Science, Research & Innovation, and Technology

Policy Intelligence Report

6 June 2016

ISC
Intelligence in Science

ISC Science and Research Intelligence Report, 6 June 2016

This is a policy intelligence report covering relevant decisions within the EU institutions and elsewhere, and conveying policy and regulatory analysis and implications in the fields of science and research for the past month (May 2016).

The first part (p. 1) of this report covers main institutional developments across the science and research portfolios, whereas the second part (p. 3) summarizes non-legislative developments, programmes, past events, and other policy-relevant issues and news. The last section (p. 7) provides an overview of detected upcoming events.

1. Institutional and legislative/regulatory developments

Competitiveness Council
Competitiveness Council was held in Brussels on 26 and 27 May 2016 (focusing, among others, on the Digital Single Market, discussing, inter alia, ways of improving the uptake of space data from European space programmes to create growth and jobs, the lessons learnt from the 7th research framework programme and the future outlook, and open science – see the news item just below). The council adopted conclusions on creation of a research and innovation-friendly regulatory environment. Amongst others, the ministers discussed the "innovation principle" whereby all new European legislation must be evaluated in terms of impact on research and innovation. Furthermore the Council concluded that the EUR 55 billion of FP7 (2007-2013) has proved to be effective in boosting excellent science and in strengthening Europe's industrial competitiveness. (Source)

The EU has proposed making all publicly funded science papers free by 2020
The European commissioner for science, research and innovation, Carlos Moedas, called the move *"life-changing"* and a *"major step forward for science".* "*Europe must be as attractive as possible for researchers and startups to locate here and for companies to invest,"* said Sander Dekker, the Netherlands' state secretary for education, culture and science. A core justification for the move is that the public funds research, so the results should be freely available to any citizen. (Source)

Council presidency: Slovakia to fight EU "fragmentation"
Slovakia will wait until after the summit held in the end of June to publish its presidency programme so that it includes the leaders' guidelines about how to handle the Brexit referendum outcome. Furthermore, Slovakia knows it will have to build consensus between the 28 member states, especially on the asylum package proposed by the commission on 4 May. Apart from that Slovakia will focus on three main areas: the first block of Slovakia's programme will be financial and economic affairs, including the upcoming 2021-2026 financial framework. The second block will be the different dimension of the single market, mainly the digital and energy unions. The third block will be the EU's external relations, including trade. (Source)

G7 meeting in Japan

On 26-27 May, Japan hosted the meeting of the G7 leaders. The summit focused on the global economy, foreign policy and the migration and refugee crisis. The joint statements are available here.

Prior to that the Science and Technology Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, met in Tsukuba on 15-17 May. Inter alia, the ministers acknowledged that the benefits of science, technology, and innovation (STI) should be shared by society as a whole, and that their impact should be accelerated through the digitalization and deployment of the Internet of Things (IoT) and the advancement of enabling technologies such as ICT and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Japan has developed the concept of "Society 5.0" which aspires to an inclusive, prosperous society where citizens are at the center of scientific and technological development. They also addressed the issue of open science and decided that the principles of Inclusive Innovation and Open Science should be reflected within each of our specific STI areas of focus: Global Health, Gender and Human Resource Development for STI, The Future of the Seas and Oceans and Clean Energy. (Source)

2. Topical issues and policy developments

2.1.1. General - EU Science, Research & Innovation, and Technology:

More transparent and balanced interest representation: new expert group rules

On 30 May the European Commission has adopted new rules on how it selects the advisory expert groups which provide external expertise to help inform the policy-making process. ([Source](#))

INNOVEIT 2016: Nurturing talent to benefit all of Europe: the road ahead for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology

"The EIT has had growing pains, most recently covered in the comprehensive European Court of Auditors report on EIT procedures and working methods. The EIT had already itself identified much of what needs to be improved and simplified. Now with the backing of the Auditors' report, this work needs to be pushed further and faster," stated, inter alia, Commissioner Navracsics. ([Source](#))

Commission takes steps to modernise EU's standardisation policy

The European Commission presented its vision on how European standard setting should evolve in the light of technological developments, political priorities and global trends. It also announced next steps on the Joint Initiative on Standardisation (JIS), which aims to reinforce the partnership between the European institutions and the standardisation community. ([Source](#))

OECD Research and Development Statistics 2016

OECD published the 2016 edition of Research and Development Statistics (RDS), providing a wide range of recent data on the resources devoted to R&D in all OECD countries and selected non-member economies. ([Source](#))

2.1.2. Climate action:

UN climate meeting in Bonn addressed action on Paris Agreement

United Nations climate officials gathered in the German city of Bonn for a ten day round of talks on how to implement the Paris Agreement on climate action. ([Source](#)) The negotiations shifted from what the Paris Agreement is to how it will be accomplished, with discussions ranging from how countries will put forward their mitigation commitments and their adaptation actions to how they'll record, report and assess their progress and ramp up action over time. ([Source](#))

2.1.3. Data protection, Big Data, and the EU Digital Agenda:

The GDPR applicable from 25 May 2018 on

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has been [published in the Official Journal of the European Union](#) on 4 May and entered into force on 25 May 2016. The implementation period will last for 2 years.

EU-US "Privacy Shield" for data transfers: further improvements needed, MEPs say

European Parliament passed a non-legislative resolution passed on 26 May saying that the EU Commission should go on negotiating with the USA to remedy "deficiencies" in proposed "Privacy Shield" protection for EU citizens' data transferred to the US for commercial purposes. The MEPs also called on the Commission to conduct periodic "robust reviews" of its decision that Privacy Shield protection is adequate, particularly in the light of experience with the new EU data protection rules which are to take effect in two years. ([Source](#))

2016 European Digital Progress Report: unequal progress
The European Commission has on 23 May 2016 released a report on digital progress in the EU, which shows that Member States are at very different stages in the development of the digital economy; some, for example, such as the Nordic countries, are among the most advanced in the world, whilst other still have a lot of catching up to do. ([Source](#))

The Digital Economy and Society Index
The DESI 2016 shows that both the European Union as a whole as well as individual Member States are progressing towards a digital economy and society. However, member states are at different levels of development and are progressing at different speeds. ([Source](#)) The study also showed that most digital EU countries lead globally: the overall results of the study are that top European performers also lead globally, but Europe as a whole has room for improvement. The best performing countries are Sweden, Denmark and Finland, closely followed by South Korea, United States and Japan. ([Source](#))

European Commission to launch €1 billion quantum technologies flagship
The quantum flagship will be a key part of the data and computing Infrastructure which underpins the European Cloud Initiative, as part of the Commission's strategy to digitise European industry. The European Commission is preparing the ground for the launch in 2018 of a €1 billion flagship initiative on quantum technologies, which can put Europe at the forefront of the second quantum revolution, bringing transformative advances to science, industry and society. Partly financed from Horizon 2020 and partly from different EU and national sources, the quantum flagship will be managed as part of the Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) programme. ([Source](#))

"Researchers in Europe falling behind in the use of text and data mining"
The Lisbon Council report shows that Asian and U.S. scholars continue to show a huge interest in text and data mining as measured by academic research on the topic, and that Europe's position is falling relative to the rest of the world. ([Source](#))

Giving youth the skills to innovate and lead Europe in the 21st century
"We are in the midst of the third industrial revolution – the digital revolution. Buzzwords such as the Internet of Things, automation, virtual reality and artificial intelligence are now commonplace. The kids growing up today are called digital natives, but are they really? It might be true that babies now learn how to swipe before learning how to walk, but we're still not giving young people the necessary tools to actually understand and shape the digital world. To be able to drive innovation, young people need more than being tech savvy," writes Eva Paunova MEP. ([Source](#))

Closing the data gap to close the gender gap
"The hard reality is that in too many areas, data doesn't exist. What's more—even where it does exist, it's often sexist," writes Melinda Gates. ([Source](#))

"We need to tackle the growing mountain of 'digital waste'"
It's not just about the energy and resources used by our devices – the services we run over the cloud can generate "digital waste" of their own. ([Source](#))

The hidden digital divide
Data is fast becoming the universal currency that defines personal status and business success. Those with unlimited access to information have a clear economic and social advantage over those for whom it is not readily to hand. Widespread internet access, however, won't close the data gap. ([Source](#))

Big data's 'streetlight effect': where and how we look affects what we see
The streetlight effect is one factor that prevents big data studies from being useful in the real world – especially studies analyzing easily available user-generated data from the Internet. Researchers assume that this data offers a window into reality. It doesn't necessarily. (Source)

4 obstacles getting in the way of IoT improvements in healthcare
The identified obstacles are context dependency, underdeveloped support infrastructure, payment pathways, and patient behaviours. (Source)

"You Can't Talk About Robots Without Talking About Basic Income"
Boston Consulting Group predicts that by 2025, up to a quarter of jobs will be replaced by either smart software or robots. The question of whether or not humans will embrace automation is the deciding factor in whether or not to get on board with basic income. Because if it is taken as a guarantee that artificial intelligence will replace human workers, basic income may be the only path forward. (Source)

2.1.4. Health:

Medical devices: MEPs strike deal with Council
Plans for stricter monitoring and certification procedures to ensure that medical devices such as breast or hip implants comply fully with safety and traceability requirements were informally agreed by MEPs and the Dutch Presidency of the Council on Wednesday. MEPs also secured tighter information and ethical requirements for diagnostic medical devices, e.g. those used for pregnancy or DNA testing. The reports are to be voted upon in June. (Source)

Evaluation of the 2nd Health Programme 2008-2013 published
The evaluation found that the Programme delivered valuable outputs with a clear link to EU health policy priorities and national priorities. It also provided EU-added value, particularly linked with the exchange of best practice and information between EU countries, in areas such as rare diseases, cardiovascular diseases and safety of organs for donation. However, the dissemination of action outputs was found to be varied, and reaching key stakeholders was not systematically ensured. The evaluation also underlined the need for improvement in transforming outputs into results and tangible impacts. Finally, while synergies with the EU research programme were shown, the report found that use of funding instruments such as structural funds could be improved. (Source)

Reports on quality and safety standards for human blood, tissues and cells published
European Commission published two reports on the implementation of EU legislation which sets standards of quality and safety for a) human blood, and b) human tissues and cells. Both reports show that all EU countries have taken measures to encourage voluntary and unpaid donation, although the interpretation of what is considered compensation and incentive vary between Member States. Furthermore, both reports reveal adequate compliance by EU countries and the EEA countries of the quality and safety requirements of the Directives. (Source)

WHO: Zika virus expected to spread in Europe in late spring and summer
The overall risk of a Zika virus outbreak across the WHO European Region is low to moderate during late spring and summer, and it varies from country to country. (Source)

Zika strain that causes microcephaly found in Africa for the first time, WHO confirms
Expert warns an outbreak of the Asian Zika virus in Africa could be *"a bigger disaster than in South America"*. ([Source](#))

Digital Solutions for Better Health
"The European Commission supports a wider uptake of eHealth. For 2016-2017 we set aside almost a quarter of a billion euros under our Horizon 2020 funding programme, for research and innovation projects in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Health and Wellbeing," writes Roberto Viola, Director General of DG CONNECT. ([Source](#))

2.1.5. *Transatlantic relations*

EU HR/VP Mogherini, Vice President Šefčovič and Commissioner Arias Cañete co-chaired the EU-US Energy Council in Washington, DC
The discussions were focused on cooperation on energy security and diversification of energy sources, with particular attention given to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) trade between the EU and the US. The European and American representatives debated how to create fair, transparent and liquid global energy markets, promoting energy efficiency, investment in essential energy infrastructure and deployment of new technologies. Cyber security of energy infrastructure and cooperation on global nuclear safety was on the agenda, too. ([Source](#))

3. Upcoming events

EU Sustainable Energy Week Conference (EUSEW), 14-16 June 2016, Brussels
EUSEW brings together public authorities, energy agencies, research organisations, NGOs, businesses, and private consumers to share best practices and inspire ideas on secure, clean and efficient energy. ([Source](#))

OECD Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy: Innovation, Growth and Social Prosperity, 21-23 June 2016, Cancun, Mexico
Ministers and stakeholders will gather to move the digital agenda forward in four key policy areas foundational to the growth of the digital economy. Internet openness is high on policy agendas; digital trust needs to be strengthened; global connectivity is reaching an unprecedented scale, while jobs and skills are being radically transformed. ([Source](#))

Industrial Technologies 2016, 22-24 June 2016, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Industrial Technologies 2016 is the largest networking conference in the field of new production technologies, materials, nanotechnology, biotechnology and digitalisation in Europe. ([Source](#))

European Data Forum 2016, 29-30 June 2016, Eindhoven
The European Data Forum (EDF) is one of the key European events for industry professionals, researchers, policy makers, and members of community initiatives to discuss the challenges and opportunities of data-driven innovation in Europe. The Forum will address all facets of data-driven innovation: infrastructure, tools, applications (including, new products and services reaching out to multilingual European audiences) as well as societal and economic impact. ([Source](#))

UK Research Office (UKRO) Annual Conference 2016, 30 June – 1 July 2016, Glasgow, UK
The focus of the Conference will be on the current hot topics concerning EU research and innovation funding. In particular, a reflection on the first two and a half years of Horizon 2020, implementation, upcoming opportunities and policy developments, as well as a forward look to include the continued integration of innovation. ([Source](#))

FENS Satellite Event 2016: Cells, Circuits and Computation: Expanding the horizons of big data analysis, 1 July 2016, Copenhagen
In this one day workshop prior to FENS 2016, listen to Allen Institute for Brain Science and Human Brain Project scientists discuss early findings that have emerged from data mining and analysis of work performed through both organizations. A hands-on training session will include training in effectively using the publicly available tools from both projects. ([Source](#))

The Global Forum on Productivity, 7-8 July 2016, Lisbon, Portugal
The OECD Global Forum on Productivity aims to foster international co-operation between public bodies promoting productivity-enhancing policies. Access here the latest research and data on productivity trends and institutions, and follow our upcoming events. ([Source](#))

EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) 2016, 23-27 July 2016, Manchester
The EuroScience Open Forum is an international conference dedicated to broadly defined science and innovation. ([Source](#))

OECD Blue Sky Forum, 19-21 September 2016, Ghent, Belgium
Every 10 years the OECD Blue Sky Forum engages the policy community, data users and providers into an open dialogue to review and develop its long-term agenda on science, technology and innovation (STI) data and indicators. (Source)

Call for participation - Digital Infrastructures for Research conference 2016, 28-30 September, Krakow
The conference on Digital Infrastructures for Research (DI4R 2016) is designed with research communities in mind and aims to foster broader adoption of digital infrastructure services and promote user-driven innovation. (Source)

Code Week EU 2016, 15-23 October 2016
On the occasion of the Code Week EU millions of children, young adults, adults, parents, teachers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers will again come together at events, in classrooms and libraries across Europe and beyond to learn to create with code. (Source)

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