

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update

Week of 3rd October 2011

Quote of the week

"Recognising the symptoms of dementia early is currently a major challenge...It is essential to look at normal ageing brains first. Once we fully understand what is normal, then we will be able to tell what is abnormal at an earlier stage."

Dr Gordon Waiter of The University of Aberdeen, commenting on research aimed at understanding changes that take place in the human brain at different times of life, to be funded by Alzheimer's Research UK, see articles of interest for further details

Agenda Watch

- i) The 7th Meeting of the European Research Area Committee will take place in Cracow between 13th and 14th October, please click [here](#) for further information

Institution Watch

- i) The **Polish Presidency of the EU has organised a** workshop on active ageing and intergenerational solidarity as part of the EU [Convention on Poverty and Social Inclusion](#) which will place between 16th and 17th October 2011 in Cracow and have invited stakeholders to submit proposals. AGE, together with a group of partners submitted a joint proposal on 15th July.

Key updates this week

EMA focus on neuropathic pain

Please click [here](#) to view the European Medicines Agency's' Concept Paper on the need for revision of note for guidance on clinical medicinal products for treatment of nociceptive pain and guideline on clinical investigation of products intended for the treatment of neuropathic pain.

A warm welcome for 'More Years, Better Lives'

Following the adoption of a European Commission recommendation on the Joint Programming Initiative 'More Years, Better Lives' in July 2011, the scheme has been publically welcomed by Neelie Kroes, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner for Research and Innovation and John Dalli, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy.

The initiative is squarely focused on exploring how to help older people remain active for as long as possible, in good health and with a better quality of life and how to make Europe's future care systems sustainable - these endorsements will allow vital research in these areas to progress.

Please click [here](#) to access the council conclusions on **Launching of joint research programming initiative 'More Years Better Lives'** adopted by the competitiveness council on 30th September.

Project managing public health in Europe

Please click [here](#) to access DG SANCO New publication: **Project Management in Public Health in Europe.**

Answer to written question on Rights and life chances of people with mental health disorders

Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE) recently asked the Commission about the discretion between recent legislation which details the rights of people with mental health disorders to independence and social integration and reports which clearly demonstrate sufferers continue to face significant economic, professional, societal and medical challenges in their day-to-day lives.

Parvanova went onto highlight clinical evidence revealing that people with mental health disorders face such barriers not only as a result of stigma and discrimination but also because they are more likely to develop physical illnesses. Given that the lives of mental health sufferers are often compounded in this way, Parvanova asked the Commission how they planned to address this and whether there are plans to further integrate the link between mental and physical health.

Responding on behalf of the Commission, John Dalli stated that they are working with member states and partners to overcome the stigmatisation and discrimination against people with mental disorders through its activities under the **European Pact for Mental health and Well-being.**

Despite clarifying that the delivery of health services and medical care falls under the competences of member states themselves, Dalli highlighted that the Commission is co-financing the EU-Health Programme entitled **European network for promoting the physical health of residents in psychiatric and social care facilities (HELPS)**. The objective of this multidisciplinary network of experts from 15 countries is to develop a toolkit to promote the physical health of residents in psychiatric care. The project started in 2008 and will be completed this year. Conclusions will be integrated into the Commission's future activities with member states and further partners under the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being.

Health of People of Working Age

Please click [here](#) to access the new publication of DG SANCO on **Health of People of Working Age.**

Getting ready for the EY2012 on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

Following approval of the European Parliament on 7th July and of the Council on 19th July, the **European Year 2012 of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY2012)** has successfully progressed through the legislation process and has now been formally adopted by the three EU decision-making institutions (the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament).

Preparation for 2012 is well underway - the **Committee of the Regions** has partnered with AGE and the European Commission to publish a brochure on [How to promote active ageing in Europe - EU support to local and regional actors](#). The brochure highlights examples of EU funded projects that support the EY 2012 objectives and provides an overview of potential funding opportunities available to local, regional and national stakeholders.

The official [EY2012](#) website (built by P.A.U. Education) will be complete in the coming weeks – click on the hyperlink to view an EC holding page highlighting activities and initiatives across member states as well as essential background on the EY2012 coalition

Articles of interest

- ✓ *BBC News online*, Alzheimer's brain research in Aberdeen wins £16,000
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-15058868>

- ✓ *MSN Online*, Singing may help some stroke victims regain speech
<http://health.msn.com/health-topics/heart-and-cardiovascular/singing-may-help-some-stroke-victims-regain-speech>

- ✓ *Psych Central*, Brain Wiring Continues Into Young Adulthood
<http://psychcentral.com/news/2011/09/23/brain-wiring-continues-into-young-adulthood/29719.html>

Dates for your diary

- ✓ Meeting of National Brain Councils and National Action Groups, Brussels, October 3rd 2011

- ✓ Launch of the Cost Study to the European Parliament, Brussels, October 4th 2011

- ✓ Board meeting and general assembly, Brussels, October 5th 2011

- ✓ EBC Board Meeting November, Warsaw, November 17th 2011

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