

EBC External Environmental Report

Week of 24 February

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If we have not done that, then we will have no budget, no Erasmus programme, no resources for research, no resources for regional development or border protection"

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen recently commented on the potential impact of further delays in reaching an agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027

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HORIZON EUROPE

ITRE chair confident EU leaders will ‘soon find a solution’ to budget stalemate ([Science](#)|[Business](#))

The chair of European Parliament’s industry committee, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, says he is optimistic that a budget deal could be reached and funding delays in Horizon Europe averted. Buşoi said he hopes EU institutions will reach a compromise soon enough so that “financing instruments in the next [EU budget] will not be affected.” At the same time, the European Parliament is committed to rejecting any budget deal under 1.3 per cent of gross national income. “The parliament is strongly committed to its position and will make all efforts necessary,” to provide sufficient funding for all programmes Buşoi told Science|Business. The president of the European parliament has already warned EU leaders it will oppose any budget deal under 1.3 per cent that will underfund the new priorities such as research, the green deal and digitalisation, but also traditional programmes such as cohesion and agriculture.

EU budget delay leaves parts of Horizon Europe in limbo ([Science](#)|[Business](#))

Failure to agree on the EU’s multiannual budget for 2021-2027 will delay the launch of Horizon Europe and the student exchange programme Erasmus, Ursula von der Leyen warned after member states failed to agree on how much they should contribute to the EU purse. For the budget to come into force in January 2021, EU member states have to reach an agreement well before the end of the year, in time for it to put through a vote in the European parliament.

EU science ministers want reciprocity in international R&D cooperation ([Science](#)|[Business](#))

The EU should welcome international partners in its research and innovation programme, but only if they meet criteria of “reciprocity, added value and respect of EU values,” science ministers say. Third countries wishing to participate in Horizon Europe should open their research systems to EU researchers and respect EU rules on intellectual property and freedom of movement. “At end of the day we should safeguard EU interests,” said Croatian minister for science and education Blaženka Divjak, speaking at a competitiveness council meeting last week. In a joint press conference with Divjak, EU research commissioner Maryia Gabriel said third countries won’t be able to pick and choose from Horizon Europe’s wide offering of missions and partnerships and should commit to participate “at pillar level”.

‘What happens if we’re kicked out?’ Seven Swiss scientists contemplate a possible future outside EU R&D programmes ([Science](#)|[Business](#))

The prospect of a diminished science relationship between the EU and Switzerland has sent tremors through the country’s research institutes and labs, as the Swiss government walks a political tightrope with Brussels to secure a new treaty and full access to the next big EU research programme. The political tussle playing out between Bern and Brussels, which could result in Switzerland being left out of parts of the €90 billion Horizon Europe programme running from 2021 - 2027, is worrying scientists, who are determined to be involved. Swiss research has flourished within the framework the EU has created for collaborative science, with EU funding leading to advances in highly-specialised research fields, encouraging investment and plugging researchers into extensive research networks.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Outgoing UK research chief says post-Brexit plans leave him ‘optimistic’ ([Science](#)|[Business](#))

Mark Walport, outgoing head of the main public sector funding body, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), said he is encouraged by plans to shore up science following

the country's stormy split from the EU. "I'm not a politician but I listen to the announcements [from the government] and I'm optimistic. It would show a lot of hubris to be certain about the future, but I think you can see some very clear evidence they are supportive," Walport said. Walport, who is due to retire in 2020, once a successor is found, said the UK's main priority now is to "keep a strong international environment." Prime minister Boris Johnson's recent announcement of an uncapped visa scheme for scientists is, "a good way into research in the UK," Walport said.

OECD AI Policy Observatory (*OECD*)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming every aspect of our lives. It influences how we work and play. It promises to help solve global challenges like climate change and access to quality medical care. Yet AI also brings real challenges for businesses and citizens alike. OECD.AI aims to help countries and others shape policy and institutional frameworks for the development of trustworthy AI that benefits society as a whole, guided by the OECD AI Principles.

Research program dedicated to finding cures for Parkinson's, Alzheimer's (*FIU Magazine*)

As a young assistant professor in the early 1980s at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, Tomás Guilarte would often visit an affiliated clinic to observe children undergoing therapy to chemically remove lead from their bodies. Many were from poor neighborhoods in Baltimore, and their exposure stemmed from lead-based paint crumbling off the walls in their homes. The dwellings of the identified children were being remediated, but for the youngsters the damage was already done: diminished memory and other cognitive problems that contributed to poor performance in school. (Lead-based paints were banned for use in housing in 1978.)

Effects of Antipsychotic Medication on Brain Structure in Patients With Major Depressive Disorder and Psychotic Features (*JAMA Psychiatry*)

In their first few decades of use, antipsychotic medications were primarily administered to individuals with schizophrenia. With the introduction of atypical antipsychotics in the 1990s, evidence of efficacy led to the US Food and Drug Administration approval for use in mood disorders, including major depression, an illness with a lifetime prevalence of 10% to 15%. Antipsychotics are also increasingly prescribed off label across the life span in a range of pediatric, adult, and geriatric disorders. For example, among all drug classes, antipsychotic medications are the ones most commonly prescribed in children with autism, with nearly 20% receiving antipsychotic medication and rising. Antipsychotics are also associated with sudden death, with risk of unexpected death substantially higher in both children and elderly individuals.

SURVEYS AND CONSULTATIONS

Consultation on the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence - A European Approach - Deadline 31 May 2020 (*European Commission*)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a strategic technology that offers many benefits for citizens and the economy. It will change our lives by improving healthcare (e.g. making diagnosis more precise, enabling better prevention of diseases), increasing the efficiency of farming, contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation, improving the efficiency of production systems through predictive maintenance, increasing the security of Europeans and the protection of workers, and in many other ways that we can only begin to imagine.

European Commission launches EU-wide public consultation on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan (*European Commission*)

Today, on World Cancer Day, the European Commission is launching an EU-wide public consultation on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. The consultation will help shape the Plan, identify key areas, and explore future action. Every year, 3.5 million persons

are diagnosed with cancer in the European Union. It is a serious health issue that will directly affect 40% of EU citizens with important impacts on the European health systems and economies. However, with up to 40% of cancer cases being attributed to preventable causes, the scope for action and potential to reduce the number of cases in the EU is immense.

Keep the EU and UK collaboration in Science #DEALFORSCIENCE - ongoing (*Wellcome Trust*)

Researchers need certainty on scientific collaboration between the UK and EU. Science has been a key success of the EU and must remain a priority to keep Europe competitive. International collaboration makes science stronger and we should not let Brexit disrupt this. Researchers need a long-term solution to allow them to continue working together on the big challenges our societies face, transforming peoples' lives for the better. It's essential that politicians quickly find a way to keep this collaboration as easy as possible.

Sign the petition - Horizon Europe - ongoing (*Initiative for Science in Europe*)

We invite Researchers, Students, Research Organisations, and the Civil Society to sign the petition to their representatives in local governments and to the European Council, asking for a more ambitious budget allocation to the next Research Framework Programme, Horizon Europe. Below, you can read the original letter in English and the letters to the ministries of the some Member States in their official language.

FOR YOUR AGENDA

EBC Meetings:

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

24 May 2020 - **Special Session at the EAN Congress: Severe patients in neurological and psychiatric disorders**, Paris

24 May 2020 - **EBRA and RethinkingMS - Scientific Theatre**, Paris

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

14 July 2020 - **EBC Special Interest Event: Global Research Collaboration at FENS Forum 2020** , Glasgow

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

Events of Interest:

16 - 22 March 2020 - **Brain Awareness Week**

17 March 2020 - **Webinar: X-linked adrenoleukodystrophy**

26 - 28 March 2020 - **EANS Annual Meeting & Research Course of Young Neurosurgeons**, Zurich

28 - 31 March 2020 - **28th European Congress of Psychiatry**, Madrid

6 - 7 April 2020 - **Better Future of Healthy Ageing 2020 (BFHA 2020)**, Zagreb

14 April 2020 - **Webinar: Recognizing atypical Parkinsonism**

21 April 2020 - **Webinar: Hypomyelination**

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

12 May 2020 - [Webinar: Paroxysmal dyskinesias: an update on clinical and genetic aspects](#)

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

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

13 - 18 June 2020 - [8th Mediterranean Neuroscience Society Conference](#), Dubrovnik

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

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

21-24 September 2020 - [NEURO 2020 Summit](#), Salamanca

22 - 24 September 2020 - European Research and Innovation Days 2020, Brussels

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



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