

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update

Week of 31st October 2011

Quote of the week

“This interesting study highlights how 'plastic' the human brain is. It will be interesting to see whether structural changes as we grow and develop extend beyond IQ to other cognitive functions.”

Dr John Williams, head of Neuroscience and Mental Health at the Wellcome Trust, commenting on research which shows how the intelligence quotient (IQ) can significantly rise and fall during adolescence, see articles of interest for further details

Agenda Watch

- i) The European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) is meeting on November 7th, click [here](#) to view the agenda

Institution Watch

- ii) The European Institute of Public Administration held a three-day workshop in Barcelona this week on the internal and external audit of the **EU funded programmes and projects**, check future updates for more details on the outcome
- iii) On November 5th, the Polish presidency is holding an expert conference: [Strengthening public health in Europe – national public health institutes network.](#)
- iv) On November 23rd, the Polish presidency is holding a conference commemorating the fifth anniversary of [REACH - On the REACH road](#) in Warsaw

Key updates this week

Answer to written question on open access to the results of European research programmes

Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE) recently addressed the Commission, and highlighted the USA's competitive advantage over Europe as a result of its allowing open access to scientific research findings. Tsoukalas highlighted the Commission's previously stated commitment to the issue - '**open**

access can increase the impact of scientific research and innovation through improved access to and rapid dissemination of research results' - and asked what progress had been made, given that deliberations on the organization of the Eighth Framework Programme have begun.

Responding on behalf of the Commission, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn stated that the practice of granting free-of-charge access over the internet to research results (open access) is backed by a

growing number of research centres and funding agencies in EU member states and that an increasing number of national initiatives in this field is encouraging a move towards the development of European policies.

Geoghegan-Quinn referenced the FP7 project [OpenAIRE](#), which provides infrastructure and practical support for the identification, deposit, access and monitoring of FP7 and European Research Council (ERC) funded articles. The Commissioner highlighted that European helpdesks, which assist researchers in meeting the requirements of the Open Access Pilot in FP7, have also been created. Significantly, Geoghegan-Quinn also stated that work towards rules for participation and dissemination of Horizon 2020, which will spell out the specific modalities to implement the general principle of open access to scientific publications emanating from EU funding, is well underway. Finally, in light of the 2007 council conclusions, **Communication on Scientific Information in the Digital Age**, a new Commission Communication and Recommendation programme for member states is planned for early 2012.

Call for contributions on mental health Europe conference - from individual to collective responsibility

Please follow the [link](#) to access the call for contributions on **Mental Health in Europe conference – from individual to collective responsibility**.

The conference is taking place in Croatia in from June 14-16th 2012.

Public consultation on measures for improving the recognition of prescriptions issued in another member state

The European Commission is consulting stakeholders to see how the recognition of cross-border prescriptions could be improved. Please click [here](#) to view the consultation document, and [here](#) to submit your contribution. News of a report analyzing the replies will be published after the consultation closes in April 2012.

Supporting HFE

Health First Europe has announced MEP Vittorio Prodi (S&D, Italy) and MEP Karin Kadenbach (S&D, Austria) as new supporters.

Prodi sits on the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) as well as being involved in health claims regulation issues and the prevalence and treatment of patient conditions.

Kadenbach has been very active on a variety of health issues within the Parliament offering her expertise on issues such as child immunization, non-communicable diseases, health inequalities, information to patients on medicinal products and the Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare Directive.

The alliances will lead to collaborations on health and healthy ageing in the very near future.

New website on the non-food Scientific Committees

Please note that DG SANCO has created a [new webpage](#) dedicated to the non-food Scientific

Committees which cover consumer safety, health and environmental risks, emerging as well as newly identified health risks. Here you can find information on each individual expert sitting in the different committees.

Articles of interest

- ✓ *Cordis News online*, IQ rises and falls during teenage years

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=33957

- ✓ *Telegraph online*, Alzheimer's and dementia cost has risen to £34 billion a year

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/8853171/Alzheimers-and-dementia-cost-has-risen-to-34-billion-a-year.html>

Dates for your diary

- ✓ EBC Board Meeting November, Warsaw, November 17th 2011
- ✓ EBC Polish Presidency Meeting, Warsaw, November 18th 2011