

The European Brain Council's Weekly External Environment Update

Week of 24th October 2011

Quote of the week

“Unfortunately, Alzheimer’s is a part of the ageing process and what we need is a better understanding of the disease, to raise its profile and earlier diagnosis. We are making progress on these things but there is still a long way to go.”

Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General for DG Health and Consumers at the European Commission, speaking at a recent *Parliament Magazine* Alzheimer’s disease roundtable event, see articles of interest for further details

Agenda Watch

- i) On 19th October, Antonio López-Istúriz White MEP held a seminar and press conference on **European funding for SMEs**, in association with the Spanish Association of Autonomous Workers (ATA), see future updates for further details
- ii) Please click [here](#) to access the draft agenda of the European Research Area Committee (ERAC) **Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) meeting** that will take place on October 26th

Institution Watch

- i) Please click [here](#) to view the presentations given at the Health Policy Forum meeting on 12th October

Key updates this week

Tender for the facilitation of the Community Platform of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Active and Healthy Ageing

The European Commission (alongside DG SANCO and DG INFSO) are to launch an online platform for the mobilisation of stakeholders in the delivery of the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Active and Healthy Ageing, in early 2012. The platform will be accessible from the [EIP's home page](#). It will include a "market and partnering" area based on collaborative tools (wikis) that allow interested parties to exchange concrete ideas, innovative solutions and idea proposals.

Check the [Guidance paper for the Steering Group of the EIP](#) for additional details.

Innovation and technology transfer: JRC launches European TTO Circle

On 19th October, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives (CEA) were the final signatories of a Memorandum of Understanding within the European TTO Circle, a network of the technology transfer offices of 21 of the largest public research organisations in Europe.

This marks the official launch of the [European TTO Circle](#), which is tasked with strengthening Europe's ability to create innovative products and services. The initial 20 partners of the JRC come from 13 countries across the EU and employ 115,000 staff in total.

The programme of initiatives includes sharing best practices, knowledge and expertise, joint activities; training and establishing informal channels of communication with policymakers.

Alzheimer's can only be beaten through research

Developing new treatments for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia was the focus of an informative event organised by London Conservative MEP Marina Yannakoudakis last week.

Yannakoudakis consulted widely with UK based Alzheimer's groups during her time working on a 2010 European Parliament report on dementia. As a result, she made a number of recommendations on the rights of patients, family and carers, as well as the best ways to raise awareness of dementia.

At the event, held at Europe House in London, Yannakoudakis said: "Over 820,000 live with dementia across the UK with nearly 500,000 Alzheimer's sufferers. Moreover, there is an increasing prevalence of dementia due to our ageing population. Increasing awareness of dementia can help with early diagnosis, which can help lessen the effects of the disease as well as reducing healthcare costs.

"In the European Union we need to share best practices in the treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's and other dementias. We also need to pool resources in researching and developing possible cures.

"Alzheimer's can only be beaten through research and while the European Union has given EUR 159 million in funding, much more still needs to be done."

Minutes of the Committee of the second Programme of Community action in the field of health

Please click [here](#) to read the minutes of the meeting of the **Committee of the second Programme of Community action in the field of health (2008-2013)** of September 27-28th 2011. Meeting documents including voting lists are available [here](#).

R&D Scoreboard: top EU firms increase investment in innovation, but lag behind global competitors

The European Commission's 2011 [EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard](#) shows that R&D investment by top EU companies recovered strongly in 2010, with a 6.1% rise following a 2.6% decrease in 2009. However, data for the world's top 1400 companies show EU companies as a whole lagging behind major competitors from the US and some Asian economies on R&D growth. There was a general positive trend in 2010, as global R&D investment increased by 4%, a robust up-turn after the 1.9% drop observed in 2009.

In terms of total R&D investment, the global top 50 includes 15 EU companies, 18 US firms and 13 from Japan. Two pharmaceutical companies occupied the top spots: Roche from Switzerland (€7.2bn) followed by Pfizer from the US (€7bn). Volkswagen (€6.3bn), in sixth place, is the biggest EU investor in R&D, followed by Nokia (11th with €4.9bn), Daimler (13th with €4.8bn) and Sanofi-Aventis (14th with €4.4bn).

Articles of interest

- ✓ *Parliament Magazine online*, Healthy ageing: Alzheimer's disease roundtable
<http://www.theparliament.com/policy-focus/health/health-article/newsarticle/facing-the-future/>
- ✓ *Telegraph online*, Blood pressure drugs could halve risk of Alzheimer's
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/8834860/Blood-pressure-drugs-could-halve-risk-of-Alzheimers.html>

Dates for your diary

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