EU Research Trends – February 2018

In February Research Trends brings news on the launch of the report on a mission-oriented next Framework Programme as well as the consultation on these possible missions for the next Framework Programme. Also we write about the launch of the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum and a new consultation on EU's bio-economy strategy. Furthermore, we list the most recent developments in the field of education where DG Education has launched three new initiatives among others a digital action plan.

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

Trends

Commission publishes report on Missions in FP9
The so-called Mazzucato-Report on mission-oriented R&I was launched end of February together with the corresponding consultation. The report was commissioned by Commissioner Moedas and is considered as one of the contributions for designing FP9. The report reflects the rationale for a possible mission-oriented approach, criteria for selecting missions as well as key aspects of the implementation. Moreover, it outlines three examples of possible missions: (i) 100 carbon neutral cities by 2030, (ii) 'a plastic-free ocean' and (iii) decreasing the burden of dementia'. On the basis of the report the Commission has launched a consultation for feedback on future research and innovation missions. This consultation is open until 3rd April. The Mazzucato-Report is attached to the email sending out this newsletter and by following this link, you can access the consultation.

Commissioner Moedas proposes mission on cancer
In his speech at a recent conference on European Science Policy in Porto, Commissioner Moedas proposed a mission on cancer in the next EU research and innovation programme. He added in his speech that a mission on cancer would address one of our times biggest challenges and that a mission on cancer would be interdisciplinary. To read the Commissioner's speech, please follow this link.

Commission communication on the Multiannual Financial Framework post-2020
The Commission has published a communication on the long-term EU-budget after 2020 entitled 'A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020'. With regards to the informal EU Leaders' meeting on 23rd February, the Commission presents various options for a new and modern long-term EU-budget for the period after 2020. The communication includes an outline of the respective policy areas and possible scenarios as well as the presentation of their financial consequences. Furthermore, options regarding modernization and funding of the EU-budget are mentioned. With respect to the

future research budget, the Commission has developed three scenarios: (i) maintaining or even lowering current investment levels, (ii) an increase in the next FP by 50% and (iii) a doubling of the budget for the next FP. The formal proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework will be tabled early May 2018. The Commission communication is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

Research Ministers discuss future of research and innovation in Sofia
During the informal Council Competitiveness meeting in February investment in human capital and possibilities for stimulating innovation were discussed. European research ministers exchanged views on instruments, strategies and best practices in order to start the process of finding a common European vision during the coming months. This informal Council was the first opportunity for Austrian Minister of Education, Science and Research to introduce himself. Austria holds the EU Presidency during the second half of 2018. During this meeting research ministers repeated the need for research in important areas such as health, security, sustainable agriculture and bio-economy, as well as clean and efficient energy, ecology and climate. Furthermore, an assessment was shared that shows that the so-called innovation gap continues to be present and that new measures are needed to increase the benefits of research funding. As expected the Bulgarian Presidency stressed the importance of cohesion policy and structural funds as well as the alignment of these measures with next research and innovation framework programme. The Bulgarian press release following the meeting can be access through this link.

European Universities Networks
France has proposed the idea of creating a system for supporting European Universities Networks to spur excellence is larger clusters in Europe. Danish Minister Søren Pind is in favour of this idea and the Danish and French administrations generally seem to have aligned their views on this. Recently Søren Pind commented on the idea in the EU Observer (link to article).

Publication on 'Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU' 2018
End of February, the Commission published a new publication on 'Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU' (SRIP) report 2018. The report analyses Europe's performance and the driving factors behind that performance in a global context. Some findings are: (i) Economic prosperity and the social model in the EU rely on innovation; (ii) The EU is a global leader in scientific excellence and needs to turn this leadership into more impactful innovation and entrepreneurship; (iii) Europe must ensure that the whole society contributes to and benefits from innovation; (iv) Changing dynamics in the innovation means Europe must renew its policies by adopting a mission-oriented approach and better support the scale-up of breakthrough innovations that create new markets. If you want to download the report and see the webcast of the report presentation, please follow this link.

New Director General and Deputy Director General in DG RTD
With the appointment on 21st February of Jean-Eric Paquet and Signe Racot as respectively new Director General and new Deputy Director General in DG RTD, the Commission aims to realign and create extra impetus for the last two years of its

current reign (2018-2019). Paquet is in Brussels described as a surprise but safe choice due to his 23 year-long Commission career. Insiders believe that letting DG RTD being headed up by respectively a Frenchman and an Estonian is a signal of European consolidation vis-à-vis the Brexit negotiations and a recognition of the vocal support research and innovation given by both President Macron and during the recent Estonian EU Presidency. To read the Commission press release on these appointments, please follow this link.

Brexit: Mandate to negotiate transitional arrangements with UK
New negotiating directives for possible transitional arrangements with the UK after Brexit are in place after the General Affairs Council end of January. The new directives are based on previous negotiating directives and recommendations including (i) There shall be no 'cherry picking', (ii) all existing EU regulatory, budgetary, supervisory, judiciary and enforcement instruments and structures will apply, (iii) UK will be a third country as of 30st March 2019, (iv) the transition period needs to be clearly defined and should not last beyond 31st December 2020. For more information, please follow this link.

Consultation on update of the 2012 Bio-economy Strategy
In 2017, the Commission carried out a review of its 2012 EU Bio-economy Strategy, which included delivering on key actions. In the 2017 review it appeared that while the objectives of the 2012 Bio-economy Strategy continue to be relevant, a refocusing of the actions and assessment of the scope of the Strategy are considered necessary in the light of recent policy developments. The process of updating the strategy is based on a broad consultation of citizens and stakeholders. Until 20th March all interested parties are invited to give feedback through the public consultation. The Commission plans the adoption of the updated Bio-economy Strategy for the third quarter 2018. If you wish to access the consultation, please follow this link and are you interested in the review of the current strategy, then please follow this link.

JPI Urban Europe starts consultation towards strategic research agenda
As a first step towards its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2.0, JPI Urban Europe opens a public consultation for all urban stakeholders to share their views, insights and experiences on urban transition and sustainable urban development. The aim is to develop a European urban mission. To access the consultation please follow this link and to learn more about JPI Urban Europe, please follow this link.

Commission launches the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum
The Commission has launched the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum with a view to highlight key developments of the blockchain technology, promote EU actors and reinforce European engagement with multiple stakeholders involved in blockchain activities. Blockchain, which brings trust traceability and security, is expected to impact almost all digital services and transform business models in a wide range of areas such as healthcare, insurance, finance, energy, logistics, IPR management and government services. To read more about blockchain and the EU, please follow this link. In the last edition of Research Trends we announced the H2020 Prize on 'Blockchain for the social good'. Read more about this prize here.

Study looks at impact of FET programme
FET Traces is an impact assessment project which looks at the scientific and technological impact of the funding scheme Future and Emerging Technologies Open. FET Traces has now published its final report: 'Visionary and collaborative research in Europe: Pathways to impact of use-inspired basic research'. The report has been prepared with the German Fraunhofer Institute and the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT). The report finds that FET research has relevant impacts on the areas of knowledge production, the economy, people and society. Amongst other the study found a high level of interdisciplinarity in 68% of all projects. The report concludes that due to the fact that FET supports 'a specific mode of research that can be characterized as use-inspired basic research', FET is a unique funding programme within H2020 and the authors pleas for a strengthened FET in FP9. To access the report on the FET programme, please follow this link.

Commission proposes collaboration on Health Technology Assessment
The Commission has put forward a proposal for a Regulation on Health Technology Assessment. The proposal is conceived to serve further empower patients, encourage innovation and help take-up of high-quality medtech innovations. The proposed regulation covers new medicines and certain new medical devices providing the basis for permanent and sustainable cooperation at the EU level for joint clinical assessment in these areas. Member States will be able to use common HTA tools, methodologies and procedures across the EU, working together in four main areas: (i) on joint clinical assessment, (ii) on joint scientific consultations whereby developers can seek advice from HTA authorities, (iii) on identification of emerging health technologies to identify promising technology as early as possible and (iv) on continuing voluntary cooperation in other areas. To read more about HTA, please follow this link.

Commission launches new tool on geographical patterns and trends of cancer
On the occasion on World Cancer Day early February, the Commission has launched a new tool: the European Cancer Information System (ECIS) website providing statistics on geographical patterns and temporal trends in the relation to cancer. The information in the ECIS is derived from some 150 European-based cancer registries from 25 EU Member States, Ukraine, Belarus, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The data available covers 65% of the EU population. To access the ECIS website, please follow this link.

Several universities call for stronger SSH anchorage in FP9
11 universities among them University of Ghent, University of Groningen and Freie Universität Berlin have published a call for a better integration of SSH in FP9. They propose concrete steps to achieve this goal: (i) Creation of an SSH Platform helping the community to give input on scoping papers, work programmes, facilitate searches for SSH evaluators etc.; (ii) encouraging researchers to think about how to generate academic and societal impact when drafting proposals; (iii) recognizing that all disciplines crucially contribute to the goal of an inclusive and prosperous Europe, and (iv) investing in high-quality SSH research and innovation opportunities; (v) a target budget for SSH spending of 10% of the overall civil research budget for F9. The call is

open for other universities to join. Universities signing this are requested to make note of this call in their response to the FP9 consultation closing on 8th March. For more information and to access the plea, please follow this link.

European Defence Agency launches two smaller Innovation Prizes
The European Defence Agency (EDA) has launched the EDA Defence Innovation Prize rewarding research entities and companies who will propose innovation and ground-breaking technologies, products, processes and services applicable in the defence domain. The prizes are especially (but no exclusively) aimed at non-traditional defence industries (civil or dual-use producers) and researchers as they play a growing role in inventing and creating the disruptive capabilities that armed forces will need in the future. There will be two different prizes each of 10,000 euros to be awarded for the most innovative ideas on: (i) integration of multi-robot swarming concepts of future defence capabilities in the area of Guidance, Navigation and Control and (ii) Autonomous detection, identification and monitoring/sampling/analysis through sensor and platform networking in the area of CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) protection technologies and techniques. Deadline for submission of proposals is 18th April 2018. The Prize award ceremony is scheduled to take place in Brussels in June 2018. To read more about the prizes, please follow this link.

Public consultation on the SME definition launched
The Commission has launched a public consultation on the review of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) definition contributing to an evaluation and possible revision of this definition. The current European SME definition comprises enterprises with fewer than 250 employees which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro. This definition is applied to EU policies and to some European administrative exemptions and reduced fees. The consultation is open until 6th May 2018. To access the public consultation please follow this link.

ESFRI publishes report on innovation-oriented cooperation of research infrastructures
The European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures, has published the third volume of the ESFRI Scripta series. The publication is built on the outcomes of the ESFRI working group on innovation. The volume describes the different forms of industry and research infrastructure collaboration that generate innovation. The report also contains a number of conclusions and recommendations for the attention of research infrastructure managers and ESFRI in the perspective of the further implementation of the ESFRI Roadmap. For more information and to download the report, please follow this link.

Mid-term evaluation of the Erasmus+ Programme
The European Commission has published its report on the mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+. The report is structured around four indicators: (i) EU added value, (ii) coherence, (iii) efficiency, and (iv) simplification. The evaluation takes the first years of the current programme (2014-2016) into account as well as the previous programme (2007-2013). The programme is described as a success, highly valued by

stakeholders and the public with satisfaction rates above 90%. In order to make the programme even better in the future inclusiveness should be increased and accessibility should be improved for school publics, VET learners and apprentices. Furthermore, digitalization is highlighted as an area for more attention in the future. Both the mid-term evaluation as well as the staff working document on Erasmus+ are attached to the email sending out this email. The latter offers more details on the evaluation results and recommendations post 2020. The future of Erasmus+ will of course also be shaped by the public consultation on Erasmus which is open until 8th March. To access the consultation please follow this link.

Commission publishes first education package
The Commission has published 3 new initiatives: (i) a proposal on key competences, (ii) on common values and (iii) an action plan for digital skills and infrastructures. Regarding the proposed initiative on key competences, the Commission suggests an update of the 2006 Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and suggests concrete guidance. Compared to 2006 there is this time stronger focus on basic skills, digitals and entrepreneurship, language and STEM. Regarding common values the Commission proposes several measures to foster mutual understanding by promoting shared values, fostering inclusion and enabling people to better understand the EU and each other. Erasmus+ will be the main instrument to drive these ambitions. Regarding the Digital Action Plan, the Commission proposes to implement by the end of 2020 several initiatives to support people and organisations in dealing with rapid digital change. For instance, through the creation of a EU-wide platform for digital higher education supported by Erasmus+. Another proposed action is a framework for issuing digitally-certified qualifications and validating digitally-acquired skills, aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). These updates were received during a session with DG EAC, a summary of the event can be obtained on request.

Two key projects launched to implement the European Open Science Cloud
The two first projects under the European Open Science Could (EOSC) have been kick-off. The two projects are the EOSC-hub and OpenAIRE-Advance project. The EOSC-hub will allow researchers all over Europe to access a wide variety of interoperable data, computing and networking resources available at national, regional and institutional level. In order to do so the EOSC-hub will mobilise the major European digital and thematic infrastructures, comprising more than 300 data centers world-wide and 18 pan-European infrastructures, and ultimately serve a large number of the 1,7 million European researchers and 70 million professionals in science and technology. To complement the resources and services offered by the EOSC-hub, the OpenAIRE-Advance project will gather more than 50 partners and will aim at building and consolidating a socio-technical network and infrastructure supporting open scholarly communication. If you want to read more about the European Open Science Cloud and the flow of projects and initiatives that wills support the develop om EOSC please follow this link.

The Guild calls for a bold EU innovation policy
The Guild of European research-intensive universities, of which AU is a member, is calling for a bold EU innovation policy that will increase transferability of research

results into innovations. The Guild has published a policy paper on this end of February which makes the follow recommendations: (i) The European Innovation Council (EIC) should focus on creating European added value across innovation ecosystems; (ii) Increase funding for collaborative research at low technology readiness levels (TRLs); (iii) Improve links between new knowledge and private Investment; (iv) Support all types of innovation, including social and cultural innovation; (v) The support of innovation ecosystems through the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) must be open, cost-effective and scalable, (vi) Support Open Innovation to encourage more exchange and co-creation of ideas wherever appropriate and to enable the sustainable participation of all actors in innovation ecosystems (vi) Europe's regional innovation performance should be strengthened by making universities more actively involved in the Smart Specialisation strategies. To access the paper, please follow this link.

Italy presents Position paper on FP9
Italy has presented a position statement and a vision document in relation to FP9. Italy believes that transnational research supported by the FP financial resources, involving multiple Member States and Associated Countries across the whole of Europe is instrumental for the achievement of a fully functional ERA. Attention points in the paper are: (i) focus on researchers especially first stage researchers and women researchers, (ii) importance of not shifting radically to a loan-based system for financing research. (iii) continuation of joint programming as a means to streamline national and European research agendas, (iv) continuation of a clear 3-pillars structure of the successor to H2020 and finally (v) a boost to the widening participation and spreading excellence agenda so that all regions benefit from FP9. The Italian paper is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

Germany and Luxembourg present vision for new industrial strategy for the EU
During an informal ministerial meeting in Sofia in January, Germany and Luxembourg together presented their vision for European industrial strategy. The non-paper presented contains two major parts: The first outlines the parameters of the European industrial strategy (digital futures incl. artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, future mobility, green technologies, initiatives for a low carbon emissions industry, skills required). The second part focuses on the 2018 launch of EU platforms.

European Research Executive Agency – administration positions open
Temporary agent positions are open in the Research Executive Agency (REA). Applicants for the domains of (i) Social Sciences and Humanities including Economics, (ii) Biology, Environment and Geosciences, and Life Sciences as well as (iii) Engineering, ICT, Physics, Chemistry and Space are invited to apply. The process towards the position includes selection and assessment tests. Deadline for applications is 8th March 12:00.

Highlighted events

Conference on demonstrating the results of big data initiatives in healthcare

17th-18th May at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam a conference will be held on the results of big data initiatives in healthcare. During the event national and European initiatives and start-ups who develop big data solutions in healthcare will demonstrate their work to potential users. Please follow this link for more information about the event.

International Conference on Agriculture Water Conservation and Irrigation Water Use Management (ICAWACIWUM) in Paris
15th-16th March, the 2018 ICAWACIWUM 2018 conference gathers leading researchers on the topic of water consumption in the agricultural sector in Paris. Innovations, trends as well as challenges and solutions relating to water consumption in the agricultural sector are on the programme. For more information, please follow this link.

Energy Cluster Event by European Universities Association (EUA)
Event on 21st-22nd March on the Energy Action Agenda developed as part of the three years project 'Universities in the SET Plan', coordinated by EUA European Platform of Universities in Energy (EUA-EPUE), an Energy Action Agenda and the survey gathering information about energy research and education at Europe's universities have been published. The action plan draws upon the skills and expertise of hundreds of academic experts at universities across Europe. It serves as a collection of concrete best practice examples and suggestions for education programmes in the fields of energy, systems and smart grids, renewables integration and energy efficiency as well as interdisciplinary education ideas. Furthermore, it also proposes ideas for new research. All this and more will be discussed during the EUA Energy Cluster Event held at the Université de Lorraine, Nancy on 21st-22nd March. To read more and register for the event, please follow this link.

Symposium on internationalisation of universities and national language
On 4th May at KU Leuven, Belgium a symposium on the topic of internationalisation of universities and national language. With the ever-increasing internationalisation of universities and with it the dominance of the English language, the fear arises that national languages and cultures might be compromised. This symposium looks at this fear: Is it justified, how can it be dealt with, etc. Do you want to read more about the event or register, please follow this link.

Did you miss the webinar on funding for health research, big data, cloud and High-Performance Computing?
If you missed the webinar on funding for health research the recording and presentations are now available through this link. ¨

Events attended in February. Summaries can be obtained by request
1st February: ReSET meeting on digital education action plan with DG EAC
26th February: ERRIN Opening Science meeting on missions in FP9

Comments or questions should be directed to Rikke Edsjö or Lina Christensen