

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update

Week of 1st August 2011

Quote of the week

“Stem cells have great potential to treat MS. The effect we are looking to achieve will mean fewer relapses, stop the progression of neurological dysfunction and even reduce disability. This is the first time that researchers from around the world have come together to test stem cell therapies in MS in such a large-scale clinical trial”

Dr Paolo Muraro, of The University of London's Imperial College, reflecting on a pioneering series of stem cell experiments, see articles of interest for further details

Agenda Watch

- i) Please click [here](#) to access a draft calendar of the forthcoming Danish presidency for the first half of 2012

Institution Watch

- i) The European Commission has created a [Participant's Portal](#) which details the individual calls for support from the Research Framework Programme. Users of the **Find a call** section on **CORDIS** - where calls were published so far - are redirected to the relevant pages of the Participant Portal.
- ii) The Committee on Budgets has published its [Opinion on the Green Paper: From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding](#)
- iii) The **2011 MedTech Forum**, the annual health and medical technology conference, will take place from 12th to 14th October 2011 in Brussels. John Dalli, EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy will make a keynote speech at this year's conference. Please click [here](#) to review prices and register for attendance.

Key updates this week

Answer to written question on Prospects for improvement regarding IPR and the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)

Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE) recently stated that the Commission does not, at present, appear to be paying sufficient attention to IPR management in the selection, negotiation and control phases of its own services or the implementation of FP7 projects. Additionally, the current

FP7 rules relating to IPR seem to place the Commission in a secondary role in terms of the promotion and protection of projects' main IPR aspects. Antoniozzi suggested that the EC is no longer enabled to sufficiently administer and manage IPR, and asked if the Commission agreed with the analysis.

Responding on behalf of the Commission, Máire Geoghegan-Quin, Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science stated that rules relating to IPR are laid down in the rules for participation and the model grant agreement, and in line with these, participants are free to seek further support under their member state consortium agreement (in line with specific project needs). Participants are also required to submit a report on their plan (for the use and dissemination of results) to the Commission.

Finally, in cases where a participant does not intend to protect results, the Commission can, in some cases, take ownership of these. Therefore, states Geoghegan-Quin, the Commission has at its disposal the necessary instruments to supervise and, if necessary, intervene in the management of IPR resulting from FP7 funded projects.

Reflecting on the IBRO Congress

The chair of the IBRO World Congress Young Investigator Visiting Programme Committee, Micaela Morelli, has provided highlights from the recent IBRO Congress in Florence, Italy. Please click [here](#) to view these.

Study shows how brain rhythms impact learning

The faster you move, the stronger your brain rhythms related to learning become, new research from Germany and the United States shows. Published in the journal **Public Library of Science (PLOS) ONE**, the findings aim to help fuel scientists' understanding of how brain functions are instrumental in human learning and navigation.

Researchers, led by Professor Mayank Mehta from the **Brain Research Institute** at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), found that an electrical brain signal called gamma rhythm, generated in the hippocampus, plays a crucial role in learning and memory during periods of learning and concentration. They used microwires 20 times thinner than a human hair and collected almost 100 gigabytes of data each day to get their results.

The faster the speed becomes, the stronger the gamma rhythm becomes as well. “The gamma rhythm is known to be controlled by attention and learning, but we find it is also governed by how fast you are running,” explains Professor Mehta, senior author of the study.

“This research provides an interesting link between the world of learning and the world of speed.”

Use nutrition for personalised healthcare, say European scientists

The FOOD4ME consortium, which comprises research and industry experts from across Europe and the US, is assessing the application of nutrigenomics research (the study of the effect of food on gene expression) to personalised nutrition. In effect, FOOD4ME will channel existing knowledge of food and genetics in order to create a more unique diet.

The FOOD4ME partners will recruit more than 1,000 people from 8 EU member states for their study and individuals will be given various levels of dietary advice based on their physical characteristics.

The project partners will consolidate the findings in the design of business and value creation models for the development, production and distribution of personalised foods. They will then test these throughout the duration of the project so as to consider the feasibility of future personalised nutrition approaches. FOOD4ME is scheduled to end in 2015.

For more information, please visit:

European Food Information Council (EUFIC):

<http://www.eufic.org/>

Atherosclerosis:

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/522790/description#description
[on](#)

Articles of interest

- ✓ **Mirror online, Hope for MS sufferers with world stem cell trial**

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2011/07/30/hope-for-ms-sufferers-with-world-stem-cell-trial-115875-23306890/>

- ✓ **Cordis News, Study uncovers new Parkinson's gene**

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=33654

- ✓ **First Science News, Michael J. Fox Foundation sponsors work to reposition current drugs**

http://www.firstscience.com/home/news/biology/msu-investigates-drug-to-halt-parkinson-s-progression_110494.html

- ✓ **Independent online, Howard Jacobson: the further north, the smarter you are**

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/howard-jacobson/howard-jacobson-the-further-north-the-smarter-you-are-2328674.html>

Dates for your diary

- ✓ Meeting of National Brain Councils and National Action Groups, Brussels, October 3rd 2011
- ✓ Launch of the Cost Study to the European Parliament, Brussels, October 4th 2011
- ✓ Board meeting and general assembly, Brussels, October 5th 2011
- ✓ EBC Board Meeting November, Warsaw, November 17th 2011
- ✓ EBC Polish Presidency Meeting, Warsaw, November 18th 2011