

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update

Week of 10th October 2011

Quote of the week

"Despite the overwhelming impact brain disorders have on society and the costs, which far exceed that of cancer and cardiovascular disease, research into the diagnosis, prevention and more effective treatment of such disorders has not been recognised as a top priority. This Report indicates that brain research needs far more focus and to receive considerable proportion of healthcare research funding."

Jes Olesen, Professor of neurology at Glostrup Hospital and the Danish Headache Centre, Copenhagen, commenting on a study commissioned by the European Brain Council (EBC) which highlights that the cost of brain disorders in Europe soared to 798 billion euros last year, see the attached report and articles of interest for further details

Agenda Watch

- i) [The MaPEer European Experts' Panel on Research by SMEs](#) (EEP-SME) met on 5th October to discuss recommendations in relation to enhancing participation of SMEs in European, national and regional RTDI programmes and the subsequent level of research activities carried out by SMEs. Please see future updates for further details

Institution Watch

- i) On November 5th the Polish presidency is holding an expert conference: [Strengthening public health in Europe – national public health institutes network.](#)

Key updates this week

Answer to written question on Best practice

Roberta Angelilli (PPE) recently addressed the Commission with a question surrounding best practice under the programme of Community action in the field of health (2008-13).

Angelilli asked what forms of best practice have been established under the 2008-2013 programme of Community action in the field of health.

Responding on behalf of the Commission, Commissioner John Dalli stated that the second programme of EU action in the field of health (2008-13) promotes the identification and exchange of best practice. As such, he continued, concrete examples of actions focusing on best practice

identification and exchange include, amongst others, **Addressing inequalities interventions in regions, Correlation II – European Network Social Inclusion and Health, Promoting Mental Health, Minimising mental illness, and Integrating Social Inclusion through Education (PROMISE).**

For further information on actions focusing on identifying and exchanging best practice as well as other actions funded by the Health programme

visit: http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/funded_projects.html

Connection between healthy ageing and neurodegenerative disorders

An international team of researchers, led by the Medical Research Council (MRC) Laboratory of Molecular Biology in the UK has identified changes in gene expression in the ageing and diseased brain, shedding new light on the biology of normal ageing and neurodegenerative illnesses.

For the purposes of the study, the team assessed and compared changes in gene expression linked with ageing and diseases in a region of the brain that experts say is affected in both Alzheimer's and FTLD. Samples from healthy subjects, aged between 16 and 102, were compared with samples from diseased subjects. The researchers identified similar changes in gene expression patterns linked to ageing and neurodegenerative diseases.

'Surprisingly, the [diseased] samples contained the same age-related changes as healthy individuals over the age of 80,' says senior author Dr Jernej Ule of the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology.

During the normal ageing process, genes linked to cellular metabolism were primarily affected by changes in alternative splicing. Disease-specific changes, say the researchers, were linked to neuron-specific genes.

Co-author Boris Rogelj of the MRC Centre for Neurodegeneration Research at King's College London says: 'Conversely, our findings also indicate that studies of neurodegenerative diseases might help us understand how to delay the changes that take place in healthy individuals at an advanced age.'

Report on the mid-term evaluation of the EU Health Strategy 2008-2013

Please click [here](#) to access the **Report on the mid-term evaluation of the EU Health Strategy 2008-2013** published by DG SANCO.

Commission Call for Expression of Interest for positions at EMA Management Board and Scientific committees

Please click [here](#) to access all information on the Commission Call for Expression of Interest for, amongst others, the position of Member of the Management Board of the European Medicines Agency.

Draft Council Conclusions on Partnering in Research and Innovation

Please click [here](#) to view the Draft Council Conclusions on Partnering in Research and Innovation.

Innovation Convention 2011

The European Commission is holding its first Innovation Convention, from 5 – 6th December 2011, following the adoption of the Innovation Union Flagship initiative in October 2010.

This major event will gather more than 1200 participants involved in the innovation chain, including high-level policy makers, leading CEOs, deans of universities and research centres, bankers, venture capitalists, top researchers and innovators.

Please click here to view further [information & call for exhibitors](#)

Articles of interest

- ✓ *Reuters*, Europe's brain disorder bill hits 800 billion euros

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/04/us-mental-europe-idUSTRE7931O320111004>

- ✓ *Tech News Daily*, High-Tech Mouthpieces Take the Football Field in Brain Injury Study

<http://www.technewsdaily.com/3269-high-tech-mouthpieces-football-field-brain-injury-study.html>

Dates for your diary

- ✓ EBC Board Meeting November, Warsaw, November 17th 2011
- ✓ EBC Polish Presidency Meeting, Warsaw, November 18th 2011