



HIGHLIGHTS

on EU policies and funding programmes related to the knowledge-based economy

The “Lisbon Strategy”

DECEMBER 2006

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General EU Information

EU Institutions



❖ European Council

14-15 December 2006 – European Council debates over research and innovation

Europe's Heads of State and Government reacted positively to the Commission's proposals for the establishment of a **European Institute of Technology** (EIT) when they met in Brussels on 14 and 15 December. They called on the Council and the European Parliament to 'move swiftly to adopt, in 2007, a decision to set up the European Institute of Technology', after having carried out a thorough examination of the Commission's proposal.

The European Council also invited the Commission to rapidly make proposals for the setting up of **Joint Technology Initiatives** (JTIs), with a view to launching the most advanced ones in 2007. JTIs are long-term public-private partnerships intended to boost technology in specific fields, and will receive funding from the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), as well as from the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The European Council also called upon the Commission to present a comprehensive **intellectual property rights** (IPR) strategy in the course of 2007, addressing issues such as the quality of the current IPR system.

The fourth innovation priority that the European Council chose to emphasise was **standards**. 'The Commission is invited, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, to propose action for the improvement of the working methods and overall resources of European standardisation bodies. Standards must be developed quickly enough to meet the needs of fast-moving markets, whilst ensuring interoperability,' read the conclusions.

Other items discussed at the Council included the Constitutional Treaty, enlargement strategy, migration, energy and climate change and external relations.

Further information: [European Council's full conclusions](http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/conclusions/vko50/en_GB/1166190412454)
http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/conclusions/vko50/en_GB/1166190412454

❖ Council of the EU

5 December 2006 – Competitiveness Council presents priorities for innovation

In September the Commission launched a 10-point innovation plan calling for urgent action at regional, national and European levels and across a range of policy areas. The Council's nine-point strategy largely mirrors that of the Commission, but places less of an emphasis on technological innovation.

The Competitiveness Council's priorities are as follows:

1. intellectual property rights (IPR);
2. creating a pro-active standard-setting policy;
3. making public procurement work for innovation;
4. launching Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs);
5. boosting innovation and growth in lead markets;
6. enhancing closer cooperation between higher education, research and business;

7. helping innovation in regions;
8. developing a policy approach to innovation in services and to non-technological innovation;
9. risk capital markets.

In its draft conclusions, the Council invites the Member States to implement the strategy's points at national level, and invites the Commission to submit a number of communications. It suggests that initiatives could be introduced for the following technologies: low carbon technologies; eco-innovation; e-health; intelligent transport systems; digital content; energy efficiency; bioenergy/biotechnology; nanotechnology; satellite navigation and Earth observation; security; ICT, and marine technologies.

Further information: [Council's conclusions](#) and [CORDIS article](#)
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/intm/91996.pdf
http://cordis.europa.eu/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.simpledocument&N_RCN=26760&CFID=255382&CFTOKEN=50184970

18 December 2006 - Council approves EU research programmes for 2007-2013

The Council adopted today decisions establishing the 7th framework programme (FP7) of the European Community (EC) for research and technological development for the period 2007 to 2013, and the FP7 for nuclear research activities (Euratom) for 2007 to 2011 (3666/06 and 13802/06).

The Council also adopted a regulation laying down the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under FP7-EC and for the dissemination of research results (3668/06).

This new legislative package will apply as from 1 January 2007, on schedule to guarantee continuity with the current FP6, which expires at the end of 2006.

Further information: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/misc/92236.pdf

❖ **European Commission**

13 December 2006 – New commissioners as Romania and Bulgaria enter the EU



MEPs have voted overwhelmingly in favour of both Romania and Bulgaria's candidate commissioners for multilingualism and consumer protection.

With 595 votes in favour, 16 against and 29 abstentions, Mr Leonard Orban becomes Romania's commissioner for multilingualism. Bulgaria's candidate, Ms Meglena Kuneva, was voted into office with 583 in favour, 21 against and 28 abstentions. She will take up the portfolio of consumer protection. Both will serve until the end of the present Commission's term of office - 31 October 2009.

The votes come at a time when celebrations are being held in Brussels to welcome Bulgaria and Romania into the EU.

19 December 2006 – Commission launches new website to communicate on EU achievements

The European Commission is launching a new multimedia product, the European Union Yearbook, which sets out 10 major policy actions undertaken by the European Union this year and is available in 22 languages. "Europe and you – a snapshot of EU achievements" aims at giving citizens a better understanding of what the European Union does and how this impacts on their daily lives.

Further information: [Europe and you in 2006](#) - http://ec.europa.eu/snapshot2006/index_en.htm

❖ **European Parliament**

14 December 2006 – Parliament adopts budget for 2007

"Once implemented, the new budget will give the significant boost to innovation, transport, education and training programmes bringing concrete improvements which should benefit many people across the Union",

said Dalia Grybauskaitė, Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget. "It is an undeniable proof of the changes in European thinking and should pave the way - in future - to the further modernisation of EU finances".

1. Competitiveness and cohesion: Building Europe's growth potential and fostering prosperity across EU regions

In 2007, the EU budget will allocate, among others, EUR 5.5 billion to research (+3.1% from 2006), EUR 1 billion to energy and transport networks (+32.9%) and EUR 0.9 billion to education and training (+31%). Funds for innovation will increase by 53.6% to reach EUR 0.4 billion.

Nearly EUR 45.5 billion (+14.8%) will be available to foster prosperity across Europe's regions and boost innovation and competitiveness. Of this total, EUR 35.3 billion financed through the European Regional Development Fund and partly from the Cohesion Fund (+16.8%) will be disbursed under the convergence objective to the least developed regions in the EU-27. (*Commitments: EUR 54.9 billion, +15.4%*)

2. Natural Resources: Modernising agriculture, stronger rural development and clean environment

In accordance with the reform of the Union's agriculture, the total amount for direct aids and market measures will remain roughly stable (+0.6%) in 2007 at EUR 42.7 billion in commitments. Rural Development expenditure, however, will see a boost of 3% to reach EUR 12.4 billion in commitments. Funds for the protection of the environment will also grow, amounting to more than EUR 0.2 billion.

3. Citizenship, Freedom, Security and Justice

The EU support in the field of freedom, security and justice will grow by 12.8% to reach a total of over EUR 0.6 billion. The allocations for Citizenship, including culture, youth and public health, will amount to some EUR 0.6 billion, a level comparable to 2006.

4. The EU as a Global Player: Stability, peace and prosperity beyond our borders

Aid for the candidate countries and potential candidates in the Western Balkans will be gathered under one single pre-accession instrument. Taking into account the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, the total amount available for the remaining candidates and potential candidates will increase by 6.5% to reach EUR 1.2 billion.

Further information: [Commission press release](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1810&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

Other bodies

❖ European Investment Bank

4 December 2006 – EIB Supports Telefonica's Research and Development

The EIB's policy is to provide additional support for research and development and innovation projects. In the effort to accelerate R&D investments to meet the Lisbon Agenda targets, corporations may benefit throughout the European Union. The long-term loan represents a major part of the financing of the R&D programme, the remaining part being financed by bank borrowings, own funds and grants.

Some 20% of total investment is to be carried out in assisted areas that are affected by change in the economic activity. Their regional development policy is aimed at developing leading edge service sectors such as R&D activities in conjunction with local educational and research institutes.

In this line, the European Investment Bank will support Telefonica's investments in R&D activities in the information society sector in Spain by providing EUR 400 million.

The R&D activities will focus on applications for processes, products and technologies of fixed and mobile telecom networks and services. Investments will be located in research centres in Madrid, Barcelona, Valladolid, Granada and Huesca. Telefonica I+D, a subsidiary company incorporated in 1988, will implement them. The project will contribute to developing innovative ICT infrastructure, hardware and software applications, as well as to facilitating improved internet, multimedia and telecom services. In addition, it will contribute to the development of Europe's information infrastructure (including e-

Government) and support European competitiveness in the IT/Internet/telecom sector, with beneficial impacts on technological developments and job creation.

19 December 2006 - EUR 20 million to support projects of SMEs in Poland

The European Investment Bank (EIB) lends EUR 20 million to BRE Leasing to finance projects of small and medium sized enterprises and municipalities in Poland. Under this loan, BRE Leasing will benefit from the SME Finance Facility representing a special scheme promoted by the EU Phare Programme. Its objective is to increase financing for the smaller segment of the SME market through providing EIB partner banks and leasing companies with incentives to further develop a strong and competitive SME sector in the new Member States. Support for the development of micro-enterprises, small and medium-sized companies and municipalities is an EIB priority. This type of EIB lending helps to increase the productivity and competitive capacity of SMEs, which collectively make an important contribution to economic growth, modernisation and employment throughout Poland as well as provide municipalities with the funds to invest and place themselves as attractive areas for future investments.

❖ Economic and Social Committee

14 December 2006 – Priorities of the EESC 2006-2008

The newly elected President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Mr. Dimitris Dimitriadis, presented at the Committee's plenary session, his programme and the priorities of his presidency for the following two years. Mr. Dimitriadis placed "**entrepreneurship with a human face**" at the centre of his programme.

He underlined the need to encourage entrepreneurship at all levels of society and in all its forms in order to face the challenges that lie ahead of us: "Entrepreneurship is the key to facing the challenges of globalisation".

Nonetheless, he stated that it is not an objective in itself but it must have a "human face" too, with the ultimate purpose being to preserve the European social model - an example to other parts of the world - and to make it capable of facing the threats resulting from global competition, but also demographic changes."

Mr. Dimitriadis also drew particular attention to the renewed Lisbon Strategy, which he characterised as the most important instrument of the European Union to face globalisation, while at the same time he reaffirmed that under his presidency the Committee will contribute to its success and support all relevant initiatives of the EU. He also mentioned Sustainable Development and environmental protection as policy objectives closely linked to the renewed Lisbon agenda; in this context, he cited the example of the new Sustainable Development Observatory which the Committee has just established in response to a European Council mandate.

Further information: [Commission press release](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=CES/06/122&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=fr>

EU policies and funding programmes for Research, Innovation, Training and Competitiveness

❖ Research Policy

○ Generalities

27 November 2006 – Finland launches new energy research programme

The Academy of Finland will launch a new, innovative energy research programme next year. The overall objective of the €9 million 'Sustainable Energy Research Programme' (SusEn) is to curb climate change.

It will do this by boosting basic research in the energy field and creating stronger links between researchers and industry to ensure the rapid application of new technologies.

As well as funding research into the development of new technologies and processes relating to energy production and use, the programme will also support analyses of the socio-economic and political systems used to manage these.

The programme will start in 2008 and run for four years. The programme call will open early next year.

Further information: [Academy of Finland website](http://www.aka.fi/index.asp?id=eb9a8e15a46244d989ac56c132e8d13a)

<http://www.aka.fi/index.asp?id=eb9a8e15a46244d989ac56c132e8d13a>

8 December 2006 – The European Space Agency (ESA) launches new SME-targeted website

The SME website is intended to be a 'meeting place' for those innovative firms looking to identify new partners and opportunities for them to work with ESA and its contractors on space programmes.

'The objective is to strengthen the communication with small- and medium-sized enterprises, a proven strong source of innovative technologies which have led to several new and ground-breaking solutions flown on ESA's satellites.' explains Nora Bougharouat, Head of ESA's SME Unit.

The new SME website is an integral part of the Space Intelligence, Engineering and Quality Network (SineQuaNet), launched in November 2005 in cooperation with the Research Directorate General of the European Commission. The network intends to become a structuring tool for SMEs interested in the space business, by offering them support in engineering and industrial processes.

The website offers information on the following:

- business opportunities, includes invitations to tender and announcements of opportunities of special interest to SMEs;
- training, includes material from training courses held previously, all available for downloading;
- SineQuaNet, provides an on-line access to an expert database, permitting SMEs to search for sources of specific expertise, or for access to test and calibration facilities;
- news, features SME success stories.

Further information: [ESA's website for SMEs](http://www.esa.int/SPECIALS/SME)

<http://www.esa.int/SPECIALS/SME>

12 December 2006 – European Research Council to represent “the voice of the scientific community”

Professor Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, former President of the German Research Foundation (DFG), is the European Research Council's first Secretary General. He was interviewed by CORDIS on the challenges that the ERC, established by FP7, is about to face. One of the main points that will have to be addressed, he says, is the treatment of young researchers. Professor Winnacker intends, among other things, to set up a “starting grant” that will help young scientists to establish their first research team.

Further information: [CORDIS article](http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=26800)

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=26800

12 December 2006 – FP6 projects show impact of research on food quality

Research results showcased in Brussels demonstrate how research is helping to make our food healthier and of better quality. New research shows that organically produced food has a higher nutritional value than conventional. Although the health benefits of fish and seafood due to omega-3 are well-known, another project has discovered that there are other important health-giving components in these foods. Researchers have also been looking at improving the welfare of farm animals, not only because consumers are demanding higher standards of welfare, but also because good conditions can significantly improve the

quality of our food. All these projects have been funded by the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme.

Further information: [Healthier and better food](#) and [Commission memo](#)
<http://www.ec.europa.eu/research/press/2006/pr1212en.cfm>
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/479&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

15 December 2006 – Western Balkans get new scientific centre to support take-up of EU legislation

European Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik opened a new research centre that will provide training and opportunities to share knowledge for scientists from across South Eastern Europe. It will focus specifically on the field of the chemical and bio-analytical measurements required for the implementation of EU legislation in areas such as environmental monitoring. The Slovenian-European Natural Sciences Research Centre (SENARC) is based in Maribor, Slovenia, and is funded from the EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and Structural Funds, among other sources.

SENARC is a "one stop shop" for training, research and sharing knowledge, linking experts from the EU with those in neighbouring countries such as Croatia and Serbia. This is done through university, post-graduate and professional training; joint research projects; and conferences and seminars, which allow an exchange of knowledge and experience. Topics include: prevention and control of environmental pollution; land management and natural hazards such as drought or floods; measuring radioactivity or the presence of chemicals; safety of chemicals. This work is important as the countries of the Western Balkans pursue their path to membership of the EU, as it is a necessary back-up to the process of adapting to EU legislation concerning the environment, water quality and food safety.

15 December 2006 – Germany sets out research priorities for its EU Presidency

'Education and research are important sources of inspiration for social development in Europe - and the source of future prosperity,' said German Minister for Education and Research, Annette Schavan. Germany will hold the EU Presidency for the first half of 2007, before handing over to Portugal.

Germany's Presidency of the EU coincides with the start of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), and Dr Schavan is particularly excited about the launch of the European Research Council (ERC). 'It is an important step towards strengthening the European Research Area,' she commented. 'For without excellent frontier research, genuine innovation is hardly possible.'

Decisions to be taken include the [European funding of joint research programmes](#) set up by groups of Member States (the Article 169 Measures) and the [Joint Technology Initiatives \(JTIs\)](#).

In collaboration with the European Commission, the German government also hopes to clarify, with concrete examples, [how EU Structural Funds can be used in concert with funds from FP7](#). In addition, it plans to launch an initiative for a [charter on dealing with intellectual property at public research institutes and universities](#).

In the field of education, the German Presidency will place a high priority on increasing the mobility of young people. Particular importance will be placed on working on the [European Qualifications Framework](#) and the [European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training](#).

Further information: [Federal Ministry of Education and Research](#)
<http://www.bmbf.de/en/index.php>

o Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development

1- The 7th Framework programme for research and development 2007-2013 (FP7)

Become an expert evaluator for FP7

The website to register as an expert for research activities has been launched on [CORDIS](#). The call for experts will be issued soon.

<https://cordis.europa.eu/emmp7/index.cfm?fuseaction=wel.welcome>

18 December 2006 – Council adopts 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development

At the Environment Council of 18 December, the European Ministers adopted the 7th Framework Programme, at the same time as they adopted the rules for participation and the FP7 for nuclear research activities (EURATOM). This adoption ensures that FP7 will apply as from 1 January 2007. The first calls for proposals are to be issued on 22 December with a closure date in March or April 2007, depending on the calls.

22 December 2006 – The FP7 calls have been issued.

Find the full text on <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7CallsPage>

2- FP7 Rules for participation

8 December 2006 – Third Country Agreements for FP7

The European Commission has issued a statement detailing the state of play on Third Country Agreements for the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

The agreement associating Israel and Switzerland to FP7 is expected to be applied provisionally from 1 January 2007. 'Proposers are hereby informed that subject to the accomplishment of the decision-making procedure, legal entities established in respectively Israel and Switzerland will be able to receive Community contributions for contracts signed after this date,' states the Commission.

For Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein to participate, the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Committee must first amend an EEA agreement. Subject to the accomplishment of this procedure, legal entities from these countries will then be eligible to receive Community contributions for projects under FP7 from 1 January.

Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) associating Turkey, Croatia and Serbia to FP7 are also expected to enter into force as of 1 January 2007. Researchers in these countries will be able to receive Community funding once internal procedures have been completed and the MoUs have come into force.

Further information: [FP7 Third Country Agreements](#)

http://cordis.europa.eu/inco/agreements_fp7_en.html

3- FP7 Events and consultations

Cancellation of 'Today is the Future' FP7- launch event

The Directorate General for Research has announced that the launch event of the Seventh Framework Programme, scheduled on 7 March 2007, will not take place due to exceptional circumstances. A new re-configured event is still to be announced.

Further information: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/events/>

15-16 January 2007, Bonn – German EU Presidency FP7 launch conference

(with Commissioner Potočník, Director-General Silva and German Research Minister Schavan)

Organisation: German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), supported by DG for Research (C-5)

RTD-C-5 contact: michael.wappelhorst@ec.europa.eu

16 January 2007, Berne – FP7 launch « à la conquête de l'excellence »

Focused on Health calls- presentation by NCP.

[Contact](#)

7-8 February 2007, Brussels - FP7 Information Multiplier Event

Key audience: NCP and EU research liaison officers (by invitation only)

Organiser: DG for Research (C-5)

RTD-C-5 contact: julia.acevedo@ec.europa.eu

13 February 2007, The Hague – FP7 Congress - World Forum Convention Center (WFCC)

National event on Information on FP7

[Contact](#)

26-28 February 2007, Berlin - European Research Council (ERC) - Launch conference

Organiser: German Research Foundation (DFG) + German Research Ministry (BMBF), hosted by the German EU Presidency.

Key audience: (by invitation only) ERC WG, EUROHORCS, ESF, ERC IDC, main Representative. Org. of European Scientific Community, next generation researchers.

RTD-B1 contact: gianpietro.van-de-goor@ec.europa.eu

4- European Technology Platforms

7 December 2006 – European Technology Platforms seminar

Commission President Barroso and Commissioner for Research Potočnik addressed the leaders of the European Technology Platforms (ETP), for the first time, in Brussels on 6-7 December.

The event gave an opportunity for the representatives of the different platforms to meet and exchange on topics such as the implementation of Strategic Research Agendas (SRA) at EU, national and regional level, on lead markets, on EU policies on research and innovation.

The presentations are available on [CORDIS](#).

Further information: [Questions & Answers on ETPs](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/464&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

18 December 2006 – Biotech industry sets out new policy agenda for Europe

The European biotechnology industry has published a new Industrial Biotechnology Policy Agenda for Europe. The document sets out a range of concrete proposals which could see the industrial biotech sector form the basis of a future EU knowledge-based bio-economy (KBBE).

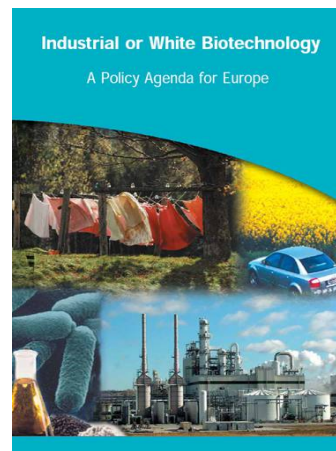
The report was produced by EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, and endorsed by ESAB, the European Federation of Biotechnology section on Applied Biocatalysis.

'Europe must build on its undoubted strengths in the area of white (industrial) biotechnology,' commented Jack Huttner, Chairman of EuropaBio's Industrial Biotech Council. 'Our problem is in translating the excellent science into commercial products. We must stimulate public-private partnerships to enable the development of flexible, research-oriented pilot plants to validate the concept of integrated and diversified bio-refineries.'

According to the report, there is a great need to harmonise the various policy areas which involve biotechnology, such as research, climate change, sustainable development and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. To ensure this happens, the report recommends the appointment of a Knowledge-Based Bio-Economy (KBBE) Coordinator by the European Commission to coordinate work in different Commission departments, and the creation of a KBBE Task Force to coordinate work in different EU Member States.

The report's authors also ask for more support for innovation in the plant science and industrial biotechnology sector. 'This means in particular ensuring that the various relevant Strategic Research Agendas from the KBBE related Technology Platforms (particularly Sustainable Chemistry, Plants for the Future, Forestry and Biofuels) are properly planned, funded and implemented within the Framework 7 programme [EU Seventh Framework Programme] and at Member State Level,' they write.

According to the report, much of the innovation in this growing sector is likely to come from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and two areas where they need particular help are in the field of intellectual property protection and financing.



Further information: [CORDIS article, A policy agenda for Europe](http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=26834)
http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=26834
http://www.europabio.org/TPWhite/policy%20agenda_141206.pdf

❖ Innovation Policy

14 December 2006 – New analysis and benchmarking initiative

The new innovation policy initiative PRO INNO Europe has been officially launched at a conference in Copenhagen co-hosted by the Danish National Agency for Enterprise and Construction in the presence of the Danish Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr. Helge Sander, and Mr. David White, Director for Innovation Policy of the European Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry.

In his welcome address, the Minister expressed his strong support for the PRO INNO Europe initiative: "I am convinced that the PRO INNO Europe initiative will strengthen European innovation. We should focus more on learning from each other's experiences. We should generate good statistics. We should benchmark each other's initiatives and programmes. We should evaluate and analyse our results. And we should seek inspiration from the many good examples of best practice in Europe".

PRO INNO Europe combines analysis and benchmarking of national and regional innovation policy performance with support for cooperation of national and regional innovation programmes and incentives for innovation agencies and other innovation stakeholders to implement joint actions.

The initiative aspires to become the main European reference for innovation policy analysis and development throughout Europe and brings together over 200 innovation policy makers and stakeholders from 33 countries.

Further information: [PRO INNO Europe](http://www.proinno-europe.eu/)
<http://www.proinno-europe.eu/>

Specific Call for Proposals – CIP - "Services in support for business and innovation"

The aim of this call is to implement a single network providing integrated services in support of business and innovation in Europe. Building on the strengths and achievements of the current Euro Info Centres and the Innovation Relay Centres, the new network aims to enhance the competitiveness and innovation capacity of European companies, in particular SMEs.

Further information:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/grants/themes_2006/eic_irc/calls_prop_2006_eic_irc_d2.htm

Strengthening the IPR enforcement of EU industry and SMEs — workshops on best practices of support measures by MS and private sector

Call for tender to be published

Identification and exchange of best practices by Member States and private sector in the area of support measures for the IP enforcement, especially outside the EU, involving the networking of Member States, industry associations, chambers of commerce, and possibly including participation by US and Japanese industry and governments. Aimed at developing good practices for Member State IPR enforcement support measures, advice structures, private-public partnerships including on-the-spot networks, enforcement practices at trade fairs etc. The continued exchange of good practices and the development of strong networks will be achieved through regular meetings. 4 meetings will be spread over 2 years and the contractor will have to produce reports on them and ensure a secretariat to the network.

More information: [contact us](#).

❖ Education policy

5 December 2006 – EU and Canada sign new agreement to boost cooperation in higher education, vocational training and youth

A new eight-year education agreement was signed on 4th December between the EU and Canada at an informal education ministerial meeting in Helsinki. It not only renews their long-standing cooperation programme in higher education and vocational training, but also expands it by including youth measures. Over a period of eight years, new innovative joint study/training programmes will be launched, exchanges of students, teachers and other professionals will be promoted, as well as the strengthening of the collaboration between youth organisations. The agreement will also encourage a policy dialogue on priority issues in the fields of higher education and vocational training.

The European Commission plans to allocate almost **€18 million** to the co-operation programme over the period 2006-2013 with **a target of some 210 projects implemented and 4 430 EU and Canadian people** participating in mobility activities over the duration of the programme. The text signed in Helsinki will promote structural, long term partnerships among EU and Canadian higher education, vocational training and youth institutions. The following actions are specifically foreseen:

1. **Joint Consortia Projects**, providing support to multilateral partnerships of EU and Canadian institutions for the purpose of setting up joint study programmes - including joint/double degrees – and transatlantic mobility of students and faculty;
2. **Joint youth activities** relating to key themes such as citizenship, cultural diversity, community work/volunteering, and recognition of non-formal and informal learning;
3. **Policy-oriented measures**, addressing comparative higher education, vocational training and youth issues, and promoting dialogue on recognition of qualifications and the transfer of credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

Further information: [EU-Canada cooperation programme in higher education training and youth](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu-canada/index_en.html)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/eu-canada/index_en.html

11 December 2006 – Commission launches new scholarship scheme outside the EU

The European Commission is launching a new "Erasmus Mundus External Co-operation Window" open to the EU's neighbours, Russia, Central Asia and Iran, Iraq and Yemen. The first call for proposals is opened until 28 February 2007 and will allow for a total of 1300 scholarships, of which 110 will be dedicated to Iran, Iraq and Yemen. These scholarships will facilitate the mobility of undergraduate, master, doctorate and post-doctoral students between these countries and the EU, as well as exchanges of academic staff for the purposes of teaching, training and research.

Further information: [Erasmus Mundus external cooperation window](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/mundus/extcoop/call/index.htm)
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/static/en/mundus/extcoop/call/index.htm>

Other EU Policies and funding programmes supporting the Lisbon Strategy

❖ Employment and social affairs

22 November 2006 – Commission issues Green Paper on modernizing labour law

The European Commission has launched an open public debate on reviewing labour law and adaptation to the modern world of work. The discussion paper asks Member States, social partners and other stakeholders how labour law at EU and national level can help the job market become more flexible while maximizing security for workers (the 'flexicurity' approach). The consultation will run over a period of four months and its contributions will feed into the upcoming Commission communication on flexicurity in June 2007.

The Green Paper debate will help to identify key challenges which have not yielded an adequate response yet. The consultation seeks views on 14 specific questions covering the much debated flexicurity approach; flexible and inclusive labour markets; employment transitions; a life-cycle approach to work; temporary agency work; working time; mobility of workers; and undeclared work.

Member States and Social Partners are invited to participate in the debate on the Green Paper, as well as anyone else with an interest in the issues at stake. The Commission is calling on all parties to make their views known during the consultation period until 31 March 2007.

Further information: [Green Paper](#) and [online consultation](#)
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/labour_law/docs/2006/green_paper_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/labour_law/green_paper_en.htm

5 December 2006 – New integrated programme for employment and social solidarity PROGRESS

With a budget of over EUR 700 million for 2007-2013, it will support the goals set out in the Social Agenda and contribute to the Union's wider strategy for jobs and growth. The programme will fund studies, mutual learning, awareness raising campaigns and support for key actors across five broad areas: employment, social inclusion, working conditions, equality between women and men and tackling discrimination. It also aims to streamline EU spending on social and employment policies while improving their visibility and coherence as a whole.

Kicking off in 2007, PROGRESS will take up and develop activities already begun under four existing EU action programmes ending in 2006 – covering action against discrimination, equality between men and women, employment measures and the fight against social exclusion.

It will focus on activities with a strong European dimension to ensure an EU added-value, such as:

- Europe-wide studies to improve knowledge of employment and social issues;
- Training of legal and policy practitioners or monitoring implementation of EU policies and laws to support coherent application;
- Building networks of national experts to encourage mutual learning and exchange of good practices;
- Supporting key EU-level networks of NGOs active in fighting discrimination or promoting gender equality
- Promoting people's awareness of policies and legislation in the social and employment field across the EU.

Partnership with national authorities, employers' and workers' organisations and NGOs will be a key feature of PROGRESS. The programme is aimed at national, regional and local authorities, public employment services, companies and employees' organisations. NGOs, universities, research institutes and specialists like statistical offices and legal practitioners will also participate. Activities will be open to the 27 EU members, EFTA and candidate countries.

Further information: [PROGRESS](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

8 December 2006 – Report shows impact of good industrial relations on economic growth

High quality industrial relations make a significant contribution to economic performance, from company-level to the economy as a whole, says a new European Commission report. The 2006 Industrial Relations in Europe report shows that co-operation between employers and trade unions plays an increasing role in the European workplace and can help to create the right conditions for strong growth.

The report finds that more and more bargaining is being decentralised to company level in the Member States. At the same time, the scope of collective bargaining is increasing and now includes restructuring, working conditions of non-standard workers and social rights. The report also finds that despite this challenge to social partner organisations, the importance of collective agreements has increased as they begin to adjust legal principles to apply them to specific national, sectoral or company situations.

Further information: [2006 Industrial Relations in Europe report](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/reports_en.htm

11 December 2006 – Conclusion of the European Year of Workers' Mobility

Highlights of the Year included the launch of the new EURES jobs portal with 1 million vacancies across Europe, the first ever Europe-wide job fair with 200,000 visitors at simultaneous events in more than 300 towns and cities, and the co-funding of 39 mobility projects at national, transnational and cross-border level. 2006 has also seen a gradual but consistent change in Europeans' attitudes towards geographic and job-to-job mobility. According to the latest Eurobarometer survey on employment and social affairs, 3 out of 4 Europeans recognise that job mobility is essential in today's labour market.

The Year has also shown that obstacles to a genuine mobility culture in Europe remain. Besides the traditional legal and administrative factors – linked to social security and recognition of qualifications – two new categories have been highlighted in 2006: 'practical' obstacles – related to housing, language, or employment of partners and spouses – and 'psychological' ones – in particular the issue of return and the lack of recognition of mobility experiences by employers.

A new and ambitious Mobility Action Plan will be launched by the European Commission in 2007 to tackle these issues, covering the following four areas:

- Mobility needs to be prepared, using tools such as the EURES portal;
- Workers and their families need access to support services at all stages of their mobility experience;
- The issue of return – namely reintegrating workers in their home job market after working abroad – must be properly taken into account;
- Mobility should become a natural element in the professional career of all Europeans.

Further information: [European Year of Workers' Mobility](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/workersmobility_2006/index.cfm

12 December 2006 – Annual progress report on the re-launched growth and jobs strategy

The current economic upturn now provides a unique window of opportunity to quicken the pace of reform. It is an opportunity that must not be missed. This is the main message of the Commission's key annual report on the progress of economic reform across Europe. The report invites the Council to formally adopt country specific recommendations designed to guide the reform efforts of Member States. It will be submitted to the Spring European Council in March 2007.

Among the Report's key conclusions are:

- Progress over the last year has in general been good towards boosting R&D and innovation, improving regulation and enhancing the business environment, especially for SMEs.
- There have been important steps forward on reinforcing financial sustainability, as governments generally set out appropriate measures to improve their budgetary positions and to deal with projected increases in pension and health care costs. Pursuing this road and achieving sound finances in the medium-to-long term remains a significant challenge.
- Weak competition in many markets, especially in network services including energy, continues to hold Europe back.
- In labour markets, measures have been taken. Employment is up and unemployment down. The growing consensus in favour of the "flexicurity" approach to labour market reform is a very positive development. But it has yet to be fully translated into action. The EU is not moving fast enough to tackle the twin problems of inflexible labour markets that hold back competitiveness and of "segmentation" between workers on permanent contracts with high employment protection and those working on fixed-term contracts, with little or no security or chance of obtaining it.

Further information: [Growth and jobs, a year of delivery](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/annual-report-1206_en.htm)
http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/annual-report-1206_en.htm

❖ Information society

30 November 2006 – More interoperability needed to boost the European ICT industry's competitiveness

The Commission's ICT Task Force has released a report on the need to increase the competitiveness of the European information and communication industries. Its recommendations are as follow:

- **ICT uptake:** As ICT investment is a strong driver of economic efficiency and productivity growth, the Task Force calls for structural reforms for a more flexible production environment, continued investment in next-generation networks and services and online public services, as well as creating a charter of consumer rights in the digital environment.
- **Growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship:** Train entrepreneurial skills, raise firms' awareness of the benefits of ICTs, and improve access to finance.
- **A single regulatory environment:** Deliver a regulatory environment that facilitates convergence and an inclusive information society, foster the creation of an internal market for knowledge-intensive services, and review copyright levies.
- **Intellectual property:** Given the diversity of IPR (intellectual property rights) models in the ICT sector, wide consultation should take place before changing EU legislation. Also, limit criminalisation for IPR infringement to wilful counterfeiting of trademarks, copyright infringement and design piracy. Promote the adoption of the London Protocol, and reduce patent costs.
- **Innovation, investment and finance in ICT research to face globalisation:** Exchange best innovation practices, stimulate research through tax credit schemes, support collaborative research via European Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives, support the development of lead markets through public procurement, secure a level playing-field for the European semiconductor industry, create a venture capital-friendly environment, and further reform of State Aid policy.
- **Standards and interoperability:** As industry is primarily responsible for technical interoperability support for Commission efforts to address legal and semantic interoperability, promote effective conformance systems, and develop procurement policies that promote interoperability.
- **Skills and employability:** As growing e-skills gaps limit innovation and ICT uptake increase investment in teachers' professional development and teacher support mechanisms, increase collaboration between industry, governments, employers and education institutions, and continue efforts in incorporating entrepreneurship into educational curricula.

These recommendations will better prioritise EU action and reinforce existing activities under i2010, including the ICT part of the EU's framework programme for research. The ICT policy support programme within the Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme will also stimulate innovation and competitiveness through the wider uptake of ICTs by citizens, governments and SMEs, responsible for most for Europe's innovation.

Further information: [Commission press release](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1635&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

❖ Regional policy

5 December 2006 – Third Restructuring Forum: regions and economic change

Some 400 regional and local leaders, social partners and national representatives have come together in Brussels to discuss how Europe's regions can make best use of EU funding to adapt to economic change. The third Restructuring Forum – jointly organised by the European Commission and Committee of the Regions – is looking at how dynamic regions can anticipate and embrace change, in particular the crucial

role played by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It comes as the European Commission finalises preparations for the 2007-2013 period of structural funding.

In particular, the Forum is discussing mechanisms and tools available for managing change; coordinating different policies within a broader strategy; mobilising regional actors within a partnership; and the role of regions in promoting competitiveness. And it is clearly demonstrating the role that the Structural Funds, and the European Social Fund in particular, can play in supporting integrated actions carried out at regional level to help the improvement of the quality of their human capital.

The event served also to bring together local and regional authorities with the industrial actors which were also present at the Forum and who are the main actors to work with while preparing to develop the regional and local potentialities of the future.

Further information: [Third restructuring forum](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/restructuring/forum_en.htm)
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/restructuring/forum_en.htm

8 December 2006 – Commission adopts regulation on implementing rules for Cohesion policy 2007-2013

The Regulation introduces the rules for the implementation of the more general rules set by the regulations on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. It gives Member States guidelines to help them prepare well for the next programming period starting on 1 January 2007.

Referring to the execution of the 2006 budget Danuta Hübner, Regional policy Commissioner, pointed out that the Commission services have registered a good level of execution and payment claims can still be sent by Member States until 31 December 2006.

As far as N+2 rule is concerned almost all EU10 have overcome the risk of de-commitments related to 2004 budget. For EU15, intensified efforts as usual at this period of the year should mitigate this risk.

As for the future programming period, Commissioner Hübner asked Member States to send back the documents where they will be setting out how they are going to use EU funding to modernise the economy of their regions (National Strategic Reference Programmes).

Member States have already shown that they intend to increase the emphasis on the promotion of the innovation, research and the knowledge economy in line with their National Reform Plans and the Lisbon Agenda.

Further information: [Commission press release](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1712&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr) and [Inforegio](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1712&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr)
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1712&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

❖ Competition

7 December 2006 – State aid : Commission authorises aid scheme by French Agence de l'innovation industrielle for BioHub R&D programme

Companies and research laboratories from a number of Member States are working together on this programme, which is being led by French starch supplier Roquette. Its objective is to develop new environmental-friendly chemical products and processes. Aid totalling €41.8 million will be provided under the aid scheme, which has already been approved by the Commission (see [IP/06/1020](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1020)). The Commission takes the view that the scheme meets the conditions for state aid for research and development, in particular in terms of aid intensity and its incentive effect.

Further information: [Commission press release](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1707&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr)
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1707&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

7 December 2006 - Commission adopts revised Leniency Notice to reward companies that report cartels

The European Commission has taken a new step to uncover and put an end to hard-core cartels by adopting a revised Notice on Immunity from Fines and Reduction of Fines in Cartel Cases (the "Leniency Notice"). The revised Leniency Notice clarifies the information an applicant needs to provide to the Commission to benefit from immunity, and introduces a so-called marker system for immunity applicants. It also clarifies the conditions for immunity and reduction of fines and introduces a procedure to protect corporate statements made by companies under the Leniency Notice from being made available to claimants in civil damage proceedings. The revision takes account of public consultations in February and October 2006.

Leniency allows the Commission to offer full immunity or a reduction in the fines that would otherwise have been imposed on a cartel member in exchange for disclosure of information on the cartel and cooperation with the investigation.

Further information: [Main aspects of the revision](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1705&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr)
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1705&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

❖ **Enterprises**

12 December 2006 – Commission allows increased help to SMEs and exempts State aid notification below €200,000

The European Commission has adopted a Regulation exempting small subsidies from the obligation to notify them in advance for clearance by the Commission under EC Treaty state aid rules. Under the new Regulation, aid of up to €200,000, granted over any period of three years will not be considered as state aid. Loan guarantees will also be covered to the extent that the guaranteed part of the loan does not exceed €1.5 million. In order to avoid abuses, forms of aid for which the inherent aid amount cannot be calculated precisely in advance (so-called 'non-transparent' aids) and aid to firms in difficulty have been excluded from the Regulation. The Regulation takes account of comments received from a series of public consultations in the course of 2006. It constitutes one of the cornerstones of the State Aid Action Plan (see [IP/05/680](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/680) and [MEMO/05/195](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/195)), designed to simplify the state aid rules, to refine the economic analysis of subsidies and to allow the Commission to concentrate its enforcement on the most distortive cases. The Regulation will be published in the Official Journal before the end of 2006 and will enter into force on 1 January 2007.

Further information: [Commission press release](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1765&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr)
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1765&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

❖ **Internal Market**

7 December 2006 – Public procurement: new Commission guidelines on defence contracts

The European Commission has provided Member States with guidelines on when defence contracts can be exempt from EU rules requiring competitive bidding. The Commission sees these guidelines, which are set out in an 'Interpretative Communication', as a necessary first step towards greater competitiveness, openness and efficiency in EU defence markets. In addition, the Commission is currently assessing the impact of a possible new Directive that would offer new, more flexible rules addressing the specific features of defence procurement. These initiatives were first outlined in December 2005 and are based on responses to a Green Paper on how to open defence procurement to greater transparency and efficiency.

Further information: [Commission memo](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/468&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr)
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/468&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

❖ Environment

12 December 2006 – Parliament approves agreement on clean groundwater directive

The European Parliament formally approved an agreement reached in conciliation with the Council in October on legislation to improve the cleanliness standards of groundwater. During the conciliation talks, Parliament's negotiating team successfully pushed for stricter measures by Member States to prevent inputs into groundwater of hazardous substances. The scope of the directive was broadened so that its aim will now be to protect groundwater "against pollution and deterioration" and not only "against pollution" as Council had proposed in its common position, but excludes nitrate pollution from farming.

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Further information: [Parliament press release](#)

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/064-1356-345-12-50-911-20061207IPR01146-11-12-2006-2006-false/default_en.htm

13 December 2006 - Tighter emission limits for cars after EP adoption of Euro 5 and 6 new standards

The European Parliament has adopted a proposal to gradually set tighter emission limits for cars, in particular nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particles. The new standards (known as Euro 5 and 6) will apply from 1 September 2009, setting tighter emission limits of particles and of NOx for new cars and vans sold in the EU market (e.g. an 80% cut in the emission limit for particulate matters from diesel cars under Euro 5). This makes the introduction of particle filters for diesel cars obligatory. Euro 6 will set significantly lower emission limits for NOx emissions from diesel cars (68 % lower than today's emission limit) and will enter into force five years after Euro 5, i.e. in 2014. The EP vote is based on a compromise reached with the Council, which is expected to adopt the package shortly.

Further information: [Commission press release](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1800&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

18 December 2006 – Commission welcomes Council action on REACH, climate change and marine protection

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas welcomed the outcome of the Environment Council which adopted the new Regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restrictions of chemicals (REACH), reached political agreement on the framework directive for EU action on marine environment policy and adopted conclusions on climate change.

REACH, a single EU regulatory system for chemical substances, will improve the protection of citizens' health and the environment. The marine framework directive aims to ensure that all EU marine waters are environmentally healthy by 2021 and it is the main component of the Thematic Strategy on the protection and conservation of the marine environment, which the Commission adopted in October 2005. . On climate change, the Council stressed the need to significantly accelerate global negotiations on a post-2012 agreement, with a view to completing them by the end of 2009 at the latest.

Further information: [Commission press release](#), Council press releases on [REACH](#), [climate change](#); also see [REACH Questions & Answers](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1826&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/488&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

❖ Transport

11 December 2006 - Commission releases Green Paper on Galileo applications

The European Union is building a global navigation satellite system (GNSS). Applications are constantly being developed, and cover sectors as diverse as transport, communication, land survey, agriculture, scientific research, health and tourism. The Green Paper outlines a number of potential applications, and then asks stakeholders to indicate their area of interest and then give their opinion on the most important related issues. These include: measures to accelerate market introduction, the legal and regulatory framework; the role of the public authorities; market perspective; sensitivity to costs; certification; and integration with communications systems.

One of the questions addresses research specifically. Annual investment in satellite navigation applications by both the public and private sectors together is currently over €100 million, according to the Commission, and the figure is likely to increase fivefold when Galileo becomes fully operational.

'Is the overall research effort in Europe commensurate with the general objective of giving Europe state-of-the-art competence?' asks the paper. 'In which relevant fields and sectors of research should efforts be concentrated?' And 'What needs to be done to increase the research effort and exploit research results at best?' the paper continues.

Other questions address small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), international cooperation, standards and intellectual property right (IPR) rules.

An analysis of the results of the public debate (to close on 6 April 2007), accompanied by an action plan, will be presented in September 2007 by the Commission.

Further information: [Green Paper on satellite navigation applications](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/green-paper/index_en.htm) and [Commission memo](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/green-paper/index_en.htm)
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/green-paper/index_en.htm
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/471&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>



12 December 2006 – EU signs the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention

This Protocol is mainly aimed to achieving sustainable transport in the Alpine Region whilst ensuring a high level of safety and environmental protection. The document was signed by Ms Susanna Huovinen, Minister of Transport and Communications representing the Finnish Presidency, and Mr Jacques Barrot, European Commission Vice-President, representing the European Community.

The main objectives of the Transport Protocol are to reduce the volume of and dangers posed by intra-Alpine and trans-Alpine traffic, in particular by transferring more traffic, especially freight traffic, to the railways, mainly by providing appropriate infrastructure and incentives complying with market principles; to ensure intra-Alpine and trans-Alpine traffic at economically bearable costs by increasing the effectiveness of the transport systems and promoting the most environmentally-friendly and economic modes of transport; and to ensure fair competition between the different modes of transport.

❖ Health

30 November 2006 – Council political agreement on EU Health Programme:

The Health Ministers Council have reached a “political agreement” on the EU Health Programme 2007-2013 and will adopt a common position in early 2007. The Programme will then have to go through the European Parliament in second reading. The Programme sets the framework for the Commission's funding of projects relating to health between 2007-13 and will be part of a broader EU health strategy to be put forward by the Commission next year. The proposed budget is €365.6 million. The Programme's objectives are: improving citizens' health security; promoting health; generating and disseminating health information and knowledge.

- *Improving health security*

Under the first objective, actions will be taken to protect citizens against health threats. This would include developing EU and Member States' capacity to respond to cross-border threats, including preparing for coordinated EU and international responses to health emergencies. This objective will also address patient safety and EU legislation on blood, tissues and cells.

- *Promoting Health*

Under the second objective, the Commission will foster healthy active ageing and help bridge health inequalities. It will also continue action on the determinants of health such as nutrition, alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption as well as the quality of social and physical environments.

- *Health information and knowledge*

Under the third objective, the Commission will foster the exchange of knowledge and best practice in areas where the EU can provide added-value in bringing together expertise from different countries, e.g. rare diseases, children's health or any other important area. It will promote EU health monitoring and develop indicators and tools as well as ways of disseminating information to citizens, such as the health-EU portal. Finally, the Commission has streamlined and incorporated some aspects of health systems co-operation, which was initially a comprehensive strand; it is now focused on cross-border co-operation issues and integrated into all objectives.

- *What kinds of actions are supported under the Health Programme?*

Cross-European health activities are eligible for financial support. Suitable projects must contribute to meeting one or more of the specific objectives set out in the Programme. These objectives can be achieved by using a range of financial instruments such as project grants, operational grants (there are no such grants in the current Public Health Programme), tenders and joint financing.

Further information: [EU Health Programme](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/pgm2007_2013_en.htm

7 December 2006 – New European Laboratory for Food Contact Materials

The European Commission has inaugurated the Community Reference Laboratory (CRL) for Food Contact Materials. EU legislation ensures that all materials that come into contact with food comply with standards so that safe food remains safe. The CRL will establish an equivalent level of laboratory practice across the EU. It will serve as a point of reference for issues relating to the enforcement of legislation on food contact materials, through a network of National Reference Laboratories and will develop methods, reference substances, training and so on to ensure the best possible implementation of EU legislation in this field. Food contact materials are essential in processing, transporting and storing food. Food packaging is a particularly important material, as it must prevent deterioration of, and at the same time avoid interacting with the food concerned. The CRL will be based at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy.

Further information: [Community Reference Laboratory for Food Contact Materials](#)

http://www.jrc.it/more_information/specialpress/200612_crl/crl-foodcontact.pdf

❖ Agriculture

6 December 2006 – Commission adopts new rules on State aid in agriculture

The new rules are in two parts: an exemption regulation which allows Member States not to notify State aid given to small and medium-sized undertakings involved in agricultural production provided that certain requirements are met, and guidelines which complement the regulation and lay down rules applicable to notified aid. The two documents cover the period from 2007 to 2013.

Further information: [Commission press release](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1697&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

18 December 2006 –Commission proposes to replace 21 Common Market Organisations with a single CMO

The European Commission proposed to establish a single Common Market Organisation (CMO) for all agricultural products, to replace the existing 21 CMOs. The move is a major step in the ongoing process of streamlining and simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy for the benefit of farmers, administrations and companies handling agricultural products. The creation of a single CMO will slim down legislation in the farming sector, improve its transparency and make the policy more easily accessible. It is an example of applied better regulation and therefore forms an integral part of the Lisbon strategy. The proposal is the most significant technical simplification of the CAP yet undertaken. Potential further simplification of a political nature will be examined in the 'Health Check' of the CAP reforms, due to take place in 2008. The proposed single CMO will allow the repeal of more than 40 Council acts and will replace more than 600 legal articles in the current regulations with less than 200. The proposal will now be sent to the Council and Parliament. The Commission expects it will enter into force in 2008.

Further information: [Questions & Answers](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/496&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

19 December 2006 –Council agreement on extension of energy crop aid scheme to all Member States

The EU agriculture Ministers have decided to extend the energy crop premium introduced by the 2003 Common Agricultural Policy reform to the new Member States (including Bulgaria and Romania) which currently do not benefit from it. The decision will give farmers in these countries the chance to receive €45 per hectare for growing energy crops. It will extend the maximum area which can benefit from this aid to 2 million hectares from 1.5 million hectares at the moment. In a further push to encourage the production of feedstocks for renewable energy production, the decision will also allow the Member States to grant national aid of up to 50 percent of the costs of establishing permanent crops on areas on which an application for the energy crop aid has been made.

Further information: [Commission press release](#)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1844&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

❖ Energy

14 December 2006 – Parliament adopts report on Eu future energy policy

In its report, drawn up by Eluned Morgan (PES, UK), adopted with a large majority, Parliament welcomes the Commission's green paper on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy, but stresses that changing conditions in the broader global energy market need to be taken into account. MEPs want a systematic approach considering production, distribution and consumption in order to develop a policy which secures affordable energy.

Priorities were identified as:

- A binding CO2 target for 2020 and changes in Emissions Trading Scheme
- Energy Efficiency to be a priority across the board
- Targets for renewables supported - nuclear power is up to Member States
- Consumers at the centre of energy policies
- EU should speak with one voice with third countries

Further information: full [Parliament press release](#)

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/051-1386-345-12-50-909-20061208IPR01269-11-12-2006-2006-false/default_en.htm

❖ Culture

19 December 2006 - Ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity

The UNESCO convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expression will enter into force in three months time, following its ratification by a sufficient number of countries yesterday. The required number of 30 ratifications was reached on 18 December when the Community, joined by twelve Member States (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) deposited their instruments of ratification at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Bulgaria also ratified yesterday in Paris at the end of this joint ratification.

Ján Figel', European Commissioner in charge of Education & Culture, said: "These ratifications by the Community and the Member States are a clear sign of the EU's commitment to cultural diversity, both within the EU and at international level. This is particularly rewarding, because the ratification is the last step in the long process of sometimes very tricky negotiations, for which the Commission was responsible as the voice of the Community."

This Convention forms the basis of a new pillar of world governance in cultural matters. Its ratification paves the way for enhanced cultural cooperation at international level, notably through exchanges of views and best practices in public policies to promote cultural diversity.

Further information: [UNESCO negotiations on cultural diversity](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/action/diversity/unesco_en.htm)
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/action/diversity/unesco_en.htm

❖ External relations – Enlargement

11 December 2006 – Negotiations on Turkey's accession partially suspended

The EU foreign ministers agreed on a partial freeze of Turkey's membership talks in their meeting in Brussels on Monday, 11 December, after Turkey's failure to normalise trade with Cyprus. The ministers said they would suspend eight of the 35 chapters on the agenda of the accession negotiations, as the Commission had recommended in its report at the end of November. The chapters that will be suspended touch upon Turkey's relations with Cyprus: free movement of goods, right of establishment for companies, financial services, agriculture, fisheries, transport, customs and external relations.

Further information: [EU's presidency press release](http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko50/en_GB/1165866274490)
http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/other_documents/vko50/en_GB/1165866274490

Research, Innovation, Training and Competitiveness related EU events

❖ Announcements

15 – 16 January 2007, Brussels, Belgium – ECNIS Workshop on environment and health

A workshop on environment and health entitled 'Air quality research needs and opportunities in the EU Seventh Framework Programme of Research (FP7)' will be held in Brussels, Belgium, on 15 and 16 January 2007. It will be organized by ECNIS (Environmental Cancer Risk, Nutrition and Individual Susceptibility) network of excellence funded under FP6.

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- foster a multidisciplinary approach to identifying research needs and opportunities in air quality;
- serve as a forum for international exchange and integration of data, particularly between disciplines (e.g. between toxicology and epidemiology);
- provide ample opportunity for participants to reveal gaps and discrepancies and identify the most productive areas for future studies building on successful approaches in previous framework programmes.

Further information: www.ecnis.org

16 January 2007, Brussels, Belgium –Workshop for FP7 1st Call – Springboard into FP7 civil aeronautics

AeroSME is organising together with IMG4 (Industry Management Group) an one-day event on Tuesday 16th January 2007 in Brussels to present the Large Collaborative Projects, which are expected to be put forward in the 1st call of FP7.

Small and medium-sized companies with RTD capabilities in these areas, who would like to take the opportunity to meet with and to receive information first hand from the project co-coordinators, are encouraged to participate in the workshop. 15-minute person-to-person meetings will be arranged between proposal coordinators and individual SMEs, interested to participate in a projects.

Other organisations are also welcome to the workshop, but priority will be given to SMEs. As places are limited, registration will be on a “first come, first served” basis.

Further information: <http://www.aerosme.com/html/workshopsFP7Cal1.asp>

25-26 January 2007, Brussels, Belgium – “Regions for economic change”

The purpose of the conference is to demonstrate how European regional policy and its instruments allow European regions to respond to demographic challenges and make the most of the opportunities presented by demographic change. The event will showcase examples of best practice and is intended to provide a learning opportunity for Structural Funds managing authorities. There will be room for up to 500 representatives of national, regional and local administrations, institutions and networks, equal opportunities organisations and representatives of universities.

Further information: [List of workshops and registration](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/opendays/od2005/conf/demo2007/fo/SearchWorkshop.do?doAction=resetSearchWorkshopsDialog

29 January – 4 February 2007, Brussels – First EU Sustainable Energy Week

A dedicated event on the current and next Intelligent Energy – Europe programmes will form part of the First EU Sustainable Energy Week, which under the heading "Take a week to change tomorrow!" will take place in Brussels from 29 January to 2 February 2007. Initiated by the European Commission in the framework of its Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign, this week will feature a series of major EU and international events covering a variety of European sustainable energy themes. (Among which “[Changing systems and habits](#)”, 2nd February)

Further information: www.eusew.eu

1 February 2007, Cologne, Germany – Information Day on European ICT Research and Development

Participants will be able to learn about the priorities and procedures for the ICT Work Programme 2007-2008, as well as network with potential partners for building a project symposium. Online event registration will be available from early January, while registered participants for the [IST2006](#) event in Helsinki can already transfer their registration details now.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/participating/forthcoming-events_en.html

21-23 February 2006, Berlin, Germany – 2nd annual CELTIC Event 2007: Facing the Challenges of Ubiquitous ICT

CELTIC is a [EUREKA](#) cluster programme, which initiates and runs privately and publicly funded R&D projects in the field of telecommunications. CELTIC projects are focusing at telecoms networks, applications, and services looking at a complete system approach.

The main objective of the event is to show the current status, the available achievements of the running CELTIC projects. Furthermore, the event provides an excellent opportunity to show the state-of-the art of the telecommunications development towards integrated next-generation telecommunications and multimedia systems for seamless use across mobile and fixed networks.

Further information: [Event website](#)

<http://www.celtic-initiative.org/Events/Celtic-Event07-Berlin/welcome.asp>

27 February – 2 March 2007, Wels, Austria – World sustainable energy days

The World Sustainable Energy Days, the largest annual conference in the field of sustainable energy use in Europe, will once again offer a unique combination of events:

- European Pellets Conference
- European Energy Efficiency Conference
- Conference "Energy Future 2030"
- Seminar "Rural development and sustainable energy"
- Technical site visits.

In 2006, more than 930 decision-makers and experts from 56 countries participated in the World Sustainable Energy Days conference

Further information: [World sustainable energy days 2007](#)

<http://www.wsed.at/wsed/index.php?id=217&L=1>

9 Mars 2007, Stockholm, Sweden – Science Forum 2007 – “Frontiers in influenza research”

The sixth Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Science Forum in Sweden presents the latest influenza research by distinguished researchers from Japan and Sweden.

Further information: <http://www.jsps-sto.com/>

15-16 March 2007, Brussels, Belgium – 5th European Business Summit – “Road to perform: Europe is our business”

The European Business Summit is the meeting place among high-level decision-makers, key politicians, CEOs, business people, researchers and journalists in Europe. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the EU, the EBS will hold a special edition that will take place on 15 & 16 March 2007 in Brussels.

With the theme “Reform to Perform: Europe is our Business”, EBS wants to play an active role in three Ds: Dialogue, Dynamism and Delivery. The challenge is to exchange views and to move Europe forward from declarations to Delivery. Delivery on the promised and necessary reforms. Reform to Perform for a more Dynamic European Union, today and in the next 50 years.

Further information: www.ebsummit.org

7-11 May 2007, Berlin, Germany – 15th European biomass conference and exhibition

This event will, in particular, be an excellent forum for the presentation of the latest innovative global strategies, technologies, projects and efficient practice rules for energy and environment in the Biomass field. Over 1000 participants from around the world are expected to attend and learn about the latest breakthroughs in the field. The Exhibition taking place concurrently with the Conference will feature the foremost companies and state-of-the-art products in the Biomass industry.

Further information: [Biomass conference website](#)

http://www.conference-biomass.com/Biomass_2007/welcome.asp

8-10 May 2007, Växjö, Sweden - Sustainable Regions and Municipalities 2007

The implementation of EU policies and directives in the field of energy and transport is often linked with great possibilities and opportunities. Nevertheless, it is also associated with difficulties arising from administrative, legal, technical and practical obstacles. This is a common problem for many local and regional European authorities.

The purpose of this conference is to give local and regional representatives an opportunity to discuss this practical work with other European regions and cities to obtain new ideas and inspiration on how to work towards sustainable regions and municipalities.

Further information:

http://www.transporteko-so.se/pages/cgi-bin/PUB_View_File.exe?pageld=167&versionId=1&linkId=1&objId=11&objType=2

8-10 May 2007, Leipzig, Germany - 'Sustainable Neighbourhood - from Lisbon to Leipzig through Research (L2L)' Conference

The aim of the conference is to position sustainability research as an engine for European competitiveness within the Lisbon Agenda. The organisers are inviting proposals for oral presentations and posters for all areas. The deadline for submitting abstracts is 22 December 2006.

Further information: [Call for presentations, CORDIS website](#)

http://www.fona.de/de/3_akteure/forum_2007/pdf/L2L_Call.pdf

11-12 May 2007, Bamberg, Germany – Japan-Germany symposium “A universal challenge: climate change”

Information available at: <http://www.jsps-bonn.de/>

17-21 September 2007, Sophia-Antipolis, France – “Smart Event”

With 478 worldwide participants from 277 organisations in 2006, it hosts 4 events:

"e-Smart", the leading smart card industry conference (Sept. 19-21, 2007)

"World e-ID", dedicated to the electronic ID management and applications (Sept. 19-21, 2007) - View the ["World e-ID" 2007 Call for papers](#)

"Smart University", educational program in smart card, ID and Aml technologies, designed and delivered by high level academics (Sept. 17-20, 2007)

"Amlid", conference dedicated to Ambient Intelligence Developments (Sept. 17-19, 2007)

As a whole, the Smart Event is endorsed by over 35 worldwide organizations. Over 650 participants are expected to attend the 2007 edition.

Further information: deadline for [call for papers](#) for e-Smart conference: 2006-12-31

<http://www.strategiestm.com/conferences/esmart/07/calls.htm>

11-15 November 2007, Rome, Italy - 20th World Energy Congress “The energy future in an interdependent world”

The deadline for submission of papers and posters for the 20th World Energy Congress will expire on December 31 2006.

The preparation of what is worldly recognized to be the top event in the energy industry is advancing and registrations increasing. After the Executive Assembly in Tallinn, more events and meetings have raised interest in the World Energy Congress, and we are expecting a large participation attracting upwards of **5000 delegates**, including WEC members, leaders of the energy industry and international organizations, governments representatives and regulators, academics, the media, sponsors and individuals interested in sustainable energy development.

Further information: www.rome2007.it

2007 -ESF further co-operation with Japan

The European Science Foundation (ESF) has signed a new extended Memorandum of Understanding with the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). They will co-operate further on the 'Frontier Science Meeting Series for Young Scientists' which brings about 80 young researchers from both Europe and Japan together with more eminent scientists to debate key topics at the cutting edge of research. Future planned conferences also include 'Robotics' in Japan in 2007, followed by 'Social cognitive neuroscience' in Europe in 2008.

Further information:

[ESF-JSPS Frontier Science Conference Series for Young Researchers](#)

[Japan Society for the promotion of science webpage](#)

<http://www.jspso.go.jp/english/index.html>

❖ List of calls for proposals launched by the European Commission this month

Political area	Call title	Deadline for submission
Research	Support European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research	2007-03-30
	Call for individuals to establish database of FP7 experts	2013-07-31
	ALL FIRST CALLS FOR FP7 AVAILABLE ON CORDIS WEBSITE http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7CallsPage	March and April 2007
Education and Culture	Call for experts for Socrates proposals assessment	2006-12-31
	European youth foundation	2007-01-02
	ACP-EU Cooperation Programme in Higher Education (EDULINK)	2007-01-15
	Vulcanus (Japan)	2007-01-20
	EAC 70/05 Erasmus Mundus	2007-02-28
	Culture 2007-2013 multi-annual cooperation projects cooperation measures	2007-02-28
	Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament	2007-01-04
Cooperation Office – EuropeAid	ASIA Invest II	2007-03-09
Enterprises	ProInvest (ACP)	2007-01-17
Innovation	Competitiveness and Innovation Programme - Services in support of business and innovation	2007-04-02
Information society	e-Ten 2006/1	Until 2009-05-19
	Call for independent experts for e-Content plus and Safer Internet programme 2005-2008	2009-06-30

❖ **List of open consultations**

Title and description	Political activity	Targeted Group	Closing date
Detection technologies for law enforcement, customs and other security authorities	Freedom, security and justice	public	2007/01/10
http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_public_en.htm			
Adaptation to scientific and technical progress under Directive 2002/95/EC on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment	Environment	Stakeholders	2007/01/10
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/rohs_6_consult.htm			
Consultation on the EU's Market Access Strategy in a changing global economy	Trade	Stakeholders	2007/01/12
http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/mk_access/cs101106_en.htm			
Respecting the Rules Better Road Safety Enforcement in the European Union	Transports	All interested parties	2007/01/19
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety/library/consultations/consultation_paper_enforcement_20060411.pdf			
European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training	Education	Stakeholders	2007/03/31
http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/index_en.html			
Green Paper: "Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century"	Employment & social affairs	Stakeholders	2007/03/31
http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=labourlaw&lang=en			
GALILEO Green Paper on Satellite Navigation Applications	Energy and transport, aerospace	Stakeholders	2007/04/06
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/green-paper/index_en.htm			
A Maritime Policy for the European Union	Maritime policy	public	2007/06/30
http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy_en.html			

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Get prepared for 2007

Trainings' news and offers on new EU funding programmes.

❖ Training News



- The 2007 Catalogue of training courses On-Line (available in FR and EN)

The catalogue presents all of our training formula, the content of courses and any practical information you would need to choose your training courses.

You can consult or download it in FR or EN from our new website from January 2007, 1st on.

There will be a possibility to register on-line for all modules of our catalogue from our revamped website

❖ Next sessions planned in Brussels (given in English or French)

* **“FP7 : The Seventh Framework Programme: How to anticipate your participation and raise your chance of success? Presentation of the new priorities and orientations.”**

Available date :

- **16th January 2007:** Course in English
- **21st February 2007 :** Course in English

* **“How to write a successful proposal under FP7?”** – tips and methodology to set up a qualitative project to be more positively assessed and properly fill in the application form with a view to enhance your chances of success.

Available date :

- **17th January 2007:** Course in English (Fully Booked)
- **22nd February 2007 :** Course in English

* **“Legal and financial aspects of European contracts for Research.”**

Available date :

- **18th January 2007:** Course in English
- **23rd February 2007 :** Course in English

* **“Mobility of Researchers – Marie Curie actions”**

Available date :

- **8th February 2007:** Course in English

To register or to consult our training sessions planned during the second semester, go on “Calendar of sessions” in the training department’s page of our website. <http://www.interfaceurope.net/news.php?p=news&lang=fr>

❖ Next sessions planned in Paris

* “Le 7^{ème} programme cadre de recherche de l’Union européenne : Comment anticiper et augmenter vos chances de succès ? – Présentation détaillée des nouvelles orientations et opportunités - Au delà de la lecture des textes, adoptez une démarche stratégique, clé de votre succès pour le 7ème PCRD.

•Date disponible/available date : 23rd January 2007 – Course in French

* “Le montage de projets européens de recherche”. The module will focus on a methodology especially designed to set-up a RTDI project and write a successful application under FP7.

•Date disponible/available date : 24th January 2007 – Course in French

To register or to consult our training sessions planned during the second semester, go on Calendar of sessions in the training department's page of our website. <http://www.interfaceurope.net/news.php?p=news&lang=fr>

Interface Europe wishes you a happy Christmas and an excellent year 2007!



Thomas Fearn, winner of EC in the UK Christmas card competition