



# Brussels News Updates

## July 2012

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### General European Highlights

#### New skills and jobs

Matching workers' skills with the demands of employers is seen as crucial to boosting employment rates, restoring growth and tackle looming labour shortages in sectors like health care, science and the green economy. Hence the European Commission has identified 'green jobs' in areas related to clean and energy-efficient technologies, as well as 'white jobs' in the fields of health and social care, among the most promising sources of new jobs for the future. The 'Europe 2020' strategy, signed off by EU leaders in 2010, includes a target to increase the employment rate across all member states from its current level of around 69% to 75% by 2020.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/socialeurope/>

#### Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union

The Cyprus took over the Presidency from Denmark on 1 July 2012 and will work during the next six months towards a better Europe, more relevant to its citizens and to the world. The priorities of the programme are:

- Europe, more efficient and sustainable
- Europe, with a better performing and growth economy
- Europe, more relevant to its citizens, with solidarity and social cohesion and
- Europe in the world, closer to its neighbours.

Source: <http://www.cy2012.eu/en/page/home>; <http://www.cy2012.eu/index.php/>

#### EU campaign challenging stereotypes of science

The campaign will challenge stereotypes of science and show young girls and women that science can provide great opportunities. It will challenge outdated views of science careers and show how contemporary research practices are connected with societal needs.

The campaign will cover all 27 European Union Member States over the years 2012/2013. In 2012, events will be first organised in six countries - Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, and Poland.

The campaign comes at a time when the European Commission has proposed Horizon 2020, a programme that would increase EU-level support for research and innovation to €80 billion for the period 2014-2020, from €55 billion in the current seven-year budget.

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/>

#### Energy efficiency as one of European priorities

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso vowed to unleash EU money to support public and private investment in sustainable energy for needy countries, through a €50-million Energy development initiative plus additional funding.



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Trillions of euros in investment in clean-energy technology are needed worldwide by mid-century to control rising carbon emissions, says a new report of the International Energy Agency that could help shape the debate on some of Europe's most controversial energy policies.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/energy-efficiency/>

### The future and emerging technologies (FET)

EU scientists and member states will decide over the next six months which future high-tech industries – from a choice including robot servants and nano clothing – should receive a €1 billion European funding boost.

The Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) Flagship Initiatives were originally endorsed by the Competitiveness Council in December 2009. In July 2010 a competition was launched to decide which pilots should be given the chance to bid in the process. The six pilots were launched in May 2011 and have just finished their year-long period, the next six months will see a final decision made on which technologies should go forward as the FET flagship initiatives.

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/innovation-enterprise/>

### Funding update

#### Call for experts in eco-Innovation, intelligent Energy and Marco Polo programmes

The Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) invites applications from experts in the fields of environment, energy efficiency, renewables, and sustainable freight transport, with a view to drawing up lists of external experts that will assist it in evaluation activities relating to the implementation of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP). The call is open until **September 30, 2013**.

Source: <http://wbc-inco.net/object/call/6912>

### Consultations and roadmaps

#### Consultation on the general block exemption regulation (the GBER)

State funding meeting the criteria of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) constitutes state aid and requires notification to the Commission. However, the Council may determine categories of aid that are exempt from the mandatory notification procedure. In application of Art 109 TFEU, the Council, by adopting Regulation (EC) No. 994/98 ('Enabling Regulation') enabled the Commission to declare compatible with the internal market and exempt from the notification procedure aid in the following categories: aid in favour of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), research, development and innovation (R&D&I), environmental protection, employment and training,



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and regional aid. On the basis of the Enabling Regulation, the Commission adopted the GBER, in force since 29 August 2008.

On 8 May 2012 the Commission adopted a Communication on State Aid Modernisation (SAM), setting out the objectives of an ambitious reform package. The modernisation of state aid control has three main, closely linked objectives:

- Foster growth in a strengthened, dynamic and competitive internal market
- Focus enforcement on cases with the biggest impact on the internal market
- Streamlined rules and faster decisions

The review of the GBER constitutes an important element of SAM.

The GBER will expire on 31 December 2013. In this context, the present public consultation offers stakeholders the opportunity to provide input to the Commission at an early stage of policy making. Member States, other Institutions and stakeholders are invited to express their views on the GBER provisions currently applicable and to suggest possible amendments to these provisions. The consultation is open until **12 September 2012**.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/competition/>

### Consultation: Energy

The objective of this consultation is to seek views on the list of all the projects that have been submitted to be considered by the ad hoc working groups as potential PCIs (Project of common interest). The list is purely indicative and no assessment has been done on any of the projects. Stakeholders may also suggest projects to be added to, or removed from, the list. The input from this consultation will feed into the PCI evaluation process. The consultation will close **20 September 2012**.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/infrastructure/>

### Consultation on the preparation of the fuel cells and hydrogen joint technology initiative under Horizon 2020

In 2008 the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH JU), a Public Private Partnership between the European Commission and the industry was established through the Council Regulation (EC)521/2008. The research community later joined the initiative. Its objective was to significantly accelerate the market introduction of the fuel cell and hydrogen technologies, in order to realise their potential as an instrument to achieve a lower carbon energy system.

The present consultation aims at collecting the views of the wider public on the fuel cells and hydrogen sector, on research & innovation in this field in Europe, and in particular on the possible continuation of the FCH JU for the implementation of FCH research in Horizon 2020. The consultation is open until **4 October 2012**.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/>

### Business update

#### Energy efficiency as a business opportunity

Europe's first-ever binding energy efficiency directive is taking shape as the 27 member states debate the draft bill in the EU Council of Ministers. The talks are expected to be concluded by July, with the end of the six-month rotating Danish presidency. It is expected to deliver 20% energy savings by 2020. One of the most controversial articles in the bill, hailed as the most substantial part to deliver the 20% target, is an obligation on energy companies to save 1.5% energy annually among their final customers. Energy retailers see the 1.5% obligation as a "threat" as they will be forced to sell less units of energy, Jon Slowe, a director at Delta Energy and Environment, a consulting firm said. But it does not necessarily mean that it will have a negative impact on their business, he added. "If they define their business as generating, supplying and helping customers use energy efficiently, then they can grow their business".

Source: <http://www.euractiv.com/energy-efficiency/>

### Forthcoming events

#### Electronics goes green 2012+

Berlin, 6 – 9 September 2012

Source: <http://www.egg2012.de/>

#### OECD International Conference: Attaining and Sustaining Mass Higher Education

Paris, 17 - 19 September 2012

Source: [www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/](http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/)

#### 7<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ECIE-2012)

Santarém, 20 – 21 September 2012

Source: <http://academic-conferences.org/>

#### Research Networks: Developing Infrastructure to Support Science

London, 27 September 2012

Source: <http://www.publicserviceevents.co.uk/>

#### 4<sup>th</sup> EuCheMS Chemistry Congress

Prague, 26 – 30 August 2012

Source: <http://www.euchems-prague2012.cz/>



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