

# EU Research Trends - December 2016

This month's newsletter provides you with an update on European affairs related to research and innovation. Primarily with an eye on what 2017 holds in store for us much of which of course relates to the mid-term evaluation of Horizon 2020 and the preparatory steps being taken on the ninth framework programme.

We wish you a good read as well as a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Trends

### **2017 will center around the future framework programme**

The Commission will have all sails set on the midterm evaluation of Horizon 2020 and the internal and initial steps for the ninth framework programme. The open consultation on the midterm evaluation that was launched in October 2016 and which will end on 15<sup>th</sup> January will be the main reference for the Commission when evaluating H2020 and when starting the preparations of FP9. In 2017 [the High Level Group](#) that was formed in December and which is led by former Commissioner Pascal Lamy will also come with its vision for how the EU can maximize the impact of research and innovation. The group is set to meet several times during the first half of 2017 and a high-level stakeholder conference with the HLG has been announced for 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The Commission will publish the midterm evaluation of H2020 towards the end of 2017 and will publish its proposal for the next framework programme beginning 2018.

### **2017 will have Malta and Estonia holding the Presidencies of the European Council**

Malta, the smallest country in the EU, is to overtake the presidency of the Council of the EU from January 2017 until July 2017. It is the first time that Malta holds the Presidency. The priorities of the Maltese EU Presidency centers around (i) migration, (ii) security, (iii) single market, (iv) social inclusion, (v) neighborhood policy and (vi) the maritime sector. It is expected that Brexit will also contribute heavily to the agenda of the Maltese presidency. Furthermore, there is general acceptance that Malta will not be a very strong driver of the research and innovation agenda. On education on the other hand, Malta has stressed its focus on inclusion and foresight on equipping young people with the skills that make them employable. The next research Council meeting is likely to be held in May. The second half of the year, Estonia will take over the baton, and although the country is small and challenged, it will have to take on some important preparations with the Commission; tasks it looks to be encouraged by due to its own drive on innovation.

### **2017 will also continue the preparation of the 2018-2020 work programmes**

The four beacons for 2018-2020 have been announced (i) Building a low-carbon climate resilient future, (ii) Digitizing and transforming European industries and services, (iii)

Connecting economic and environmental gains in the circular economy, (iv) Boosting the effectiveness of the security Union. The impact focus of the Commission has come to stay and it is expected that broader 'mission-oriented' calls for larger projects will be launched. The Commission is also working to prepare 'international cooperation flagships calls'. Calls which will be co-financed with third countries. It is still not clear which countries will be the first to operate under these calls but Canada seems close to the Commission in these talks. This instrument is being conceived in order to get renewed energy into the 'Open to the World' agenda. In this connection it is worth noting that H2020 has only seen 2.4 % of its projects realized with international collaboration (compared to 4.9 % under FP7).

#### **Update from the Strategic Programme Committee**

In November the EU Strategic Programme Committee met. The meeting focused on the European Innovation Council and the strategic outline that the committee is working on in relation to the midterm evaluation and FP9. There is consensus that the European Innovation Council must provide a clear cut entry point for innovation initiatives and that it will have integration with FP9. The Commission is setting up a High Level Group for Innovation. The call on this Group closed 27<sup>th</sup> October and the group is to start its work early 2017. From the SPC meeting it is clear that the Commission is very preoccupied with creating fertile ground for more unicorns in the EU. Furthermore, it appeared from the meeting that the Commission is eager to see even more market driven innovation in the remaining part of H2020 and that increased ease of access to calls will be prioritized as well as shorting the evaluation time as well.

#### **Council meeting conclusions**

On 29<sup>th</sup> November the European Research Ministers held their Council meeting. [Council conclusions](#) were published after the meeting on measures to support young researchers. This has been a priority case for the Slovakian EU Presidency, however, the conclusions are not that powerful as the majority of the Council insisted that existing measures are to be used better. Rather the Council meeting had focused on the EU [Space Strategy](#). The consequences of Brexit in relation to the ongoing EU space projects (Copernicus and Galileo) are unclear. Furthermore, the Council meeting had a discussion of the relation between defense and research. In this connection it is worth noting that the German Minister of Defense together with the German Minister of Research has written a letter to the Commission urging for a clear separation and stating that defense research is not to be undertaken on the expense of civil research.

#### **Horizon 2020 Monitoring report**

On 29<sup>th</sup> November the Commission published its monitoring report for H2020. It is the first annual monitoring report under H2020 which covers a comprehensive analysis of H2020 calls closed in 2014. It identifies the most important performance issues, participation trends and provides data for all priorities and objectives of H2020. Special attention is given to cross-cutting issues as well as EITs, the Euratom Research and Training Programme as well as FP7 projects still producing results and impacts. See more [here](#)

### **FET flagships**

The Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Günther Oettinger, hosted a roundtable with high-level representatives from Member States, major European research organisations, European industry and academic research associations with the objective to explore the future science and technology challenges of strategic importance for Europe. Major challenges that could be addressed by future FET-flagships were identified in key areas such as "ICT for connected society", "health and life science", and "environment, climate and energy". As a next step and as part of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020, a competitive call for preparatory actions for future flagships covering these areas will be launched. For more information, please follow this [link](#)

### **Swiss participation in H2020**

On 16 December 2016 the Swiss Federal Council ratified the Protocol on the extension to Croatia of the Free Movement of Persons Agreement between the EU and Switzerland. This means that as of 1 January 2017 the Agreement continues to apply and will be expanded to cover the whole of Horizon 2020, Euratom Programme 2014-2018 and activities carried out by Fusion for Energy. The relevant information can be found in the [updated note regarding associated countries](#). Equally the [information note](#) has been updated.

### **Juncker's Investment Plan: European Fund for Strategic Investments**

EFSI is not geographically or sector-specifically earmarked and is demand driven. Up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, 26 out of 28 countries were reached. However, this initial equal distribution does not hold through. Of the EFSI the EU15 have received 91 % and the EU13 a mere 9 %. Zooming in even further, it appears that within the Infrastructure Investment Window (IWW), UK, Italy and Spain have received 63.4 %, while for the Small and Medium Enterprises Window (SMEW) saw Italy, France and Germany receiving 36.1 % of the funds. Reasons mentioned for the lower EFSI support in Central and Eastern Europe are the competition from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), less capacity to develop large projects, less experience with Public Private Partnerships, a less developed Venture Capital market and the small size of projects. When looking at the sector coverage, it shows that EFSI contributes mainly to R&D (45 %), energy (21 %) and ICT (17 %) sectors. Some sector gaps are less addressed, but this is not seen as a major issue. To read the full evaluation report follow this [link](#)

### **Energy Union**

The Commission presented its plan for realising the European Energy Union; a plan which is set to speed up the clean energy transition and boost growth and job creation in the EU. The package pursues three main goals: (i) putting energy efficiency first, (ii) cementing the EU's global leadership in renewable energies and (iii) providing a fair deal for energy consumers. The Commission's "Clean Energy for All Europeans" proposals are designed to show that the clean energy transition is a growth sector of the future. By mobilising up to 177 billion euros of public and private investments per year from 2021, the plan can generate up to 1 % increase in GDP over the next decade and create 900,000 new jobs. For the [press release](#) and further information on the [energy package](#). It is worth noting that the European Association of Universities have published a roadmap for European Universities on energy. See more [here](#).

**EU Galileo project provides the most accurate Global Positioning System (GPS) in the world**

The new global positioning service can determine accuracy down to one metre, whereas the rivaling US-satellites only can determine the accuracy down to several metres. The accuracy is an opportunity for citizens, innovators and companies - at large - as the ability to determine accurate positions opens up for more effective services. For instance, exploiting the accuracy of Galileo presents opportunities for autonomous car features, telecommunications and energy networks. Further satellites will be launched in the coming years by the European Space Agency; the satellite system is expected to be fully operational by 2020. For more information, please follow this [link](#)

**Coast 2 Coast Climate Challenge**

Coast2Coast Climate Challenge (C2C CC) project signed and ready to kick-off in 2017, with a wide array of possible research and innovation to spring therefrom. Together with municipalities, companies and the region, CDEU has secured 7 million EUR from the LIFE programme to carry out 24 integrated projects across the Central Denmark Region. The aim of the project is to adapt the region to deal with the effects climate change has on the hydraulic circle from rainwater and groundwater to sea, fjords and inland rivers. Aarhus University is already responsible for one of the projects, and CDEU will - in the coming years - continue to support research and innovation communities who want to build upon the knowledge produced by C2C CC. For more information, please follow this [link](#)

**Berlin's Liaison Office in Brussels hosts event on 'Digital Skills in Science'**

On the backdrop of the Commission's newly publicized report "[Realising the European Open Science Cloud](#)". The Berlin Liaison Office hosted an event on digital skills and big data in Science. The messages of the event centred around the scientific possibilities that big data creates in terms of scientists being able to build parallel realities with big data for the purpose of tests and manipulation. Also messages were delivered on the new type of scientists which research institutions need. The "Data Scientist" combines math and statistical knowledge with skills in computer science and an ability to apply it to a specific research area. People with these competencies are scarce even though they are highly demanded, so efforts must be made to train such scientist and professionals. The Commission estimates that 500,000 data scientists will be needed within the coming years.

**The Commission seeks input on Smart Wearables**

The Commission held a stakeholder consultation meeting on smart wearables in December 2016. A reflection paper has now been published with the input from this day and this paper can now be commented. For more information see [here](#).

**Revised Commission decision on the use of unit costs in clinical studies**

The Commission has recently published a revised version of its decision authorizing the use of unit cost for reimbursement in clinical studies. Major changes include the introduction of the possibility to use different methods (actual and real unit costs) for the different categories of eligible costs within one clinical study, as well as the definition of the conditions under which the unit costs can be modified during the implementation of the action.

### **Questionnaire on Research Trends News letter**

During the past two months a questionnaire has been open where you could give your input on this newsletter as well as recommendations for a modernization of this service. Your input has now been collected and the newsletter will be revamped in the first quarter of 2017. The winner of the Belgian box of chocolates is: Katrine Solvang. Congratulations.

## **Highlighted events**

### **Connected Smart Cities Conference**

EU Conference on connected smart cities with AU participation in the panels on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in Brussels. See more [here](#).

### **ESFRI info-day and workshop**

The ESFRI roadmap 2018 will be the topic of an info day on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and of Experience Exchange day on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in Malaga. See more [here](#).

### **Copernicus workshop at AU**

The Commission invites all interested stakeholders for a workshop on the earth observation project Copernicus at AU on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017. For more information, please see [here](#).

*In December the following events were attended and summaries can be obtained on request:*

- *Digital skills in Science 7<sup>th</sup> December*
- *LERU event on Interdisciplinarity 14<sup>th</sup> December*

*Furthermore, detailed information can be given on the Strategic Programme Committee meeting as well as the Council meeting.*

**Attached to the email sending out this newsletter is a comprehensive list of relevant events.**

Comments or questions should be directed to [Rikke Edsjö](#) or [Lina Christensen](#)