

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update

Week of 19th September 2011

Quote of the week

“There is definitely a need for new treatments for stroke. An awful lot of patients are left with persistent disability. Anything that improves the effectiveness of physiotherapy and potentially could be used at home could have a big impact on long-term outcome.”

Professor Heidi Johansen-Berg of The University of Oxford, commenting on a study which highlights that adding a nine volt battery to electrodes attached to the brain can speed up the process of learning; see articles of interest for further details

Agenda Watch

- i) On September 14th, the Bioethics Working Group held a meeting on **Ethics and clinical trials in low and middle income countries**. Please see future updates for further details
- ii) On September 21st, *Parliament Magazine*, in association with SANOFI, is organising a debate entitled **“Facing the future: Developing an EU strategy on Alzheimer’s”**. For more information and for registration, please click [here](#)

Institution Watch

- i) On September 26th the Polish presidency is holding a **Marie Curie researchers symposium** in Warsaw: [Science – passion, mission, and responsibilities](#)
- ii) On October 3rd, the [European SME week 2011](#) starts, during which a number of events are organised across Europe to gather local entrepreneurs

Key updates this week

3rd European Innovation Summit

[The 3rd European Innovation Summit](#), to be held between 11th and 12th October, is focused on uniting relevant parties in order to share best practice and develop greater cohesion Within the European research and innovation system, while preserving the freedom of EU regions and Member States to act independently.

Under the motto “Towards a European Innovation Ecosystem”, part two of the [3rd European Innovation Summit](#), to be held between the 11th and 13th October, will focus on two events: the first, to take place in Warsaw, will be on adapting EU research and innovation policies to

national and regional contexts, and on increasing synergies between different policy areas. The second, to take place at the European Parliament in Brussels, will see participants discussing the role of people and talent for innovation and the challenges of innovation funding and financing.

Report on the final evaluation of the Public Health Programme 2003-2008

Please click [here](#) to access the **Report on final evaluation of the Public Health Programme 2003-2008** by the European Commission and DG Sanco.

Breaking down barriers to research – consultation on the European Research Area

The European Commission has launched a public consultation, with the objective of investigating ways to improve the research environment throughout Europe in order to create a combined European Research Area by 2014, enabling researchers, research institutions and businesses to circulate, compete, and co-operate across borders.

European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn said: "The need to boost Europe's economy means that we have to get the very best out of our research. It is unacceptable that it is often more attractive and easier for our top scientists to cross the Atlantic than to move across the EU. We want the research community to tell us what they need, so we can work together to tear down barriers to growth and jobs."

The consultation runs until 30th November 2011, and seeks to tackle the following points:

- Are researchers looking for new opportunities, but finding themselves locked behind national borders?
- Are scientists in need of new research infrastructures to perform and test ideas?
- Does the research community need more opportunities to share views, realise new projects and create new products and services?

At the recent ERAC Stakeholders' Seminar in Brussels, Geoghegan-Quinn highlighted that although existing frameworks for national research are necessary, in order to ensure a wide diversity of focus and topics these need to be properly coordinated in order to maximise output and ensure vital support is provided.

All those interested in European research and innovation can participate in the consultation at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/era/consultation_en.htm

'Conf-Shop': Planning the future Knowledge Base for Evaluation

In light of preparing for the future Horizon 2020 programme, DG Innovation & Research is organising a 'Conf-Shop' workshop to examine evidence gathered as part of the evaluation and look ahead to future challenges.

The focus of the event will be on three interrelated issues:

- An overview on recent efforts to assess the longer term impact of the Framework Programme
- Reflections from practitioners on the evaluation of FP7
- Views from experts and stakeholders on the challenges for an evaluation and monitoring system for the Horizon 2020 Programme

Please find a draft programme attached.

Articles of interest

- *Mail Online*, Bright sparks: Electrodes on your skull let you learn the piano faster - and could even turn you into a star sportsman
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2037827/How-electric-shock-brain-improve-life-stroke-victims.html?ITO=1490>
- *The Guardian*, B-vitamins may slow onset of Alzheimer's, study finds
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2011/sep/13/b-vitamins-alzheimers>
- *New Scientist*, Nokia app powers portable brain scanner
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21128305.500-nokia-app-powers-portable-brain-scanner.html>

Dates for your diary

- Meeting of the MEP Interest Group on Mental Health, Brussels, September 22nd 2011
- 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