

EU Research Trends - April 2018

In April Research Trends brings news on the EU's proposed protection for whistleblowers, selected universities already moving forward on the Commission's plans for European Universities Networks, the Communication on Artificial Intelligence and the EIC H2020 prize on early detection of epidemics, the 39 new COST networks and of course much more.

The general events calendar is attached to the email sending out Research Trends.

Trends

Whistleblower protection

The Commission proposes a new law to strengthen whistleblower protection across the EU. Scandals such as Dieselgate and the ongoing Cambridge Analytica revelations have spurred the Commission to recognize that whistleblowers can play an important role in revealing unlawful activities. The Commission is therefore putting forward a proposal to guarantee a high level of protection for whistleblowers who report breaches of EU law by setting new EU-wide standards. The new law will establish safe channels for reporting both within an organization and to public authorities. The proposal ensures protection for reporting breaches of EU legislation in a wide spectrum of fields. The Commission encourages Member States to go beyond these minimum standards. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

Commission consultation on Mazzucato report closed

The Commission has published a preliminary summary of the call for feedback on the report 'Research and Innovation in the European Union: A problem-solving approach to fuel innovation-led growth' by Mariana Mazzucato. The consultation was open from 22nd February till 4th April this year and received 1,191 responses (of which 42% from universities). The summary provides an overview of the closed questions of the call for feedback. Regarding the criteria proposed: Criterion no 3 '*EU R&I missions should have ambitious but realistic R&I actions*' was ranked first by 88% of all respondents. In terms of implementation 88% voted for '*Implementation and building in-house capabilities*', and 68% agreed that citizens should be consulted in the choice of missions. As a next step, a comprehensive analysis report of all submissions, including all comments and proposals will be developed. The preliminary summary is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

European Parliament publishes overview on preparatory work for FP9

The European Parliamentary Research Service has published a report '*Preparing FP9: Designing the successor to the Horizon 2020 research and innovation framework programme*'. The paper aims to provide an overview of the activities developed by the Commission to contribute to the preparation of the next FP. It includes an analysis of the position of all the actors on 10 key discussion points including: The

battle over the FP9 budget; the tensions between support for excellence and the need for cohesion; streamlining of instruments and simplification of processes; requests for greater EU added value; the role of the Member States in the FPs governance and implementation; and the expected innovations; the European Innovation Council and a mission-oriented approach. This work is done to prepare the Parliament for the FP9 proposal expected on 6th June. The report is attached to the email sending out this newsletter

KU Leuven and 5 other universities warm up for the coming European Universities Network by launching new strategic partnership

Six leading European universities have mid-April signed an agreement in Bologna that opens up a shared, multilingual and multidisciplinary academic space that may lead to a European University Network. The European University Alliance counts KU Leuven, Freie Universität Berlin, University of Bologna, Krakow University, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. The agreement marks a close alliance on higher education and research and goes right to the heart of the ambitions of the Commission of fostering strategic university networks. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

ECIU launches 10 criteria to maximise impact of European Universities Networks

In a press release on European Universities Networks, ECIU calls for universities that dare to go heads on with innovative education in the quest to maximise their social impact. ECIU praise the opportunity that European Universities Networks offers for student-centered learning, flexible education and European curricula. ECIU puts forward ten criteria for the European Universities Networks and five ideas. All recommendations and suggestions center around openness, transparency, flexibility and ambition. For more information please follow this [link](#).

Commission launches EIC Horizon Prize for Early Warning for Epidemics

The Commission has launched a 5 million EUR prize to find the best solution for setting up an early warning system for epidemics. The prize is one of six European Innovation Council (EIC) Horizon Prizes which are part of the EIC pilot under H2020. The prize will be awarded for the development of a scalable, reliable and cost-effective early warning prototype system using Earth observation data to forecast and monitor outbreaks of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, zika, dengue or yellow fever. The deadline to apply is 1st September 2020. For more information please follow this [link](#).

39 new COST Actions starting in 2018: Get involved

COST's governing board decided to fund 39 out of 422 eligible network proposals. The new actions will be starting throughout summer and autumn 2018. Almost half of the 39 network proposals cover at least two science and technology fields. One in three proposal leaders is an early career investigator and also one in three proposals have attracted participants from all over the world. For more information about the new COST actions, please follow this [link](#).

Europe to become global hub for FinTech

The technology-enabled innovation in financial services (FinTech) have the potential to transform capital markets and bring new market players and more efficient solutions to the table. On this backdrop, the Commission has launched its EU Action Plan on Fintech. This plan is aimed at helping Europe in becoming a global hub for FinTech. The FinTech Action Plan includes 23 steps. Steps that are to some degree supported by Horizon 2020 which funds or will fund projects that could draw on blockchain technologies for up to 340 million EUR. To read more about the EU Action Plan on FinTech please follow this [link](#).

JRC launches innovation radar tool

The Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has announced the launch of the Innovation Radar Tool - a data-driven online tool to help match innovators with those who can help get their innovation to market. The innovation radar provides an intuitive interface to identify high-potential innovations and the innovators behind them in EU-funded R&I projects. It is a policy tool for innovation management and commercialization, designed to connect innovators in EU R&I projects and external stakeholders such as technology scouts and incubators. With its real-time data collection, it allows for the analysis of EU-funded R&I projects. The tool can be accessed via web or as a smartphone app. For more information please follow this [link](#).

KU Leuven selected the most innovative university in Europe

For the third year in a row, KU Leuven tops the Reuters ranking of Europe's most innovative universities. Imperial College London and University of Cambridge are second and third on the list. For more information please follow this [link](#).

EIT selects new chairman: Dirk Jan van den Berg

Dirk Jan van den Berg has unanimously been elected as the new chairman of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Governing Board. He will succeed Peter Olesen. Van den Berg will also chair the Executive Committee. EIT Governing Board members as off 1st July 2018 are Marja Makarow, Björn Nilsson and Ana Trbovich. The EIT wishes to expand this board, please see the news item below. Van den Berg is Dutch and have had a career across international business, academia and government functions. The EIT Governing Board is the principal governing body of the EIT and is independent in its decision-making. To read the EIT press release please follow this [link](#).

EIT looks for new members for its Governing Board

EIT is currently looking for expressions of interest for the selection of new members for the [EIT Governing Board](#). The deadline for applications is 14th May 2018. The EIT Governing Board consists of 12 members appointed by the Commission and provides strategic leadership to the EIT. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

High-Level Group report on Key Enabling Technologies

The Commission has published a report from the Independent High-Level Strategy Group on industrial technologies 'Re-finding Industry-Defining Innovation' written on the request of Commissioner Moedas. The report advices on support for key enabling

technologies through R&I and it recommends two new key enabling technologies *artificial intelligence* and *security & connectivity*. The report is attached to the email sending out this newsletter. The report can be downloaded through this [link](#).

New guidance to Member States in transition to Open Science

The Commission has revised its Recommendation on access to, and preservation of, scientific information. The revised guidance was published end of April as part of the [Digital Single Market](#) package and lays out the blueprint for policies on open access to publications and data. The guidelines are intended to provide even better support to excellent research across the EU. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

Open letter calls on Commission for better rules on text and data mining

On the occasion of the European Commission's Digital Day 2018, 23 European research related organisations, institutions and enterprises have signed an open letter to the Commission calling for maximizing the benefits of artificial intelligence (AI) through future-proof rules on text and data mining. The 23 organisations represent a very broad spectrum of organisations from universities (e.g. LERU and EUA), over start-ups and scale-ups to libraries and more. The signatories state that they fully support the ambitions to stimulate the development and boost investment into AI in Europe, however, they point out that Europe still lags behind the US and China, and they therefore call on the EC to set up the right regulatory and policy framework to encourage European companies to become leaders in AI. The signatories express concern that the Commission's draft Communication on AI does not recognize the foundational role that text and data mining (TDM) plays in AI and the fact that the Commission is currently pushing for a restrictive TDM exception within the Copyright Directive. They regard the ongoing efforts of the Commission on the Open Science Cloud as an important way of safeguarding sustainable access to datasets and thus a key enabling factor for progress in AI. The Open Letter calls for any European AI strategy to include robust support for TDM in public and private industries in order to make Europe a global leader in AI. The Commission's AI Strategy was launched on 25th April. The Open Letter is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

Summary report on consultation on re-use of public data

In the autumn of 2017, the Commission ran a public consultation on the review of the Directive 2003/98/EC on the reuse of public sector information (the so-called PSI Directive). The summary report takes stock of the contributions and presents preliminary trends that emerge from them. To read more please follow this [link](#).

Commission communication on Artificial Intelligence

End of April, the Commission communication on Artificial Intelligence (AI) was published. The communication follows the European leaders' call for a European approach on AI. The Commission sketches how the EU can make the most out of AI. The EU AI approach rests on three pillars: (i) Boosting the EU's technological and industrial capacity and AI uptake across the economy, (ii) Preparing for socioeconomic changes that AI brings, (iii) Ensuring an appropriate ethical and legal framework. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

EU countries to work together on Artificial Intelligence

25 EU countries have signed a declaration of cooperation on Artificial Intelligence (AI). By teaming up, the opportunities of AI for Europe can be better ensured and the challenges be better addressed. The list of signatories are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK and Norway. For more information, please follow this [link](#). Further to this initiative a number of EU countries (22) also signed a Declaration to establish a European Blockchain Partnership. Denmark is not among the signatories. The partnership is to be a vehicle for cooperation amongst Member States to exchange experience and expertise in technical and regulatory fields and prepare for the launch of EU-wide blockchain applications across the Digital Single Market. For more information please follow this [link](#).

EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation

The Commission is proposing measures to tackle online fake news and disinformation. A Code of Practice supported by an independent network of fact-checkers and other measures are to implement this proposal. To read more, please follow this [link](#).

ENISA publishes its first study on cyber Threat Intelligence Platforms

The European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) has released the first comprehensive study on cyber Threat Intelligence Platforms (TIPs). The study focuses on the needs of consumers, users, developers, vendors and the security research community. The report concludes with a series of recommendations. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

EU countries will collaborate in linking genomic databases

16 EU countries have signed a declaration for delivering cross-border access to their genomic information. Sharing more genomic data will improve understanding and prevention of disease, allowing for more personalized treatments (and targeted drug prescription) in particular for rare diseases, cancer and brain related diseases. The list of signatories are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and UK. For more information please follow this [link](#).

New brochure on H2020 project communication, dissemination and exploitation

The Commission and the IPR Helpdesk have published a new brochure called 'Making the Most of Your Horizon 2020 Project'. The brochure explains the terminology of communication, dissemination and exploitation by illustrating the differences between the three terms and pointing out the areas they have in common. It is intended as an introduction and for providing a helpful overview when developing an outreach and exploitation strategy and plan for a H2020 project. The brochure is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

European Joint Research Center (JRC) and French agricultural research institute INRA signs collaboration agreement

The European Joint Research Centre (JRC) has signed a five-year agreement with the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) to reinforce cooperation in the fields of agriculture and climate change. For more information please follow this [link](#).

PRIMA looking for experts

PRIMA, the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area, is looking for experts to assist with assignments that include the evaluation of proposals and other tasks related to programme and project implementation. Experts conduct such assignments in their personal capacity not as representatives of any organization. PRIMA is a ten-year initiative (2018-2028) to devise new R&I approaches to improve water availability and sustainable agriculture production in the Mediterranean region. PRIMA consists of EU Member States, H2020 Associated Countries and Mediterranean Partner Countries. To date, 19 countries committed to the initiative. For more information please follow this [link](#).

The Guild position on SSH in FP9

The Guild of European Research Universities has published a Position Paper on Social Sciences and Humanities in FP9. The Guild argues that R&I under FP9 must empower researchers to fulfil their potential and contribute to evidence-based policies on social cohesion, education, intercultural communication, democratic participation and developing a fair and sustainable economy in the context of globalization. The FP must contribute to a deeper understanding of disruptive innovation and transformation. The Guild thus pleads for FP9 to ambitiously address societal and cultural challenges, must address the SDGs, must contribute to the security of EU citizens and must have broader definition of impact. For more information please follow this [link](#).

EARTO presents recommendations for Rules of Participation for FP9

The European Association of Research and Technology (EARTO) welcomes the Commission's continuous efforts towards simplification and brings further recommendations for the elaboration of FP9 Rules of Participation. The main recommendations are: (i) Further reflect the beneficiaries' accounting practices and cost categories, (ii) Improve the flat rate approach to better reflect the real costs of RTOs (increase flat rate covering indirect costs, allow and simplify claims for infrastructure costs as well as allowing reasonable allocation keys in the calculation of direct costs), (iii) Carry out a thorough evaluation of the lump-sum approach prior to any expansion, (iv) Further improve measures for ex-ante assurance and legal certainty, (v) Reduce the audit burden to further simplify the FP, (vi) Provide one single set of rules aligned on the FP rules for every programme performed with EU funding. The EARTO paper is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

Commission's Group of Scientific Advisors

The Commission has renamed the High Level Group for its Scientific Advice Mechanism ([SAM](#)) to 'Group of Scientific Advisors'. Since 2016 the Group has produced [Scientific Opinions and Explanatory Notes](#) at the request of the College of

Commissioners on issues such as Food from the Oceans, Cybersecurity in the European Digital Market and New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology.

RIO publishes Annual Country Report 2017

RIO, the Research and Innovation Observatory of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre has published the Annual RIO Country Report for 2017. The report provides a brief analysis of each country's R&I system covering the economic context, main actors, funding trends and human resources, policies to address R&I challenges, and R&I in national and regional smart specialization strategies. Data is from Eurostat unless otherwise stated. To access the country chapters please follow this [link](#).

Latvia publishes preliminary position on FP9

In its recently published position paper on the next framework programme, Latvia stressed the importance of high-quality, socially relevant and open research and innovation for smart economy and inclusive, sustainable development. Latvia agrees that the European Research Area (ERA) is a core concept and that the next FP must further develop and integrate ERA. A key political objective of FP9 should be to contribute even more strongly to a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation. The paper promotes a concept of 'inclusive excellence' providing opportunities for scientific collaboration for all Member States. Latvia also promotes a broader definition of impact. The position paper is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

Highlighted events

SAVE-THE-DATE info-day and matchmaking on Societal Challenge 2

On 25th and 26th June in Brussels, the Commission hosts an info-day and matchmaking on Societal Challenge 2 (Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, maritime and maritime inland water research and bioeconomy) call 2019. The event will consist of two parts: 25st June will be a dedicated info-day and 26st June will be a matchmaking day dedicated to supporting partners in finding each other future joint proposals. Keep an eye on [this link](#) to register.

SAVE-THE-DATE Info-day and matchmaking on Societal Challenge Societal Challenge 5

On 11th and 12th September in Brussels, the Commission hosts an info-day and matchmaking on Societal Challenge 5 (Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency & Raw Materials).

International conference on Agricultural GHG Emissions and Food Security

10th to 13th September this year, the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture will be hosting a high-level international conference in Berlin on Agricultural GHG Emissions and Food Security - Connecting Research to Policy and Practice (AgriGHG 2018 Conference). The conference is organised under et aegis of JPI on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI) and the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (GRA) in collaboration with the CGIAR Research Programme on Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). The

conference will focus on policies and innovative practices that can help mitigate agricultural GHG emissions while ensuring sustainable and resilient agricultural production and enhanced food security. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

SAVE-THE-DATE - ERC event on Artificial Intelligence

25th-26th October this year, the ERC will take stock of relevant research supported by ERC on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and provide a forum for networking between scientists leading ERC funded projects. The conference will look at the foundations for AI, AI and the brain, AI and ethical challenges, applied AI for vision, speech, language, robotics and games as well as AI and society. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

Conference on impact of R&I Policy at the crossroads of policy design, implementation and evaluation

5th-6th November this year, the Austrian EU Council Presidency hosts a Conference in Vienna on Impact of Research & Innovation Policy at the Crossroads of Policy Design, Implementation and Evaluation. The conference will discuss new policy rationales and new demands for R&I policy in service of society. Looking at broader definitions and conceptualisations of impact as well as open innovation and citizen-driven innovation. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

ICT 2018 - IMAGINE DIGITAL - CONNECT EUROPE

The European flagship event on ICT and digitalisation organised by DG CONNECT will be held on 4th-6th December 2018 in Vienna. This R&I event will focus on EU priorities related to the digital transformation of society and industry. To read more about ICT 2018 - CONNECT EUROPE, please follow this [link](#).

Events attended in March. Summaries can be obtained by request

17th-18th April - EARMA

24th April - Science prizes event

26th April - Innovation in Bioeconomy in the North of England

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