

# In touch with EU



## News from the Association

### Views sought ahead of EGM

*Ian Mayfield, EIA Treasurer, recently circulated this message via Eurotalk. This slightly edited version is reproduced here for the benefit of those who might have missed the original message.*

Dear fellow EIA member

As you know, at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the EIA on 5 March a proposal will be put forward that the Association should be dissolved. The Committee feels that there is very little option about this since membership has steadily declined over a number of years and income is no longer enough to support costs, particularly the fees paid to Eric Davies, the Coordinator.

But does this mean that there is no longer any need for the work which the EIA does? Over many years the Association, and before it the Association of EDC Librarians, has provided support for professionals working with EU information, in the form of a journal, newsletter, discussion list and training events. Is EU information now so much easier to find that this support is no longer needed, or is there still value in a support network? If so, what would you want from it?

Although the Committee feels bound to propose dissolution, we would very much like to see something 'rise from the ashes' to continue the work. Although there will be little money left if we continue until the end of this year, there will

be a legacy in the form of a set of online learning materials on which Eric is currently working. One possibility might be to combine resources with the EU Databases User Group (EUDUG) which has similar interests (and some members in common) but which has also seen membership decline in recent years.

Any successor organisation would of course need to be organised on a different footing, with lower membership subscription costs and no paid worker; much like many other professional associations which depend on work contributed freely by members. Over the past few years the Association has relied heavily on Eric with support from key members of the Committee; without him, success could only be achieved if there were sufficient committed members willing to make a real contribution.

So over to you, colleagues: are you ready to see the EIA's work come to an end? If you are unable to come to the meeting, please let us know your views, either via Eurotalk or by mailing Eric at the address below.

Eric Davies  
EIA Coordinator  
[eric@eia.org.uk](mailto:eric@eia.org.uk)

*This newsletter can be printed, but the embedded URLs will be lost ...*

Issue 17 - February 2012

# It's official:

## EU documents , publications and sources

### **JOIN, SWD**

The latest EUR-Lex newsletter has details of the new JOIN and SWD identifiers for preparatory acts. JOIN indicates joint proposals, communications and other documents adopted by the Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; SWD indicates staff and joint staff working documents, and replaces SEC (traditionally indicating a document issued by the Commission's Secretariat General); the well-known COM now refers only to documents drafted by the Commission.

See: [EUR-Lex newsletter](#)

### **Bioeconomy**

The Communication 'Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe' (COM(2012) 60) sets out a strategy to shift the EU economy towards greater and more sustainable use of renewable resources, focusing on three key aspects: 'developing new technologies and processes for the bioeconomy; developing markets and competitiveness in bioeconomy sectors; and pushing policymakers and stakeholders to work more closely together.'

See: [Communication text](#)

### **Pensions**

COM(2012) 55 is the White Paper 'An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions'. In it, the Commission 'puts forward a range of initiatives to help create the right conditions so that those who are able can continue working - leading to a better balance between time in work and time in retirement; to ensure people who move to another country can keep their pension rights; to help people save more and ensure that pension promises are kept and people get what they expect in retirement.'

See: [White Paper text](#)

### **Innovation Scoreboard**

The latest Innovation Union Scoreboard shows that most EU Member States improved their innovation performance in 2011. However, the EU is not closing the gap with global innovation leaders US, Japan and South Korea. Within the EU, the innovation leaders are: Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland; innovation followers are: Belgium, UK, Netherlands, Austria, Luxembourg, Ireland, France, Slovenia, Cyprus and Estonia.

See: Press Release [IP/12/102](#)

### **Education and training**

The report 'Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe' shows that the EU risks missing its 2020 targets to reduce the number of early-school leavers and increase the share of students completing tertiary education.

See: [Report text](#)

### **EU funding**

The Communication 'A simplification Agenda for the MFF 2014-2020' brings together more than 120 proposed changes to the rules on EU funding, aimed at simplifying the rules and making access to EU funding easier.

See: [Communication text](#)

### **Classification and Labelling Inventory**

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has published the first EU Classification and Labelling Inventory. The Inventory aims to provide industry, especially small companies, with easy access to information on how hazardous a substance is, and the availability of any less damaging alternatives.

See: Press Release [IP/12/123](#)

# Focus on ...

## European Citizens' Initiative

Based on Article 11 of the TEU and Article 24 of the TFEU, Regulation (EU) 211/2011 establishes the procedures and conditions governing the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI).

Under the ECI, the European Commission can be asked to propose legislation on matters where the EU has competence to legislate. An ECI must have a minimum of one million supporters, drawn from at least seven of the 27 Member States.

The Regulation applies from 1 April. Ahead of the launch, a dedicated [European Citizens' Initiative](#) subsite has been established by the Commission.

Split into three main sections, the site aims to provide information about the ECI, about individual initiatives, and about the process of launching an initiative.

'About the citizens' initiative' covers basic facts, a step by step guide to the ECI procedure, and how people wishing to support an initiative can sign up to it.?

Once the ECI is up and running, the 'Find an initiative' section will allow visitors to identify initiatives which are open, closed or obsolete (i.e. those that have been withdrawn or failed to attract sufficient support). The initiatives database can be searched using a number of criteria, including keyword, date of registration and status (open, closed, obsolete).

For people interested in starting an ECI, the 'Launch an initiative' section offers software for setting up an online collection system, plus a registration option and secure area for managing an ECI.

Elsewhere, the site offers a 32-page pdf Guide\*, information on the legislative framework, details of relevant national authorities, and 'Other ways of having your say' - details of how to petition the European Parliament, complain to the European Ombudsman, participate in consultations etc.



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Can your idea be a citizens' initiative?		
Download software for online collection		
Register your initiative		
Manage your initiative		

\* in English, Danish, French, German, Italian, Polish, Slovakian, Spanish,

### About the citizens' initiative

- [Basic facts](#)  
What you need to know about the citizens' initiative
- [The procedure step by step](#)  
Detailed explanations on the rules governing the citizens' initiative
- [How to sign up to an initiative?](#)  
Want to give your support? Find out how
- [FAQ](#)

### Find an initiative

- [Open initiatives](#)  
Initiatives open for signatures
- [Closed initiatives](#)  
Initiatives for which the collection period is over, including those that have received an answer from the Commission
- [Obsolete initiatives](#)  
Initiatives which did not gather enough support or which have been withdrawn

### Launch an initiative

- [Can your idea be a citizens' initiative?](#)  
Find out if your idea falls within the Commission's powers
- [Download the software for online collection](#)  
You wish to collect statements of support online? Download the free software that will help you set up your online collection system
- [Register your initiative](#)  
Are you ready to launch your initiative? Access the registration form
- [Manage your initiative](#)  
Your initiative is already registered? Access your organiser account

# HORIZON 2020

*EIA Chairman Paul Clarke recently provided the EIA website with an introduction to HORIZON 2020: the European Union's plans for research and innovation funding (2014 to 2020). These brief extracts are taken from the online version, available via the Members Area of the website.*

## MULTI-ANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The EU plans its spending within seven-year multi-annual financial frameworks (MFFs) and as the 2007 to 2013 MFF is drawing to a close, it is currently devising and agreeing the MFF for the period 2014 to 2020. To be concluded between the European Parliament, Council and European Commission, this sets the maximum amount of commitment appropriations in the EU budget for broad policy areas and fixes an overall annual ceiling on spending. The main details are set out in two documents: A Budget For Europe 2020 - [Part I - Communication](#) and A Budget For Europe 2020 - [Part II - Policy Fiches](#).

## HORIZON 2020

The Commission has noted, when introducing previous MFFs, that the EU faces a significant innovation gap lagging behind Japan and the United States with regard to a number of key research and development (R&D) indicators including the number of patents registered, the number of medium-high and high-tech product exports and the percentage of GDP expenditure on R&D. It makes the same point again and stresses that the EU must improve its record of turning scientific knowledge into patented processes and products for use not only in high-tech industries but perhaps even more importantly in traditional sectors.

The Commission proposes that future research and innovation funding be based on three main areas that are firmly anchored in the Europe 2020 strategy:

- excellence in the science base;
- tackling societal challenges; and
- creating industrial leadership and boosting competitiveness.

A common strategic framework (Horizon 2020) will aim to eliminate fragmentation and ensure more coherence, including with national research programmes. It will be closely linked to key sectoral policy priorities such as health, food security and the bio-economy, energy and climate change. Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with an €80 billion budget, the EU's new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe.

[www.eia.org.uk](http://www.eia.org.uk)

# Snippets:

## News and views from non-EU sources

### **Notre Europe**

From: [The 'TSCG': much ado about nothing?](#)  
by António Vitorino, President of Notre Europe  
The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the EMU\* (TSCG), which was signed on 1 March 2012 has already triggered criticism of a dimension that is inversely proportionate to the length of the document (16 fairly short articles) and to the time it took to draft (a few weeks). It is important to take stock of these criticisms and of the impacts of such a treaty on the EU, its member states and citizens, based on four sets of political, legal, economic and institutional observations.

### **PressEurope**

From: [Finance Watch – a lobby to break the lobbies](#)  
Joost Mulder knows all the tricks. For five years this clever Dutchman worked the Brussels legislative machine on behalf of financial institutions. Playing a political game in a network made up of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the 27 governments was his profession. Speaking four languages and knowing everyone, the 31-year-old glided smoothly through the bazaar of Brussels policymakers – he was a model lobbyist.

### **Stawatch**

From: [JHA archive - EU Justice and Home Affairs documents from 1976 onwards](#)  
This database contains bibliographic records and full-text documents on EU Justice and Home Affairs policy dating back to 1976 when the Trevi Group was set up (Trevi was ad hoc intergovernmental cooperation on Terrorism, Radi-

calism and Violence, and grew into formal European political cooperation in the former Third Pillar after the Maastricht Treaty). It has been created to allow researchers to chart the historical development of EU JHA policy from the start. The EU's public register of Council documents only dates back to 2000 (with some documents from 1999) while the Commission's incomplete public register started in 2002. Thus the first phase of the development of the SEMDOC JHA archive covers the period 1976-2000.

### **European Policy Centre**

From: [An Arab Springboard for EU foreign policy?](#)  
The EU has not been perceived as reacting very rapidly or effectively to the so-called Arab Spring. Events do validate the underpinning idea of the European Security Strategy and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP): only where governments guarantee to their citizens security, prosperity, freedom and equality, can peace and stability last – otherwise, people will revolt. But in practice, in its southern neighbourhood the EU has acted in precisely the opposite manner, so the Arab Spring is occurring in spite of rather than thanks to EU policy.

### **euobserver**

From: [Britain, Sweden and Netherlands refuse to sign off EU accounts](#)  
EU finance ministers on Tuesday (21 February) rubber-stamped the bloc's accounts for 2010, but Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands opposed the move, noting that auditors found too many errors for the seventeenth year in a row.