

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update
Weekly Update

Week of 30th May 2011

Quote of the week

"These dramatic results underscore how much we still have to learn about autism and the great need to increase research, especially early-stage research"

Dr. Terre Constantine, Executive Director of The Brain Research Foundation, discussing a study that calls for greater investment in early stage autism research (see Articles of Interest for further detail).

Agenda Watch

- i) The Draft council conclusions on The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being: results and future action have now been published and are available to view [here](#)

- ii) An Intergroup Meeting on Improving Medicines for Older People met on 23rd May and discussed the challenges faced by this demographic in terms of accessing treatments tailored to their needs – in spite of the significant proportion of prescribed and over-the-counter medicines that are accessed by the older populations of developed nations, they are often excluded from clinical trials

- iii) Coreper I (Council of The European Union) met on the 24th and 25th May to discuss preparations for the 6th June Council meeting on employment, social policy, health and social affairs. Agenda items included:
 - The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being: results and future action
 - Innovation in the medical device sector

Please see further updates for outcomes of the upcoming Council Meeting.

- iv) The new FP7 Health - 2012 orientation paper has now been published, please click [here](#) to view this in full

- v) The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) has presented a study on the differences in costs of and access to pharmaceutical products in the EU. Find this attached and discussed in more detail below

[Key updates this week](#)

Helping create a stronger strategic framework for research and innovation

EBC has responded to The European Commission's Green Paper entitled "From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework

for EU Research and Innovation Funding", as have EBC member The European Federation of Neurological Societies.

In EBC's response we suggested that several main challenges should be addressed to make the Common Strategic Framework a success:

- Simplification of all bureaucratic and administrative burdens, a particular issue for smaller organisations, this would include simpler tools and speedier access to funds (prompter payments) once projects are agreed

- Prioritisation to address the areas of greatest societal need and encourage greater input from patient groups and associations in this prioritisation

- Reduction of duplication between national and EU wide programmes

- Partnership with more diverse groups of national and international stakeholders where global programmes are clearly the way forward

The EFNS additionally commented that there is a need for support for investigator led multicentre European clinical trials of therapeutic interventions which are not of commercial

interest but are of key importance to advancing treatment of diseases which affect European citizens.

Please click [here](#) to view a response from The European Parliament Committee and [here](#) for The Budget Committee's reflections.

The report of the public consultation on the Green Paper will be presented on June 10th. Once the Matias report has been voted in the plenary in September, the commission will draft its own proposal which will be presented on 30th November.

Key outcomes resulting from the World Health Assembly

The sixty-fourth World Health Assembly (with over 2700 delegates from civil societies, government departments and independent organisations) has now closed, after passing multiple resolutions.

Particular resolutions of interest to EBC are as follows:

- i) With regard to noncommunicable diseases delegates wholeheartedly supported The World Health Assembly's headline meeting on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases being held this September in New York. All attendees urged governments and heads of state to attend.
- ii) The WHA's resolution on child injury prevention concluded that in light of the alarming statistics, sufficient preventative measures, such as the enforcement of speed limits around schools and the mandatory installation of smoke alarms, already exist.
- iii) Finally the WHA also discussed the report from the working group of member states on Substandard/ Spurious/ Falsely Labelled/ Falsified and Counterfeit medical products, in terms of the need to provide access to quality and affordability. The group has been granted an extension in order to continue its work, and will report to the next WHA.

Bridging the cost of care

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) has presented a study highlighting the differences in costs of and access to pharmaceutical products in the EU, presented by Dr Panagiotis Kanavos of The London School of Economics.

The document (attached) has triggered a number of key responses from representatives of (amongst others) The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

A helping hand

The Council of The European Union has produced a guidance paper for the steering group of the pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, please click on the following link to view this in full: 10634/11

Further reading

Please note that the contributions to the Health Policy Forum meeting that took place earlier this month are now available.

Please click here to access these.

Articles of interest

BBC News online, Blind people determine where something is with the visual part of brain,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-13539921>

Electronics Weekly, Imec research labs to understand the human brain,
<http://www.electronicsweekly.com/Articles/2011/05/17/51063/imec-research-lab-to-understand-the-human-brain.htm>

Public Servant online, Technology projects battle for €1bn prize,
<http://www.publicserviceurope.com/article/362/technology-projects-battle-for-1bn-prize>

Pharmiweb, Study calls for greater investment in early stage autism,
http://www.pharmiweb.com/pressreleases/pressrel.asp?ROW_ID=41279

Reuters, Study finds way to get antibody therapies into brain,

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/26/us-antibody-therapies-idUSTRE74P04L20110526>

Dates for your diary

EBC Board Meeting, June 14th 2011

EBC Industrial Board Meeting, June 15th 2011

FENS & SfN Advocacy Workshop, Brussels, June 16th – 17th, 2011

EBC Board Meeting November 17th 2011 Warsaw

EBC Polish Presidency Meeting November 18th Warsaw

First European Day of the Brain November 18th 2011

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