



Editorial

Dear readers,
Our report on the 2nd Steering Platform meeting is followed by updates from the EC highlighting the association of Western Balkan countries to FP7 and a possibility for you to influence European policies on R&D: The opportunity of an open consultation process to make your voices heard should not be missed!

see-science.eu invited the Joint Research Centre, the Stability Pact, the Central European Initiative, CEEPUS, RIBN and other stakeholders to contribute to this issue.

Doris Pack, Member of the European Parliament and chairwoman of the EP's Delegation to South Eastern Europe, provides us with an article on her view of successful cooperation strategies in S&T and education. On page 4, you will find an update on the transformation of the Stability Pact towards a Regional Cooperation Council. And a topic which is being discussed by lots of relevant stakeholders and researchers is featured on page 6: visa facilitation for the WBC.

The country focus this time is on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. We also provide a short overview of Italian initiatives regarding WBC (page 8 and 9). Each issue discusses a thematic priority of FP7 and "Energy" has been chosen this time (page 10 and 11). Motivating researchers from the region to participate in the Framework Programme is an important task and some relevant activities are presented on page 11. The interpretation of rules and regulations of FP7 is dealt with in the section "frequently asked questions" on page 13. We are sure most of our readers are interested in the developments of the SEE-ERA.NET Pilot Joint Call - we have learned that more than 1000 research teams were involved in proposed projects. Last but not least, we provide you with an overview of databases to facilitate the search for project partners and recommended reading. I am looking forward to your feedback.

Elke Dall - dall@zsi.at

Imprint

Information Office of the Steering Platform on Research for the
Western Balkan Countries
c/o ZSI - Centre for Social Innovation
Linke Wienzeile 246, 1150 Vienna, Austria
tel. +43 1 4950442-62, fax -40
e-mail office@see-science.eu
ISSN 1991-1750
Subscription & recent issues:
<http://see-science.eu/ejournal/list>



2nd Meeting of the Steering Platform in Berlin

The second meeting of the Steering Platform on Research for Western Balkan countries was held on March 29, 2007 in Berlin upon invitation of the European Commission and the German Council presidency. The representatives from the science ministries of the Western Balkan countries discussed their initiatives with several EU Member States (i.e. Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, the UK, etc.) and representatives from the European Commission (Directorate General Research and Directorate General Joint Research Centre).



After presentations on the state-of-the-art of S&T policy in the region, the European Commission confirmed its support for and outlined the latest developments on the procedures of association to the Seventh Framework Programme (see also article on page 2) and other activities in the region.

Representatives of the supporting Information Office of the Platform see-science.eu and the Southeast European Era-Net presented their current activities and future plans.

One important outcome of the meeting was that the Steering Platform will convene twice a year in the future. A strong impetus is expected through the implementation of an INCO-NET for the region, which shall be a project to provide logistical and analytical support to the bi-regional dialogue. The participants thank the German organisers for the organisation of the meeting and their hospitality. A date for the next meeting was not set, but the Slovenian colleagues expressed their interest to host a meeting during their presidency.

(Information provided by Elke Dall, see-science.eu)

Next see-science.eu deliverables

After discussion at the Steering Platform meeting in Berlin, the topics have been set for the thematic reports of see-science.eu to be delivered in the next project period.

The partners who implement see-science.eu (ZSI and FFG) are going to prepare input papers on the following topics:

- Barriers to Transnational Mobility Programmes and the Integration of WBC Researchers in the European Research Area
- The Situation of Higher Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo/UNMIK
- Innovation Structures in the Western Balkan Countries

Further objectives for the near future are to update the S&T country reports which were drafted last year with further input from regional stakeholders and to further disseminate the 'Needs-Offer-Matrix'-Study.

All deliverables are available for download on the see-science.eu website (filter documents for 'deliverables'). Suggestions for improvements are most welcome and will be acknowledged.

Progress in Association Procedures

Great news: on June 13, Commissioner Janez Potočnik will sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) associating Croatia, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia to the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7). The signing of the MoUs is the last step in a long procedure which began with the request to become associated, then the discussion of the terms and conditions of the association to FP7, and finally the internal adoption procedure at the level of the European Commission and in the respective Association Countries.

The Memorandum of Understanding enters into force as soon as it is signed and is retroactive to January 1, 2007. This means that research entities from Croatia, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia are eligible for participation and funding as Associated Country for all calls since January 1, 2007. The signing ceremony will take place at the same time with all three Western Balkan countries. The Croatian Minister for Science, Education and Sports, Dragan Primorac, the FYR of Macedonia Minister of Education and Science, Sulejman Rushiti and the newly appointed Serbian Minister for Science, Ana Pesikan will be present in Brussels. We will certainly update you about this important event in our next eJournal.

The Memorandum of Association with Turkey will be signed on June 1. This means that Turkey will also have associated status from January 1, 2007 under FP7, as it had under FP6.

The next Association Agreement will be with Montenegro as soon as Protocol 8 to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement is adopted (provisionally July 2007), after which the internal decision-making for association to FP7 can be launched. The Association Agreements with Israel and Switzerland are also moving ahead with signing planned for July 2007. Application for participation and funding is also retroactive to January 1, 2007. Information provided by Tania Friederichs, EC, DG Research)

Green Paper on the European Research Area

The European Commission has recently adopted a Green Paper, entitled 'The European Research Area: New Perspectives'. The purpose of a Green Paper in general is to stimulate debate and launch a process of consultation, and the purpose of this Green Paper in particular is to assess the progress made in establishing the ERA and to discuss the future direction of the project. In line with these objectives, the European Commission has published a complementary online public consultation, addressing the questions raised in the Green Paper. This link to the consultation can be found via the see-science.eu website:

<http://see-science.eu/goto/1266.html>

The structure of the consultation questionnaire mirrors the texture of the Green Paper (see also attachment on <http://see-science.eu/doc/1260.html>). The consultation poses questions for each of the six characteristics identified as main requirements to achieve an effective ERA:

- Realising a single labour market for researchers
- Developing world-class research infrastructures
- Strengthening research institutions
- Sharing knowledge
- Optimising research programmes and priorities
- Opening to the world: international cooperation in S&T

Mary Minch, the Director for International Cooperation, has addressed a letter specifically to draw your attention to the final section "A wide opening of the European Research Area to the world", which deals with international cooperation, upon which our community should definitively comment.

Through this eJournal, we would like to encourage all our readers to actively respond to this online consultation. It is a unique opportunity to help further shaping of the European Research Area, of which all Western Balkan countries are geographically speaking already part but where much remains to be done on substance. Research plays a special role as a tool to facilitate both integration in the European Union. Feedback as to whether the specific position of the candidate and potential candidate countries has been sufficiently addressed in the paper or not is of high importance. Is the position of the WBCs in the ERA adequate? Are specific needs covered? Comments/questions can also be shared with the Platform so that we can collectively take up concerns raised or issues to be addressed. (ed)



A view from the European Parliament

MP Doris Pack: Educational Reforms - Premises for Successful S&T Cooperation and Strategies in the Western Balkans



The area which probably deserves the greatest attention and focus both from the EU institutions and WBC in their process of transition and EU integration is the field of educational reforms and development of knowledge-based economies and societies in general. The emphasis on political and administrative changes should be fully accompanied by a strong commitment to educational reforms as well as to fostering and advancing reforms concerning public research and science and technology cooperation in general.

Having realised several shortcomings at the level of official political representation, as well as at the level of public administration, the Western Balkan countries have now initiated a demanding and often hard and painful process of core reforms concerning the area of education.

There is a clear EU strategy to support the internationalisation of research-funding in the countries of the WBC e.g. through the South-east European Era-Net (SEE-ERA.NET) designed to contribute to the "EU Balkan Countries Action Plan in Science and Technology", which has been adopted by the Council of Ministers in Thessaloniki. Besides, there is also the expressed intention of several of the WBC (Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia) to associate to FP7.

Nevertheless, we have to note that a lot of difficulties beset this process, especially concerning the slowness of reforms in higher education. There is a strong top-down approach of the state towards universities, as well as a lack of independent and sustainable initiatives to support research projects. This we can notice even in the case of Croatia with its positive developments in educational reforms and the field of scientific research. We can take Bosnia as an extreme example where there are great problems with the adoption of a Higher Educational Law, a Law on the Education Agency, a Framework Law on Vocational Education and Training and a Framework on Pre-school Education. Actually, this should not be so surprising if we take a closer look at the complex and rather non-functional institutional framework. I especially refer here to the fact that there are 14 Ministers in the country in charge of education.

Educational reforms actually play a key role in the whole region in the context of the process of regional stabilisation and the EU integration process.

In March last year, European Ministers of Education pointed out that the Lisbon Agenda is the basis for educational reforms not only for the EU countries but also for the WBCs. Emphasis should also be put on the involvement of universities from the region in Community programmes such as Erasmus Mundus and the Life Long Learning programme. This is one reason why the authorities in BiH should be urged to proceed with the educational reforms.

Another reason for the urgent need for university reforms in the

region is the fact that projects mainly involve academic staff and researchers at higher education institutions. Universities in WBCs have the potential to play a major role in the promotion of socially responsible institutions with far-reaching consequences for the general development of social, economic and political spheres. Equally, universities have significant influence within the education-research-innovation triangle in promoting EU standards.

Therefore, strong support for higher education institutions should be part of every political strategy for the region, in order to deal with both past problems as well as emerging ones.

Besides the substantial support of national governments from the region for SEE-ERA.NET, there should also be a strong commitment of governmental assistance to regional cooperation. The conditions currently demanded by the Bologna process concerning mobility of students and academic staff could be accomplished precisely through regional cooperation in the fields of research and education.

In this regard, new conceptions, frames of mobility of students, researchers and academic staff should be much more developed, thus satisfying the basic premises of SEE-ERA.NET. It is very important to understand that one of the core postulates of the bilateral S&T cooperation within the Southeast European Era-Net is that the leaders should also be involved in the field of new science and research strategies.

So, instead of a vicious circle consisting of a combination of political irresponsibility and complete lack of efficiency and quality of educational processes and applicable scientific technologies, the other combination needs to replace it. In fact, all these processes of change aimed at accomplishing the EU standards should be accompanied with a real understanding of the importance of changes in educational processes in general, as well as the procedures regarding the application of research projects.

If the promotion of new EU standards continues together with reflection on and an analysis of existing educational models, necessary changes will get new drive through the support of the wider academic circle.

About MP Doris Pack

The author is Member of the European Parliament for Saarland/Germany. She is a member of the conservative Christian Democratic Union, part of the European People's Party. Ms. Pack is chairwoman of the European Parliament's Delegation to South Eastern Europe. Between 1974 and 1989, Ms Pack was member of the German Bundestag and from 1981 to 1989 member of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe and the WEU. <http://see-science.eu/users/1373.html>

European Parliament

The European Parliament is the only directly-elected body of the European Union. The 785 Members of the European Parliament are elected once every five years by voters in the 27 Member States of the European Union on behalf of its 492 million citizens. <http://see-science.eu/org/1375.html>



From Stability Pact to Regional Co-operation Council



Launched on June 10, 1999, the day that the last of the 1990s conflict in the Balkans ended, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe was conceived to be the first comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy of the international community, directed towards building peace, democracy, respect for human rights, economic prosperity and security in partnership with countries of the Balkans. Today, reflecting on the last 8 years of involvement in the region, the Stability Pact can be judged as a success.

Over the years, the focus of the Stability Pact has shifted from conflict prevention through confidence building to a framework for regional co-operation in South Eastern Europe. In addition, the Stability Pact has taken on the role of assisting the SEE countries in their efforts to comply with the criteria for European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization membership. Today, the Stability Pact is working on issues of democratisation, economic reconstruction, co-operation and development as well as security. With its Secretariat in Brussels, it provides an important link between the countries of South Eastern Europe and the EU and NATO institutions.

A success story

Since 1999 regional free trade has almost doubled and the process of close economic cooperation has been crowned by the signing of the CEFTA agreement between the SEE countries in Bucharest in December 2006. Furthermore, SEE countries have adopted a common approach on how to address difficult issues such as the fight against organised crime and corruption. Best practices in the area of migration are being exchanged. The Energy Treaty has created a regional electricity market in line with EU standards. Four countries have formed the Sava River Commission to manage the economic and environmental issues of this important basin. There is ever closer cooperation among the local authorities along the borders of SEE countries which are today being protected almost exclusively by police and not by military. Thanks to the involvement of the Stability Pact, coordination among the countries of the region is significant with regard to reform of science and education policies, parliamentary cooperation, local democracy and cross border cooperation and media.

Towards regional ownership

There is no doubt that the region has come a step closer to Euro-Atlantic integration today and credit for this success goes also to the Stability Pact. In the next stage the region must move away from what has been essentially an internationally driven process towards a greater ownership of its own affairs. Bearing this in mind, a transformation and streamlining process was launched in 2005 with the final aim of having the new framework for regional co-operation in South Eastern Europe in place by 2008. Following a wide consultation process with countries of SEE, the Stability Pact's highest decision-making body - the Regional Table in Belgrade in May 2006 - took decisions on the

transformation of the Stability Pact into Regional Cooperation Council (hereinafter RCC). The main task of this organisation will be to play the role of a facilitator of regional cooperation and support for the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the Balkan countries. Regional ownership of the new structure will be not only political but also financial. The representatives of the region reached consensus on contributing €1 million annually to the budget of the RCC Secretariat. In turn, the financial commitment of the countries of the region is an important sign of the political commitment of the SEE countries to engage even further in the process of regional cooperation. Simultaneously, the Stability Pact and its international partners ensure the continued involvement of the donor community, thus preserving the legacy of the Pact.

The RCC is to be chaired by a Secretary General from the region, nominated by the South Eastern Europe Co-operation Process (SECEP) May 10-11, 2007 in Zagreb and endorsed by the Regional Table and subsequently by the RCC. The Secretary General will head the Secretariat of the RCC and also provide support to the SECEP Chairmanship. Considering the importance of close relations with EU institutions, the SEE states agreed that a Brussels-based representation of RCC would be necessary. It was agreed that the RCC and its Secretariat should focus its activities on six areas which the countries of the region have already identified as those where regional cooperation will be beneficial to all: Economic and Social Development; Infrastructure; Justice and Home Affairs; Security Co-operation; and Building Human Capital with Parliamentary Co-operation being an overarching theme that is linked with each of the other areas.

Building Human Capital (Education and Research)

During the last Stability Pact Regional Table Meeting, held in Belgrade on May 29-30, 2006, SEE countries and Stability Pact partner states reached an agreement to make Fostering and Building Human Capital (hereinafter BHC) the new core objective of the Stability Pact. The rationale for establishing this new core objective derived from the key role that education and research play in the overall economic, political and social development of countries, as well as from the fragile state of education systems and research facilities and opportunities in all SEE countries. The new core objective concentrates on both education and research in order to tackle the specific challenges faced in the reform of both fields, and it intends to actively promote regional cooperation in order to foster the development of a learning society, which is democratic and accessible to all. In the process of promotion of regional cooperation in the above mentioned fields, the new core objective of BHC aims to complement the activities and receive the active support of the SP SEE Task Force Education and Youth, the Education Reform Initiative for SEE and the Steering Platform on Research for Western Balkan countries as well as SEE-ERA.NET.

Within the framework of the new core objective, the Working Table I (WTI) envisages several activities to be completed in the following period. So far, WT I has produced a Mapping Document of regional Vocational Education and Training Centres and a Recommendation paper for the development of vocational training in SEE. It continues to



support the Joint History Workbooks Project of the Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation of South Eastern Europe (hereinafter CDRSEE) with a view to having the workbooks translated in all languages of the SEE region. Apart from these activities, WT I has launched a capacity building traineeship project for the junior experts from the SEE Ministries of Science and Education.

The Stability Pact, through its Transfer of Information Meetings continues to serve as a regional platform for the exchange of useful information between the EU and SEE countries on the opportunities offered by the new financial instrument of the EU for the Balkans - the Instrument for Pre-Accession - and to discuss the use of this instrument in order to facilitate the Western Balkans participation in EU programmes in the field of research (namely FP7).

One output of the BHC core objective has been the recent launching of the database on Post Graduate Scholarship and Grant Opportunities for SEE Students in Social Sciences, a web portal for graduate students from South Eastern Europe on available scholarships and grants in the European Union Member States and beyond. As Marijana Grandits, Director of Working Table I puts it, *"The opportunity to be informed about scholarships and grants should not be a privilege of a few. Everyone should be able to have the benefit to study in a wider European educational space."*

Initial coverage will gradually be expanded towards covering all fields of study. But bearing in mind the overall process of transformation of the Stability Pact and the intention to constantly expand the information offered in the database, the Stability Pact intends to transfer the charge of this pilot project to an established regionally-owned, constantly updated information service. In cooperation with its partners as a follow-up to the launching of the database, the Stability Pact is preparing to organise a large public event dedicated to the issue of brain circulation between the SEE and the EU in the summer of 2007.

Conclusion

Ultimately, it needs to be underlined that the phased evolution of the Stability Pact into a regionally owned framework should not be interpreted as the international community withdrawing its support or leaving the region on its own. On the contrary, many of Stability Pact's international partners have assured us that they will remain involved, but want to see the countries of the region gradually take more ownership of the process - politically, financially and also personnel-wise. It is in the interest of all parties to ensure the sustainability of the cooperation processes initiated within the Pact and thus safeguard its legacy for South East Europe. Its success depends on two pre-conditions: enhanced regional ownership and continued international support in the transition phase. To put it differently, the role of the Regional Co-operation Council is necessary in order to allow for continued international involvement and support while enhancing regional ownership. Therefore, the South Eastern European countries, the SEECF and the international community must take the necessary decisions to make this a reality.

Author Srdjan Cvijić
<http://see-science.eu/users/1152.html>
 Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
<http://see-science.eu/org/433.html>

On the Way to CEEPUS III

This year's meeting of the Joint Committee of CEEPUS Ministers, held in Zagreb on March 16, has proved to be an important meeting in several ways. With the accession of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the objective of integrating all the South East European Countries into CEEPUS has been accomplished. CEEPUS now comprises 14 countries: Albania, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia. Exchange with Bosnia-Herzegovina is scheduled for the academic year 2008/09, provided that all the necessary legal steps at local level will have been completed by then. Impressed by the performance of the programme, the ministers have pledged an all time high of scholarship months: a total of 5925 scholarship months which allows CEEPUS to operate 50 networks including 534 institutions during the academic year 2007/08. As for the future development of CEEPUS, the ministers are convinced that CEEPUS has great research potential that should definitely be made use of. They have outlined the following areas for future activities: Joint PhD Programs, CEEPUS grants for research activities, the operation of joint regional expert pools and the identification of regionally relevant research topics in order to develop joint projects. The ministers have also strongly expressed their belief that CEEPUS could be an important tool to prepare for FP7 projects. Concrete proposals based on these political guidelines will be worked out at a conference of experts to be held in Vienna. In order to allow for optimal timing, the ministers have decided to prolong the current term of CEEPUS II from 2007 to 2009. Thus, there will be enough time to develop new strategies while at the same time to speed up the move from exchange to mobility and implement CEEPUS III.

Author Elisabeth Sorantin
<http://see-science.eu/users/1094.html>
 CEEPUS - Central European Exchange
 Program for University Studies
<http://see-science.eu/org/1093.html>

wiiw GDN-SEE Research Competition 2007 Completed

In early March 2007, the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw) with financial support from The World Bank, the Austrian Ministry of Finance and the Austrian Central Bank, announced a research competition within the framework of the wiiw Global Development Network Southeast Europe (wiiw GDN-SEE) research project, inviting proposals from economists and other social scientists. For the competition, the following priority areas of research were identified: Inequality; Migration; Fiscal systems. The deadline was April 16, 2007. wiiw has received 14 proposals out of which about 10 will be elected for funding. Grants range from € 5,000 to € 8,000. Issuing of grants began on April 30, 2007 and will end no later than December 31, 2008. Researchers interested in future research competitions are requested to join the wiiw Balkan Observatory mailing list at www.balkan-observatory.net in order to receive information on deadlines. (Information provided by Mario Holzner, wiiw)



Joint Research Centre Providing Support to the Western Balkans



JRC
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Directorate General Joint Research Centre (JRC) includes the scientific and technical institutes and laboratories of the European Commission. It is the in-house research body of the European institutions and it is independent of any national and private interests. It employs 2700 staff, mostly researchers and technicians, and its seven institutes are located in 5 EU Member States. As such, JRC is uniquely positioned to provide customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of EU policies.

The JRC also supports the EU Enlargement policy. This is done through the Enlargement and Integration Action (E&IA), which is published every year. The main objective of the E&IA is to strengthen collaboration with the New Member States (NMS), Candidate Countries (CC), including Croatia and FYR of Macedonia and Potential Candidate Countries (PCC), including Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. More particularly, the E&IA focuses on complex scientific and technical issues within the JRC remit, which underpin EU legislation and cover a wide range of policy areas, such as environment, health, food, energy, chemicals, agriculture and nuclear safety. E&IA consists of a number of integrated instruments aimed at stimulating scientific and technical collaboration. These are for example hosting temporary staff at the JRC Institutes, carrying out specialised workshops and training courses, organising events and disseminating information within the Enlargement Countries.

Over the last few years, JRC has made special efforts to promote the integration of organisations, researchers and experts from the WBC within its activities and projects. We have already achieved the first positive results in the areas of metrology in chemistry, monitoring of agriculture with remote sensing (MARS), assessment of renewable energies potential, food quality and safety, prevention of natural disasters etc.

As another tool to promote collaboration and exchange of knowledge and good practices, JRC organises over 100 specialised scientific and technical workshops annually, all of which are open to experts from the Western Balkans. The participation rate is still low but increasing every year. In 2006 for example, the JRC researchers organised 137 workshops, of which 331 experts from the Western Balkans took part. The thematic areas of these workshops included food, chemicals, environment, metrology, agriculture, energy and nuclear safety, foresight etc., all of which are important research topics in the European countries, including the Western Balkans. In 2007, we are planning about 120 similar workshops.

Another attractive instrument for integration of researchers from Enlargement Countries into our activities is the possibility to work in JRC for a period of one to two years. Every year JRC reserves some 100 positions for seconded experts and visiting researchers at our laboratories. However, to be eligible for this opportunity, the expert must come from a country which is at least associated to FP7. In this respect it is very promising to see the efforts by the Western Balkan countries which are to be associated to FP7.

This means that the doors to European research collaboration activities are completely open to experts, including the possibility to apply for positions in JRC institutes. A new call for about 50 temporary job positions in the different JRC institutes will be published on our web-page at the end of May. We would like to encourage the Western Balkans experts, who come from countries to be soon associated to FP7, to submit their applications according to the published profiles as they will be also considered upon association.

Last but not least, we organise different dissemination activities in the Western Balkans. In June 2006 we held an Information Day in Zagreb, which was attended by some 220 experts and in April 2007 we organised our first Information Day together with DG Research in Skopje, at which some 220 experts were present. We will have an Information Day in Belgrade on June 12, 2007, where we intend to present important topics such as news from FP7, mobility of researchers, JRC achievements and possibilities for collaboration in the fields of environment, agriculture, food safety and quality, energies and others. We invite all interested experts to check our web-site at the beginning on June.

Author & Links

Milena Raykovska
<http://see-science.eu/users/160.html>
 Joint Research Centre
<http://see-science.eu/org/987.html>
 Enlargement Actions:
<http://see-science.eu/goto/1465.html>

INCO-NET Proposal

Based upon the work done by the Information Office see-science.eu, an INCO-NET proposal was submitted by the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) in cooperation with 24 partner institutions. The proposed project's core objectives are the support of the bi-regional dialogue between the EU, associated FP7 countries and the West Balkan countries and the fostering of the participation of WBC researchers in European RTD projects by structural measures.

The S&T ministries from Albania, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are among the partners as well as the official FP7 NCP from Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, S&T ministries from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Slovenia and Turkey participate to add critical mass and momentum.

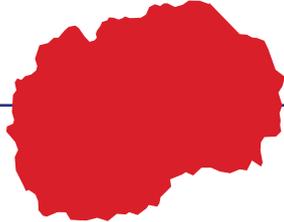
The proposed project supports the bi-regional dialogue through the Steering Platform on Research for WBC, as well as the dialogue within the region and information exchange with several EC Directorates General and international stakeholders, such as UNESCO or the World Bank.

The dialogues are to be substantiated by several analytical inputs. It is aimed e.g. to identify research areas of mutual benefit in an inclusive and comprehensive manner. The project proposal also puts emphasis on the building of capacities and the facilitation of networking opportunities. The proposal was submitted for the deadline of May 2, 2007 to the 'Capacities' programme of FP7. Evaluation is being carried out in June. Should it be successful, contract negotiations will start not earlier than September/October. We cross our fingers! (ed)



S&T in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Location: South Eastern Europe
 Total land area: 25,333 sq. km
 Population: 2,035,000 (2005, mid year, preliminary) source: wiw
 GDP - per capita: 2,277 EUR (2005) at official exchange rate - source: wiw
 GERD: 0.25 % of GDP (2004)
 BERD: 0.015 % of GDP (2004)
 HERD: 0.11 % of GDP (2004)
 GOVERD: 0.12 % of GDP (2004)



The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia is responsible for science policy in the country, which is organised and executed by the Department of Science and Technology and advised by the Council for Science and Research.

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for organisation, financing, developing and promotion of scientific research, technological development, technical culture, information technology and information systems as well as the international cooperation related to these issues.

Considering the overall political, social, and economic conditions the country has faced during the past years, the funding of scientific research has been very limited. This has also been followed by a continuous decrease in the number of active researchers in the country. However, the Ministry has promoted and stimulated activities aimed at an integrated approach in research activities and especially for regional and international cooperation.

The Governmental measures for improvement of the R&D sector are defined in several programmes, which encompass programmes for improvement of R&D and programmes for enhanced technological development. The Ministry of Education and Science has seriously considered the problem of the technological development of the country, and in that regard, measures have been taken in order to stimulate and support cooperation between the universities and industry, improve and intensify the use of scientific research results in industry, and promote the technological development of enterprises aimed at stimulating their competitiveness.

Legal Framework:

- Law on the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts
- Law on the Scientific and Research Activities
- Law on Encouraging and Supporting Technology Development
- Law on Higher Education
- Law on Industrial and Intellectual Property Protection
- several regulations and instructions

During 2004 and 2005, for the first time, a complete database with publications in scientific journals with impact factors (journals referred to in SCI and citations of institutions and researchers) was created in the country. A database of all patent activities was compiled as well.

In 2005, the new Council for Scientific research was introduced. Furthermore, a completely new system of project evaluation was established with assigned national coordinators for each scientific discipline who manage the evaluation process of scientific projects in the respective fields.

In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Science signed an agreement for national access to the electronic scientific database Scopus, which is available for all faculties and institutes at the state universities in the country. Also in 2006, the Government accepted a "Programme for development of scientific research activities in the Republic of Macedonia for the period of 2006-2010". The Programme was prepared in one year by experts and officials from all fields of science and future activities are set out in the Action Plan of this Programme. The new strategy for improvement of R&D defined in this document suggests an integrated approach to research activities characterised by necessity and quality. Increasing funding for R&D projects and for fellowships for young researchers is one of the priorities together with increased regional and international cooperation. Additionally, a definition of the national priorities in the R&D sector as well as an improved intergovernmental coordination between the ministries are emphasized as main concerns for the future development of the country. This strategy for the future science policy also includes a definition of criteria for supporting R&D, establishing a new peer evaluation procedure.

As one of the strategic objectives, five potential centres of excellence have been identified in the country based on their scientific results: Institute of Chemistry at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Research Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts; Nephrology Clinic at the Faculty of Medicine; Research Centre for Energy, Informatics and Material Science at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Institute for Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology. They are recognised not only in the country, but also internationally due to their publications, citations and international cooperation.

During the last years, the Ministry has promoted and stimulated international cooperation in all fields of scientific research and technological development. This strategy has produced a substantial increase in international scientific cooperation with many countries, especially with the European Union Member States. The scientific cooperation has been realised through the Framework Programmes for RTD, COST, NATO, UNESCO, IAEA and JICA. The increased participation of the Macedonian scientists in the 6th Framework Programme should be especially highlighted. According to our data, more than 50 projects with our scientists have been approved, which is 4 times more than in the 5th Framework Programme. The Macedonian Government officially stated the willingness and readiness for improvement of science and research in the country and a full participation



in the 7th Framework Programme. The Department of Science at the Ministry of Education and Science is an active participant in two large and important multilateral projects in the 6th Framework Programme (SEE-ERA.NET and ERA-WEST-BALKAN+), which enables a wider incorporation of Macedonia in European S&T activities. The participation of our scientists in the COST Program also significantly increased from 5 Actions in 2003 to 25 Actions in 2006.

The Department of Science creates European oriented science policy and, in every way, promotes, stimulates and assists in establishing international cooperation. Three years ago, there was bilateral project cooperation with Slovenia and Germany only. Then, this kind of cooperation was for the first time established with Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, France, Albania, the Russian Federation, Japan and China with more than a hundred bilateral projects. In the near future, cooperation with the USA, Israel, Austria and Spain will begin as well. Furthermore, there is an open call for joint project proposals with institutions from countries with which Macedonia has not signed agreements for scientific cooperation yet.

All these activities are intended to facilitate the incorporation of Macedonia in the European activities in the scientific research area, which has been recognised in the opinion of the European Commission for the status of this sector in the country, stating that in the fields of Science and Research the country should not have major difficulties in applying the *acquis* in the medium term.

Finally, the necessity of full understanding, coordination and support between the science policy makers and other decision makers should be emphasised because it is the only way for efficient and productive improvement of the scientific research and technological development of the country.

Author

Viktor Stefov
<http://see-science.eu/users/213.html>
 Ministry of Education and Science
<http://see-science.eu/org/87.html>

Responsibility for the use of nomenclature for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia lies within the authors, and in this regard the editors of this journal disclaim all responsibility.

Further information on WBC's research systems

More information on the national research system of the FYR of Macedonia is available in the see-science.eu deliverable of the country's S&T report which can be downloaded from our website: <http://see-science.eu/doc/1079.html>

Furthermore you can browse our website 'by regional focus' and will receive an overview on organisations and documents registered in our database:

Currently there are more than 230 organisations and more than 250 documents registered, and we are constantly enhancing our database.

To register your organisation and also to be able to access the contact and document database, you simply need to fill a webform 'apply for an account' or send an e-mail to Elke Dall - dall@zsi.at

Italy's S&T Relations to the Western Balkan Countries



A P R E
 A G E N Z I A
 P E R L A
 P R O M O Z I O N E
 D E L L A
 R I C E R C A
 E U R O P E A

Italy's relations with the countries of the Balkans are a natural priority in the panorama of Italian foreign policy as a result of political tradition, geographic location, and cultural affinity. Our geographic proximity, interdependence regarding security and migration, and common interest in redefining the map of cooperation, are all reasons that make the Western Balkans an area of crucial importance for Italy.

In the Western Balkans, Italy is also one of the most active countries in the sector of Development Cooperation, seen as a support for the process of economic transition and political democratisation in the region with the goal of encouraging stabilisation.

Italian Cooperation is concentrated in the sectors of infrastructure, energy, environment, health, education, public administration, support for the private sector (SMEs in particular) and protection of cultural heritage.

Implemented projects

Italy, through various organisations (universities, research centres etc.), participated in several projects with the WBC, funded by the 6th Framework Programme. The main goal of the projects was reinforcement of the research capacities, improvement of knowledge, research, methodologies, financial support, human resources etc. A successful collaboration in this field was carried out with the Macedonian Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy on the RECAPO project.

The Italian Agency for the Promotion of European Research (APRE) is currently participating in several projects involving the Western Balkan countries. The project EU BALKAN FABNET has the objective of encouraging and facilitating the participation of research centres and SMEs of the WBC in innovation and research activities regarding Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology in FP7. The objectives of the FOOD-N-CO project are similar, as they are also oriented to facilitating FP7 participation in this field. Furthermore, APRE is involved in the preparation of an FP7 WBC-INCO.NET project proposal.

Italy's aims

Our expectations are to expand the front of excellence to the West Balkan countries, with emphasis on keeping experts in the region and broadening perspectives for high level education, research and employability of young people. This will also provide a significant contribution to preventing the brain drain, realised through new job opportunities in the scientific field and permanent personal development by networking with leading European research centres. It is in our interest to build a solid basis for further integration of the Western Balkan countries into European projects and international collaboration.

Author

Jelena Kolić
<http://see-science.eu/users/1330.html>
 APRE
<http://see-science.eu/org/1285.html>



Energy as a Priority Area in FP7

"Energy" is one of 10 priority areas in the Specific Programme 'Cooperation' in the 7th Framework Programme on RTD. According to a speech by Raffaele Liberali, from the Energy Directorate of DG Research, held at the Energy and Transport Information Days in Brussels in February, the three main pillars for this area are:

- fight against climate change including CO2 emissions,
- fight for energy-sustainability in Europe and ensuring energy supply,
- ensuring the competitiveness of European industry.

For the implementation of international cooperation two mechanisms exist:

1. Opening of all activities and topics to international cooperation

Third countries and regions can participate in addition to the minimum legal consortium. Certain topics, called "opening +", lend themselves to the participation of third countries or regions and this is explicitly encouraged. In the first FP7 'Energy' Work programme the Western Balkan countries are earmarked as a target region for the specific topic "ENERGY.2007.3.7.1: Harmonisation of biomass resource assessment" with a deadline on June 28, 2007.

2. Specific International Cooperation Actions (SICA)

SICAs address problems on the basis of mutual benefit, shared interest and importance e.g. the environmental consequences of energy policies, inter-dependency of energy supply, technology transfer and capacity building. Specific criteria for the composition of consortia apply in the case of SICAs.

Links [CORDIS Website on Energy: http://see-science.eu/link/1685.html](http://see-science.eu/link/1685.html)
[Presentation on International cooperation in "Energy" by DG Research: http://see-science.eu/doc/1684.html](http://see-science.eu/doc/1684.html)

Treaty establishes Energy Community

The Treaty establishing the Energy Community, which entered into force on July 1, 2006, brings together the EU, along with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Bulgaria and Romania have recently joined the EU, changing their status from Contracting Party to Participant. Moldova, Norway, Turkey and Ukraine have obtained observer status, and may eventually join the Energy Community in the future, provided that they take on board the commitments of a contracting party to the Treaty.

The Treaty commits all its partners to work together to develop integrated gas and electricity networks across their territory. In time, all Contracting Parties will implement most of the legal framework, already adopted by EU Member States, in the area of energy networks, including competition, environmental protection and increasing use of renewable energy sources. The process of transforming 27 EU national markets, which seven Contracting Parties will also join, into a single

energy market is as yet at an early stage. Whilst the administrative and regulatory changes are advancing, the huge investments needed to modernise and adapt the infrastructure designed for national networks will take many years. And it is only when electricity and gas flow freely across national boundaries in an integrated European network, will consumers feel the full benefits of the single market.

Benefits for the customers

The single market (or internal market) is the fundamental basis of EU policies across a wide range of fields, and energy is no different. The Union's electricity and gas networks have been opened up to allow generators and suppliers access to the market throughout the Union without discrimination on the basis of nationality. As of July 1, 2007, all consumers will have the right to choose a different supplier in place of the previous monopoly gas and/or electricity supplier. The Contracting Parties will join the EU's single market in the electricity and gas sector. While the Energy Community entails legal obligations and corresponding rights, the Parties will benefit from integration in many ways. In fact, through identifying examples of good practice, they will benefit from the experiences of others in modernising their networks, allowing faster development and at lower costs.

The Energy Community has clear decision-making and support structures, ensuring that all partners are fully involved in and committed to the work of the Energy Community. The Ministerial Council is the body which takes key decisions at a political level regarding the Energy Community's policies and formally adopts its rules. The Permanent High Level Group brings together senior officials from each contracting party, ensuring continuity and follow-up of the political meetings of ministers, and decides on implementation of measures in some cases. Regulators from each partner and from the EU are represented on the Regulatory Board, which advises on details of statutory, technical and regulatory rules and makes recommendations in the case of cross-border disputes between regulators. Stakeholders from the electricity and gas industries, including consumers, meet to discuss issues related to the work of the Energy Community in the Electricity Forum and Gas Forum.

The activities of the Energy Community are administered by the Secretariat, regularly reviewing each Contracting Party's fulfilment of its obligations under the Treaty. It is also responsible for ensuring the Energy Community's budget - to which all partner countries contribute - is correctly spent and accounted for. The Secretariat, whose staff are appointed in accordance with the principle of geographical equilibrium amongst all Contracting Parties, is based in Vienna.

Just as EU energy policy will develop to take account of changing circumstances, so too will the policies of the Energy Community. But there is no automatic change in Energy Community policies as a consequence of EU policy changes. Partners have to agree on new policies, when appropriate, for example following changes in EU legislation.

Author Božena Mazur
 Director Energy Community Secretariat
<http://see-science.eu/org/1466.html>



Virtual Balkan Power Centre for Renewable Energy Sources

The FP6-project VBPC-RES offers a unique opportunity for networking between research institutions, industrial partners and utilities in the Western Balkan region. VBPC-RES (2005-2007) focuses on the Western Balkans region, where the economic situation is improving only slowly due to the lack of sufficient funds and the general socio-economic conditions. The project's consortium is made up of 17 members from 11 countries, of which 11 are from EU members and six represent all the Western Balkans countries. Prominent local institutions with strong professional focus are taking part in the project and contribute to the dissemination of results.

Key challenges of the project are:

- Building awareness about Renewable Energy Sources (RES) in the region with severe economic problems.
- Defining key steps, technical and regulatory, for the countries in the region to bootstrap the development and foster the efficient use of RES for energy supply.
- Ensuring the transfer of know-how from the EU to beneficiaries and among them.

Progress to Date and Highlights of Results

The following work has already been carried out:

- In the context of 5th and 6th Balkan Power Conferences, the 1st and the 2nd International RES Seminars were organised in Sofia, Bulgaria, and Ohrid, FYR of Macedonia, respectively. Each drew some 35-40 participants.
- The Balkan Power Student Contest was organised in 2005 and 2006, targeting power engineering students younger than 26 in the WB region to promote renewable energy issues among students.
- Two Balkan Power Summer Schools took place in 2005 in Bucharest, Romania, and in 2006 in Fojnica, BiH. Invited students who qualified at the Balkan Power Student Contest met to discuss Renewable Energy Sources, contemporary policy issues and technologies.
- A Project web portal and documentation of the activities were designed, as were scientific exchange processes.

Future Activities

The project is nearing its final year. The key activities that remain are the local workshops aimed at the dissemination of the project's proceedings.

They are organised each month in another Western Balkan country, and the lecturers are international experts from VBPC partners as well as high profile national experts from the host country. Workshops have already taken place in Tuzla/BiH, Zagreb/Croatia and Skopje/FYR of Macedonia. The next local workshop will take place in Novi Sad/Serbia (May 2007) and in June the final one will be held in Tirana/Albania.

Author
 Andrej Gubina
 University of Ljubljana
 VBPC-RES project
<http://see-science.eu/org/1300.html>

Motivating WBC Researchers: An Example From Montenegro

The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with The Bureau for International Scientific, Educational, Cultural and Technical Cooperation of the Government of Montenegro, organised an Information Day on FP7, at the University of Montenegro (UoM), on April 12, 2007. It was targeted mainly at the local research community and conceived as an informative and motivating event that would trigger greater involvement of researchers and support institutions in FP7 projects.

Introductory notes were offered by Sreten Škuletić, Vice Rector for International Cooperation at the UoM, and Slobodanka Koprivica, Vice Minister for High Education and Science, who was also the moderator of the event. Local NCPs together with researchers from Slovenia and Montenegro were presenters. The NCPs first gave a general introduction to FP7, the status of Montenegro within it, and illustrated ways of participating in the Framework Programme by giving examples of Health, Environment and themes for Coordination and Support Actions. Topics that call for participation of ICPC and especially WBC were stressed. In the second part of the event there was a very informative and inspiring presentation by an outstanding researcher from Slovenia, Jana Kolar, who gave valuable insight into FP7 projects from a researcher's point of view, focusing on the position of partners in projects. The presentations, by Mira Vukčević, from the UoM, who focused on the 'Capacities' Programme and recommendations for participation in it and by Božo Krstajić, also from the UoM, who spoke about his experiences in FP6 e-infrastructure projects, were also highly appreciated. Their success stories have encouraged researchers to start investigating FP7 opportunities. The Info Day was co-financed by the Project 'ERA Westbalkan+' and the Ministry of Education and Science of Montenegro. The 'see.science.eu Journal' was recommended as a very relevant information source for West Balkan research.

Author
 Branka Žižić
<http://see-science.eu/users/1154.html>
 Ministry of Science and Education,
 Montenegro
<http://see-science.eu/org/88.html>

NCP FP BiH Activities

During the first quarter of the year 2007, NCP FP BiH organised numerous activities concerning the promotion of and dissemination of information regarding FP7. Some of the activities were round tables organised by focal points, which were held at the University of Sarajevo, the University of "Đemal Bijedić" Mostar, the University of Banja Luka and at the the University of Mostar. In addition to round tables, info days on FP7 for the RTD community in BiH took place at the University of Sarajevo, the University of Zenica, the University of Tuzla and the University of Banja Luka. The total number of participants at all these events was 275. Furthermore, the new NCP FP BiH web page was also officially launched: www.ncp-fp.ba

Author
 Dina Masnik
<http://see-science.eu/users/401.html>
 NCP FP BiH
<http://see-science.eu/org/388.html>





WWW.SEE-ERA.NET

SEE-ERA.NET Pilot Joint Call Exceeds Expectations

More Than 300 Valid Project Applications in the First Call

The first pilot joint call for the submission of research projects from 14 countries was successfully concluded on March 31, 2007. Expectations were really exceeded with a total of 321 valid applications submitted by 1437 research teams, clearly showing the need and also the potential for international research collaboration in the Southeast European region. The evaluation of the project applications is expected to be finalised in early summer, so that the first projects can begin in autumn 2007.

Through the Southeast European Era-Net (SEE-ERA.NET) project, the European Union is supporting networking between countries through international research initiatives. However, the joint call budget for projects comes from the countries themselves, which are deeply interested in the process, also because of their financial involvement. As the target region of the project, the project partners from the Western Balkans have the same rights as the EU partner countries in all decision-making processes. Summer schools, research and network projects are being supported by the first SEE-ERA.NET call in the areas of "Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology", "Information and Communication Technologies" and "Environment". For an application to be accepted as eligible, at least three (five) research teams from three (five) different countries must be involved, with at least one (two) of them from the Western Balkans. SEE-ERA.NET is funded by the European Commission under FP6. It is coordinated by the Centre for Social Innovation (Zentrum für Soziale Innovation) in Austria, with project partners, research ministries and agencies in the project countries Austria, Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia.

Author

Florian Gruber
<http://see-science.eu/users/114.html>
 Centre for Social Innovation
<http://see-science.eu/org/29.html>

Bilateral Agreements with the Western Balkans

On the right, you can find a rough overview of the bilateral agreements between the European Union Member States, Associated countries and the Western Balkan countries.

With agreements being activated/resting the situation is changing all the time. To get the latest news researchers interested in bilateral cooperation should get in touch with their national contact points.

	Albania	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Croatia	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Austria			■	●	●	
Belgium						●
Bulgaria				■		●
Czech Republic						●
Cyprus						
Denmark						
Estonia						
Finland						
France			■	■	■	■
Germany		■	■	■		■
Greece	■	●	■	●	■	■
Hungary			■			■
Ireland						
Italy	■					●
Latvia						
Lithuania						
Luxembourg						
Malta						
Netherlands						
Poland						
Romania	■		●			■
Slovak Republic						■
Slovenia	■	■	■	■	■	■
Spain						
Sweden						
United Kingdom				■		
Israel				■		●
Norway						■
Switzerland				■		■
Turkey	■			■		●

■ signed agreement

● under negotiation or protocol existing



Frequently Asked Questions

At the Information Office, we have received a number of questions from our readers concerning the ICPC lump sum funding method, which has not been fully explained by the European Commission yet. Ralph König summarises the available information for see-science.eu:

What are the financial models to be applied in FP7 and what is the 'lump sum funding method' for ICPC?

Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of December 18, 2006 lays down the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under the Seventh Framework Programme and for the dissemination of research results (2007-2013), and article 30 of this regulation stipulates that: Participants from international cooperation partner countries may opt for the Community financial contribution in the form of lump-sum financing. The Commission shall establish applicable lump sums in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

Since the publication of this regulation in the Official Journal of the European Union in December 2006, no further practical information has been provided by the EC, in particular on how FP7 project proposal partners (applicants) should deal with this question when submitting a proposal and filling in the project's budget in the A3.1 proposal submission form (EPPS).

In this A3.1 proposal submission form for any FP7 type of activity (RTD, Demonstration, Training, Coordination, Support, Management), each partner of the project consortium is required to answer yes or no to the question:

My legal entity is established in an ICPC and I shall use the lump sum funding method?

If yes, please fill below the lump sum costs (flat-rate or scale of unit costs) row only for the specific type of activity

If no, please do not use the lump sum row

For this purpose each project partner has to know

a) whether it is really located in an International Cooperation Partner Country (ICPC) or not (which is and has been difficult to decide in the phase of the first open FP7 calls for proposals for applicants/partners in countries like Croatia, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia) and
b) what amount of lump-sum contribution for participants from ICPC the European Commission has foreseen.

The first question has already been extensively discussed in this journal. Basically, a list of the international cooperation partner countries is published on the CORDIS Website "Participate in FP7 - Eligible countries" (<http://see-science.eu/goto/1793.html>). Additional information on the definition of associated countries, ICPC etc was provided in the last issue of the journal (page 4 or see <http://see-science.eu/news/1035.html>), and further information on the association procedures is given on page 2 of this journal.

In the official documents we learn that "The Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) associating respectively Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey to the Seventh EC Framework Programme are expected to be applied retro-actively as of 1 January 2007. Proposers are hereby informed that subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the respective internal procedures and the entry into force of the relevant MoUs, legal entities established in respectively Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey, will be able to receive Community contributions for contracts signed after 1 January 2007." Many researchers have been confused as to whether they are located in an ICPC or in a country already associated to FP7 as a result of this information.

With regard to the second question, 'Article II.18 of ECGA - Community financial contribution' of the 'DRAFT Guide to Financial Issues relating to FP7 Indirect Actions' (<http://see-science.eu/goto/1791.html>) published on April 24, 2007, in chapter 2 'EC contribution in the form of lump sums' states that:

2.1 Lump sums for ICP countries (*DISCLAIMER: The decision on lump sums has not been yet adopted by the Commission. The text may have to be adapted according to the decision of the Commission*)

The EC lump sum contribution for participants from ICPC takes into account the economy of the respective country and is structured in three categories:

Economy of the ICPC	Contribution (researcher/year)
Low income	8,000 €
Lower middle income	9,800 €
Upper middle income	20,700 €

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro belong to the group of countries with lower middle income. For the calculation of the maximum EC contribution, the project partner organisation from an ICPC has to take into account the upper funding limit for the specific type of activity.

Funding Scheme	Public bodies, EDU, research organisations and SMEs	All other organisations
Collaborative project	75%	50%
Network of Excellence	75%	50%
Coordination and support action	100%	100%
Support for "frontier" research (ERC)	100%	100%
Research for the benefit of specific groups	75%	50%
Support for training and career development of researchers (Marie Curie)	Not applicable	Not applicable

Conclusions

a) A clear answer to the above question on the legal status of specific countries (in particular Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) will be available as soon as the Memoranda of Understanding are signed (see page 2).

b) Since the decision on lump sums has not been yet adopted by the Commission and the guide to financial issues relating to FP7 indirect actions is not available in its final version, it is the project proposers/partners decision (respectively responsibility) to take into account the information in the draft guideline regarding lump sum funding and to decide which method of calculating the direct and indirect cost the organisation shall use.

Author
Ralph König
<http://see-science.eu/users/557.html>
Austrian Research Promotion Agency
<http://see-science.eu/org/125.html>



Supporting Regional Innovation and Networking through Economic and Business Fora



The Slovenian Business and Research Association (SBRA), together with the Municipality of Nova Gorica and the Slovenian Government, is organising the 3rd annual European Regional Economic Forum (EREF-2007) from May 31 - June 02, 2007 and the 3rd RIBN Business Forum on May 30, 2007 in Nova Gorica, Slovenia.

SBRA, which was established in Brussels in 1999, is an international non-profit organisation connecting business and research communities in Slovenia with EU institutions and other public and private bodies at EU level. Members of SBRA, both from the private and public sector, represent a wide-spectrum of Slovenian interests, particularly from the fields of business, research and regional interests.

EREF-2007 Forum

Under the high patronage of the Committee of the Regions, the already traditional Nova Gorica Forum will be addressing important issues regarding the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda in European regions.

The focus of EREF-2007 is public RTD funding and communication and the role of structural funding in supporting knowledge-based competitiveness. Besides stakeholders from business and RTD, representatives from regional and local authorities, as well as those from EU institutions, European associations and networks will exchange views on good practice in creating conditions for successful Lisbon-type reforms and making RTD the backbone of their development effort.

The majority of forum participants will come from science and technology parks, universities, research institutes, clusters, centres of excellence and technology oriented companies.

Benefiting from analytical reports being prepared within the project such as 'Building and Improving Support for RTD Policy and Public Spending' (BIS-RTD), which is being funded by the EC, the participants of the Forum will gain insight into the experience, successes, effective instruments and challenges of European regions in building knowledge societies and linking research with economic operators to enhance and support the creation of new technologies and other innovations.

The Forum will also provide opportunities for meeting potential business and RTD partners, for inter-regional networking at EU-27 level, as well as potential partners from candidate and potential candidate countries. Having shared a common state for over 70 years, Slovenia as a whole, along with the border region of Goriško, traditionally plays the role of a natural gateway to the countries of the Western Balkans. This explains why this region is contributing about a third of the Forum's participants.

RIB Network

The mission of the Research, Innovation and Business Network (RIBN) for Central and South-Eastern Europe is to act as an interface between the various levels and types of stakeholders along the value chain of

the economies of Central and South Eastern Europe. The Network aims to encourage and facilitate interaction between its members and related bodies at local, regional, national, cross-border and pan-European levels, as well as to mobilise and combine dispersed efforts and support synergies of expertise and resources particularly of economic actors and research bodies in the region. A day prior to EREF-2007, SBRA (as secretariat of the RIB Network) is organising the RIBN Business Forum (May 30, 2007) in order to introduce the activities of the Southeast European Era-Net (SEE-ERA.NET), Canadian support for international research cooperation, and the financial advisory services offered by the EU.

The RIBN Business Forum will also include a match-making event where companies from EU-27 will have a chance to meet companies from candidate and potential candidate countries to discuss possible support with respective regional and/or national authorities and banks. Participants will also receive overviews of the development priorities of these countries and the EU-27 priorities for cohesion funding.

Author

Bojan Terčon
<http://see-science.eu/users/896.html>
 RIBN
<http://see-science.eu/org/1321.html>

UnivSOE-Project: SEE Towards European Research and Higher Education Area

Universities are of vital interest for the development of modern knowledge-based societies as well as intellectually trained individuals ready to take responsibility for the political, economic, social and cultural advancement of a country, especially in Central and South East Europe. However, different conditions have to be fulfilled (legal, political, economic etc) in order to contribute to the general reform process. Since September 2005 the UnivSOE research project, conducted by a research team at the University of Graz and financed by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research, has tried to analyse strengths and weaknesses of universities, academies of sciences and other research institutions in Central and South East Europe on their path towards the European Research and Higher Education Area.

After a workshop held in November 2006 and the completion of country reports and interviews conducted with numerous experts from the region, the preliminary results of the project will be discussed at the Final Conference on June 29/30, 2007 at the University of Graz (Austria) convened under the title "Institutions of Research and Tertiary Education in Central and South East Europe. Developments, Structures and Perspectives of these Institutions for their Integration into the European Higher Education and Research Area". It aims to bring together different stakeholders and scientists from the region with their counterparts from Austria along with the relevant EU officials.

On the project website <http://www.uni-graz.at/univsoe> you can find the programme and further information.

Author

Hedwig Kopetz
<http://see-science.eu/users/1274.html>
 University of Graz
<http://see-science.eu/org/1273.html>



The International Scientific Cooperation within the Central European Initiative



The Central European Initiative (CEI) is an intergovernmental body, set-up in 1989, for stimulating and supporting political, economic and cultural cooperation among its Members and with the EU. This cooperation is developed at all levels, ranging from Prime Ministers to individual institutions, and includes common policies involving the various countries of the Central Eastern Europe and the Balkans, embracing topics from security to research. There are 18 member countries participating in the CEI, extending to Ukraine and Bielorrussia in the East and Serbia, Montenegro and Albania in the South.

The CEI has an Executive Secretariat which can be contacted regarding initiatives and is described in more detail on the web-site <http://www.ceinet.org>. The activities related to Science and Technology are coordinated and stimulated by an ad hoc working group, which has been operating for more than ten years.

The development of common policies in Science and Technology has been implemented through a number of initiatives, the major ones being the construction of a Network of Research Institutions, the Support to International Meetings and Training Activities, and the selection and support of ideas for the Start-Up of Business Initiatives from Research. With the entry of several CEI Countries in the EU, the activities are being more focussed on the nine countries not (yet) in the EU. In this way, the new EU Member States become, together with the "older" EU States (in particular Austria and Italy), supporters of the countries more in need of support. In the last few years, there has been a stronger connection to the EU Framework Programme, thus increasing leverage.

The network of institutions has been built starting from the many international institutions operating in Trieste which, in turn, are connected to institutions in the other countries. The network ensures the circulation of ideas and people, and the easy movement of students and trainees, as well as researchers. The resources for these activities are made available by integrating resources of the Trieste institutions and the CEI Secretariat, thus increasing the resources offered to CEI countries. The support of meetings and training activities is activated by applications to the CEI Secretariat, and the proposals are evaluated by the Working Group. Resources for these actions are limited, but it is possible to obtain grants of 5.000 to 15.000 euros, provided that the initiative mainly involves researchers from the CEI countries and shows good scientific quality. The third initiative, to support the connection between research and business, is based on open calls for ideas to be submitted by teams of researchers led by junior researchers, who believe they have a good idea or a technological result from research, which can be the base for starting a new industrial business. The proposals are selected on the basis of their quality and feasibility, and the selected teams receive a grant of about 10.000 euros aimed at supporting the early stages of their business idea, in particular the

development of a business plan and the setting up of a firm. The CEI is, thus, one of the instruments aimed at the reconnection of a common socioeconomic environment between all countries, and the rebuilding of the common cultural links. The involvement of research, which has the advantage of being used for collaboration, has a particular significance in facilitating an overall process which needs to proceed quickly to allow the CEI region to become competitive at world level in the context of globalisation.

Author

Carlo Rizzuto
<http://see-science.eu/users/1312.html>
 Central European Initiative
<http://see-science.eu/org/1313.html>

Databases - A Way to Find Suitable Project Partners

If you want to take part in a European research project under the 7th EU Framework Programme, you need a good consortium with professional partners. There are different ways to find suitable project partners e.g. through personal networking establishing new contacts at events or seminars as well as through personal recommendations. Another way is to search for profiles in partner-databases - or to register your own profile. There are several partner-databases that are open for European countries, including the Western Balkan area. In this and the following issues, we want to present a useful selection. First, we start with the biggest official ones - CORDIS and ERA-CAREERS and a focus on databases for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

CORDIS - <http://cordis.europa.eu/partners-service>

CORDIS, the Community Research and Development Information Service for FP7 is a service portal offering information about European research and innovation, EU funding programmes, initiatives, projects and partners. The CORDIS Partners Service is a free on-line service offering tailor-made help to find the best research partners for research projects, either in the context of EU-funded projects or within a broader search for technology-orientated partnerships. The service includes details on thousands of active partnership requests from companies, research institutions and universities across Europe and around the world. You can publish your own profile by entering your project idea or specific expertise. If you want to be informed about newly inserted profiles suitable to your area of interest, you can also register for an email-notification.

Mobility - <http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers>

On the European Researcher's Mobility Portal organisations can post vacancies for research positions and additionally have access to the personalised CV search tool in the database. The possibility for universities, research centres, enterprises, foundations etc. to advertise their research positions is free of charge but registration is required. If you are an individual researcher regardless of your age, nationality or level of research experience, you can post your CV on the portal and have access to the personalised job vacancy tool. An alert service enables registered researchers to be informed about jobs that registered organisations are offering.



Searching for SMEs in specific research topics**SMEs go Health** - <http://www.smesgohealth.org>

The main objective of the 'SMEs go Health' project is to offer advice and support to European SMEs and SME groupings and assist them in participating in EU-funded research projects in the Health thematic priority of FP7.

The SMEs go Health project also offers a partner search platform where SMEs can publish their profiles and partner searches. The database offers both profiles of SMEs and research institutes interested in becoming involved in FP7 research projects as well as partner searches of research consortia looking for SME partners. Use of the database is free but you have to register first.

SMEs for Food - <http://www.smesforfood.org>

The SMEs for Food Project supports SMEs participation in European wide research projects focusing on topics related to food quality and security. FP7 also funds research projects under the Theme "Biotechnology, Agriculture and Food" and the SMEs for Food database helps companies and researchers to find and build suitable project consortia more easily. Use of the database is free upon registration.

EPISTEP - <http://www.epistep.org>

The EPISTEP database is directed at Small and Medium sized Enterprises in Europe, which work in the areas of mobile communications, embedded systems and nano-electronics or have interests in these areas. The database is divided in 4 sections: Section 1 provides general information about your company; Section 2 deals with research and development activities of your company; Section 3 examines your participation in European funded programmes and Section 4 deals with your participation in non-EU programmes. This service is also free but you have to register.

SEE-INNOVATION - <http://www.see-innovation.org>

SEE-Innovation is a Specific Support Action whose overall goal is to assist SMEs from candidate and third South East European countries to actively participate in European R&D activities and programmes on IST research domains. Among other services, networking is facilitated through an online directory. The project will end soon but intends to maintain its database.directory.

Author

Victoria Solitander
<http://see-science.eu/users/1243.html>
 Austrian Science and Research Promotion Agency
<http://see-science.eu/org/125.html>

**Governing Sociotechnical Change in Southeastern Europe**

The publication with contributions from a Science and Technology Studies (STS) Perspective was published in Sofia this year. It is the result of the project SEENet-STs funded by the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices Ljubljana and Sofia.

Rohracher/Mitev/Tchalakov/Pendev/Mali/Milovanovic/Stupar/Simeonova/Vasileva/Späth/Galev/Pascalev: Governing Sociotechnical Change in Southeastern Europe - Contributions from a Science & Technology Studies Perspective. Sofia. 2007.

ISBN: 978-954-321-305-4

Links

order a printed copy at IFZ
<http://see-science.eu/org/1686.html>
 project website:
<http://see-science.eu/link/1784.html>

**Science and Technology Statistics and Indicators Systems**

The report, written by Tiago Santos Pereira of the Coimbra University in Portugal, on behalf of UNESCO-BRESCE, presents the results of a Pilot Study on 'Enhancing Science Policy and Management in South East Europe: S&T Statistics and Indicators Systems'. It describes the state of the art of the production (from the qualitative and quantitative points of view) of S&T statistics and indicators in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia and a project proposal for future activities to be undertaken in this area.

Links

link to download a pdf version
<http://see-science.eu/doc/1332.html>

Imprint

The 'Information Office of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries' (see-science.eu) is co-funded by the European Community's Programme for Specific International Scientific Cooperation Activities [http://cordis.europa.eu/inco/home_en.html (INCO)] under the 6th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (Contract Number: 031770).

The sole responsibility for the content of this eJournal lies with the authors. It does not represent the opinion of the European Community or the editors of the journal. Neither the European Community nor the editors are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

ISSN: 1991-1750

Subscription & recent issues available at <http://see-science.eu/ejournal/list>

Editors: Elke Dall and Florian Gruber

Layout: Maroš Kollár

Proofreading: Michael John Flynn

Contact: office@see-science.eu

