

# EU Research Trends

While Kirstine C. Magoola is on maternity leave, I will be writing the monthly EU Research Trends.

Members of the European Parliament have held their last plenary session and are now campaigning full time prior to the upcoming elections 22-25 May. The mandate of the Commission is soon ending, so in terms of new legislative proposals, it will be quiet for a while.

## Trends

### Horizon 2020: Work Programmes

The 2015 part of the work programmes 2014-2015 is being negotiated and the final work programmes are expected to be available on the Participants Portal in 1-2 months. The changes are only minor changes like adding “The Mediterranean” to the maritime part of the societal challenge number 2.

The process towards a new Strategic Programme has started and a concrete draft is expected after the summer break. The preparation of the next work programmes for 2016-17 will then formally be initiated. Already now, new ideas should be considered, in order to timely present them to the European Commission.

The budgets in the work programmes for 2015 are indicative budgets subject to the adoption of the budget 2015 by the Council and Parliament.

The work programmes are found under the Participants Portal [here](#).

### A new JTI “Shift2Rail” is coming up

The public-private partnerships take the form of Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs). They represent the joining of forces between the EU and industry and provide vital funding for large-scale, longer-term and high risk/reward research. They establish their own strategic research and innovation agendas and fund projects selected through open and competitive calls for project proposals. The JTIs are established under Article 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and managed by dedicated entities called Joint Undertakings.

“Shift2Rail” is an ambitious public-private partnership which will manage a 7-year work programme of targeted research and innovation to support the development of better rail

services in Europe. It will develop and accelerate the bringing to market of technological breakthroughs.

With "Shift2Rail", the Commission is more than tripling its financing for rail research and innovation to €450 million (2014-2020) compared to €155 million for the previous period. This will be matched by €470 million from the rail industry.

Shift2Rail aims to deliver: a reduction, by up to 50%, in the life-cycle cost of railway transport (i.e. costs of building, operating, maintaining and renewing infrastructure and rolling stock); an overall increase in capacity of up to 100%; and an overall increase in reliability of up to 50% in the different rail market segments.

### **The European Research Area, ERA**

"Europe needs a unified research area to attract talent and investment. Remaining gaps must therefore be addressed rapidly and the European Research Area completed by 2014 to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation", concluded the European Council both in February 2011 and March 2012.

The commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science invites organisations to participate in the [2014 ERA Survey](#), which will be crucial for identifying areas where progress has been made and where further efforts are required.

The Council will respond to a Commission declaration on the completion of the ERA at the Council meeting in July.

### **The Innovation Investment Package (IIP) and the Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR)**

During the last plenary session in April, the European Parliament adopted a package of public-private and public-public research partnerships worth up to €22 billion. The Innovation Investment Package (IIP) and the Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR) joint undertaking now go to Council for final approval. Most of the investment will go to six public-private partnerships in innovative medicines, aeronautics, bio-based industries, fuel cells and hydrogen, electronics and rail transport.

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

The package awaits the final approval by the Member States, with a view to launching these partnerships in July.

### **Simplification Scoreboard**

The European Commission has recently adopted its Final Simplification Scoreboard, which includes over 120 measures to simplify the rules for applicants to EU funding. Already in 2011, in the run-up to the 2014 to 2020 programming period, the Commission proposed simplification measures and, in 2012, the simplification agenda for the 2014 to 2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) was launched. This was followed by a commitment from the Commission to track the legislative process in the European Parliament and Council of the EU through the regular publication of a scoreboard monitoring achievements in simplification.

The 120 plus simplification measures were the result of the EC's assessment of how the existing spending programmes functioned and a consultation exercise with citizens and stakeholders. The new measures aim to cut 'red tape' and ensure access to EU funding opportunities is as inclusive as possible. Some examples of the simplification measures include: a single reimbursement rate for all participants with a flat-rate for indirect costs; shorter beneficiary payment deadlines; the use of electronic systems to submit data and documents; and requirement for document retention time shortened to a maximum of three years for EU funded projects.

The [first](#) and [second](#) simplification scoreboard are available here.

### **Innovation Union Scoreboard**

The 2014 edition of the European Commission's Innovation Union Scoreboard has been published. The report suggests that Europe is closing the 'innovation gap' with the United States and Japan, but that differences in performance between EU Member States are still high and diminishing only slowly. At a regional level, the innovation gap is also widening, with the innovation performance having worsened in almost one fifth of EU regions. The overall ranking by EU country is similar to previous scoreboards with Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden characterised as 'innovation leaders' investing the most in research and innovation.

The report finds that progress in the last year has been driven by the openness and attractiveness of the EU research system, plus business-academia innovation collaboration and the commercialisation of knowledge by licensing and patent revenues. However, growth in public R&D spending was offset by less venture capital investment and innovation investment in companies. The Innovation Union Scoreboard uses a set of 25 indicators within three broad areas (enablers; firm activities; outputs).

The report is available [here](#)

### **Reshuffle in DG Research & Innovation**

DG Research & Innovation has been reorganised. The new organisation chart can be found [here](#).

The reorganisation shall ensure that the directorate general has more focus on policy whereas the Executive Agencies will focus on the implementation of the programmes. The directorate general expects to make cuts in personnel, while the agencies expects to engage some 1000 new employees in 2014-2020.

### **EU will offer €20 mio. in prizes for innovators**

The European Commission is planning to offer €20 million in prizes for researchers to offer innovative solutions to specific problems. A first pilot prize has been awarded this year to a company having delivered solutions to store vaccines without need for refrigeration and another prize, for which submissions are now closed has been launched with the aim of supporting the creation of apps for running local public services.

Next in line is a similar prize, announced beginning of March, offering €7.230 (US\$10.000) for the best ideas for the promotion of technology-enabled growth and job creation in the EU. Funded from the Horizon 2020 budget, more prizes will be announced in 2015 and are expected to cover the areas of health, transport, energy and materials, and renewable biological resources. In 2016 and 2017, more prizes are already being planned to be included in EU yearly work programmes.

### **JRC Annual Report 2013 now available**

The [Annual Report](#) provides an overview of the JRC's main activities, accomplishments and resources in 2013, highlighting its scientific and technical support to several EU key priorities: the economic and monetary union; the single market, growth, jobs and innovation; a low-carbon economy and resource efficiency; agriculture and global food security; public health and (nuclear) safety and security. A special chapter is also dedicated to the JRC's work in the field of standardisation, including the most significant examples.

You are more than welcome to contact me with your comments or questions.

Best regards,  
[Rikke Edsjö](#)