guarantee Facility. The youth sector will receive 10%, the sport sector 1.8%. All three institutions agree that there should be a substantial increase in the program's budget, but the final figures depend on the outcome of the MFF negotiations.

The long-term budget should be signed off by Member states and the European Parliament in the coming months and depends on the approval of the proposed overall €960 billion (US\$ 1 250 billion) EU budget for 2014-2020

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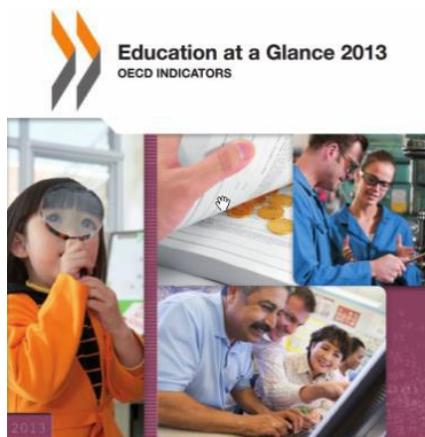
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<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/06/eu-leaders-agree-on-science-budg.html>

<http://www.nature.com/news/horizon-2020-deal-reached-in-brussels-1.13279>

<http://eu2013.ie/news/news-items/20130626erasmuspluspren/>

1.37 OECD Publishes the 2013 "Education at a Glance"



"Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators", is the authoritative source for accurate and relevant information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances, and performance of education systems in more than 40 countries, including OECD members and G20 partners. Featuring more than 100 charts, 200 tables, and over 100 000 figures, Education at a Glance provides key information on the output of educational institutions; the impact of learning across countries; the financial and human resources invested in education; access, participation and progression in education; and the learning environment and organization of schools.

In the 2013 edition, new material includes:

- More recent data on the economic crisis, showing that education remains the best protection against unemployment;
- More detailed data on program orientation (general versus vocational) in secondary and tertiary education;
- An analysis of how work status (full-time, part-time, involuntary part-time) is related to individuals' level of education;
- A review of the relationship between fields of education and tuition fees, unemployment rates and earnings premiums;
- An indicator showing how many of the students who enter a tertiary program ultimately graduate from it;
- An indicator on the relationship between educational attainment and two health-related concerns, obesity and smoking; and

- Trend data covering the years 1995 to 2010-11 for all the key indicators.
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Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: July 2013

Publication available at: : http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2013_eag-2013-en

1.38 COST Simplifies Participation Rules



COST, the intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, has revised the rules for participation in COST activities to make them more inclusive, user-friendly and responsive to scientists' networking needs. The revised rules and procedures clarify and simplify the participation in and implementation

of COST activities and allow for a wider range of activities to be funded. In particular, the key innovations introduced include: a harmonized set of documents and guidelines, a renewed focus on increasing Inclusiveness and excellence, measures to increase participation by Near Neighbor Countries, and increased online processing.

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Source: http://www.cost.eu/about_cost/cost_stories/COST-Simplifies-Participation

1.39 EU Pushes Through Unified Patent Court



Brussels has paved the way for a specialized European patent court to solve disputes in one instance and avoid multiple litigation cases in up to 28 different national courts.

The European Commission announced on July 29 the legal framework for Europe-wide patent protection by updating EU rules on the jurisdiction of courts and recognition of judgments, the so-called Brussels Regulation.

The changes are intended to make it easier for companies and inventors to protect their patents. The Unified Patent Court will have specialized jurisdiction in patent disputes, with an aim to cut legal costs and speed up decisions in patent infringement cases. "In the event of a dispute, companies will no longer have to launch actions before a number of courts in different countries," said Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner. "Removing bureaucratic obstacles, extra costs and the legal uncertainty of having 28 different and often contradictory systems makes the single market more attractive. This is a very good example of how justice policies can stimulate growth."

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: August 2013

Full article available at: http://www.euractiv.com/innovation-enterprise/eu-pushes-unified-patent-court-news-529632?utm_source=RSS_Feed&utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=EurActivRSS

1.40 EU and the US Extend Scientific Co-Operation on Standards and Measurements



To help reaching the goal of having compatible standards across both sides of the Atlantic, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on Wednesday 17 July, 2013 agreed to expand their current scientific co-operation to 10 different areas related to standards and measurements. Environment and climate, energy, transport and security feature high on the collaborative research agenda. Healthcare and clinical measurements, food safety and nutrition, as well as nanotechnology will be subject of the development and harmonization of methods, indicators and documentary standards. Besides reference

materials in a range of areas, the co-operation will include research on civil engineering structures and emerging Information and communication technologies (ICT), as well as marine optical radiometry.

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Full article available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=1410&dt_code=NWS&obj_id=17370&ori=RSS

1.41 First EU-US Interoperability Centre on E-vehicles and Smart Grids Inaugurated



The first of the twin centers designed to promote common standards in electric mobility and smart grids on both sides of the Atlantic was today inaugurated near Chicago. Converging standards and interoperability between smart grids and electric vehicles will allow for deeper penetration of renewable energies in the electricity systems, thus facilitating the way to a low-carbon economy. Technology harmonization will drive product and service innovation in the two world's largest economies and could prove instrumental in establishing global standards for electric mobility. The launch of the Interoperability Centre for electric vehicles and smart grids is the fruit of 18 months of dedicated work following the Letter of Intent for closer co-operation, signed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission's in-house science service, and the US Department of Energy (DOE) in 2011. The Interoperability Centre inaugurated is hosted at DOE's Argonne National Laboratory near Chicago. The second Centre will be opened in the EU, at the JRC sites in Petten, The Netherlands and Ispra, Italy, in 2014.

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Full article available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=1410&dt_code=NWS&obj_id=17390&ori=RSS

1.42 New ERC Starting Grant Results: €400 Million to 287 Early-Career Top Researchers

The European Research Council (ERC) has selected 287 top scientists in its sixth Starting Grant competition, which is the last one under the EU's Seventh Research Framework Program (FP7). They are awarded nearly €400 Million (USD 531 Million), with grants being worth up to €2 Million (USD 2.6 Million) each. This coveted funding will enable early-career talent to develop their best, innovative ideas across the European Research Area (ERA). The share of women amongst the successful candidates in this Starting Grant call (30%) increased from last year (24%). This is a continuing trend over the past years. This call attracted 3,329 applications, which is a 50% increase compared to the corresponding group last year. Due to the substantially increased number of applications, the overall success rate dropped to around 9%. The next Starting Grant calls will fall under the new Framework Program 'Horizon 2020'.



European Research Council

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Press release available at:

http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/press_release/files/press_release_stg2013_results.pdf

1.43 European Research Council Takes a Further Step Forward towards Open Access by Joining arXiv



The European Research Council (ERC) announced that it has joined an international partnership supporting arXiv, one of the major scientific repositories in the areas of physics and mathematics which is operated by Cornell University Library (New York, US). The ERC is the first European research funding organization to join the arXiv initiative. By doing so, the ERC reaffirms its commitment to open access and to ensuring that the fruits of the research it funds can be freely accessed, read and used, both by scientists working in relevant areas and by the public.

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Full article available at:

http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/press_release/files/ERC_press_release_arXiv.pdf

1.44 EU Grants for 25,000 young researchers under Horizon 2020



From 2014-20, 25,000 young researchers will receive grants from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) program, which has a budget of €4.7 billion (US\$6.2 billion). This follows the reaching of an agreement on the European Commission's 8th Research Framework Program Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Within Horizon 2020, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions is a dedicated European Union (EU) program for researchers' skills development, with industry participation being mandatory in most sub-programs.

The achievements of the past Framework Programs (FPs) in Horizon 2020 have been significant, with 60,000 researchers of 130 different nationalities having received support and training since 1996. More than half of the research supported through framework programs has been in the fields of health, climate change and energy. Around 37% of the participants have been women, and the program has purposely included small- and medium-sized enterprises, since the labor market for doctoral candidates is likely to shift towards the private sector in future.

The Marie Curie part of the FP has been oversubscribed in terms of number of applications. The most popular part of Marie Curie Actions in FP7 was the Initial Training Networks, where more than 5,000 consortia filed applications during the five rounds of calls from 2007-12. The success rate was close to 10%, with the initiative supporting almost 500 consortia and financing more than 10,000 PhDs.

Horizon 2020 is now emphasizing even stronger links between education, research and innovation, with this knowledge triangle being seen as a cornerstone. It is now expected that business will be integrated into the research part of the doctoral training. The agenda for Horizon 2020, with calls for proposals expected to be published in December, urges synergy between MSCA and the other parts of Horizon 2020 – the Excellent Science initiative, focus on societal challenges, industrial doctorates and the European Institute of Technology. There are also plans to promote synergy with the Erasmus+ program and possibly also with the huge EU structural funding requested by the European parliament. The European Institute of Technology-supported Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) networks, which are based on the knowledge triangle, will receive a €2.8 billion (US\$3.71 billion) tranche from Horizon 2020.

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1.45 "European Research Council Goes Global" Campaign Continues to China



The European Research Council (ERC) is visiting China from 2 to 7 September to inform top researchers about its funding opportunities and to foster relations with its Chinese counterparts. As part of the awareness-raising campaign "ERC goes Global", the tour will take the ERC delegation to leading universities and research institutions in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Wuhan, Xi'an and Harbin. They will also meet with the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) in Beijing.

European Research Council ERC Secretary General Prof. Donald Dingwell, who leads the delegation, commented: "The European Research Council is excited about visiting China; a powerhouse for research in Asia. We hope to forge closer ties, learn from each other and raise the levels of support for the best researchers. The ERC's substantial funding is open to top talent from anywhere in the world. We are confident that Chinese researchers will respond to this remarkable opportunity in Europe. This is not the first time the ERC goes to China, and it won't be the last."

The ERC funds leading researchers from anywhere in the world, and their innovative ideas across all disciplines, with up to €3.5 million (USD 4.6 million) per grant. Since the ERC's launch in 2007, it has awarded €6.3 billion (USD 8.3 billion) to over 3,800 scientists performing frontier research in Europe - both early-career and senior.

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Source:

http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/press_release/files/ERC_Highlight_global_campaign_China_2013.pdf

1.46 New European Database of Research Infrastructures Launched



The MERIL database (Mapping of the European Research Infrastructure Landscape, <http://portal.meril.eu/>) aims to provide a comprehensive inventory of high quality research infrastructures in Europe across all scientific domains, accessible through an interactive online portal. It will provide a better picture of Europe's existing scientific capacities and foster collaboration amongst the European scientific community by compiling information on high quality facilities of any size and profile, from specialized university laboratories and historical archives to biobanks and experiments at large establishments such as CERN, home of the Large Hadron Collider.

MERIL's development is the result of a pan-European multi-stakeholder effort co-ordinated by the European Science Foundation (ESF). The longstanding need for such a database was reaffirmed in a 2009 report from the ESF and European Heads of Research Councils (EuroHORCs), which stressed that an inventory of existing facilities would enhance the information available to policy makers for planning and funding decisions. The MERIL project was subsequently initiated in October 2010 with competitive funding from the European Commission and significant input from the ESF member organizations and other stakeholders, including the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI).

Research infrastructures indexed in the MERIL portal have been identified as being of high quality and of greater than national relevance by responsible national and international "Data Intermediaries"; they are also required to offer access to external scientific users, nationally and internationally, through a transparent selection and admission process. The database will be continuously open to the addition of research infrastructures that meet the criteria for inclusion.

Martin Hynes, Chief Executive, European Science Foundation, commented, "Research excellence requires high quality facilities which not only support research but also create an attractive environment for researchers. MERIL is a unique resource for the scientific community and we hope it will foster greater interaction, mobility and a sense of partnership across the region."

The MERIL portal is launched at the Lithuanian EU Council Presidency Conference "Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities" in Vilnius on 24 September 2013. The MERIL project was initially funded for two years (2010-2012) by the European Commission under the coordination of the ESF, and is being maintained in 2013 with the financial support of ESF's member organizations.

Link to MERIL portal: <http://portal.meril.eu/>

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Full article available at: http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2013-09/esf-ned092413.php

1.47 €660 Million in EU Funding to Top Researchers



Exploring the limits of life on Mars, developing a virus that can target cancer cells, or using photonics to restore vision in patients with cataracts. Societal challenges such as ageing populations in developing countries or inequality in capitalist societies. These are just some of the issues being tackled by the 284 scientists who are set to receive €660 million (USD 890 million) in the latest funding round from the European Research Council (ERC).

In its sixth and last Advanced Grant competition under the EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7), the ERC will provide individual grants of up to €3.5 million (USD 4.7 million). The funding will enable well-established senior researchers to pursue their 'blue-sky' research. The next Advanced Grants call will be the first under Horizon 2020, the new EU research and innovation program.

In this call, the successful candidates are of 27 different nationalities, with British, German, French, Dutch and Italian researchers being the most numerous. Grantees are based in some 150 institutions across 18 different European Research Area (ERA) countries.

For this particular competition, just over 2,400 applications were submitted to the ERC, which is a slight increase (4.5%) from last year. Thanks to the ERC grants, the selected scientists in this call will be able to build their own research teams, engaging an estimated 1,200 postdocs and PhD students as ERC team members.

Advanced Grants are awarded to well-established top researchers of any nationality or age, scientifically independent and with a recent research track-record, as well as a profile which identifies them as leaders in their respective field(s). The ERC also funds young, early-career top researchers (ERC Starting Grants) and already independent excellent scientists (ERC Consolidator Grants).

Additional Information:

ERC grants target top researchers of any nationality who are based in, or willing to move to, the European Research Area (ERA) (the EU Member States plus countries associated to the EU research program). As the largest EU Member-States, the UK, Germany and France host the highest absolute number of selected researchers in this call. In relation to population size, the Netherlands, UK, Finland and Denmark (of the EU countries), and Switzerland and Israel (of the countries associated with the EU research program), host the greatest number of successful candidates in this call.

The overall success rate for this call lies at nearly 12%. The share of selected women in this round of grants is just over 13%, reflecting the continuing underrepresentation of women in senior research positions. The average age of the researchers to be funded is 53 years old.

In this call, 45% of successful proposals were in the 'Physical Science and Engineering' domain, 36% in 'Life Sciences', and 18% in 'Social Sciences and Humanities'. The grantees were selected through peer review evaluation by 25 panels composed of renowned scientists from around the world.

Set up in 2007 by the EU, the European Research Council is the first pan-European funding organization for excellence in frontier research. The ERC, which is a pioneering component of the EU's Seventh Research Framework Program ('Ideas' Specific Program), has a total budget of €7.5 billion (USD 10 billion) from 2007 to 2013. The European Commission proposed a significant boost of the ERC budget in the new framework program "Horizon 2020" (2014-2020).

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Full article available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-867_en.htm?locale=en

1.48 Worldwide Network of Research Universities to be Created?



Four of the world's major research university groups released a joint statement in China on 10 October outlining the characteristics of contemporary research universities as the next step towards establishing an international network of the four associations. This latest move follows discussions among the four groups over the past 18 months about creating a parallel organization to the Global Research Council, a virtual organization launched in Arlington in Virginia in May last year and comprising the heads of about 50 science and engineering funding agencies from around the world. At a meeting in Hefei outside Shanghai on Thursday, the presidents released the statement along with an explanatory Q&A document. These were intended to identify the key characteristics that make research universities effective while also promoting a policy environment "which protects, nurtures and cultivates the values, standards and behaviors underlying these characteristics so as to facilitate their development if they do not already exist", the statement said.

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Full article available at: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20131009115557994>

1.49 French Mathematician Jean-Pierre Bourguignon to Lead the European Research Council



© Jean-François Dars

French mathematician Jean-Pierre Bourguignon is to become the next president of the European Research Council, Research Europe has learned. Bourguignon has been selected to take up the role from January 2014, several sources say. A former chairman of the ERC's peer-review panel for young mathematicians, Bourguignon has been the director of France's Institute for Advanced Scientific Studies in Bures-sur-Yvette near Paris since 1994. Bourguignon will take over from Helga Nowotny, the Austrian sociologist who has been in the position since 2010. The post, based in Brussels, will also include the responsibilities of Secretary General Donald Dingwell, a role that will not be renewed after Dingwell's term ends in November. The nomination of Bourguignon has been made following the efforts of a seven-member search committee, set up by the Commission to select Nowotny's successor from three candidates. His appointment still has to be announced officially by the European Commission, a process that could be delayed as a result of the on-going Horizon 2020 negotiations.

66-year-old Bourguignon holds an engineering degree from the École Polytechnique near Paris. In 1977, he gained a PhD in mathematics at the University of Paris VII and began studying the mathematical aspects of physical theories and geometry. In the same year as his PhD, Bourguignon was awarded a bronze medal from the French National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS). His term as research director at the center ended in August this year. Bourguignon is also a member of its Ethics Committee of Sciences. Further accolades for Bourguignon include the Prix Paul Langevin, awarded to him by the Academy of Sciences of Paris in 1987, and honorary degrees from Keio University in Japan and Nankai University in China. He has previously been president of the Mathematical Society of France, from 1990-92, and president of the European Mathematical Society, from 1995-98. He is a member of a number of other academies and societies, including Academia Europaea, and is a foreign member of the Royal Spanish Academy of Sciences.

Bourguignon will take the helm of the ERC at the start of the next EU Framework programme, Horizon 2020, under which the council is set to receive a significant budget boost. Over the seven-year Horizon 2020 programme, the ERC will receive 17 per cent of the total budget—which equates to €13 billion (USD 18 billion) in constant prices. Under Framework 7, the ERC received €7.5bn (USD 10.3 billion).

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Full article by by Laura Greenhalgh and Rebecca Hill at:

http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_news&template=rr_2col&view=article&articleId=1339098

1.50 New Agreement between the European Research Council and Korea



*Signing of the Implementing Arrangement by the Commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn and by the Korea's Minister of Science, ICT and Future Planning, Choi Mun-kee, in the presence of the President of the European Council, Mr Herman Van Rompuy, the South Korea's President, Park Geun-Hye and the President of the European Commission, Mr José Manuel Barroso.
Credit "The Council of the European Union".*

A new initiative has been launched to boost opportunities for early-career Korean scientists to come to Europe to join the research teams of European Research Council (ERC) grantees. The agreement was signed by Minister of Science, ICT and Future Planning of the Republic of Korea, Choi Mun Kee, and – on behalf of the ERC – the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn. The objective of the agreement is to stimulate cooperation by bringing the best researchers together to exchange ideas and experiences, and to enhance their international profile and knowledge. The initiative will make it easier for early-career Korean top scientists to be part of ERC-funded research teams for six to twelve months.

The common initiative signed today is in the form of an 'implementing arrangement' of the existing EU-Korea Scientific and Technological Cooperation agreement signed in 2006. Researchers from Korea who will become part of teams led by ERC grantees will be supported through the

ERC grant in the same way as any other team member. The first agreement of this kind was signed in July 2012 with the US National Science Foundation (NSF) to provide opportunities for early-career NSF researchers to join ERC- funded teams in Europe.

To date, three Korean researchers have been awarded ERC grants and are based in research institutions in Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK.

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More information available at: <http://erc.europa.eu/>

1.51 Horizon 2020 EU Research Program Approved by the European Parliament



Horizon 2020, the European Union's (EU) €70.2 billion (USD 95 billion) framework program for research and innovation in 2014-2020, was approved by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) on Thursday November 21st. Parliament amended it to improve support for small firms, attract more people into science and more scientists to join the program, and earmark funding for non-fossil energy research.

"After lengthy negotiations and a great joint effort by all my colleagues, today we finally approved the Horizon 2020 package. I am very satisfied with the result achieved, which will promote scientific excellence in Europe, strengthen our industrial leadership and support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises with a total budget of 70 billion euro", said Industry and Research Committee chair and Parliament's lead negotiator on the five legislative files Amalia Sartori (European People's Party, Italy).

The Horizon 2020 program has three main pillars:

- Societal challenges (39% of the total budget which includes investments in health, energy, transport, climate action and freedom and security research projects),
- Excellent science (32% which includes grants to top-level individual researchers, and investments in future technologies and training for researchers), and
- Industrial leadership (22% which includes investments in biotechnology and space technologies, access to risk finance and support for innovative small firms)

MEPs made it a target that at least 11% of the Horizon 2020 budget should go to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Moreover, there will be a specialized SMEs department, with its own budget, to ensure that the program's calls for tenders are SME-friendly.

To further EU climate goals, MEPs earmarked 85% of the Horizon 2020 energy budget (around €5.4 billion – USD 7.3 billion) for non-fossil fuel energy research.

Parliament's negotiators ensured that around €750 million (USD 1 billion) from the Horizon 2020 budget will go to measures to widen the group of researchers participating in the program, e.g. by attracting new applicants or promoting networking of research institutions.

Parliament's negotiators also ensured that over €400 million (USD 541 million) will go to "Science with and for society" projects to attract young students to take up careers in science, promote gender equality and encourage citizens to take part in science education.

After Parliament's vote, the program needs to be formally adopted by EU member states too, in the coming weeks. The program starts on 1 January 2014.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: December 2013

Full article available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131115IPR24730/html/Horizon-2020-research-programme-more-support-for-small-firms-and-new-players>

1.52 UK Announces over 70 New Centers to Train Tomorrow's Engineers and Scientists



Pioneering research
and skills

Details of how a £350 million (USD 566 million) fund will be used to train over 3,500 postgraduate students in engineering and physical sciences, was announced by Universities and Science Minister, David Willetts.

This is the UK's largest investment in postgraduate training in engineering and physical sciences. It will fund over seventy new Centers for Doctoral

Training (CDTs), spread across 24 UK universities.

The funding, targeted at areas vital to economic growth, has been allocated by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

A total of 1000 partners will be involved in the Centers, leveraging in around £250 million (USD 404 million) worth of support. Many of the Centers will involve research that connects to key industries and important technologies which will aid innovation and growth. A number of the other Research Councils, including the Medical Research Council and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, are also contributing towards Centers with key relevance to their fields of research. EPSRC may announce a further group of Centers if more resource can be secured.

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Full article available at: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2013/Pages/phdnewcentres.aspx>

1.53 Launch of the EU-Russia Year of Science 2014



The 'EU-Russia Year of Science 2014' has been officially launched at an event in Moscow. Its purpose is to celebrate and promote the vibrant and multifaceted scientific and technological co-operation between the two partners. About 200 events are planned in Russia and EU member states. Some will be dedicated events, while others will include a strong focus and/or special sessions on EU-Russia science and technology co-operation. The timing of the 'Year of Science' benefits from the conjunction of key related events in 2014, including the launch of Horizon 2020, the renewal of the EU-Russia Science and Technology Agreement, the launch of the Russian State Program and the Russian Federal Targeted Programs for research and development.

In keeping with the EU's new international co-operation strategy for research and innovation, future co-operation will focus on three mutually agreed "flagship" priority areas: aeronautics, ICT and research infrastructures. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) and Russia also currently co-operate in many areas, including nuclear energy, the environment, soils and food security, forestry, agriculture and energy efficiency. Plans are being made for further co-operation in various fields through the on-going EU-funded ERA-Net.RUS project, which gathers 18 partner organizations, six from Russia and 12 from the EU, including the JRC.

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Full article available at: <http://horizon2020projects.com/global-collaboration/year-to-celebrate-eu-russia-st-co-operation-begins/>

More information: <http://www.eu-russia-yearofscience.eu/en/1379.php>

2 Austria

2.1 Austrian Research and Technology Report 2013 Published



The Austrian Research and Technology Report, commissioned annually by the three Austrian ministries responsible for research and technology, i.e. the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BMWFW), the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT), and the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ), highlights, based on current data, the developments in research, technology and innovation policy and compares Austria to other countries in select areas. In addition to reports on the development of R&D expenditures in Austria or Austria's ranking in the "Innovation Union Scoreboard (IUS)", which are published regularly in the Research and Technology Report, the Report also contains analyses in specific areas of focus, this year for example on the topic of "knowledge and technology transfer between science and business".

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Source:

<http://www.en.bmwfj.gv.at/ResearchandInnovation/Innovationandtechnologypolicies/Seiten/AustrianResearchandTechnologyReport2012.aspx>

2.2 Pascale Ehrenfreund is the New President of the Austrian FWF



© FWF/Hans Schubert

Pascale Ehrenfreund has been elected President of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). Professor Ehrenfreund and the new Executive Board took up their functions in September 2013.

An astrophysicist, Ehrenfreund studied astronomy and biology/genetics at the University of Vienna, after which she earned her master's degree in molecular biology in Salzburg at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. She went on to complete her Ph.D. in astrophysics in Paris and Vienna. In 1999, she earned her venia in astrochemistry at the University of Vienna with funding from an APART Fellowship from the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In 2008, Ehrenfreund also earned a master's degree in management and international relations.

From 2001 onward, Ehrenfreund worked as a professor of astrobiology in Amsterdam and in Leiden, where she has served as a visiting professor since 2006. In 2005, Ehrenfreund moved on to the United States, where she worked as a Distinguished Visiting Scientist at JPL/Caltech in Pasadena, California. Since 2008, she has been a Research Professor of Space Policy and International Affairs at George Washington University's Center for International Science and Technology Policy. In that capacity, she addresses science policy issues with a special focus on international relations. Since 2008, she has also been a lead investigator at the NASA Astrobiology Institute, where she is collaborating in the search for traces of life in the solar system. Ehrenfreund has also chaired the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) Panel on Exploration (PEX) since 2010, and she was a member of the European Commission's FP7 Space Advisory Group (SAG) from 2011 to 2013. In addition to numerous other memberships, she has served on the NRC Committee on Human Space Flight since 2012. Since 1999, she has also been present in outer space, as the asteroid "9826 Ehrenfreund 2114 T-3" bears her name.

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More information available at: http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/public_relations/press/pa20130606-en.html

3 Belgium

3.1 Belgian Mathematician Rewarded the Abel Prize for Shaping Algebra

Given annually by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and named after the famous Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel, the Abel Prize is worth 6 million Norwegian kroner (about US\$1 million). It has been four decades since Belgian mathematician Pierre Deligne completed the work for which he became celebrated, but that fertile contribution to number theory has now earned him the Abel Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in mathematics. The Academy has rewarded Deligne, who works at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey, “for seminal contributions to algebraic geometry and for their transformative impact on number theory, representation theory, and related fields”.

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Full article available at: <http://www.nature.com/news/belgian-mathematician-rewarded-for-shaping-algebra-1.12644>

4 Bulgaria

4.1 Additional € 8.2 Million for Developing Applied Research in Bulgaria



The total amount of the grant "Development of applied research in the research organizations in Bulgaria" was increased from BGN 19 558 300 (USD 13.5 million) to BGN 35 700 637 (USD 24.6 million). This will enable the financing of project proposals included in the reserve list, which have successfully passed the evaluation process, but did not receive funding. The main objective of grant is to strengthen and develop the capacity of Bulgarian research organizations for the implementation of successful R&D programs by providing support for the renovation and modernization of the equipment necessary for the implementation of applied research.

The minimum grant amount for each individual project is BGN 100 000 (USD 79 000), and the maximum is BGN 4 000 000 (USD 2.8 million). The grant procedure is realized with the financial support of the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund.

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Adapted from:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/bg/highlights/highlight_0003

5 Czech Republic

5.1 Three Eastern European Countries Are Gearing up to Host Powerful Light Sources



Last month, an order was placed for a pair of titanium–sapphire lasers. With an output of 10 petawatts, each would be about nine times more powerful than the strongest laser in existence today — capable of exploding the nuclei of heavy elements. Nearly as special as the lasers is the place where they will be delivered: Măgurele, Romania, a town of 11,000 people that was once home to a Soviet-era research reactor. In June, workers broke

ground at the construction site for a new research center to house the twin lasers.

It would not be possible for the former Eastern bloc nation to afford the project's €356-million (US\$475-million) cost: expenditures on research and development in Romania are among the lowest in Europe. Instead, the European Union (EU) is expected to pick up most of the tab, as it plans to for two other facilities, in Hungary and the Czech Republic. The three projects, along with a fourth still on the drawing board, will make up the Extreme Light Infrastructure (ELI) — an experiment in using EU structural funds to advance research. Structural funds, which make up more than one-third of the EU budget, are aimed at reducing economic disparities across Europe. They typically pay for local projects such as road repair, construction of power lines or clean-up of industrial waste — not super-powerful lasers. And although any member state can apply for these infrastructure funds, most of the money goes to the poorest countries. ELI, by contrast, is an international research institute that will encourage scientists to do laser experiments at higher energies, intensities and speeds. Both France and the United Kingdom wanted to host the project, marked as a priority in a 2006 road map for European research. But structural funds provided the Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary with a way to pay for it. Advocates for using the money in this way touted the potential of ELI to stimulate economic growth. Romania hopes to attract technology companies and establish Măgurele as a 'laser valley'; the region is also planning to build a smaller laser facility to train its scientists to participate in ELI.

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Source: <http://www.nature.com/news/europe-sets-sights-on-lasers-1.13551>

5.2 Update of the National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic



The Update of the National Research, Development and Innovation Policy 2009-2015 with an outlook to 2020 has been approved by the government of the Czech Republic. The main aim of the update is to improve conditions for innovation, knowledge transfer and diffusion of frontier technologies as the key sources of economic growth over the long term. The update is focused on four priority areas: i) Supply of high-quality human resources; ii) Enhancing the framework for transfer and utilization of knowledge; iii) Boosting the innovative capacity in the business sectors and iv) Improving strategic management of the system. As the keystone has been flagged the field of human resources, as this is essential for the successful launch of operation of the newly build large research infrastructure projects (ESFRI, etc.). The document is divided in two parts; one outlining the strategy and one dealing with its implementation, including specific indicators, deadline and responsible government bodies. Another purpose of the update is to re-align the reform agenda with the government medium-term budgetary plans, which have been significantly altered by the economic crisis and prolonged recession, as the result of which the public support for R&D stagnates and is expected to remain stable in medium-term outlook (in contrast to the expansion envisaged in the original document). However, the update confirms the commitment to meet the 2020 national target of 1% of government spending on R&D as % of GDP.

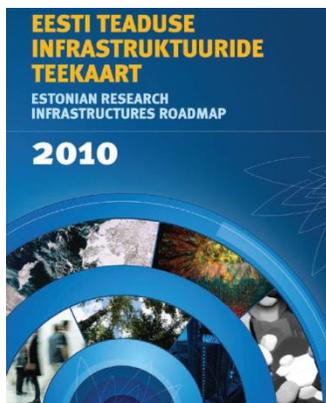
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Full article available at:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/cz/highlights/highlight_0003

6 Estonia

6.1 Updating the Estonian Research Infrastructures Roadmap



The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the Estonian Academy of Sciences has launched a program for compiling the Estonian research infrastructures roadmap. Pursuant to the development trends of Estonian and international research, the needs of modernizing the existing research infrastructure are mapped along with initiatives for establishing new infrastructure. The roadmap is a long-term (10-20 years perspective) planning instrument, which lists research infrastructure units of national importance which are either new or in need of modernizing. The roadmap is regularly updated (3-5 year cycles) in order to take into account the changing needs and opportunities. The inclusion of infrastructure in the roadmap does not mean it will be funded or ranked; the roadmap is rather an input for investment decisions which are under preparation.

Research infrastructure is defined as facilities (laboratories, equipment, machinery, collections, archives, structured information or their complexes), conditions, knowledge, methods, materials and the activities and services related to them, used with the purpose of research and development activities, creating new knowledge as well as transmitting, exchanging and/or preserving knowledge. The list of the objects in the Estonian research infrastructures roadmap includes:

1. Estonian e-Repository and conservation of collections;
2. Estonian Centre for Genomics;
3. Centre of Estonian language resources;
4. Estonian Environmental Observatory;
5. Estonian beamline at MAX-IV synchrotron radiation source
6. Estonian magnet laboratory (EML)
7. Estonian participation in ESS (European Social Survey)
8. Estonian participation in the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)
9. Estonian PET-Centre
10. Estonian structural biology infrastructure (ESI)
11. Estonian Scientific Computing Infrastructure
12. Estonian research and education optical backbone network
13. ESS – European Spallation Source
14. Estonian participation in the European Space Agency;
15. Estonian participation in the European Southern Observatory;
16. Natural history archives and information network (NATARC);
17. Baltic Sea regional research vessel
18. Nanomaterials – research and applications
19. National centre for translational and clinical research
20. Plant biology infrastructure – from molecules to high-technology agriculture

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: September 2013

More information available at: <http://www.etag.ee/research-funding/estonian-research-infrastructures-roadmap/?lang=en>

7 Finland

7.1 Research cooperation between Finland and the USA to be strengthened

A research cooperation project focusing on learning and education and funded by the US National Science Foundation (NSF), the Academy of Finland and Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, has been launched. The first research projects jointly organized by Finnish and American research units are now beginning.

The project "Innovations in Learning and Education" involves Finnish and U.S. teams of researchers under the NSF's Science Across Virtual Institutes (SAVI) program and will focus on technology-enhanced learning, educational innovation and learning analytics. The U.S. part is coordinated by Eric Hamilton from Pepperdine University.

"The American and Finnish researchers participating in the projects have a joint research plan. During the discussions, workshop and project preparations organized between the NSF, the Academy of Finland and Tekes, research subjects such as learning through games, the challenges set by a multicultural setting and making use of information technology and social media were selected," says Director Eero Silvennoinen from Tekes.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: January 2013

Full article available at:

<http://www.tekes.fi/en/community/News/482/News/1344?name=Research+cooperation+between+Finland+and+the+usa+to+be+strengthened>

Additional information available at:

<http://www.aka.fi/en-GB/A/Academy-of-Finland/Media-services/Releases1/Funding-for-Finnish-US-research-collaboration-in-learning-and-education>

7.2 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).

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: May 2013

Full article available at: <http://www.aka.fi/en-GB/A/Academy-of-Finland/Media-services/Releases1/Academy-research-funding-EUR-327-million-in-2012/>

7.3 Academy of Finland Designated 14 New Centers of Excellence in Research

The Board of the Academy of Finland has selected the Centres of Excellence in Research (CoE) for the 2014–2019 CoE programme. The new CoE programme will consist of 14 units, involving research teams from twelve universities or research institutes. The Academy has reserved a total of EUR 45 million (USD

59 million) for the first three years of the six-year programme term. The funding negotiations for the new CoEs will be held in autumn 2013. CoEs are the flagships of Finnish research. They are at the very cutting edge of science in their fields, carving out new avenues for research, developing creative research environments and training new talented researchers for Finnish society and business and industry. A Centre of Excellence is a research and training network that has a clearly defined set of research objectives and is run under a joint management. Funding is provided for a six-year term, which means that CoEs can work to long-term plans and even take risks. CoEs are jointly funded by the Academy of Finland, universities, research institutes, the private business sector and many other sources. The Academy has funded CoEs since 1995.

Centres of Excellence 2014-2019 (director, name of centre, coordinating university, other parties)

- Alitalo, Kari: Centre of Excellence in Translational Cancer Biology, University of Helsinki (UH). Other parties: University of Turku (UTU)/Sirpa Jalkanen, Institute for Molecular Medicine Finland (FIMM)/Olli Kallioniemi
- Aro, Eva-Mari: Centre of Excellence in Molecular Biology of Primary Producers, UTU. Other parties: UH
- Hyyppä, Juha: Centre of Excellence in Laser Scanning Research, Finnish Geodetic Institute. Other parties: UH, University of Oulu (UO), Aalto University (AU)
- Ikkala, Olli: Centre of Excellence in Molecular Engineering of Biosynthetic Hybrid Materials Research, AU. Other parties: VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland
- Ikonen, Elina: Centre of Excellence in Biomembrane Research: From Lipid Protein Interactions to Functions, UH. Other parties: Tampere University of Technology (TUT)
- Jacobs, Howard: Centre of Excellence in Research on Mitochondria, Metabolism and Disease, University of Tampere (UTA). Other parties: UH
- Jernvall, Jukka: Centre of Excellence in Experimental and Computational Developmental Biology Research, UH
- Knuuti, Juhani: Centre of Excellence in Cardiovascular and Metabolic Disease, UTU. Other parties: University of Eastern Finland (UEF)
- Kulmala, Markku: Centre of Excellence in Atmospheric Science - From Molecular and Biological Processes to the Global Climate, UH. Other parties: UEF, Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI)
- Kupiainen, Antti: Centre of Excellence in Analysis and Dynamics Research, UH. Other parties: UO, University of Jyväskylä (UJ)
- Mursula, Kalevi: Centre of Excellence in Research on Solar Long-Term Variability and Effects, UO. Other parties: UH, FMI
- Nissinen, Martti: Changes in Sacred Texts and Traditions, UH
- Paasi, Anssi: Centre of Excellence in Research on the Relational and Territorial Politics of Bordering, Identities and Transnationalisation, UO. Other parties: UTA
- Saarinen, Risto: Centre of Excellence in Reason and Religious Recognition Research, UH

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Full article and more information available at: <http://www.aka.fi/en-GB/A/Academy-of-Finland/Media-services/Releases/1/Academy-of-Finland-designated-14-new-Centres-of-Excellence-in-Research/>

7.4 Academy of Finland Poised for More Powerful Role in Science Policy



An international evaluation report published today by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture paints a very positive picture of the activities of the Academy of Finland. In the report, the results and quality of the Academy's operations receive top marks. The reviewers note that the Academy is internationally an outstandingly cost-effective organization. On the whole, researchers seem to be satisfied with the Academy's application, evaluation and decision-making processes.

The report also proposes a more extensive role for the Academy in terms of science policy. Professor Heikki Mannila, President of the Academy of Finland, welcomes this proposal: "The recommendation is a clear sign of the high regard in which the Academy's reliability and expertise in

science policy are held.” The report further proposes that the Academy of Finland draft an internationalization strategy in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Tekes and other key players. “The key here is cooperation. The reviewers strongly recommend that the drafting of a national strategy concerning the internationalization of Finnish science and research be a joint undertaking,” Mannila underlines.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: September 2013

Source: <http://www.aka.fi/en-GB/A/Academy-of-Finland/Media-services/Releases1/Academy-of-Finland-poised-for-more-powerful-role-in-science-policy/>

7.5 Finns Have High Trust in Science



Science, both as an institution and more specifically through certain organizations, is highly trusted by Finns. This information is provided by the Finnish Science Barometer 2013, a survey examining Finns’ attitudes towards science and their opinions on scientific and technological progress.

Three out of four respondents reported being interested in nature and the environment. Social affairs in general came in second, with 72%. Two out of three respondents (65%) say that they follow science, research and technology-related issues with great interest. The percentage of respondents interested in science has increased by eight percentage points since 2010. Interest in economy, politics and social affairs has also grown since 2010.

Seven out of ten Finns report having interest in general progress in science, research results and inventions. The respondents find medicine the most interesting field of science. More than two-thirds (68%) state that they follow progress in medicine, such as the development of new drugs and treatments, with environmental research a close second (66%). About half of the respondents were interested in historical and cultural research, IT, gene technology and biotechnology, while one out of three found space research interesting. Policies and funding issues related to science are deemed the least interesting category of all scientific themes (24%), while more than one third were interested in the international success of Finnish science (36%).

Of the sources of scientific information, television and radio are the most important (85% find these at least fairly important). Newspapers are seen almost as important (75%). The Internet was not far behind traditional mass media (Internet, data networks and social media, 69%).

The news topics recognized by the greatest number of respondents, making them also those most followed, were human influence on climate change (87% report to have followed this topic at least to some extent) and the recommended dosage of vitamin D (80%). Two news topics nearly as widely recognized and followed were protection of privacy online (73%) and vaccine safety (74%). The remaining four news topics – the Higgs boson, biobank, research project tender procedure and revival of minority languages – attracted considerably less attention.

The survey also examined how well the Finns are familiar with the achievements of Finnish science and scientists. The most widely known achievement was AIV (Artturi Ilmari Virtanen) silage. Expressions connected to mobile phones, mobile technology and Nokia came second, closely followed by xylitol. Gene research and gene technology were also ranked close to the top, while Linux as well as cancer research, treatments and drugs were also mentioned frequently.

The respondents were also asked to assess their level of trust in various institutions and operators of Finnish society. Finnish universities and other institutions of higher education are trusted nearly as much as the defense forces. More than seven out of ten respondents have great trust in these higher education institutions. Only the police are seen as more trustworthy than the above-mentioned organizations. VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland is the most trusted science and research organization on the list. More information:

The Finnish Science Barometer 2013 was commissioned by the Finnish Society for Scientific Information (Tieteen tiedotus ry) from Yhdyskuntatutkimus Oy. A total of 971 people gave written responses to the survey. The report in Finnish and its summary in English are available on the website of the Finnish Society for Scientific Information: www.tieteentiedotus.fi/tiedebarometri.html

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: November 2013

Full article available at: <http://www.aka.fi/en-GB/A/Academy-of-Finland/Media-services/Releases1/The-Finnish-Science-Barometer-2013-Finns-have-high-trust-in-science/>

8 France

8.1 French National Agency for Research Program Guidance for 2013

The 2013 French National Research Agency (ANR) Program completes the 2011-2013 three-year cycle in a context of limited budget. The 2013 Program Guidance has been designed to reflect the general guidelines established by the Minister of Higher Education and Research, and is built around three components:

- The non-thematic tools (Unsolicited Proposals, Young Researchers Proposals, Return Post-doc, Industrial Chairs, ...)
- The building of the European Research Space and multilateral collaborations (i.e. the European Research Area Networks -ERA-Nets)
- The thematic programming that follow the priorities set up by the European Union and include: Innovative, secure and inclusive societies; Health and wellbeing of aging population; Biological resources, environment monitoring and protection; Energy transition and post-carbon industries; Information and communication technologies; Global security and dual (civil and military) research.

Several measures are incorporated into project calls to contain the annual volume of proposals and increase the success rate:

- Only one proposal per year for each scientific coordinator will be allowed, regardless of the type of proposals for the 2013 edition.
- The minimum commitment for the scientific coordinator's research time spent on the project is raised from 33% to 40%.
- It is recommended to the project coordinator to maintain the share of temporary jobs in the projects (such as PhDs and post-docs) to 30% of the total staffing (permanent and non-permanent) assigned to the project.

ANR is cooperating with NSF in the field of Computational Neurosciences and Open Research Area for social sciences for which dedicated calls for projects will be issued.

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Full article and documents in French available at: <http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/programmes-de-recherche/les-orientations-2013>

8.2 New French Science Law Falls Short of Expectations

The draft bill that the French Minister for Higher Education and Research Geneviève Fioraso presented to the Council of Ministers on March 20 consists of 20 measures that altogether aim to increase student access to university and graduate employment and give research a new impetus in order to boost the

nation's economic recovery and competitiveness. Seeking to address the complexity and opacity of France's higher education and research landscape, for example, the draft bill proposes that the nation's universities and other higher education institutions and research laboratories over time gather into 30 or so regional groupings. Some already-existing collaborative clusters will thus disappear to become the so-called "communities of universities and institutions," which are meant to be more inclusive and cooperative, democratic in their governance, and more open to their regional and socioeconomic environment.

The bill also aims to help France more easily set a stronger and clearer national strategic research agenda, which is to be in line with the priority areas set in the European funding program Horizon 2020. In charge of designing such a national strategy will be the newly created Strategic Council of Research, which is to replace two existing consulting bodies in an effort to simplify research governance at the national level.

The bill further proposes replacing the highly criticized Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (AERES) by a newly created High Council of Research and Higher Education Evaluation, designed to allow institutions to be evaluated coherently with research laboratories and education programs. In contrast to AERES, which was largely perceived as running overwhelming and redundant evaluations, the council will accredit evaluation procedures to be proposed by the institutions, only performing the evaluations themselves at the request of the institutions.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: April 2013

Full article available at: <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/03/new-french-science-law-falls-sho.html?rss=1>

8.3 The French National Research Agency Engages in Supporting Open Access

The French National Research Agency has signed together with 25 other signatories a partnership agreement in favor of the open archives platform HAL (*Hyper Articles en Ligne*). This agreement is part of the national policy in favor of open access, sharing of the research results, their dissemination and preservation. The HAL platform currently contains 220 000 documents, including 34,000 theses from French or foreign academic or research institutions, public and private laboratories.

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Full article available at (in French): <http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/informations/actualites/detail/hal-lanr-sengage/>

8.4 Georgia Tech, the French National Research Center and the University of Rabat in Morocco Establish Joint Laboratory

On April 4, 2013, during the state visit of the French President Francois Hollande to the Crown Prince of Morocco, King Mohammed VI, a letter of intent was signed, establishing a mirror laboratory of the International Unit GeorgiaTech - *Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique* (National Center for Scientific Research, CNRS) in Morocco. The International University of Rabat in Morocco, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the CNRS are the primary partners in this new endeavor.

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Source: <http://www.georgiatech-metz.fr/news-and-events/mirror-lab-gt-cnrs-laboratory-established-morocco>

8.5 A new innovation policy in France

The French Minister of Higher Education and Research, Geneviève Fioraso, presented on Tuesday, May 21, 2013, the "Strategic agenda for French research, technology transfer and innovation". The goal of the Ministry's agenda is to integrate science and research within the policy for economic recovery. The Minister spoke at the Science, Research and Society forum held at the College de France on Thursday,

May 23, where she presented the inter-ministerial program for the development of research and innovation "France Europe 2020 - Tackling societal challenges and contributing to the competitiveness of the country." The new policy offers nine specific actions:

1. Mobilizing players on major societal challenges

The program identifies nine challenges such as food security, resource management or development of safe and clean energy. "Citizens must be able to relate to them" said the Minister. According to "France Europe 2020", these challenges require a multidisciplinary approach between basic sciences and technology research. Research in these areas will serve as basis for developing government policies.

2. Rebuilding the coordination and orientation of research in France

Two new committees are created: a Strategic Research Council composed of scientific experts, and a Ministerial Steering Committee. Their mission will be to ensure the prioritization of the "Agenda 2020", as well as the coordination and implementation of the work. They will assess the measures' effectiveness a posteriori.

3. Promoting technological research

"Technology should not be the poor cousin of basic research in France," said Geneviève Fioraso. She would like to promote technological research as a tool for the application of basic research outcomes in support of industrial innovation. A major project is the creation of 100 joint laboratories between SMEs and academic research institutions.

4. Developing training and digital infrastructures

Creation and development of publicly-funded information technology infrastructures that provide better access to supercomputers, as well as data sharing and storage at a national level, to allow for computer simulations that advance knowledge.

5. Promoting innovation and technology transfer

Geneviève Fioraso recalled: "We are ranked 6th in the world by the number of scientific publications but only 15th in innovation." In all higher education institutions, courses on innovation and entrepreneurship will be organized, as well as training courses for active researchers.

6. Embracing the scientific culture

According to a survey by Ipsos (a market research company) published in *La Recherche* and *Le Monde* magazines in June 2012, 81% of French feel that they are not being sufficiently informed about research issues. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research reached the same conclusion independently. To promote the dialogue between science and society, universities will be encouraged to better disseminate results of their research and doctoral students will be trained to present their work to the general public. The Ministries of Productive Recovery, of Communication, and of National (pre-college) Education will develop each year a strategic policy of scientific, technical and industrial culture.

7. Developing a program tailored to priorities in research and innovation

The new strategy in scientific policy will rely on the experience of the National Research Agency (ANR-Agence Nationale de la Recherche) in managing calls for research projects. ANR programming will be defined by the ministerial Steering Committee based on the strategic agenda.

8. Supporting national development

"France Europe 2020" does not forget that research can be used as a tool for national development and planning. Expectations of local economic stakeholders should be taken into account in the establishment of higher education policy. "It should also contribute to remove barriers and create better links between higher education institutions and national research laboratories," explained the minister.

9. Increasing the presence of French research in Europe and internationally

The government intends to strengthen French participation in international projects. "For one Euro invested by France, French participants receive 0.7 Euros in return. For example, in Switzerland for 1 euro invested, the Swiss receive back 3 Euros", said Geneviève Fioraso. Strengthening the French lobby

in Brussels, developing a French web portal of European programs, establishing research activities abroad and encouraging students' mobility are all part of the agenda "France Europe 2020".

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Translated and adapted from: <http://www.larecherche.fr/actualite/politique-scientifique/nouvelle-politique-innovation-france-21-05-2013-103309>

8.6 Patrick Nédellec Named Director of the French National Research Center European and International Cooperation Department



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On October 1, 2013, Patrick Nédellec was appointed Director of the National Research Center (CNRS) European Research and International Cooperation Department (DERCI) by president Alain Fuchs. He succeeds Minh-Hà Pham-Delègue, who has been named scientific advisor for science and technology at the French Embassy in Washington D.C. (US).

Born in Paris in 1965, Patrick Nédellec left France in 1989 to pursue his studies at Laval University in Quebec, Canada, where he earned a master's degree in biochemistry in 1991. In 1995, he completed a PhD thesis at McGill University's Division of Experimental Medicine in Montreal.

After returning to France, he joined the Pasteur Institute as a postdoctoral fellow in the Slow Viruses Unit. The following year, he became a CNRS researcher at Paris Descartes University's School of Pharmacy. In 2003, he was named scientific and academic cooperation attaché at the French Embassy in Copenhagen (Denmark). Four years later, he moved to China to serve as scientific attaché in charge of the innovation sector at the French Embassy in Beijing. In January 2011, Nédellec returned to CNRS as Director of the CNRS China office. As the new director of DERCI, his mission will be to implement and promote the CNRS European and international cooperation policy.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: October 2013

Press release available at: <http://www2.cnrs.fr/en/2269.htm>

8.7 The French National Research Agency to Coordinate the New Flagships ERA-NET on "Human Brain and "Graphene"



The European Research Area Network (ERA-NET) FLAG-ERA initiative, coordinated by the French National Research Agency (ANR), gathers 22 research funding agencies, research performing organizations and ministries in Europe around a common goal: supporting the "FET Flagship" projects of the European Commission, in particular the two large-scale projects on graphene and on the human brain.

As a network of research funding agencies and research performing organizations funded by the European Commission, an ERA-NET is an instrument of the EU policy to develop and strengthen the coordination of national research programs. Those actions materialize for example through the launching of transnational calls for collaborative proposals on selected topics. ANR takes part in those calls and finances the French teams.

The ERA-NET FLAG-ERA gathers many European countries and should contribute to building the two FET-Flagship projects: the "Graphene" project, whose goal is to accelerate the development and commercialization of applications using graphene, a material full of promise and the "Human Brain Project" (HBP), which notably aims at creating a highly detailed simulation of the complete human brain by using a supercomputer. The Flagship projects were selected by the European Commission following

an unprecedented two-year European-wide contest on Future and emerging technologies (FET). Each project should receive €1 billion (USD 1.35 billion) over ten years, half to be provided by the European Commission and half by national partners (States, universities, private sector).

Beyond these two projects, FLAG-ERA will also support the work carried out by the other four pilot projects that were launched during the selection stage but that were finally not selected by the European Commission.

The kick-off meeting of the ERA-NET FLAG-ERA was held on November 12-14 in Amsterdam in the presence of around sixty representatives from 19 countries and from the European Commission.

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Adapted from: <http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/en/news/news/single/anr-to-coordinate-a-new-era-net/nc/>

More information: <http://www.flagera.eu/>

9 Germany

New Program for International Cooperation for German Universities

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) announced the outcomes of a recent initiative aimed at strengthening the networking capabilities of German universities with foreign universities. German higher education institutions can receive up to € 250,000 (US\$ 388,000) per year from a new DAAD program for strengthening their international profile. A first selection round has produced 21 projects which will be funded for a maximum of four years. The program supports these projects in building up strategic partnerships and thematic networks with foreign universities. Higher education institutions from 29 countries are involved in the selected projects. The USA and China are particularly well represented. The program “Strategic Partnerships and Thematic Networks” is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education, which is providing almost € 3,000,000 (US\$ 4,000,000) in the first year alone.

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Full article available at: <http://www.research-in-germany.de/121596/2013-02-04-new-programmer-for-international-cooperation-for-german-universities.html>

9.1 Europe’s Fastest Supercomputer Inaugurated in Germany

The new supercomputer JUQUEEN was inaugurated at Forschungszentrum Jülich (Jülich Research Center, Germany) in the presence of representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Research of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (MIWF). The supercomputer is currently the fastest in Europe and has a peak performance of 5.9 petaflops, that means about six quadrillion (10¹⁵) arithmetic operations per second.

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More information available at: <http://www.fz-juelich.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/UK/EN/2013/13-02-13juqueen.html>

9.2 German Research Institute Pulls Out of Canadian Tar Sands Project

As many as 20 scientists at the world-famous Helmholtz Association of German Research Centers have ceased involvement in the Helmholtz Alberta Initiative (HAI), after a moratorium on contacts was declared last month. “It was seen as a risk for our reputation,” Professor Frank Messner, Helmholtz head of staff said stiffly over the phone from his offices in Leipzig.

“As an environmental research center we have an independent role as an honest broker and doing research in this constellation could have had reputational problems for us, especially after Canada’s withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol,” he said. The HAI had been tasked with upgrading bitumen and lignite coal to reduce energy consumption, and finding ways to deal with toxic overspill from the tar sands industry such as ‘tail ponds’- toxic lakes that now cover up to 176 square kilometers of Alberta. But in reply to a written question from the German socialist Member of the European Parliament Frank Schwabe, a statement from the country’s education and research ministry on February 20 said that a moratorium had been imposed on collaboration, pending an independent assessment into its environmental bona fides which will conclude in June. “The assessment evaluates whether a project conforms to sustainability principles,” Thomas Rachel, the education and research minister said.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: March 2013

Full article available at: http://www.euractiv.com/science-policy-making/german-research-institute-pulls-news-518608?utm_source=RSS_Feed&utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=EurActivRSS

9.3 German Leopoldina Strengthens Cooperation with French National Academy

The German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the French Académie des sciences are set to collaborate even more closely in future. Leopoldina President, Prof. Jörg Hacker, and the President of the French National Academy, Prof. Phillipe Taquet, signed a cooperation agreement consolidating the already close ties between the two institutions. The agreement foresees the two academies cooperating on statements and recommendations on various scientific topics. The Leopoldina and the *Académie des sciences* also plan to host further joint conferences, seminars and colloquiums. They will thus jointly organize a symposium on modern vaccination strategies in Berlin on 10 June in cooperation with the Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology Berlin. The program will include appearances by Nobel laureate and Leopoldina member Prof. Harald zur Hausen and Prof. Jules Hoffmann, Nobel laureate and member of the Leopoldina and the Académie des sciences.

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Full article available at: <http://www.leopoldina.org/en/press/news/734/>

9.4 Germany’s highest valued international research award goes to a researcher from the U.S.

A communications engineer from the USA, a microbiologist from Sweden, a psychologist from the Netherlands and a solid-state physicist from Japan have been selected as new Alexander von Humboldt Professors. The research award, worth up to five million EUR (USD 6.5 million), is granted by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. With the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship, the Foundation honors world-leading researchers of all academic disciplines working abroad. In the long term, these researchers are to conduct cutting-edge research at German universities.

The selected award winners are currently entering into appointment negotiations with the German universities that nominated them:

- Giuseppe Caire (47), communications engineer at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA, was nominated by the Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) in conjunction with the Fraunhofer Heinrich Hertz Institute, Berlin.
- Microbiologist Emmanuelle Marie Charpentier (44), who most recently worked at Umeå University in Sweden, was nominated by the Hannover Medical School in conjunction with the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Braunschweig.
- Jens Förster (48) is a psychologist at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He is to conduct research at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum in future.
- Solid-state physicist Hidenori Takagi (52) was nominated by the University of Stuttgart in conjunction with the Max Planck Institute for Solid State Research Stuttgart. He previously conducted research at the RIKEN Advanced Science Institute, Wako, Saitama, Japan.

The Humboldt Foundation's selection committee had eleven applications to consider. Seven of the nominees currently work in the USA, one in the UK, one in Japan, one in the Netherlands and one in Sweden. The awards will be presented in Berlin in 2014. The award amount is earmarked for funding the first five years in Germany. The award gives universities the opportunity to offer international top-class professionals competitive conditions and the prospect of long-term work in Germany as well as the opportunity to raise their own profiles.

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Full article available at: <http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/1596474.html>

9.5 German Visit to China Gives Significant Impetus to Partnerships in Research

The German Research Foundation (DFG) President Professor Dr. Peter Strohschneider and Secretary General Dorothee Dzwonnek held a series of talks on science policy with their counterparts in Chinese partner organizations and with high-ranking science policymakers. The visit took place during a period of particularly intense dialogue between Germany and China at various levels of political, economic and scientific life, which also saw the Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang pay a visit to Germany.

The visit to China was Professor Strohschneider's first major foreign trip since he took office in January and underlined the special importance that the DFG, Germany's central self-governing organization for research, attaches to collaboration with China. The DFG runs the Sino-German Center for Research Promotion (CDZ) in Beijing jointly with its partner organization, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). Opened in 2000, the CDZ was the DFG's first representation abroad and since then has helped researchers from China and Germany to initiate joint research projects by providing in-depth advice and organizing bilateral symposia.

The agenda for this visit included the first meeting with the NSFC President, Professor Yang Wei, who also took up his post this year. The President also met the new Vice President of the NSFC and the Chairman of the Joint Committee of the CDZ, Professor Liu Congqiang. More talks were held with the directors of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

During Professor Strohschneider's visit to the Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE), Vice President Hao Ping announced plans to establish a special fund with which to finance German-Chinese Research Training Groups. The DFG currently funds three bilateral Research Training Groups jointly with the MoE. This special fund will provide a reliable framework for setting up further German-Chinese Research Training Groups, the DFG's most important instrument for funding German and Chinese early career researchers. The relationship between the DFG and the Chinese Ministry of Education is based on an over 30-year-old agreement, which will be replaced with a new extended version to be signed at the next summit meeting.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: July 2013

Full press-release available at:

http://www.dfg.de/en/service/press/press_releases/2013/press_release_no_19/index.html

9.6 DFG Position Paper on the Future of the German Research System



Document calls for better core support for universities, differentiation between research organizations and funding organizations, excellence funding in the DFG budget

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation), the central, self-governing research funding organization in Germany, presented a position paper on the future of the German research system at its annual press conference in Berlin on 4 July 2013. Drawn up by the DFG's Executive Committee and Executive Board, the document was the subject of intense

discussion among representatives from all areas of science and the humanities and the federal and state government funding bodies at the DFG's Annual Meeting, which took place from 1 to 3 July in Berlin.

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Full article available at:

http://www.dfg.de/en/service/press/press_releases/2013/press_release_no_26/index.html

9.7 Increased 2014 Budget for the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research



The Federal Government is continuing to make targeted investments in education and research even in times of budgetary consolidation. In 2012, the budget of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) increased by 11%, the provisions for 2013 grew by 6.3% compared to 2012 (totaling about €13.75 billion or USD 18.4 billion) and, despite the attempt of budgetary consolidation, the Government draft for the 2014 federal budget provides for a further increase in the 2014 budget for the BMBF of about €224 million (USD 300 million), up to a total of some €14 billion (USD 18.7 billion).

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More information available at: <http://www.bmbf.de/en/96.php>

9.8 Germany Woos Top Scientists and Researchers in San Francisco



The 13th Annual Meeting of the German Academic International Network (GAIN) from August 30 through September 1, 2013 in San Francisco is expected to attract roughly 300 of the best German early-career researchers and scientists working in the U.S. and Canada. There they will meet over 150 top-ranking representatives from German research, politics, and industry. For the first time since it was first held in 2001, the final day of the conference, Sunday September 1, 2013, is also open to non-German researchers, seeking information on transatlantic careers and collaborations. This year's motto "Priority for Science and Research" addresses Germany's growing demand for highly qualified young scientists. Furthermore, the current debate about the future and sustainability of the German research system will be a central theme.

In various workshops and networking events the participants get a chance to debate, make valuable contacts, and communicate their concerns and ideas directly to the representatives from Germany. Expected guests are the Deputy Secretary in the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, Cornelia Quennet-Thielen, and the Minister for Science, Research and Culture of the State of Brandenburg, Prof. Sabine Kunst. The leadership of all German research and funding organizations as well as the top German universities will be in attendance. The Keynote will be delivered by Dr. Ijad Madisch, founder and CEO of Research Gate, an online social network for researchers, who is also a former participant of the GAIN conference and a returnee from the U.S.

The conference is hosted by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and the German Research Foundation (DFG) under the umbrella of their joint initiative GAIN, and funded by the Federal Ministry of Research and Education.

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Press release available at:

<http://live.rig2013.aperto.de/default/dachportal/en/Infoservice/News/2013/08/2013-08-14-germany-woos-top-scientists-and-researchers-in-san-francisco.html>

10 Greece

10.1 University of Athens on Strike



Athens University, Greece

The rector of the country's largest university has said that the institution has no choice but to strike against the government's plans to remove hundreds of its administrative staff. Theodoros Pelegrinis, the head of the University of Athens, said the government's so-called mobility scheme would leave the university unable to function. He was speaking a day after the university senate voted to keep the college closed until next Monday. This means that the registration of incoming students, which was supposed to begin on September 11, will be postponed. Freshmen have until September 27 to enroll. Unions say that of the 6,239 administrative staff at third-level institutions across the country, the government is seeking to place 1,765, or 25%, in its mobility scheme, which will end in dismissal if another job for them cannot be found in the public sector.

In an interview on Skai TV, Pelegrinis said the university was facing its worst crisis in a decade. Although its state's subsidy had been halved since 2009, the university was able to function, Pelegrinis said. But the decision to move staff out as part of the mobility scheme has led to an "impasse", meaning it can no longer function. "Considering the operating needs of the university, the number of 1,300 staff is not excessive," the rector said, pointing to possible implications for the health sector given that the university supports 66 clinics in public hospitals. Reports suggest that Pelegrinis' university could lose up to 500 staff members under the mobility scheme. Countering allegations that the universities are sabotaging efforts to create more efficient third-level institutions, Pelegrinis noted that the University of Athens has already carried out an assessment of its staff. According to university's general director of administration, Panagiotis Fotopoulos, while the US has 9.5 administrators per 100 students and the UK 7.9, at the University of Athens the ratio is just 2 per 100. In addition, the US and UK have 8.7 and 7.3 teaching staff per 100 students while Athens has 3.1 per 100.

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Full article available at: <http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.newsmain&id=1463>

11 Italy

11.1 Italian Universities Drop in Student Numbers

Student numbers at Italian universities have fallen by 17 per cent in the past decade, according to an analysis by the country's National University Council (CUN). The number of professors and PhD students has also dropped, a trend that cannot be explained solely by changing demographics, according to Andrea Lenzi, the Council's president. "The reasons can be found in the economic crisis as well as in the Italian social structure, which does not consider the degree as a precious intellectual investment and a useful tool for a fast profit," he explains.

In December last year, the Italian government proposed a further 4 per cent cut to the Ordinary Fund for Higher Education (FOO), the country's core fund for academic research. The fund has already been much reduced, from €7.5 billion (USD 10 billion) in 2009 to €6.6 billion (USD 8.8 billion) in 2013. The analysis has found that Italian universities have dropped 1,195 courses in the past six years. This reduction was caused by FOO spending cuts and a drop in numbers of teaching staff, as retiring professors have not been replaced, the council says.

A lack of funding has also caused numbers of PhD students to drop dramatically, according to the analysis. Italy now has 6,000 fewer PhD students than the EU average for a nation of its size, the CUN says. Government negotiations over PhD reform, which were supposed to simplify funding, are still in deadlock, and half of the country's prospective PhD students do not have a fellowship.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: March 2013

Full article available at:

http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_news&template=rr_2col&view=article&articleId=1295516

11.2 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.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: May 2013

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

11.3 Italy's First Academic Research Assessment Published



Italy's first-ever national research assessment has been received cautiously by scientists, who demanded greater transparency in its data collection process. The Italian university research evaluation agency, Anvur, published the results of the assessment exercise on 16 July. It is the first time research performance data have been evaluated across Italy, and the results will be used to distribute €540 million (USD 718 million) in funding for academia. The Anvur assessment examined nearly 185,000 publications and other research "products" produced by professors and scientists at 133 universities and research institutes. The analysis of the results shows that the University of Padova is the best of the large universities, the University of Trento is the best of the medium-sized universities and Sant'Anna School

of Advanced Studies in Pisa stands out among the small ones. Overall, the best universities are mostly in the north of the country. "The gap between north and south is unfortunately growing," warns Stefano Fantoni, Anvur's president.

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Full article available at:

http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_news&template=rr_2col&view=article&articleId=1337348

12 Ireland

12.1 Science Foundation Ireland to get extra powers under new bill

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is to be given the power to fund applied research in addition to its existing remit to fund basic research in universities. SFI currently provides grants to researchers and research groups based in higher education institutions on the basis of competitive calls for proposals and on the basis of international peer review. The Department of Enterprise said in a statement that it would extend SFI's remit to include applied research in order to bring research funded by SFI "closer to market which in turn increases the potential of research to yield commercial opportunities and jobs". The extension of SFI's remit is to be granted under the new Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) (Amendment) Bill 2012, published by the government. The Bill also includes a new function to enable SFI to promote and support awareness and understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

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Full article available at:

<http://www.businesspost.ie/#!/story/Home/News/Science+Foundation+Ireland+to+get+extra+powers+under+new+bill/id/19410615-5218-50c8-28a7-527e06441310>

12.2 Ireland's Largest Ever € 300 Million State/Industry Co-Funded Research Investment

The Irish Government has announced a landmark investment of € 300 million (USD 396 million) in scientific research which is closely aligned to industry and enterprise needs, job opportunities and societal goals. €200 million of Irish Exchequer funding will be invested in seven world class research centers of scale. The new funding will be delivered through Science Foundation Ireland's (SFI) Research Centers Program coupled with over €100 million in cash and in-kind contributions from industry partners, making it the largest ever combined state/industry co-funding announcement of its kind in the research field in Ireland. The funding will be provided over the next six years with a mid-term review. Thus far 156 industry partners are connected to the centers, spanning multinationals and SMEs, including Cisco, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, Medtronic, GSK, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, BT, Kerry Group, The Irish Times, ESB, Alere, RTE, Intune Networks, Intel, IBM, Roche, UTRC Ireland and many more.

The centers will be in the following areas:

- Big Data – with the explosion of internet based information through this center we will see the development of breakthrough data analytics technologies to make Ireland a global leader in this rapidly expanding area;
- Marine renewable energy – Ireland is one of the best locations in the world in terms of marine renewable energy resources. This center will look to generate energy technologies for industry from wave, tidal and floating wind devices.
- Nanotechnology/engineered materials – will deliver world-leading research across a number of key enterprise sectors, most notably ICT, industrial technology and medical devices and delivery systems. Ireland is currently ranked 6th globally in nanotechnology and 8th in materials science.
- Food for health/functional foods; the center will address important issues such as disease prevention, healthy ageing and improved population health in general. Ireland is currently ranked 2nd in the world in probiotics research.
- Photonics – which is the generation, manipulation and utilization of light, is an important enabling technology that underpins many areas such as future networks, communications systems and medical devices.

- Perinatal Translational Research – will focus on fast-tracking discoveries relating to most complications of pregnancy and newborn babies and service a huge societal and economic need globally.

- Drug synthesis/crystallization – this center will develop new mechanisms and better control processes to produce new and improved drug formulations and safe medicines. This center is of major importance to Ireland's pharmaceutical sector, a sector which generated over €56 billion in exports in 2012.

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Full article available at: <http://www.sfi.ie/news-events/press-releases/300million-investment-in-7-world-class-research-centres-minister-bruton-minister-sherlock/>

12.3 Ireland at the Heart of European Information and Communication Technologies R&D

Ireland may sit on the geographic edge of the EU, but when it comes to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the country is at the very heart of Europe's digital industry. According to the industry association ICT Ireland, the ICT sector is a thriving and growing industry; 9 of the top 10 global companies maintains a presence in Ireland. Could this be the country's foundation for economic recovery?

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Full article available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/headlines/news/article_13_03_17_en.html&item=Infocentre&artid=29393

13 Macedonia



13.1 Updates from the FYR of Macedonia

The Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic (FYR) of Macedonia adopted a new Law on Innovation Activity in May 2013, which determines the innovation activity, as well as principles for commercialization of the results of the innovation activity, the scientific research activity, the technical and technological knowledge and of the inventions. The law envisions establishment of a body entitled "Fund for innovation and technological development", which will finance and logistically support the innovative projects in order to improve the competitiveness of Macedonian companies through development of new knowledge and innovation.

In June 2013, the first ranked university in the country "Ss. Cyril and Methodus" University in Skopje opened a new Regional Centre for social innovations, through its Faculty for Computer Science and Engineering. The center is specialized for development of mobile applications, as well as for development and testing of Information Technology (IT) products and services for the private sector.

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Source : http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/mk/country

14 The Netherlands

14.1 First Dutch laboratory opens in Antarctica

On Sunday 27 January, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) opened the first Dutch laboratory on Antarctica. The Dirck Gerritsz Laboratory consists of four sea containers that have been converted into laboratories and placed in a docking station. In the laboratory Dutch scientists will carry out research into algae and traces of iron in the warming Antarctic seawater, for example.

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Full article available at: <http://www.nwo.nl/en/news-and-events/news/2013/nwo-opens-first-dutch-laboratory-on-antarctica.html>

15 Norway

15.1 Trade and Industry on Board in Norway

The Research council of Norway announced more than NOK 1.2 billion (USD 210 million) in funding for the application deadline of February 13 2013. About half of this amount was earmarked for Knowledge-building Projects for Industry and Innovation Projects for the Industrial Sector. Trade and industry accounted for roughly one-fourth of the 1 054 grant application submitted. The Program for User-driven Research-based Innovation (BIA) has an annual budget of NOK 390 million (USD 68 million), making it one of the Research Council's largest programs. The program is an open competitive arena targeting research and development projects in trade and industry that fall thematically or scientifically outside the scope of other industry-oriented activities under the Research Council.

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Full article available at:

http://www.forskingsradet.no/en/Newsarticle/Trade_and_industry_on_board/1253983852287

15.2 Norway Says Yes to the EU Program Horizon 2020

The Norwegian Government has announced that it wishes to take part as a full member of the new EU framework program for research and innovation, Horizon 2020.

"European collaboration on research and innovation is important because it enhances the quality of Norwegian research, it enables us to contribute ourselves, and it gives us better access to international knowledge development. This in turn leads to innovation," states Kristin Halvorsen, Norway's Minister of Education and Research, in a press release. "The Research Council of Norway is very pleased that the Government has confirmed that our close research cooperation with the EU is to continue," says Director General of the Research Council, Arvid Hallén, in a comment to the decision.

The Research Council has already started planning how to organize and administer the activities that will best promote Norwegian mobilization efforts and assist research groups and companies with their activities under Horizon 2020. Norway's overall contribution to Horizon 2020 is expected to total close to NOK 16 billion (USD 2.7 billion) over a period which may extend to 2025.

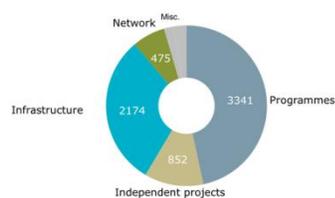
Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: June 2013

Full article available at:

http://www.forskingsradet.no/en/Newsarticle/Norway_says_yes_to_Horizon_2020/1253986729745

Note: Norway is one of very few western European countries not to be a member of the European Union. Norway has held a referendum on the issue of EU membership twice, first in 1972 and then again in 1994. On both occasions, a rather narrow majority of the Norwegian population rejected membership (in 1994, 52% were against and 48% were in favour). As a consequence, Norway is not a Member State of the EU, and the relationship with the Union is based on other forms of co-operation. In the field of research, Norway is participating in a range of EU programs such as the Framework program for Research and Innovations (FP7) and the European Research Council. Source: <http://www.eu-norway.org/>

15.3 Key Figures for the Norwegian Research Council in 2012



Approximately one-third of all public research funding in Norway is channeled via the Research Council of Norway. Key figures summarizing the Research Council's activities for the period 2008-2012 are now available. The publication Key figures for the Research Council provides statistics for projects, allocations and grant applications and key figures for the Council's allocations for the period 2008-2012. Each year the Research Council receives around 5 500 grant proposals for funding of new projects.

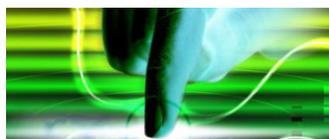
The Research Council administers allocations from 16 ministries. In 2012, these allocations totaled more than NOK 7.2 billion (USD 1.2 billion). Nearly 40% of this funding is allocated by the Ministry of Education and Research. Nearly 75% of the Research Council's allocations are awarded to institutions of higher education and independent research institutes and nearly 45% of the total allocations are distributed via the Council's research programs. In recent years there has been a substantial increase in allocations to projects seeking funding under independent competitive arenas at the Research Council that are not affiliated with specific research programs. The subject fields "Mathematics and Natural Sciences" and "Technology" still receive the largest proportion of project funding across all sectors. In terms of percentage, however, the largest increase in allocations is found in the categories of "Humanities", "Social Sciences" and "Agriculture and Fisheries Science/Veterinary Sciences".

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Full article available at:

http://www.forskningradet.no/en/Newsarticle/Key_figures_for_the_Research_Council_for_2012/1253988479810

15.4 New Norwegian National Strategy Gives Momentum to ICT Research



In the new strategy document, the Norwegian Government points to quality, value creation and benefit to society as areas of particular focus. The strategy encompasses a broad range of sectors and industries and will have a major impact on the growth and prosperity of Norwegian society at large – as evidenced by the fact that it has been signed by a full 15 government ministers. "The Research Council provided input to the process of drawing up the strategy based on analyses of ongoing research in addition to dialogue with key actors in industry and the rest of society," explains Anne Kjersti Fahlvik, Executive Director of the Research Council's Division for Innovation. "We are pleased to see that our views have been integrated into the strategy." "One of our clearest recommendations has been to strengthen the foundation for research by focusing on quality, researcher recruitment and the internationalization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) research. Basic research and recruiting researcher talent are critical for the private and public sectors alike." "The ICT strategy's emphasis on internationalization of research very much aligns with Research Council philosophy," continues Ms Fahlvik. "Research is by nature international, and we are dependent on access to the best international research as well as top-notch international researchers if we are to satisfy our needs for ICT knowledge."

The strategy points out that Norway's social and economic welfare are closely tied to ICT. The document stresses three important areas of focus: information security, ICT in the public sector, and infrastructure in health and health care services.

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Full article available at:

http://www.forskningradet.no/en/Newsarticle/New_national_strategy_will_give_momentum_to_ICT_research/1253989075786

16 Poland

16.1 Poland supports Open Access to scientific publications

Scientific publications should be freely available online, according to the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. In the middle of 2013, the Ministry will determine how fast it can happen, announced Deputy Minister of Science Prof. Maria Elżbieta Orłowska. "Currently we pay PLN 160-170 million (\$ 38-41 million) per year for access to scientific publications. At the same time, the Virtual Library of Science, which is maintained for the money, is available to a limited number of people: researchers and students, but not to entrepreneurs or managers in companies - explained Deputy Minister Orłowska. Virtual Library of Science is an Internet portal where employees of universities and research institutions can read journals from databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, including such titles as Nature and Science. The fee for access to the online resources comes from the State budget. Deputy Minister of Science explained that the business model, in which scientific journals sell their content to readers and thus earn, slowly becomes obsolete. Open access philosophy, increasingly popular all over the world, assumes that the author pays for the article publication. Magazine publisher no longer charges readers and articles are simply freely available online. According to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, results of research Polish scientists carried out with public money should be published this way. The ministry is willing to pay for these publications and, with open access becoming more common, hopes to gradually reduce spending on paid subscriptions. "This way we can also strengthen the cooperation between science and the economy. Recent, often groundbreaking research results will be available to, say, factory engineers or new tech companies. Authors themselves should also welcome this. Open access papers will certainly find more readers" - believes Orłowska. In mid-2013, the Ministry of Science intends to present the schedule of transition of Polish scientific publications into open access model and detailed rules for the payment for publications in open journals. However, funding for this purpose can only be guaranteed in the budget for 2014.

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Full article available at: <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/scientific-research/polish-science/science/science/artykul/ministry-of-science-scientific-publications-should-be-available-online-for-free/>

16.2 Young Polish researchers win grants totaling \$12.9 million (PLN 40 million)

Thirty-seven young scientists were awarded \$12.9 million (PLN 40 million) in the 3rd edition of the LIDER Program of the Polish National Centre for Research and Development. The LIDER Program allows scholars under 35 years of age to get research funding up about \$386,120 (PLN 1.2 million) per project and aims at encouraging scientists to cooperate with businesses as well as stimulating business investments in research and development (R&D). Public and private academic institutions and business entities can apply for funding. Young scientists must demonstrate that they are prepared to undertake independent research on a project that can be applied in practice.

"The winners will learn to manage their own teams, as well as planning and fund research. Research today generally involves serious funds. Being able to manage them effectively is an important skill" – explained the National Centre for Research and Development director, Prof. Krzysztof Jan Kurzydłowski.

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Full article available at: <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/scientific-research/polish-science/science/science/artykul/40-million-for-scientific-leaders>

Additional information:

The Polish National Centre for Research and Development is the implementing agency of the Minister of Science and Higher Education. It was established in 2007 as an entity in charge of the performance of the tasks within the area of national science, science and technology and innovation policies. More at: www.ncbir.pl/en/

16.3 EIB Supports Research and Development in Poland with Almost EUR 1 Bn



The European Investment Bank (EIB) is providing two loans amounting to EUR 970 million (USD 1.3 billion) for research and development (R&D) activities in Polish research institutes, universities and business enterprises. With these loans, the EIB will assist Poland in improving its readiness to contribute to the common European Research Area by strengthening R&D infrastructure potential and the R&D capabilities of scientific institutions.

The first EIB loan of EUR 490 million (USD 655 million) will finance R&D project grants, which will be awarded by the National Science Centre and the National Centre for Research and Development through open calls to Ph.D. students, post-doctoral fellows and senior scientists. These projects will concern either basic or applied research and will be implemented at public research institutes, universities and business enterprises across Poland.

The EIB is lending a further EUR 480 million (USD 642 million) for the statutory research tasks performed by all categories of scientific and academic staff employed by Polish public universities, colleges and research institutes in the majority of scientific disciplines (except medical research performed at university hospitals and defence-related research). Through this loan, the EIB will also support capital investment of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education in public R&D infrastructure and scientific equipment.

Note: The EIB is the long-term lending institution of the European Union owned by its Member States. It makes long-term finance available for sound investment in order to contribute towards EU policy goals.

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Source: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_BEI-13-114_en.htm?locale=FR

16.4 Polish government proposes assignment of ownership of inventions to academics not their employing institutions

The Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education published proposed amendments to the law on higher education and passed it for public consultations, which stipulate the assignment of ownership of inventions to academics not their employing institutions, alongside additional regulations, facilitating technology transfer by university-owned companies.



According to the proposal, researchers employed by public higher education institutions and students would retain rights to their inventions. This presents an exception from the general rule related to the employee inventions, which in the Polish legal system belong to their employers. Universities would be entitled to 10%-25% of future profits, derived from the future commercialisation. The proposed regulation is expected to stimulate the commercialisation of research results by offering direct financial motivation to scientists and simplifying technology transfer processes, which are currently complicated due to the applicability of regulations

concerning public finance. The same act stipulates also that transfers of intellectual property rights between universities and their special-purpose company, dealing with technology transfer, will not be subject to public procurement regulations and will not require consent of the Minister of Treasure.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: September 2013

Source:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/pl/highlights/highlight_001

4

16.5 Planned government budget cuts to affect public R&D expenditures, but the expected impact remains limited

The Polish government submitted on August the 21, 2013 to the parliament a plan for wide-ranging budget cuts in response to the lower than expected economic growth in the first half of the year. The proposed savings include also 3.2% reduction of the science budget for 2013 (decrease by 160.2m PLN). The savings will affect among others two R&D funding agencies. The annual budget of the National Science Centre (NCN), funding basic research, will be reduced by approximately 1.6% (decrease by 15m PLN - USD 4.6m), and the National Center for Research and Development (NCBiR), distributing funds for applied research, will have its budget cut by approximately 5.4% (subtracting 70m PLN - USD 21.7 m from previous plans).



At the same time, the amended science budget for 2013 maintains the previously agreed investments, as well as the planned increases in remuneration for scientists employed by public sector organizations.

The cuts to NCN and NCBiR budgets are not alarming, when taking into account past performance in executing budgets. In 2012, the expenditures in the science budget amounted to 92.57% of the original plan, so actual annual savings amounted to 7.43% of the budget. NCN managed to spend 96.80% of its awarded budget, and NCBiR - 95.36%.

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Source:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/pl/highlights/highlight_0017

17 Romania

17.1 Romanian Protest

All 19 members of Romania's National Research Council resigned on April 12 in protest at budget cuts and interference. The government had told the council how it should distribute basic research grants after slashing its budget on 8 April. Two days later, the education ministry launched a call for proposals in applied research, but under new rules removing a legal requirement for international peer review. The council says that such external review is necessary: in January, its respected peer-review system identified plagiarism in grant applications.

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Full article available at: <http://www.nature.com/news/seven-days-12-18-april-2013-1.12802>

17.2 Four months after the mass resignation of the members of the Romanian National Council for Scientific Research, their positions are still vacant



Appointments for the National Council for Scientific Research (NCSR) are still pending. NCSR is responsible among others for coordinating three programs of the National Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Plan 2007-2013 (i.e. Ideas, People, Capacities). All members of the NCSR resigned on 12 April 2013, motivating their decision by the reduced allocation of public R&D expenditure in the national budget for 2013 and the associated decisions of cutting the budgets for the undergoing projects, postponing the announcement of the accepted projects from the 2012 competitions, and the interruption of calls on certain financing lines. Replying shortly thereafter to the message of the NCSR members, the Delegate Minister for Research Mr. Mihnea Costoiu declared (according to Mediafax) that the budget for 2013 has in fact slightly

increased compared with the previous years, but that the success rate for projects having started these years was not sustainable in a multiannual planning.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: September 2013

Source:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/ro/highlights/highlight_0008

18 Russia

18.1 Russia plans to send probe to moon in 2015

Russia will resume a long-dormant quest to explore the moon by sending an unmanned probe there in 2015, the head of the space agency was quoted as saying on Tuesday. The craft, called Luna-Glob, or Moon-Globe, will be carried by the first rocket to blast off from a new facility that Russia is building in its far eastern Amur region, Roskosmos director Vladimir Popovkin said, according to the Interfax news agency. "We will begin our exploration of the moon from there," he said of the new space centre that will decrease Russia's reliance of the Baikonur Cosmodrome in the ex-Soviet nation Kazakhstan, which it leases.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: January 2013

Full article available at: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/01/15/us-russia-space-moon-idUKBRE90E0ZS20130115?feedType=RSS&feedName=scienceNews>

18.2 Uniting European and Russian Expertise in Shared Nanotechnology Research

The goal of enhanced integration between the European Union and the Russian Federation was significantly advanced by a series of three linked EU-Russian research projects. With matching funding provided from the European Union and the Russian Federation, the three projects focused on a work program entitled "Nanostructured Sensors". As well as creating mutual benefit through increased co-operation in teaching and research, including both short and long term exchanges of researchers, the aim was also to optimize the added-value for both sides of their respective specialist expertise and to realize the commercial potential such collaboration could produce.

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Full article available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/star/index_en.cfm?p=ss-sawhot-s3-ingenious&calledby=infocentre&item=Infocentre&artid=29414

18.3 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.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: May 2013

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

18.4 Russian Government Approves Universities for World-Class Bid



Tomsk Polytechnic University,
Russia

The Russian government has officially approved the list of leading universities that will receive state subsidies this year of RUB592 million (US\$20 million) each to help improve their images in the international arena and their positions in global university rankings. The selection process, which was conducted by the Ministry of Education and was based on an evaluation of universities' development programs, led to the listing of several of the country's leading technical universities. They include Tomsk Polytechnic University, the Higher School of Economics, Moscow, the Engineering Physics Institute, the Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys and the National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics. According to state plans, the funding should help at least five domestic universities make the list of the top 100 of the world's leading universities by 2020, which is in accordance with a directive recently issued by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The government also intends to allocate funds to strengthen the connection between the country's leading universities and the national defense industry. It is planned that a portion of the 'world-class' funds will be used to promote Russian universities abroad, and to organize tours for Western journalists to Russian universities. There are also plans to create a website profiling top institutions.

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Full article available at: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130911144451887>

19 Slovakia

19.1 Slovakia Launches New Policy Measures Supporting R&D and Innovation



The Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports signed contracts on building eight University Science Parks with six Universities in July 2013. The total value of contracts is €280m (USD 371 million), of which €15m (USD 20 million) is provided by the state budget and the rest by the Operational Program Research and Development (OPRD) provided by the European Union. All projects must be completed by June 2015. The University Science Parks is the most important policy initiative supported by the OPRD. The OPRD invested in several hundreds of small-scale projects and accounted for low spending rates in 2008-2013. Some 38.5% of the program budget was spent by June 30, 2013. The large-scale projects help increasing spending rates and focus financial support on selected R&D themes. Generous support from the EU Structural Funds contrasts with meager national funding for research and innovation. The Slovak Ministry of Economy and the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency launched the first scheme for innovation vouchers on July 1, 2013. The value of one voucher was set to €3500 (USD 4647) and the total budget of the scheme is €100,000 (USD 133,000). All projects supported by the voucher scheme must be completed by November 30, 2013.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: August 2013

Source:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/sk/highlights/highlight_0012

20 Spain

20.1 Spain Urged To Pull Its Weight in European Science

Cuts to Spain's participation in large European research programs, including in astronomy, could leave the country's scientists without collaboration opportunities, researchers have warned. Spain's ongoing hesitation to pay its subscription fee to the European Extremely Large Telescope, which is estimated to be €40 million (US\$ 51 million) over the next decade, has alarmed scientists in the country. If it decides not to pay, Spanish companies and researchers will be left out of the European Southern Observatory's project, astronomers argue in a petition to government launched on 8 March. At the time of writing, about 19,000 people had signed the online petition, including Xavier Barcons, president of the ESO council and a researcher at the Institute of Physics of Cantabria. On a smaller scale, Spanish research institutions owe money to the European Science Foundation (ESF). Earlier this month the ESF announced it had frozen funding for Spain's researchers for activities taking place after 30 June, unless contributions by the country's member organizations are paid in full.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: April 2013

Full article available at:

http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_news&template=rr_2col&view=article&articleid=1313161

20.2 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.

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

20.3 The Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) is under a major budget crisis

The Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) is dealing with one of its largest budget crisis in years.



Since 2010, the CSIC has suffered large budget cuts from the government, with approximately 500 million Euros (USD 660 million) of total reduction.

The council needs 100 million Euros (USD 132 million) to make it to the end of the year. The government has injected 25 million Euros (USD 33 million) and promised to advance some payments coming from scientific projects.

The CSIC has absorbed the savings of its institutes to deal with the cash shortages. The decision has raised important concerns among the directors of its institutes about the sustainability of the centres. The budget assign to the institutes does not guarantee the renewal of research contracts and the operationalisation of running projects. More than 100 directors sent a letter to the government explaining the consequences of the current financial situation last 19 July. Researchers of the organisation launched a new campaign to collect support from other researchers and citizens. The initiative has collected more than 235,000 signatures through and on-line call that were sent to the government on 30 July.

The CSIC is the Spain's largest scientific organisation with about 15,000 employees and one of the most important research performers of the country, with about the 20 per cent of the national scientific production.

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Source:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/es/highlights/highlight_0017

20.4 Spanish Universities Launch 'Adopt a Student' Scheme



Spanish universities are considering a move to set up charitable funds so that private individuals can sponsor the studies of those from low income families. "In the same way that one might sponsor-a-child (in the Third World) individuals could sponsor a student in Spain by contributing to their tuition fees," explained Adelaida de la Calle, the dean of Malaga University and chair of Association of Spanish University Deans. The emergency measure is being considered after figures showed that some 30,000 students are on the verge of abandoning their studies at the start of the academic year because they can't meet tuition or living costs. Access to state sponsorships have been restricted leaving students from low-income families struggling to fund further education at a time when youth unemployment in Spain has soared to a record 56 per cent. Enrolment fees for bachelor degrees at public universities in Spain vary between €680 (USD 900) and €1280 (USD 1670) per academic year depending on the regional authority responsible. The fee payable by students amounts to between 15 to 25 per cent of the total cost of the degree. Fees at private universities are far higher.

Public funding of universities has been cut by 12.3 per cent – €1.2 billion (USD 1.6 billion) since 2010 as part of a series of austerity measures designed to slash Spain's public deficit.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: September 2013

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/10289213/Spanish-universities-launch-adopt-a-student-scheme.html>

21 Sweden

21.1 Sweden Invests in Environmental Nano Research

The Swedish Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research (MISTRA) is to invest SEK 40 million (USD 6.3 million) in a new research program to explore the uses of nanotechnology. A call for proposals is now being issued, to find research environments that can both survey the environmental effects of nanomaterials and develop new applications to solve various environmental problems.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: March 2013

Full article available at:

<http://www.mistra.org/en/mistra/news/news-archive/1-24-2013-environmental-nano-research-in-new-mistra-programme-.html>

21.2 Is Sweden Recovering from the International Student Crash?



Uppsala University, Sweden

Swedish universities are looking to build on the first signs of recovery in the international student market, following the collapse in overseas applications when 'full-cost' tuition fees were introduced for non-European students in 2011. But they face a massive uphill task. Many feel more should be done to sweeten the attractiveness of Sweden's higher education, with improved scholarships, greater flexibility in the application process and liberalization of the post-study work environment. The number of international applicants fell dramatically, from 132,000 in 2010 to 15,000 in 2011, as University World News reported two years ago. This was after students from outside the European Union and European Economic Area – EU-EEA – were told to find around €10,000 (US\$13,300) a year to study for a bachelor or masters degree at a Swedish university – or apply for one of the very limited scholarships that the government introduced to try to soften the blow. At a stroke, for thousands of Indian, Pakistani, African and Chinese students, the cost of fees for studying in Sweden became almost the same as going to a British or American university. The result was a fall of 79% in newly enrolled non-EU students for the start of the 2011-12 academic year – a drop from 7,600 to just 1,600, according to the Higher Education in Sweden – 2013 status report, published by the Swedish Higher Education Authority. Numbers did recover in 2012, but only by a meager 7% and meant that just 1,700 'free-mover' students from outside the EU-EEA started degrees in Sweden last autumn.

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Full article available at: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130912120237809>

22 United Kingdom

22.1 UK Research Councils release beta 'Gateway to Research'

Research Councils UK (RCUK) has released on December 12 a 'beta' version of a new web-based portal that gives the public better access to information about research funded by the UK Research Councils. Gateway to Research aims to provide a mechanism for businesses and other interested parties to identify potential partners in universities to develop and commercialize knowledge, and maximize the impact of publicly funded research. The beta Gateway to Research contains information such as who, what and where the Research Councils fund, as well as details about the outcomes, outputs and impact held on RCUK's Research Outcomes System (ROS) and ResearchFish. The information contained within the Gateway to Research beta version is a fixed snapshot of available information on research, containing real data from all grants across all seven Research Councils awarded from 2006 onwards.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: January 2013

More information available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/2012news/Pages/121212.aspx>

22.2 UK Economic and Social Research Council announces new centres and large grants worth £30m

Following the latest call for the centres and large grants competition, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) announced overall funding of nearly £30m (\$36 million) for eight new investments. These investments will focus on a range of subjects including: the impact of welfare, understanding human behaviour, including behaviour change and decision making, dynamics of ethnic identity and relations, the use and manipulation of language in society, applying quantitative method to complex social issues, the global economic crisis and risks to the UK's financial system. The competition was for experienced researchers requiring longer term or extended support for research groups, inter-institutional research networks, linked-project programmes, medium-to-large surveys, other infrastructure or methodological developments, or any related larger scale projects.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: January 2013

Full article and list of funded projects available at: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-and-events/press-releases/24715/new-centres-and-large-grants-funding-announced.aspx>

22.3 UK Research Councils publish impact reports

Minister for Universities and Science David Willetts has announced the publication of the Research Councils UK (RCUK) Impact Report 2012, during his speech at the Policy Exchange to update on progress of the Government's industrial strategy. The report details the various activities through which the Research Councils are working together to achieve greater impact. Additionally, it complements the individual Impact Reports prepared by the Research Councils, also published.

David Willetts said: "These excellent reports show that the UK research base is not only at the cutting edge of scientific and academic discovery, but also is doing more to translate this into practical wider benefits. This helps to keep us ahead in the global race."

In his speech, the Minister also announced further details of the allocation of the additional £600m of funding, mainly for capital investment in science and technology that was announced by the Chancellor George Osborne, in the Autumn Statement in December 2012. The details are as follows:

- \$297.52M (£189m) for e-infrastructure in areas including a new bioinformatics capability in universities, an Environmental Virtual Observatory, and investment in the ESRC-led Life Study, the most ambitious birth cohort study yet, to ensure the UK maintains its leadership in social sciences.
- \$55.09M (£35m) for centres of excellence in Robotics and Autonomous Systems.
- \$78.71M (£50m) to support the implementation of key recommendations from the UK Synthetic Biology Roadmap.
- \$31.49 (£20m) capital investment for the Regenerative Medicine Platform.
- \$102.32M (£65m) in buildings, joint facilities and infrastructure to promote co-location of industry, high-tech business and academic groups on Research and Innovation campuses. There is also a further £30m for capital investment in BBSRC's world-leading Research and Innovation campuses.
- \$70.84M (£45m) in advanced materials research.
- \$47.23M (£30m) to create dedicated R&D facilities to develop and test new grid scale energy storage technologies.
- \$78.71M (£50m) for scientists to upgrade equipment and labs.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: February 2013

Individual Research Council Impact Reports can be accessed through the main link: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/2013news/Pages/130124.aspx>

22.4 UK Research Councils Could Face Mergers

A government review that quietly began earlier this month could lead to major changes at the agencies charged with distributing much of the United Kingdom's scientific funding.

Possible changes to improve efficiency include bringing the roughly £3-billion (US\$4.7-billion) annual spend of all seven research councils into a single pot — potentially resulting in a body that would look rather like the US National Science Foundation (NSF). But observers fear that such a shake-up could bring years of chaos and disrupt the links between funders and the communities they serve.

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Full article available at: <http://www.nature.com/news/uk-research-councils-could-face-mergers-1.12319>

22.5 £21 million (USD 31 million) for New UK Centers for Innovative Manufacturing

Four new research centers, that will develop new ways of manufacturing in the fields of electronics, laser use in production processes, medical devices and food production, have been awarded a total of £21 million (USD 31 million) Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) grant funding as part of a £45 million (USD 68 million) package of investments in manufacturing research announced today by David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science.

The new Centers, which will begin work later in the year, will involve academics from 15 universities across the UK and over 60 project partners from industry.

EPSRC currently supports 12 centers across a wide range of fields, from Additive Manufacturing to Industrial Sustainability to Continuous Manufacturing and Crystallization. These four new centers bring the total to 16. The centers are:

- EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Large Area Electronics – led by Dr Chris Rider at the University of Cambridge – starting October 2013. Grant value £5.6 million.
- EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Food – led by Dr Tim Foster at the University of Nottingham – starting September 2013. Grant value £4.5 million.
- EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Laser-based Production Processes – led by Professor Duncan Hand at Heriot-Watt University – starting October 2013. Grant value £5.6 million.

EPSRC Centre for Innovative Manufacturing in Medical Devices – led by Professor John Fisher at the University of Leeds – starting October 2013. Grant value £5.7 million.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: March 2013

Full article available at: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/NEWSEVENTS/NEWS/2013/Pages/newcentres.aspx>

22.6 UK Minister announces £47 million (USD 70 million) investment in engineering research projects

New innovative engineering projects and an international partnership between the UK and US have been announced by the UK's Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts, at the first Global Grand Challenges Summit held in London on March 12-13. The event was organized by the Royal Academy of Engineering, the US National Academy of Engineering and the Chinese Academy of Engineering and was supported by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and other partners.

Five Frontier Engineering projects will receive £25 million (USD 37 million) in total. The successful applicants cover a range of topics that align with the themes of the Global Grand Challenges Summit. In addition, four large grants to UK universities, totaling £20 million (USD 30 million), will go to projects that match the themes of Resilience, Health, and Technology & Growth. They will develop new diagnostic tools and therapies in health, explore the use of hexagonal structures in technology, and improve urban infrastructure planning and modeling.

A new call for proposals from UK and US teams to research provision of clean water for all will have between £1-2 million (USD 1.5-3 million) to allocate. This will be issued via collaboration between the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

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Full article available at:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2013/Pages/risingtomeetglobalchallenges.aspx>

22.7 PhD Training Given £84 Million Boost in the UK

The UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is this year investing £84.2 million (USD 128 million) in postgraduate training through its annual Doctoral Training Grants (DTGs). This year's investment is the largest ever round of DTGs made by EPSRC, it includes £10 million (USD 15 million) for Doctoral Prizes and £1 million (USD 1.5 million) for Vacation Bursaries.

The DTGs are awarded to universities for the provision of postgraduate study and are allocated each year on the basis of EPSRC research grant income. The grants allow institutions to be flexible in terms of student recruitment and retention, and enable them to vary the length of support (between three and four years) dependent on the project. This year, 39 universities will benefit from the Doctoral Training Grants funding, which ranges from £287,000 (USD 435 778) to nearly £9 million (USD 14 million). The flexibility of the DTG mechanism allows universities to leverage funds, for example from industry, and potentially support higher numbers of students.

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: April 2013

More information available at:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2013/Pages/traininggiven84millionboost.aspx>

22.8 UK Scientists Fear Further Cuts

With anxiety rising about what the immediate future may hold for Britain's science funding, the man responsible for the nation's finances is trying to allay researchers' fears. Science "is a personal priority for me", chancellor of the exchequer George Osborne told reporters on 6 June after a ceremony to mark the completion of the roof of the new £650-million (US\$1.1-billion) Francis Crick Institute under construction in London. On 26 June, Osborne is set to unveil the next comprehensive spending review (CSR), which sets spending for government departments. He said that he hoped to make clear the government's "long-term commitment" to research in the new review, but scientists fear another budget freeze. Asked if he could cut science after his supportive statements, the chancellor said that he would not pre-empt the CSR but added: "You can read between the lines that I'm going to do everything I can to make sure Britain has a bright scientific future."

Analysts are especially keen to know what the government will do with the 'ring fence' that was placed around the science budget in 2010, freezing it at £4.6 billion (US\$7.1-billion) a year. The fence spared core spending areas - such as grants that are awarded by the country's research councils - from the cuts inflicted on other public sectors, although the science budget still lost money in real terms each year. The umbrella group Universities UK has calculated that, when inflation is taken into account, the deficit is £600 million (US\$934 million) over the current four-year CSR period.

The 2010 CSR moved capital spending in science - monies allotted to large infrastructure projects such as buildings and facilities - outside the ring fence, away from the core science budget. That made infrastructure vulnerable to cuts, and projects such as the United Kingdom Infrared Telescope in Hawaii face closure as a result. Many policy analysts expect the ring fence around science funding to be retained in the new CSR. But some worry that it may be removed or that additional categories of science money could be moved outside it. One rumour in circulation is that the Medical Research Council (MRC), which is a major funder of UK medical research, will be moved from the Department for Business, Innovation

and Skills - the department in charge of the science budget - to the Department of Health, where it might be more vulnerable to cuts or to a change in research focus. In a 6 June statement, Ted Bianco, acting director of the biomedical-funding charity the Wellcome Trust, called the prospect "ill advised and potentially damaging", adding that it would shift the balance "from fundamental to applied research when both are essential to medical progress".

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: June 2013

Full article available at: <http://www.nature.com/news/uk-scientists-fear-further-cuts-1.13180>

22.9 UK Students Head to US in Record Numbers for a Better Value of Degree

The majority of top US universities are reporting a rise in the number of places awarded to students from the other side of the Atlantic over the last 12 months, it was revealed. Data obtained by the Telegraph shows that entry rates were up at many institutions this year – including members of the elite Ivy League – such as Yale, Princeton, Columbia and Pennsylvania. Princeton alone admitted 131 British students in 2012/13 – up by a fifth in 12 months and double the number in the mid-2000s. It comes as data from the Independent Schools Council shows four-in-10 private schools had reported a rise in students going to universities abroad this year, while just nine per cent reported a decline. The US was by far the most popular destination. Experts warned that many of Britain's brightest sixth-formers were being attracted to the US by the breadth of the liberal arts curriculum, in which students take a range of subjects before specializing in the third year. It was also claimed that a near tripling of tuition fees in England last autumn to £9,000-a-year (14 000 USD) combined with the lure of more generous scholarships in the US had made overseas study a more realistic option for many students.

Lauren Welch, director of marketing at the US-UK Fulbright Commission, said it had witnessed a doubling of the number of people attending its flagship US college fair in London in recent years "The flexibility offered by the liberal arts curriculum, the quality and reputation of US institutions and the opportunity to experience campus life remain the top reasons why UK students pursue US study," she said.

The Telegraph obtained 2012/13 admissions figures from 11 of the top universities in the US, with the number of British students rising at seven. It emerged that Yale admitted 114 undergraduates and postgraduates, up from 106 a year earlier and 102 two years' ago. Princeton gave places to 131, compared with 110 in the two previous years and just 64 in 2005. Columbia took 198 British students compared with 192 a year earlier and 180 in 2010. At Pennsylvania, 86 places went to UK-based students, up from 73 a year earlier, while Chicago said numbers increased from 83 to 95 in the last year. The University of California, Berkeley, gave places to 53 undergraduates compared with 40 a year earlier, while numbers were up from five to 13 at the University of Michigan. Harvard admitted more British students than any other institution – 211. It was its third-highest annual intake on record but was actually down on the 242 a year earlier.

The Fulbright Commission said a record 9,186 British students took university courses in the US in 2011/12 – the latest available figures – but it anticipated that numbers would be up in 2012/13.

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Full article available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/10092413/Students-head-to-US-in-record-numbers-for-a-better-value-of-degree.html>

22.10 UK and US Launch Global Partnership Initiative

In a new global initiative, America and Britain have joined forces to forge university partnerships with emerging economies. The aim is to achieve 40 trilateral partnerships involving 120 universities worldwide in the first year, and up to 600 over five years. The UK-US Global Innovation Initiative, which will last for up to five years, was announced by UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and US Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington DC, after the signing of a memorandum of understanding on 10 June. At a joint press conference on 12 June, Kerry said the initiative would support multilateral research emphasizing science, technology and engineering, and would focus on issues such as climate change and sustainable

development. The project would, he added, “bolster collaborations between universities in the United States and the United Kingdom” and further higher education cooperation between the countries – a priority for both President Barack Obama and Prime Minister David Cameron. The initiative was billed as “the first multilateral higher education program working directly with the US and UK governments”. It will be funded by the US State Department and Britain’s Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, or BIS.

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Full article available at: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130614081202630>

22.11 New UK-India research partnerships unveiled

The growing strength of joint UK-India research was highlighted by the announcement of 12 new collaborations in the areas of Advanced Manufacturing and Smart Energy Grids and Energy Storage. The new projects will be supported by £8.3 million (US\$ 13 million) from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) through the Manufacturing and Research Councils UK Energy Program themes, with matched resources from India’s Department of Science and Technology (DST). There will be seven projects in Advanced Manufacturing and five in Smart Energy Grids and Energy Storage.

The new research grants involve over 30 industry partners from the UK and India, contributing over £1 million (US\$ 1.56 million) to the research projects. Partners include: Rolls-Royce, Bharat Heavy Electricals, E.ON, National Grid and Mott Macdonald. The work of RCUK is supported in India by RCUK India, which is based at the British High Commission, New Delhi. It plays a key role in the facilitation of UK-India research opportunities.

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Full article available at: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2013/Pages/perfectmatch.aspx>

22.12 UK Clamps Down, France Eases Visas to Attract Students from India

Just a week after reports that the United Kingdom is considering imposing cash bonds on Indian students entering the country, France has announced a slew of measures, including easing certain visa rules, to attract Indian students to its higher education institutions. Special attention will now be given to students living far from any French consulate or office of Campus France – the governmental agency promoting French higher education – in an attempt to simplify and expedite visa procedures. France’s announcement is in direct contrast to the UK’s new visa rules, which aim to curb immigration from countries in Africa and Asia including India and Pakistan, but which will also affect foreign students wanting to enter the UK for studies.



Under new UK rules announced in June, some individuals will have to furnish a ‘bond’ or deposit of £3,000 (US\$4,500), which they would have to forfeit if they overstayed in Britain. Students are included in the measure although the ‘bond’ is not aimed specifically at them. Other proposals made in recent weeks include charging international students a fee to use Britain’s National Health Service, which has been free to international students until now. In Britain, changes to the post-study work visa that came into effect from April last year removed the option for most foreign students of staying on and working for two years after their studies. Under new rules, students can stay for three years post-study only if they find “graduate-level jobs” on salaries of £20,000 (USD 30 000) or higher. Britain’s stringent norms on student visas have resulted in a sharp decline in the number of Indian students in higher education there. Students going to the UK from India fell by 23.5% overall, including a 28% drop at postgraduate level in the past year.

France is making efforts to raise the number of Indian students in France by 50% in the coming five years. Almost 2,600 Indian students opted for higher education in France in 2012, a jump of 50% over the past five years. The vast majority of these students attend the more than 700 courses taught in English in France, the number of which is increasing every year. In order to facilitate travel to France for all Indian citizens who have studied there, as of 14 July, all Indian citizens who have graduated from a French higher education institution subsequently applying for a tourist or business visa for a trip to France will be given a visa with a long period of validity – up to five years if the studies in France were at the masters or PhD levels.

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Full article available at: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130705200907773>

22.13 Report published on the leverage of science and research from public funding



A report has been published which presents evidence of how public investment in science and research levers additional funding from industry, charities and overseas sources.

[Leverage from public funding of science and research](#), published 15 July on the Research Councils UK (RCUK) website, examines the financial contributions made by each sector to the research base and their interdependencies. It illustrates examples of successful leveraging with case studies, provided by stakeholders, of the consequences of withdrawal of public funding from areas of research.

The report was written by Dr Sarah Main, now the Director of the Campaign for Science and Engineering, who last year was on detail from the Medical Research Council to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to gather evidence on the impact of public investment in science and research, looking specifically at leverage. The team also looked at issues including efficiencies in higher education, the dual funding model, and the impact of science and research on local economies.

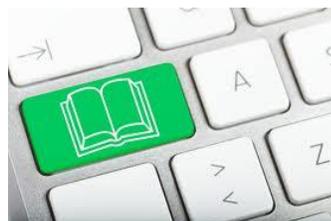
Further information about this work is available in [Dr Main's blog](#), published on the RCUK blog site. A summary of the report is also available.
15 July 2013

Date published in NSF Weekly Wire: July 2013

Full article available at:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/2013news/Pages/130715.aspx>

22.14 UK Parliamentarians Urge Government to Reshape Push for Open-Access Publishing



British parliamentarians are urging the government of the United Kingdom to alter its plans for transitioning to open-access (OA) publishing of research results. In a report released, a committee of the House of Commons says the government should encourage greater use of free institutional repositories, rather than OA journals that charge per-paper fees for publishing. Traditionally, journal publishing pays for itself by charging subscriptions for its journals. This, however, limits access to research to those who can afford subscriptions. Research funders worldwide are pushing to encourage more OA publishing, in which papers are free to anyone, so that results can spread wider and more quickly to those who can make use of them. The problem is that OA publishers have to find another way, apart from subscriptions, to finance their work. Some charge scientists an “article processing charge” (APC), while others are subsidized by governments or other bodies.

Last year, the U.K. government declared that it wanted to move toward OA publishing for all publicly funded research and called on universities to pay researchers' APCs out of existing funds. Also, during a 5-year transition period, the government would continue to finance libraries paying for journal subscriptions so that researchers could continue to see research from abroad published in non-OA journals. Many objected to this policy because APCs would eat into already scarce research funding.

There is an alternative to APC-funded OA (also known as gold OA), in which researchers publish their papers in any journal and then place the peer-reviewed final draft into a free-to-access repository run by their university or other body. Some non-OA journals will allow this practice, but others require the paper to remain under embargo for a period, usually 6 months. Known as green OA, this scheme is considered by some as a transition arrangement until full gold OA is viable.

In its report, the House of Commons' committee recommends that the government amend its policy to favor green OA during the transition and promote standardization and compliance among repositories.

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