

# EU Research Trends

## Trends

### Online consultation on the Future and Emerging Technologies (FET)

The Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) Unit has launched its online consultation to identify game-changing directions for future research in any technological domain. The consultation targets scientists and researchers from the widest range of disciplines, innovators, creators or interested bystanders and members of civil society in general. Its purpose is to initiate thinking about future proactive initiatives to be included in the next FET Work Programme for 2016 and 2017, similar to what was done to prepare the FET call topics for the ongoing Work Programme (2014-2015).

The consultation is accessible [here](#). The closing date is currently set at 15. June 2014. All contributions will remain visible on-line.

### Consultation of the stakeholders of the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 5

In the context of implementing Horizon 2020 (H2020), there is a stakeholder consultation for the H2020 Societal Challenge 5 “Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials”. Stakeholders are invited to send their insights and recommendations for 2016-2017, structured around seven questions listed in the consultation paper. For background information, stakeholders may consult the H2020 Specific programme, as well as the H2020 Societal Challenge 5 Advisory Group report, which represents a valuable basis and framework for this programming exercise.

Anyone who would like to participate in this consultation is invited to send their contribution to [RTD-ENV-H2020STAKEHOLDERS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:RTD-ENV-H2020STAKEHOLDERS@ec.europa.eu) by 16 June 2014.

The consultation paper is attached to the EU Research Trends.

### Iceland and Norway sign up to join Horizon 2020

Iceland and Norway became the first non-EU countries to associate to Horizon 2020. The decision, taken at a meeting of the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Committee, takes effect from the beginning of Horizon 2020 allowing these two countries' researchers and companies to participate on the same basis as their counterparts in the EU. In return, the two countries will contribute financially to Horizon 2020.

These two EEA/EFTA countries bring to Horizon 2020 and to the EU an excellent science base and clear strengths in specific fields. Norwegian scientists are addressing global challenges in areas such as the environment, climate change, oceans, food safety and energy research. Iceland has unique knowledge about geothermal energy production and its research capacities on climate change and marine biodiversity will also benefit Europe.

Norway has been associated to EU research and innovation programmes since 1987 and Iceland since 1994. Association of both countries takes place through an amendment to Protocol 31 of the EEA agreement<sup>1</sup> and is effective retroactively to the beginning of Horizon 2020.

More than 2,350 Icelandic and Norwegian participants, including many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), took part in the last EU programme (2007-13). Icelandic researchers were involved in 217 projects, receiving funding of nearly 70 million EUR. Norwegian researchers contributed to more than 1,400 projects, receiving a total of 712 million EUR.

### **Review of Europe 2020 Strategy**

The European Commission is seeking guidance in its review of the Europe 2020 strategy and comments on future developments, and has decided to open a public consultation exercise that will run until 31 October 2014. The strategy impacts on a number of policy areas, such as economic and financial affairs, competitiveness, industry, the single market, jobs, research and development, innovation, the digital economy, climate, energy, efficient use of resources, education, training and tackling poverty and social exclusion.

The Europe 2020 strategy is implemented and monitored in the context of the European semester, the yearly cycle of coordination of economic and budgetary policies at EU level. The European semester involves discussion among EU institutions on broad priorities, annual commitments by the Member States and country-specific recommendations prepared by the Commission and endorsed at the highest level by leaders in the European Council. These recommendations should then be taken on board in the Member States' policies and budgets. As such, together with the EU budget, the country-specific recommendations are key instruments for the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy. After the consultation exercise, in early 2015, the European Commission will publish proposals on pursuit of the strategy.

The public consultation is accessible [here](#).

### **Commission welcomes EU Member States' approval of multi-billion euro innovation partnerships**

EU Member States have adopted nine public-private and public-public research partnerships worth up to 20 billion EUR. Most of the investment will go to five public-private partnerships in innovative medicines, aeronautics, bio-based industries, fuel cells and hydrogen and electronics. The decision paves the way to launch these partnerships, with first calls for projects expected on **9. July**. EU Member States are expected to formally adopt related partnerships on rail transport and air traffic management (Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research) worth an additional 2 billion EUR shortly.

Over the next seven years, the EU's contribution of 9 billion EUR to the package will unlock an equivalent investment from the private sector and 4 billion EUR from Member States. The EU funding will come from Horizon 2020.

### **State aid: Commission adopts new rules facilitating public support for research, development and innovation**

The European Commission has adopted new rules that will facilitate the granting of aid measures by Member States in support of research, development and innovation (R&D&I) activities. The new R&D&I state aid Framework sets out the conditions under which Member States can grant state aid to companies to carry out R&D&I activities. Moreover, the scope of measures that no longer need to be notified to the Commission for prior approval has been widened under the new General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER). These new rules will help Member States reach the targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, while at the same time limiting distortions in the Single Market.

### **Evidence-based decisions**

Emma Marcegaglia, BUSINESSEUROPE President, wrote to José Manuel Barroso to give scientific evidence its adequate role in the EU policy-making process. In particular, BUSINESSEUROPE calls on the European Commission President and his successor to implement a number of changes to strengthen the position of the Chief Scientific Advisor. This will secure evidence-based decisions, derived from the best available science, in order to build trust, enhance legitimacy, and reduce the risk of regulatory failure.

The current Chief Scientific Advisor, Anne Clover said at a conference prior to the European Parliament election that “A big challenge for the next European Commission will be to disconnect its evidence gathering processes from the “political imperative” that’s driving policy proposals”.

Anne Clover was quoted in an article that can be read [here](#).

### **MARIA KHORSAND ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT OF EARTO (EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATIONS)**

The EARTO Executive Board elected Maria Khorsand as President of EARTO. She has taken on her seat on 9th May after receiving unanimous support from EARTO General Assembly Members.

Maria Khorsand is the CEO of SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden. SP is the leading and largest technical research institute in Sweden.

### **Results of European Parliament elections**

Despite a rise in anti-European parties, political balances remain broadly unchanged in the European Parliament following the elections, with the centre-right and centre-left parties on track for a grand coalition. The centre-right European People’s Party (EPP) won 212 seats in the European parliament, followed by the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), with 186 seats (out of 751). The centrist liberal groups got 70 seats, Green parties 55 and the right-wing Conservatives and Reformist group, 44. The far-left obtained 43 seats, while the far-right Europe of Freedom and Democracy group got 36. The big question mark relates to the 38 Non-

affiliated MEPs and the 67 “other” MEPs who do not yet belong to any political grouping. Most of those belong to populist and extremist parties hostile to European integration.

Forming a political group in the European Parliament requires minimum 25 members from 7 Member States. Group affiliation starts immediately.

Denmark has one member of the conservative group (EPP): Bendt Bendtsen, three members of the socialist and democrat group (S&D): Jeppe Kofod, Christel Schaldemose, Ole Christensen, three members of the liberal group (ALDE): Ulla Tørnæs, Jens Rohde, Morten Helveg Petersen, one member of the green group (the greens/EFA): Margrete Auken, one member of the European United Left group (GUE): Rina Ronja Kari and four members of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group (EFD: Morten Messerschmidt, Rikke Karlsson, Anders Vistisen and Jørn Dørhmann. The members of the EFD-group are likely to change affiliation to the ECR-group founded after the election in 2009 by the British conservatives.

Unfortunately, Britta Thomsen, MEP (S&D) was not reelected. She has been a great asset as member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and has been cooperating closely with AU over the years.

Key dates in relation to the new Parliament and the new Commission:

27.5. – morning	Outgoing EP group leaders meet to discuss results
27.5. – afternoon	European Council meets – first discussion of results
27.5.-27.6.	Van Rompuy to consult with EP – then negotiations in Council on 4 top posts
27.6.	European Council
24.6.	EP establishes groups, committees and distribution of chairmanships
1.7.	EP Constitutive session – EP president elected
15.-16.7.	Earliest possible date for Council vote on top posts (unlikely)
Sept.	Earliest possible EP hearings for designated Commissioners
Oct.	Earliest possible EP vote on Commission <i>en bloc</i>
Oct.	Outgoing Commissions mandate ends – entering caretaker mode if no new COM appointed

### Council meeting

At its meeting the 26. May, the Council concluded on the implementation of the roadmap for the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures, [ESFRI](#). Several Member States, including UK and Germany, signed up to a declaration requesting to limit the funds available to the three projects identified in the ESFRI roadmap as priorities to a maximum of 50 % of the funds available, but this was not included in the Council conclusions as this is a Commission competence to decide upon.

The Council held a debate on ways to reinforce and further develop scientific and technological cooperation between the EU and Mediterranean partner countries with a view to creating an area of shared prosperity and to jointly tackling the society’s greatest

challenges. This could be of interest for AU, as food development, food security and water are among the focus areas for research and innovation.

Esko Aho, a former prime minister of Finland, presented a report evaluating on the European Innovation Partnerships. The conclusions are that the EIP is the right way forward and a useful way of bringing together stakeholders, but a greater political backing and a better analysis of the outcome is necessary. The report can be found [here](#).

The upcoming Italian Presidency will pay particular attention to the development of the European Research Area, including its external dimension by encouraging regional partnerships.

### **Unified Patent Court**

With a clear 'yes', the Danes have voted to join the EU's Unified Patent Court. A common European court is supposed to make patent applications easier and cheaper within the EU, as companies would only have to apply in one place, instead of several EU countries. It is thought that such an arrangement would boost Europe's competitiveness against other world regions.

After 30 years of discussions and disputes over languages and the location of the new patent court, EU leaders finally came to an agreement in June 2012, during the Danish presidency of the EU. According to the compromise, the court will be set up in Paris, with two departments - in Munich and London.

All EU countries signed up, except for Croatia, Poland and Spain.

Comments or questions? Please contact [Rikke Edsjö](#)