

EU Research Trends - November 2016

In this version of Research Trends attention is given to the proposal by the Commission for a new tax break system to finance R&D, to worried voices relating to EU's defense research as well as the ongoing work being laid for the next Framework Programme. This month has seen a number of activities relating to the mid-term evaluation of Horizon 2020 as well as the future framework programme. Finally, we again call on you to take part in the survey that will help modernise this newsletter. If you have not done so yet, please do access the survey towards the end of this newsletter and answer to 8 simple questions. We draw a box of Belgian chocolates among the answers!

Trends

Lykke Friis part of High Level Group on FP9

On Tuesday 29th November, the Commission announced the members of the High Level Group that will formulate a vision for the ninth framework programme. The group which will be chaired by Pascal Lamy, former Director-General of the World Trade Organisation and former Commissioner for Trade. The High Level Group has a Danish member, prorektor for education on the University of Copenhagen, Lykke Friis. The members have been appointed in their personal capacities reflecting a healthy balance of experience and representation. Read more [here](#).

European Parliament organises H2020 hearing in the ITRE Committee

On Tuesday 29th November, the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Technology, Research and Energy organised with the rapporteur for the own initiative report on the mid-term evaluation of Horizon 2020. The hearing addressed a number of relevant reflections on the divide between the EU13 and EU15, the brain drain currently witnessed in especially Southern European countries as well as practical insights from researcher on what has worked well and what has been a challenge under Horizon 2020. A full summary of the hearing can be obtained by contacting Lina Christensen lc@centraldenmark.eu. To access the ITRE website and see more information can be done [here](#).

ERC President speaks at ITRE Committee meeting in Parliament

The ERC President was invited on 8th November to address the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)'s working group on Horizon 2020. ERC President, Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, during his speech he underlined that European Research including the European Research Council needs strong support from Parliament and that he was profoundly grateful for the support of the ITRE Committee. He reminded the Committee that ERC next March will celebrate its 10th anniversary and how much has happened in the 10 years ERC has existed. To underline the breath of ERC, he explained that since 2007 ERC has supported over 6,500 researchers to develop their projects; that ERC has seen 6 of its grantees being awarded a Nobel Prize and that more than 30,000 post-doctoral fellows and PhD

aspirants are working in teams built by ERC grantees. The ERC President ended his speech by underlining that ERC has transformed the attitudes of scientists towards EU research programmes, today the ERC is seen by many researchers as the 'first best funding option'. See more [here](#).

European University Association's vision for FP9

The European University Association has published its vision for the ninth framework programme. These initial thoughts centers around three main needs that should be met by FP9: (i) long-term policies and funding instruments, (ii) reinforcement of collaboration and minimization of discrepancies across the EU, (iii) stronger alignment of policies for education, research and innovation. See more [here](#).

EU 2015 monitoring report on H2020 published

On Monday 28th November, the Commission published the 2015 monitoring report on Horizon 2020. The report which comes in the midst of the interim evaluation is likely to become a reference point in the ongoing evaluation of Horizon 2020. The conclusions drawn show that the EU research programme attracts more interest than earlier programmes, especially from businesses. To download the report look [here](#).

Danish winner of EU prize

The Commission has awarded the first two Horizon Prizes to innovators delivering breakthrough solutions in 'collaborative spectrum sharing' and 'breaking the optical transmission barriers'. The Danish winning project on optical transmission was led by the Department of Photonics Engineering, Technical University of Denmark. The other project on spectrum sharing was won by King's College. Both projects receive EUR 500,000. See more [here](#).

EU proposes tax breaks for R&D

The European Commission has put forward rules on how R&D could be supported through a new tax system where companies investing in R&D will be able to deduct an amount equal to or larger than their investment. The proposal is targeted corporations with an annual turnover of more than EUR 750 million and which are tax resident in an EU Member State. Smaller companies that voluntarily join the scheme will be allowed to deduct up to 200 per cent of their R&D costs. 'It is a great incentive for the open innovation policy of EU Research Commissioner Carlos Moedas', said Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary General of the League of European Research Universities. Finalising and implementing this proposal can take a number of years. See more [here](#).

Preparatory Action on Defense Research under fire by researchers

The initial EU defense programme (Preparatory Action for Defense Research) will spend around EUR 25 million per year until 2020. Spending proposals so far include financing drone, cyber defense and maritime surveillance research. The preparatory action can eventually grow into a permanent programme worth EUR 3.5 billion run separately from H2020.

This initiative has heard critical voices from various sides. With arguments centering around defense research being inherently closed and that the defense industry has no place in the EU

research framework programme. In either case, the pilot is the first exclusively focused on defense research and it marks a major shift towards allowing European defense companies to access EU budget.

As background it is relevant to note that the EU lags behind major powers on defense investment. EU national spending on defense research is currently less than EUR 8 billion and most research is carried out in France, UK and Germany. For comparison, the US defense R&D budget is EUR 67 billion next year.

FOODCONNECT winner of the FOOD KIC call

The winning consortium for the future Knowledge and Innovation Community for Food (FOOD KIC) is FOODCONNECT, a consortium of 50 partners lead by the Technical University of Munich. See more about the winning consortium [here](#). Another consortium FOODNEXUS was in the running for the plus EUR 100 mio. KIC read more about this consortium [here](#).

League of European Research Universities (LERU) publishes reform list for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

In a new brief LERU states that the EIT needs to develop more powers to its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). From its headquarter in Budapest, EIT funds and oversees a network of 800 academic and industry partners, however, the complex EIT-KIC model has several shortcomings and has produced little in terms of tangible results. LERU sees more freedom to the KICs as part of the solution. After fifteen years of EU funding, KICs (within information technology, energy, climate change, raw materials and life sciences) are meant to become independent and profitable. However, so far only one KIC has been successful in generating income. This has led LERU to conclude that full financial autonomy and sustainability cannot be achieved without changing the EIT's role and position. The Commission has set up a five-person panel of experts to make further recommendations for EIT reform by the end of 2016. See more [here](#).

Commission publishes data on Member State Research and Innovation systems

In accordance with the European Semester, the Commission has published its yearly country reports and recommendations on research and innovation. These reports follow closely the structural reforms undertaken at member state level to promote jobs, growth and investment. Research and innovation play a key role in this context and therefore specific reports are developed on this topic. Read more [here](#).

The EU Member States make progress towards the education and training objectives

The recently released Education and Training Monitor published on 7th November shows that Member States are working towards reaching the 2020 objectives on education and training. Among the commitments are: (i) lowering early school leaving rates to under 10 per cent, (ii) increase the number of higher education graduate to at least 40% of all 30-40 year olds. From this year's report is seen that early school leaving is down to 11% whilst participation in tertiary education is up to 38,7 per cent. See more [here](#).

The EU launches agenda for oceans

The EU has adopted a communication proposing actions for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans. 14 actions are contained within 3 priority areas: (i) Improving the international ocean governance framework, (ii) Reducing human pressure on the oceans and creating conditions for a sustainable blue economy, (iii) Strengthening international ocean research and data. See more [here](#).

Healthy Measures – sharing experience with using patient data

The business-research platform Science Business launches a new service to keep track on the growing use of patient data. Under the name Healthy Measures Science Business wants to create a platform for sharing and exchanging practices on patient data usages. See more [here](#).

DG Connect consultation

The European Commission is preparing the Next Generation Internet Initiative. An open consultation has just been launched on the Internet of 2030. See more [here](#). Also through DG Connect a consultation has been launched on the mid-term evaluation of the Connection Europe Facility. See more [here](#).

DG Research and Innovation consultation on the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020

The consultation opened last month and the Commission has since then distributed the consultation to a large number of stakeholders. Have you not received the consultation directly, then please do access here as feedback from the research environment is crucial. Please access the consultation [here](#).

EU budget for 2017 approved

On 17th November the EU institutions reached an agreement on the 2017 EU budget. The EU will spend more on competitiveness and security. Likewise, more money will go to support for the reception and integration of refugees and to address the root causes of migration in the countries of origin and transit. The 2017 budget is set at EUR 157.9 billion in commitments and EUR 134.5 billion in payment credits. Nearly half of the funds EUR 74.9 billion in commitments will stimulate growth, employment and competitiveness. For instance EUR 21.3 billion will go to programmes like Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, COSME and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). See more [here](#).

Highlighted events

Europe as a Global Actor

DG Research and Innovation's Unit Open and Inclusive Societies will host a conference for representatives of projects selected under SC6 in the 2015 call. The representatives will present their understanding of a number of research problems they investigate such as Europe as a global and regional actor, European contributions to global justice, responsible trade and science diplomacy. The conference will take place on 5th December 2016 in Brussels. See more [here](#).

Smart Robots for the Real World 2017

Researchers, entrepreneurs, policy makers and investors will discuss current and future technologies, which enable robots to work alongside humans in the real environment, as well as the risks and effects on society of more and more intelligent machines. There will also be an exhibition area showcasing some of the most advanced robots. The conference and exhibition will take place in Edinburgh on 22nd-24th March 2017. See more [here](#).

World Circular Economy Forum

The European Commission is co-organising the World Circular Economy Forum which will welcome participants specialized in circular economy solutions for business, cities and finance. 1200 people are expected and the event will take place on 5th-6th June 2017 in Helsinki. See more [here](#).

In November the following events were attended and summaries can be obtained on request:

- *LERU event on Citizen Science 7th November*
- *IGLO backed event on Swarfs: Opening Science to Society*
- *Slovakian Presidency conference: Spreading excellence and crossing the innovation divide*
- *European Parliament hearing on mid-term evaluation of Horizon 2020*

Attached to the email sending out this newsletter is a comprehensive list of relevant events.

Rethinking this newsletter

Your input needed to improve this newsletter. In an aim to modernise Research Trends and adapt it to the needs of its readers we seek your input and therefore encourage you to respond to this [survey](#). The survey consists of only 8 questions and should not take more than a couple of minutes of your time. We will draw a Belgian box of chocolate among the respondents! Many thanks in advance.

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