

EBC External Environmental Report

Week of 13 January

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Citizens need to know and be proud of what science and innovation does for Europe"

Mariya Gabriel, EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, recently shared her perspective on the establishment of the "European Knowledge Strategy" that is to ultimately accelerate the movement of ideas, researchers and students across the EU.

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HORIZON EUROPE

Orientations towards the first Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe ([European Commission.pdf](#))

The purpose of this document is to summarise the results of the intense co-design process that took place over the summer and autumn 2019 in view of preparing the first Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe. The views and ideas of more than 7000 respondents were collected through webbased surveys and close to 4000 participants engaged in in-depth debates in the European Research and Innovation Days, which took place in Brussels on 24 - 26 September 2019.

New R&D commissioner aims to 'revitalise' European Research Area, for east and west ([Science|Business](#))

The European Union's new innovation chief wants to "revitalise" efforts to create a real single market for research, education and innovation, bridging the performance gap between eastern and western Europe. In an interview with Science|Business, Mariya Gabriel, the new commissioner for research, innovation, education culture and youth, laid out her plans for R&D policy in the next five years. Her long term goal: the establishment of a "European Knowledge Strategy" that would try to integrate policies for the movement of ideas, researchers and students around the EU.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Viewpoint: We lost the Brexit battle. But we need to fight on (*Science|Business*)

The Scientists for EU group is gearing up for 2020 after the desperate disappointment of losing its three-and-a-half year campaign against Brexit - a result that has major implications for research. Co-founder of the group, Mike Galsworthy, admits he's "wiped out" but says he is ready to keep lobbying for science in a year that will determine the UK's future relationship with Brussels. The country will leave the EU at the end of the month, after the Conservative party won a majority of 79 seats in December's general election.

Call to reform Slovakia's R&D system (*Science|Business*)

Researchers and academics in Slovakia are teaming up to put pressure on government, calling for upgrades to the national research and higher education system to put more emphasis on excellence, improve the country's performance in EU's Horizon programme, increase international participation and stop the brain drain. Peter Moczo, chairman of the Learned Society of Slovakia says a reform of the Slovak R&D system is long overdue. "We are really dramatically behind countries which truly support science, research and education," Moczo told *Science|Business*. "The intellectual potential of Slovak science is better than is [realised] in this system and level of support."

Researchers suffering 'shocking' levels of stress, poll reveals (*Science|Business*)

Pressure to bring performance in line with metrics, win grants, and produce impactful research are contributing to shocking levels of stress and mental health problems among scientists, according to a survey carried out by the biomedical research charity Wellcome Trust. Fewer than one third of scientists who took part in the survey said they felt secure pursuing a research career. Many respondents reported concern with the "growing dominance and impact of metrics", such as quality of publications and citations.

Health professor: AI has huge potential, provided ethical issues can be solved (*EurActiv*)

Three years ago, Canadian physicist Geoffrey Hinton shocked the medical world when he said radiology will be replaced by artificial intelligence (AI) in five year's time. Radiologists should not be trained anymore because of that, he argued. Others beg to differ, however. "It's not really the case," said Boris Brkljačić, Professor of radiology and Vice-Dean at the University of Zagreb School of Medicine in Croatia, who is also President of the European Society of Radiology (ESR).

Digital Transformation in Healthcare (*EurActiv*)

The development of pioneering new digital treatments and technologies, including robotics, artificial intelligence and data networks, is set to transform our healthcare systems over the coming years, optimising our healthcare system and offering numerous benefits for patients and healthcare providers alike.

New research shows what AI can teach us about the human brain (*Vox*)

Google's DeepMind research group has a lot of flashy AI accomplishments to its name. Among the biggest are AlphaGo, its game-playing algorithm that stunned many by beating top Go players in a 2016 match; and its successor AlphaZero, which plays Go even better and can also be taught other games; and AlphaStar, which plays the real-time strategy game StarCraft at an expert level.

Study links Alzheimer's disease with circular RNA (*National Institute on Aging*)

Certain loops of ribonucleic acid — "circular RNAs" — in the brain are associated with the development of Alzheimer's disease, according to a study reported recently in *Nature Neuroscience*. Because these circular RNAs can be detected not just in the brain but in cerebrospinal fluid and blood, they have the potential to be developed into lab tests to detect Alzheimer's before symptoms appear.

Violent Acts and Being the Target of Violence Among People With Mental Illness—The Data and Their Limits (*JAMA Psychiatry*)

Evidence has accumulated over the last 40 years indicating increased rates of violent perpetration and being the target of violence among people with mental illness. Landmark data collected in the early 1980s by the Epidemiologic Catchment Area study found a 12-month prevalence of 12% for any type of violence among people with mental disorders, which dropped to 7% if people with comorbid substance abuse (DSM-III) were excluded, compared with 2% in the general population.

SURVEYS AND CONSULTATIONS

State of Global Neurosurgery Outreach: a European survey - Ongoing (*Global Neurosurgery WFNS*)

The field of Global Neurosurgery has grown rapidly in recent years, as there is increasing recognition that addressing the unmet need for neurosurgical care is an essential component of global health efforts. The WFNS has recently established a [new committee on Global Neurosurgery](#). We would like to take this opportunity and examine the the current state of outreach, information and engagement on the topic of Global Neurosurgery among European Neurosurgeons.

FOR YOUR AGENDA

EBC Meetings:

18 - 19 May 2020 - **Board Meeting and General Assembly**, Brussels

25 May 2020 - **6th Academy Meeting of National Brain Councils**, Paris

23 - 24 September 2020 - **Board Meeting and Strategic Workshop**, Brussels

Events of Interest:

17 January 2020 - [Innovative Medicines Initiative \(IMI\) Information Day](#), Sofia

3 February 2020, [Human Brain Project Open Day 2020](#), Athens

13 February 2020 - [3rd triMS.online conference](#)

13 February 2020 - [Horizon Europe: A practical insight](#), Budapest

18 February 2020 - [Brain Health as a Global Priority - time for the EU to act now](#), Brussels

16 - 22 March 2020 - Brain Awareness Week

26 - 28 March 2020 - [EANS Annual Meeting & Research Course of Young Neurosurgeons](#), Zurich

28 - 31 March 2020 - [28th European Congress of Psychiatry](#), Madrid

4 - 5 May 2020 - [EU Health Summit](#), Brussels

23 - 26 May 2020 - [6th Congress of the European Academy of Neurology](#), Paris

26 - 28 May 2020 - [HIMSS & Health 2.0 European Conference](#), Helsinki

11 - 15 July 2020 - [12th FENS Forum of Neuroscience](#), Glasgow

12 - 15 September 2020 - [33rd ECNP Congress](#), Vienna

18 - 22 October 2020 - [EANS2020](#), Belgrade



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