

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update

Week of 26th September 2011

Quote of the week

“It is the patients with a severe course, in particular, who urgently need better therapies...The genetic differences between these two types are so marked that we have to speak of two different diseases that may even arise from different original cells.”

Dr Stefan Pfister, a researcher at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and Heidelberg University Hospitals, commenting on the identification two-tier system in brain tumours, see articles of interest for further details

Agenda Watch

- i) On October 5th the European Commission is organising the **14th European Health Forum** in Bad Hofgastein, Austria. Topics include: Towards Health 2020, Active and Healthy Ageing, Health Technology Assessment, Social Innovation in Health, Non-communicable Diseases, and Future of Medicine
- ii) On October 6th, the European Commission and the Joint Research Centre are organising the 3rd European conference on **corporate R&D on the dynamics of Europe's industrial structure and the growth of innovative firms**. The event takes place in Seville, Spain
- iii) COREPER I met between September 21's and 23rd. Items on the [agenda](#) included the Commission's recommendations on the research Joint Programming Initiative (JPIs) "**More Years Better Lives - The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change**"

Institution Watch

- i) On 19th September, the European Parliament held a plenary session on EU research and innovation funding. Please click [here](#) for further information

Key updates this week

Linking depression to social conditions

On September 23rd Nessa Childers (S&D) addressed the Commission and highlighted the results of research comparing social conditions with depression in 18 countries across the world in conjunction with the World Health Organisation's World Mental Health (WMH)

Survey Initiative – subsequently, Childers asked whether there are plans for a similar initiative to be undertaken at EU level.

Mr Dalli spoke on behalf of the Commission and highlighted the seriousness of the issue of depression throughout the EU and that prevention is one of the priority areas identified under the European Pact for Mental Health and Well Being. The adoption of conclusions on mental health in June 2011 highlighted the need for further action on depression under the Mental Health Pact, something which the Commission is currently considering in terms of next steps.

Dalli also specified that there have been a number of individual projects, across the EU, focused on dealing with the epidemiological surveillance and differences in relation to depression across European Member States.

Green Paper: From challenges to opportunities - towards a common strategic framework for EU research and innovation funding

Please click [here](#) to access the ITRE report from Marisa Matias on the **Green Paper: From challenges to opportunities: towards a common strategic framework for EU research and innovation funding**.

World Alzheimer's Day: 21st September 2011

The European Medicines Agency supported [World Alzheimer's Day](#) which took place on 21st September 2011.

In light of Alzheimer's being the most common form of dementia, the European Research Council currently supports several projects aiming at advancing the scientific knowledge of this disease and finding possible remedies. These include a [project](#) by Italian researcher Andrea Ballabio (ERC Advanced Grant 2010) which focuses on the gene network that may be the source of treating neurodegenerative diseases.

Additional projects include one by Israeli researcher Inna Slutsky (ERC Starting Grant 2011) which aims to unravel the [dynamics at the origin of Alzheimer's](#), and a study being carried out by Dutch researcher Sander Nieuwenhuis, which centres on [the effect of norepinephrine in learning and memory, and its influence on human cognition](#).

Decision on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

Please click [here](#) to view the European Parliament's decision on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) (1).

Pilot on Active and Healthy Ageing

Please click [here](#) to view the Commission on European Innovation Partnerships assessment of the Pilot on Active and Healthy Ageing

World Mental Health Day

Please click on the following links to view supporting information highlighting WHO'S World Mental Health Care Day on 10th October:

- [More about mental health](#)
- [WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme \(mhGAP\)](#)
- [More about World Mental Health Day](#)

Articles of interest

✓ *Cordis online*, Researchers identify two-tier system in brain tumours
http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=33822

✓ *ITN online*, Brain scan research 'reconstructs images from human minds'
<http://www.itn.co.uk/home/29928/New+brain+scan+research+reads+minds>

✓ *Press Association*, MRI scanners upset sense of balance
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALeqM5jsGSm--fkW2aZ3w6lsQ18YiFZ1og?docId=N0538551316706928798A>

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