

## EU Research Trends - March 2017

In March, the European Research Council celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this was done with a lot of praise from across the EU and beyond. The EU as a political project, however, receives less praise on its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and on this occasion President Jean-Claude Juncker launched a new White Paper setting up scenarios for the next 10 years for the EU. An interesting publication reminding us that in a global world Europe's population and economic weight is falling as other parts of the world grow. By 2060, none of the EU Member States will account for even 1% of the world's population – in its own a compelling reason to stick together to achieve more. An interesting perspective as UK on 29<sup>th</sup> March activated article 50 making Brexit a reality. Maybe closer to our daily lives working with research and higher education, this newsletter also shares interim reports on Joint Undertakings and Future & Emerging Technologies as well as calls on experts. Be sure also to consult the events calendar attached to the email.

### Trends

#### **Juncker presents White Paper on the future of EU27**

As preparation to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Union - the Treaty of Rome - the Commission launched in the beginning of March a White Paper on the future of Europe. The White Paper sets out the main challenges and opportunities for Europe in the coming decade and it presents five scenarios for how the Union could evolve by 2025. All depending on how it chooses to respond to globalisation, digitisation, security concerns and the rise of populism. It underlines that Europe's population and economic weight is falling as other parts of the world grow and that with that loss of individual Member State weight, the EU countries need each other more than ever. To read more and download the White Paper use [this link](#). Ironically March is not only the month of the celebrations of the Treaty of Rome, it is also the month where the British Prime Minister activated article 50 and thereby made Brexit a reality. By 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 the UK is hereby foreseen to be definitively divorced from the EU. There is deep uncertainty what the Brexit negotiations will result in, however, the EU seems very determined not to set a dangerous precedence.

#### **Commission releases study calling for more public funding of research and innovation**

On 16<sup>th</sup> March the EC released a study calling for more public funding of R&I, to act as a catalyst to boost private R&I and overall economic growth. It reviews existing empirical literature and underlines the particularly important role of public R&I funding. According to the study two thirds of the economic growth in Europe can be traced back to innovation. It also estimates that the typical returns for private R&I investment range between 10-30% and are even higher for the economy in general due to positive spillover effects. The study stresses that for public R&I funding to have maximum impact it should cover the whole cycle of innovation from fundamental research to market-creating innovation. The report will be

submitted to the high level group of experts chaired by Pascal Lamy which advises the Commission on how to maximize the impact of the EU's investment in R&I. Download the report [here](#).

### **MEPs adopt 2018 budget priorities**

On 15<sup>th</sup> March the European Parliament voted on the guidelines for the Commission officials preparing the EU draft budget for 2018. The key priorities identified by the MEPs are growth and jobs, particularly for young people, tackling migration, climate change, and safety and security. With regard to the priority on growth and jobs, the European Parliament rapporteur for the EU 2018 budget proposed that the EU must invest more in infrastructure, innovation and research and support more SMEs and entrepreneurs. See the press release [here](#).

### **Open consultation of 7 Joint Undertakings (JUs)**

Recently the European Commission launched an open public consultation of seven JUs operating under Horizon 2020. The consultation is an important part of the midterm evaluation of JUs as carried out in the context of the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020. The evaluation covers the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the JUs, their achievements and scientific outputs as well as their wider socioeconomic impact. The consultation is open till 10<sup>th</sup> March. Please follow [this link](#) to access the consultation.

### **EARTO publishes paper on JUs**

The European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO) contributes to the above consultation on JUs by publishing a paper on 'How JUs boost RTOs-Industry Collaboration and Leverage Private RD&I investments in Europe'. The paper contains views on collaborative research within Horizon 2020 including Public Private Partnerships and Joint Technology Initiatives. The paper can be downloaded [here](#).

### **Interim evaluation report on FET Flagships**

After three years of activities, the Flagship instrument, and its implementation through the two Future & Emerging Technologies (FET) Flagships, namely Graphene and the Human Brain Project has been evaluated by a panel of high-level experts. The evaluation is intended to improve the existing Flagships as well as guide the preparation of new Flagships such as the Quantum Technologies Flagship. According to the evaluation panel, the Flagships demonstrate their effectiveness in delivering excellent science, but their future effectiveness in supporting innovation still needs to be demonstrated. The FET Flagships Interim Evaluation is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

### **Interim report from the High-level group on the Quantum Flagship**

The interim report on the Quantum Flagship is published bringing forward its first recommendations for the Strategic Research Agenda of the Flagship. The group will deliver its final report this summer including a consolidated implementation and governance model. Read more [here](#). The report will be used to prepare the initial phase of the Quantum Flagship including the first call related to the Flagship which will be published this autumn as part of the Horizon 2020 FET work programme for 2018. For more information, please follow this [link](#).

### **Report by the Future and Emerging Technologies Advisory Group on SSH**

The report analyses how technological innovations need more awareness on the contexts in which they are placed. The report recommends more support to multidisciplinary and

interdisciplinary research that brings together engineering, natural sciences and social sciences and humanities. To download the report, please follow [this link](#).

#### **Participation in Horizon 2020 Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) projects**

The Commission has published an infographic showing the participation in Horizon 2020 FET projects. The infographic shows the number of participants per country and distribution of funding as of December 2016. To access the infographic please follow [this link](#).

#### **Call on experts to Commission Expert Group on the Future of Scholarly Publishing**

DG Research and Innovation invites interested stakeholders to submit their expression of interest to participate in an Expert Group on the Future of Scholarly Publishing. This expert group has recently been set up to contribute to the strategic priority of 'Open Science'. A key element in Commissioner Moedas' research agenda. The call is upon until 7<sup>th</sup> April. To access the call, please follow this [link](#).

#### **Call on experts for Commission group to support Circular Economy Financing Expert Platform**

DG Research and Innovation has published a call for applications for its expert group set up as part of the Circular Economy Finance Support Platform. The Platform was launched on 26<sup>th</sup> January and the support group will be an informal Commission expert group operating in accordance with the horizontal rules for Commission expert groups. Deadline for submission is 9<sup>th</sup> May. For more information and for call documents access this [link](#).

#### **Call for European Young Researchers Award 2017**

The call for the European Young Researchers Award is now open. The award is granted to researchers demonstrating outstanding research performance and leadership. It aims to inspire early stage researchers to incorporate a European dimension and perspective into their research. The deadline for the call is 16<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The prize-giving ceremony will take place during the [EuroScience Open Forum](#). For more information follow [this link](#).

#### **Public consultation on Horizon 2020 Article 185 partnerships**

As part of the midterm evaluation of Horizon 2020 the Commission has launched a public hearing on Article 185 initiatives. Article 185 initiatives are public-public partnerships which promotes research and innovation within selected areas. The initiatives need a minimum of 50% co-financing from the Member States. Five Article 185 initiatives exist: (i) Active and Assisted Living (AAL), (ii) Joint Baltic Sea Research Programme (BONUS) (iii) EUROSTARS, (iv) European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) and (v) European Metrology Research and Innovation Programme (EMRP). The public consultation is open till 30<sup>st</sup> April. Please access the consultation [here](#).

#### **DG SANTE launches European Reference Networks**

On 1<sup>st</sup> March the newly established European Reference Networks (ERNs) started their work. The ERNs are virtual cross-border cooperation platforms between specialists for the diagnosis and treatment of rare and low prevalence complex diseases. In practice, the 24 ERNs will develop new innovative care models, eHealth tools, medical solutions and devices. To read more on the ERNs, follow this [link](#).

#### **Commission adopts new rules for funding salaries under Horizon 2020**

The Commission has presented a new amendment to the provisions of Horizon 2020 by which

it will increase the salaries of EU-funded research in low-income Member States to match national pay rates and will offer additional bonuses of up to EUR 8,000 a year. The new rule is designed to stop the brain drain from east to west and the rule will apply retroactively to all Horizon 2020 projects. It is not likely that extra money will be allocated to Horizon 2020 and as the calculation will be very complicated the impact of this decision remains unclear. The Commission memo on this new amendment is attached to the newsletter.

#### **Open consultation on ERASMUS+**

Until 31<sup>st</sup> May, the Commission runs an open consultation on ERASMUS+. The aim is to gather input from a variety of stakeholders and assess the effectiveness of ERASMUS+ programmes. To read more and access the public consultation, please follow this [link](#).

#### **European Research Council (ERC) celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Commissioner announces ERC budget increase**

In the beginning of March the ERC celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The highly acclaimed research facility was applauded from across and beyond the EU for its clear and ambitious strategy that with relatively simple and solid tools has made it an internationally acclaimed beacon of research excellence. If you missed the celebrations look [here](#) for a wrap-up of the most important achievements of ERC. To underline and recognize the significance of the ERC the Commissioner announced that the ERC budget will be allocated an additional 50 mio EUR under Horizon 2020.

#### **Commission announces pilot project to boost digital skills through internships**

The European Commission has announced plans for a pilot project to provide working experience in the digital field for 5,000-6,000 graduate students in 2018-2020. The paid 4-5 month internships will be available for students of all disciplines. This initiative is launched because despite high levels of youth unemployment there are two million job vacancies in Europe. In most jobs digital skills are needed and more than half of ICT specialists work outside the ICT sector. Internships could focus on skills such as cybersecurity, big data, quantum and artificial intelligence as well as web design, digital marketing, software development, coding and graphic design. The interns will receive a stipend of around 500 EUR per month. Further details on the project will be provided in the coming weeks. For more information about EU and digital skills, please follow this [link](#).

#### **EU ministers commit to digitise Europe with high-performance computing (HPC)**

Ministers from seven EU Member States (France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) have signed in Rome a declaration to support the next generation of computing and data infrastructures, a European project of the size of Airbus in the 1990s or the Galileo of the 2000s. They plan to establish EuroHPC for acquiring and deploying an integrated world-class high-performance computing infrastructure. This will be available across the EU for scientific communities, industry and the public sector no matter where the users are located. At the moment, EU industry provides about 5% of the High Performance Computing resources worldwide but consumes one third of them. Other Member States are encouraged to join. The declaration is attached to this newsletter.

#### **Race to land the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in London**

With the announced activation of Article 50 on 29<sup>th</sup> March to commence the divorce negotiations between the UK and the EU, the race among cities bidding to become the new

home of [EMA](#) intensifies. The new location may be announced before June. EMA itself has set up a relocation task force, which has identified that as many as 50% of the EMA staff will not be interested in relocating with the office. Their decision largely depending on where EMA will locate in the future. EMA counts 890 full time employees and hosts 4,000 national regulators and scientists who attend 36,000 meetings each year to review and approve drugs. Only 6,5 percent of EMA's permanent staff are British. Six countries seem to be more likely than others to win the EMA office: Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands.

**Norway has published a paper with its preliminary positions on the next Framework (FP9)** Programme for Research and Innovation. Norway emphasises that FP9 should contribute to a green shift and renewal of our economies and societies with focus on digitisation, green innovation and blue growth. The five key principles of the next FP should be excellence, impact, openness, simplicity and European Added Value. The Norwegian paper is attached to the email sending out this newsletter.

## Highlighted events

### **1<sup>st</sup> European Conference on Connected and Automated Driving**

3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> April, the European Commission is hosting the first European conference on automated driving with a number of industry and science partners, among them TU Delft. The conference is fully booked but can be followed through webcast. For further information, programme and webcast links follow this [link](#).

### **Closed event with Lykke Friis in Copenhagen**

On 11<sup>th</sup> May, Danish Universities is organising an event on the future EU research and innovation programme. The key note speaker of the event is prorector at Copenhagen University Lykke Friis, member of the High Level Group investing how to maximise the impact of EU research and innovation funding. Furthermore, professor and Vice-President in the European Research Council Klaus Bock will talk increased synergies between the EU programmes can potentially be achieved.

### **Events covered in March – summaries to be obtained on request**

28<sup>th</sup> February: 'H2020 – Performance and Further Simplification'

6<sup>th</sup> March: 'Secure Societies Info Day and Brokerage' Event

7<sup>th</sup> March: The Guild Policy Lab 'A Vision for EU: Research, Innovation & the Democratic Deficit'

7<sup>th</sup> March: 'Empowering Development', info event on climate projects in 3<sup>rd</sup> World Countries.

8<sup>th</sup> March: 'Synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds & Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Funding

30<sup>st</sup> March: ACA Policy Seminar – Trump, the Brexit and other unwelcome developments.

30<sup>st</sup> March: LERU event 'Productive interactions: Societal impact of academic research in the knowledge society'

**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](#)