

Monthly Report
Issue 37 – September/October 2010

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Please note that articles may include information on opinions expressed by others and do not represent any position of WHEB

The Science in Society project, PLACES, was launched during the Science and the City conference and a European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) meeting provided more information about opportunities for universities to become involved in the project.

The 4 year-long PLACES project is funded by the European Commission's FP7 programme under the topic Science in Society (SiS) with the aim of creating and promoting the concept of the European City of Scientific Culture by establishing a platform of science communicators in order to sustain future collaboration. [ECSITE](#) is the coordinator and works alongside the other partners: [EUSCEA](#); [ERRIN](#); [UPF](#) Barcelona, in implementing the project's objectives. The main focus of the PLACES is the development of city partnerships, bringing together 67 science centres, museums, festivals and events, each in partnership with local authorities. ERRIN is also leading two of the project's work packages, with 9 member regions involved as third-party partners.

The Science and the City conference provided the ERRIN member regions who are partners with an opportunity to bring their experts together to find out more about the project and its objectives, and also to find out more about the European Commission's Science in Society policy. Malcolm Harbour MEP opened the session with a welcoming speech in which he highlighted the importance of the Innovation Union, one of the seven pillars of the EU 2020 strategy, and its strong link to science, science cities and science policies.

Following this, Stephen Parker, a European Commission representative from DG Research, gave an overview of the Commission's Science in Society policy, with information about the relevant open calls in the SiS Work Programme. With the Innovation Union aiming to create a broader concept of innovation, to include social innovation and creative industries, the Commission is eager to support creativity and cultural activities in this sector, with Science in Society centred on capacity building and skill development. Mr Parker's speech concentrated on the aspect of the programme aimed at creating links to the creative sector, an area where there is fast growth potential for employment and wealth creation. He also revealed that new developments in future work programmes will expand to focus on different aspects, while ensuring that themes from previous work programmes are still relevant. SiS currently funds 14 projects under the theme 'Promoting science as a relevant cultural activity', and one large project to 'support links between science education and research careers'. Building on this, two projects will receive funding of up to €2 million under the theme 'Clusters of cities of scientific culture and innovation' to raise awareness of role of science and technology to innovation in the creative sector. The deadline for proposals is 20 January 2011 and more information can be found in the [SiS call fiche](#).

The panel discussion that followed the presentations allowed the audience to question representatives from the PLACES project partners ECSITE, EUSCEA and ERRIN regions. One question prompted a discussion on the indicators for

development and project's outcomes. The panel agreed that greater engagement with public authorities in science, through the creation of European Cities of Scientific Culture, will hopefully lead to a measurable increase of young people choosing science as a career and not just as a subject.

At the **ERRIN Science in Society Working Group** meeting, an update was given on the objectives and deliverables of the PLACES project from an ERRIN perspective. A main objective is to hold workshops to gather up to 25 experts on a certain theme in order to identify challenges that the project can address through its training and services initiatives. Experts from ERRIN regions not involved as project partners are invited to attend these workshops, which will be hosted by each of the 9 partner regions involved in the project's Work Package 3. Each workshop will be allocated €25,000 funding and experts selected to participate will be reimbursed by PLACES for travel and accommodation expenses. Representatives who have not been selected can participate at their own cost.

One workshop is already planned for January, hosted by Birmingham City Council, and will combine the first PLACES workshop with the final conference of the SiS project, [Cities And Science Communication](#) (CASC), which was established to create innovative ways of involving the public in science. The themes for the other workshops are yet to be decided, but the regions involved will identify the dates, topics and locations by early next year.

Following the workshops, which will all take place before March 2012, PLACES will then focus on the training and services initiatives in order to address the challenges identified in the workshops until April 2013. The budget for this is €30,000 and relevant experts from ERRIN regions not involved as partners are again invited to become involved and their expenses will be covered. At the close of the meeting it was decided that more information about the regional workshops will be circulated as soon as possible to allow the relevant representatives to express their interest in attending.

The PLACES presentation from the ERRIN working group meeting is available [here](#).

Bremen regional office organises a regional Innovation and Cohesion seminar at the Committee of the Regions

WHEB attended the seminar on regional innovation and cohesion organised by the Bremen regional office. The seminar opened with a presentation given by Holder Bornemann from the Bremen region on support for the region through the ERDF. Bremen is a port city that has depended on traditional industries but is adapting to economic changes. The region has decided to concentrate on building clusters in fields of excellence and focus on research and development. 75% of ERDF funds are now spent on research and development and skills in the Bremen area. The fields of excellence include wind energy where structural funds have been spent on both physical infrastructure and research and development projects such as thermal imaging for damage to offshore wind blades. The first prototypes were developed in partnership with the Bremenhaven Wind Energy Agency, which provided the training facility for technicians.

The experience in Bremen has shown that institutions need to develop regional innovation systems to equip players with research information that can provide support to other stakeholders. The technology for offshore wind farms has been transferred to other sector of the economy e.g. the rotor blades industry. The speaker from Bremen stated that the multiannual nature of the structural funds is important for young entrepreneurs and the development of new technology. This is not available through the Framework Programme where SMEs experience difficulties in finding international partners and where the topics are not always relevant for regional strengths. Mr Bornemann argued that the Framework Programme is complementary to but cannot replace the ERDF. Structural funds have shown that they can strengthen regional innovation and can support industry at its earliest stages before moving to mass production and cluster-like structures. This can lead to growth in employment, which Bremen has experienced as a centre of offshore wind energy industry.

The issue of employment was also taken up by Danuta Hubner MEP and former commissioner for regional policy. She stated that it was important to recognise that innovation can lead to employment and that networks of governance or multilevel governance is conducive to innovation. There is a need to mobilise creative talent and knowledge and therefore skills development is crucial. She was pleased to see that Bremen had showed that investing in innovation needs a systematic approach involving all stakeholders.

Mikel Landabasso, DG Regio, added that the developments in Bremen showed European added value as structural funds have clearly supported regional policy in Bremen and led to new projects and partnerships. He argued that innovation by its nature is place-based and territorial, depending on key economic factors in a particular region and that the Framework Programme complements this. However, public authorities should not dictate but rather cultivate and facilitate innovation in

the regions. Around 60bn euros have yet to be allocated to research and development within the structural funds for this financial perspective.

Maria da Graca Carvalho, MEP, member of the Industry, Research and Energy Committee in the European Parliament highlighted the tension between research and development policy, which requires international collaboration and cohesion policy that is focused on specific territories including collaboration at local level. Territorial based education policies need to develop good education systems that will provide a strong stimulus for research, which then can be fostered through international collaboration. Structural funds can support capacity building for research and development, providing excellent infrastructure and conditions that then can be exploited through the Framework Programme. Ms Carvalho's home country, Portugal, has used structural funds to lessen the impact of the severe cuts to public finances. The Portuguese have decided to re-orientate funds towards research and development and ICT by supporting clusters and regional research and development programmes e.g. health clusters in the north, wind energy and biotechnologies.

The following debate included arguments for cultivating innovation according to the particular profile of regions. Successes in one region cannot be carbon-copied in other regions since the relationships built up by the right actors in a certain region tend to be the most important factor. The panel also agreed that both the Structural Funds and the Framework Programme should be simplified and made more flexible, especially for SMEs though some argued that EU rules were necessary to provide discipline in expenditure and force beneficiaries to ensure that their activities fit with EU priorities.

How to measure the success of regional innovation systems was another question addressed to the panellists. Mikel Landabaso argued that the impact is hard to grasp and that there is a need to find new indicators and better evaluation. Linking innovation and research to EU2020 through the Innovation Union might help by ensuring that programmes work to a broader EU objective. Employment and the involvement of SMEs were suggested as important indicators to ensure that there were tangible gains from innovation funding.

The seminar closed with a discussion on the merits of keeping the Competitiveness and Employment objective in the Structural Funds. There was agreement that providing further support to successful innovation initiatives can have added impact by encouraging partnership working and networking across the EU. These regions could still benefit from leveraging in private funding to support innovation. Indeed, Competitiveness and Employment regions will still need to adapt and change to reflect new economic conditions and should therefore still be supported at the EU level.

The roundtable event 'Developing children's creativity – luxury or economic imperative?' gathered a variety of key European stakeholders to debate the theme of creative learning.

The event, organised by [Creativity, Culture and Education \(CCE\)](#) and the North East England Brussels Office at the European Parliament, included keynote speeches from two MEPs and a panel discussion, which provided a good platform for initiating a wider debate on the future of this important agenda. .. how strategic uses of culture can be developed in different domains ...

CCE is an organisation dedicated to increasing the involvement of children and young people in high quality arts and cultural activities. Programmes are designed, developed and evaluated based on the results of CCE's work with European and international partners, with independent research showing that these programmes can improve the life chances of young people. However, in the current economic climate the financial benefits of cultural activities and programmes can be difficult to measure, and the seminar asked the question whether or not developing children's creativity is regarded as a luxury or an imperative.

Fiona Hall, Liberal Democrat MEP and Stephen Hughes, Labour MEP, both representing the North East of England, agreed that fostering creativity in children and young people is essential. According to Stephen Hughes, EU education policy shouldn't focus entirely on knowledge and skills, encouraging initiative and creativity must also be integrated into teaching methods. Fiona Hall highlighted the challenging economic climate and the difficulty of maintaining the view that culture activities are essential, stating that many organisations and programmes have had to stop due to lack of funding. However, she agreed that every effort must be made to encourage more children and young people to become involved in cultural activities.

Following the keynote speeches, Paul Collard from the CCE gave an overview of the organisation's activities, including information about established programmes and approaches. With the educational landscape changing dramatically, there is need to consider whether or not the traditional form of education is enough to develop creative and innovative young workers for the future jobs market. CCE has developed methodologies that can 'teach' creative thinking, with research has showing that the best way of learning is by imitation; teachers must be creative in order to teach the pupils.

In terms of the EU policy approach to culture and creativity, Mr Collard referred to the seminar's question by highlighting that in an economically difficult time approaches that generate a visible income or positive financial result are obviously more popular. But, engagement with culture must still be encouraged, even if the results are not visible financially, because developing creativity through traditional means can impact on the potential for creativity in other, non-artistic, subjects and greatly increase employment prospects for young people.

This issue was explored further as the panel answered questions from the roundtable participants, with a representative from the European Commission's Education and Culture Directorate-General responding to questions concerning the DG's objectives for the future. DG EAC intends to encourage creativity to be applied to all thematic areas, not just the arts, by encouraging better knowledge transfer between universities and businesses to boost creative and innovative research. This is something that DG EAC hopes will feature strongly in the next Framework Programme. The Commission recognises that culture can play an essential role in realising Europe's aims and objectives and research programmes must invest in creativity across all sectors, not focusing solely on science and technology research. Other members of the panel also agreed, and with lobby organisations such as Culture Action Europe working to influence European policy and the next generation of research funding to incorporate culture into other themes, it is hoped that boosting creativity can increase innovative research in Europe.

The final question for the panel session explored the need to increase understanding between the creative economy and the knowledge economy. For Europe to become more globally competitive an economy driven by creativity is essential and creating an innovative cultural policy can drive the EU's economic, social and educational programmes. It was agreed that encouraging children and young people to become creative in all aspects of education, not just in traditional forms such as the arts, can make them more dynamic in their future careers, helping Europe's society and economy grow and become more innovative.

The Conference 'Conditions for achieving excellence in universities and other research organisations' organised by the Belgian Presidency to the EU addresses university-business collaboration and doctoral education

With the recent publication of the European Commission's new policy document, *The Innovation Union*, making education, research and innovation increasingly important, the Belgian Presidency organised a two-day conference along with the European Commission to examine the role of universities and research centres in the European Research Area (ERA). The European Commission's Innovation Union plan aims to complete the ERA by 2014 and the Belgian Presidency is committed to supporting this with a specific focus on: joint programming; excellence of universities; researcher mobility; international cooperation. These topics were discussed at the conference by various representatives from industry, academia and the public sector.

The conference began with a keynote speech by Research Commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, which focused on the Innovation Union and how its success depends on the ability of universities and research institutions to rise to the new challenges they face. Encouraging universities to step up cross-disciplinary research is essential and with research and innovation at the heart of the EU 2020 Strategy, universities and research institutions are essential to ambitions to turn Europe into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

The commissioner also mentioned the launch of the Industrial Platform on healthy ageing, which is the first pilot partnership to be launched in 2011. With the Innovation Union strategy aimed at public service and social innovators, as well as the traditional business sector, challenges like care for the elderly will become increasingly important. The aim is to increase the average number of healthy life years by two by 2020, to reduce the strain on social security and health budgets.

Following the introductory speeches WHEB attended two of the parallel sessions on 'Partnerships between Research Organisations and Industry' and 'Research Training for Innovation – Towards a Framework for Doctoral Training in Europe'. The first session focused on **partnerships between research and industry**. University-business collaboration should be actively promoted at regional, national and international level and instruments to support the commercialisation of innovative ideas should accompany research efforts. Future challenges on this issue include: improving access to tertiary education (inclusion, cohesion); encouraging more and better science; transferring science to society. In addition to this, problems also exist on the supply side, which suffers from underfunding and is often fragmented with many small, unspecialised organisations. In addition, while there is little doubt that the EU has the capacity to catch up with the US and Asia in terms of research quantity, but it will be more difficult to attain the same level of quality.

This session included a presentation by Mike Wright, Professor at Nottingham University Business School, who addressed the principles, priorities and progress of university-industry collaborations. Professor Wright highlighted the challenges facing mid-range, regional universities, in areas such as licensing and patents; contract research, consultancy and reach-out; and graduate and researcher mobility. He drew on a number of studies, which compared mid-range universities with leading institutions and concluded that the focus must be on research in their areas of expertise in order to generate excellent research and critical mass to demonstrate themes that have emerged in this area. Due to the lack of a world-class science base and limited support mechanisms in these universities, research must be specialised in order to attract the best business development opportunities. When identifying the priorities to implement changes, Professor Wright once again focused on the difference between universities' capabilities and stated that because not all universities can undertake all types of knowledge transfer, distinctive strategies must be adopted to mirror the specific university's activities and universities must ensure that decision making systems in the institutions are compatible with industry. Links with intermediaries and consortia are also essential for universities that don't have enough contact with industry in order to create effective partnerships.

The question and answer session that followed included a discussion on the incentives that have the most impact for both universities and businesses to engage in partnerships. It was agreed that the partnership must have a clear purpose and must be attractive to industry and academic partners in the form of producing a published output or generating income from a patent. A member of the panel, Joseph Martial from the University of Liege, explained about the [GIGA](#) initiative, which is a research and development structure for activities in the biotech area. The set-up of the centre, with businesses and industries sharing facilities in the same building, enhances multidisciplinary research and makes close collaboration between research and business more accessible. This research-sharing centre provides makes it more accessible for businesses in the area to become more involved in research, although the panel agreed that there is no single model to boost collaboration between higher education institutions and industry and models must be adapted in order to suit different research cultures across the EU.

On the second day, **doctoral training in Europe** was the topic of another parallel session and centred on the structuring of doctoral education. The session opened with Conor O'Carroll, head of the research office at the Irish Universities Association referring to a few points made on the previous day, such as the fact that Europe is falling far behind the US in terms of the number of researchers as a share of the population and that barriers to mobility and developing critical mass still remain.

By creating a doctoral training framework for Europe, the Commission aims to create an environment that brings talented researchers through and encourages graduates to remain in the sector – currently 50% leave research for other areas. Also, increasing the awareness of PhDs to ensure that they are recognised in their own

right, and not simply as another type of degree that is based on the teaching-learning method is also important. In addition to this, as pointed out by Mr O'Carroll, ensuring that researchers are able to gain transferrable skills during their PhD and that these are recognised by industry can encourage mobility.

Jean Chambaz, chair of the steering committee of the Council on Doctoral Education of the EUA, insisted in his intervention that the Doctoral Agenda remains a priority and presented the audience with the EUA's 'Salzburg II' initiative, which follows on from the Salzburg Principle as the basis for doctoral education reform. Doctoral education must be enriched in order to continue to cultivate the research mindset in Europe. Mr Chambaz identified the need for universities to be more autonomous in the development of their own doctoral education programmes and that there is no unique model in place across Europe to develop doctoral education.

Izabela Stanislawiszyn, President of [Eurodoc](#), the federation of young researchers, referred to a recent study in her presentation and commented on the need to increase the attractiveness of the research profession and the barriers to mobility - for 90% of researchers the main barrier is funding; 81.6% of candidates receive funding, but 17.4% of this funding doesn't meet living costs. Eurodoc is also calling for doctoral candidates to be recognised as professionals, not 'students', and for the supervision of early-stage researchers to be of a better quality; a third of the feedback from supervisors is not useful for the candidates. Some suggested solutions to these issues include: creating a comprehensive administrative structure for doctoral programmes; a clear, Europe-wide status for doctoral candidates; a framework for training supervisors; improve dissemination of research into society to help the EU's competitiveness and make research careers more attractive. In addition to this, efforts must be made to prepare early stage researchers for careers as managers, leaders and policy makers in tomorrow's society.

The final presentation came from Heikki Ruskoaho, chair of the Finnish national working group for the development of structured doctoral training. In Finland, the driving force behind doctoral education is competitive funding, which has resulted in the number of fellowships doubling between 1995 and 2009. The main objectives of Finland's doctoral education policy include improving the efficiency and quality of research and increasing the number of researchers working outside academia.

In the question and answer session that followed the presentations it was agreed that if researchers apply for funding for their research, they must then be accountable for what they produce and that this accountability must be assessed according to a set of criteria. With this in mind, it was agreed that having a competitive call on themes such as international mobility would be beneficial to doctoral education in Europe. The session ended with the final mention being given to the value of networks as a substitute for individual universities' doctoral programmes. Very few universities can build up critical mass and a collaborative approach to allow researchers to move across universities would allow doctoral education to expand in the future.

Commission announces 'Youth on the Move' initiative as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy

The European Commission has recently launched the Youth on the Move initiative which is intended to be one of the most visible and important flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This initiative was welcomed by most of the groups attending the 'Youth on the Move Conference', hosted by the Belgian Presidency in late September, as it highlighted the need to strengthen the links between education and labour markets. This initiative recognizes the importance of fostering vocational education and training, promoting apprenticeships, and reducing the numbers of early school leavers.

The economic and financial crisis has made it harder for young Europeans to enter the labour market. The number of young people looking for a job has increased from 4 to 5 million since the onset of the financial crisis, with EU youth unemployment now at nearly 21%. The jobs of the future will require different skills. The commission estimates that 35 percent of jobs will require high-skills and 50 percent will require medium-level skills. High levels of early school drop-out rates is of great concern to the Commission as it could seriously hinder the ability of Member States to reach the Europe 2020 goals. Through Youth on the Move, the EU aims to reduce the share of early school leavers from 15 to 10 percent and increase the share of young people with tertiary education from 31 percent to at least 40 percent by 2020.

In line with meeting these targets, several interesting actions have been launched including a 'Youth on the Move Website', providing a single point of access to information about opportunities to study or gain work experience abroad, including advice about EU grants and individual rights. 'Your first EURES Job' aiming to help young people find a job abroad and a 'Mobility Scoreboard' to monitor your progress. On the financial side, the Commission is exploring the possible creation of a 'European Student Lending Facility' together with the European Investment Bank to support students who wish to study or train abroad financially.

The conference concluded that this initiative aims to provide a framework of policy priorities for action at national and EU level to reduce youth unemployment by facilitating the transition from school to work. Though overall considered a good initiative, it has a major weakness. Several participants pointed out that these goals may not be attainable in view of the fact that labour law and education policies are competences of national and regional governments. As such, the EU has little power to maneuver and can only encourage Member States to prioritize the implementation of these policies. A representative from the European Youth Forum rightly pointed out that this initiative may be significant at the EU level, but most Member States are currently consumed with reducing budget deficits and so this priority will receive little national attention.

For further information please visit the Youth on the Move Website:

<http://europa.eu/youthonthemove>

WHEB attended two events on the theme of Creativity, Culture and Innovation in October

The EU has identified cultural and creative industries as having great potential to meet EU challenges especially in the context of the EU 2020 Strategy. Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture and Youth, opened the seminar '**Creativity, Culture and Innovation: Looking for new links**' hosted by the Belgian Presidency, by emphasising that the cultural and arts sectors contribute to meet the above listed objectives as they represent a major source of creativity and can support economic, technological and social innovation.

On the one hand, this seminar sought to demonstrate that innovation plays a considerable role in the development of the cultural sector and, on the other hand, that culture constitutes a major asset for innovation, in both economic and social terms. It was established that self-employed, micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises play a determining role in the development of the cultural and creative sectors. Hence, it is crucial for governments and society at large to recognise the creative and innovative potential of culture, and its role as a vehicle for economic growth.

David Crombie from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands concluded the session by reiterating the social and cultural importance of the link between culture and innovation. If the EU is to progress in this field, it must better integrate culture in programmes for research and technological development, and it must strengthen synergies between education, culture and science.

The information session '**Towards a European Creative Industries Alliance**', was organised by the European Commission adjacent to the 'Creativity, Culture and Innovation Seminar'. The Commission's [Green Paper "Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries"](#) recently announced that, as part of the "Innovation Union" flagship initiative, specific actions will be undertaken to strengthen the role of cultural and creative industries as a catalyst for innovation and structural change.

According to Mette Quinn from DG Enterprise and Industry, support for Industrial Innovation Unit, the proposed "European Creative Industries Alliance" will aim to bring the main actors at regional, national and European levels together to establish a policy dialogue in support of creative industries via enhanced transnational cooperation.

Here, the mandate will be to steer the initiative and prepare practical plans with concrete roadmaps for policy implementations. "The aim is to have a high impact and this will not be achieved by just another network or mere policy recommendations in this strategic industry. We need committed partners, master plans and concrete actions to facilitate entrepreneurship, structural change and spill-overs with this initiative" stressed Reinhard Büscher, Head of Unit Support for

Industrial Innovation. Particular attention will be paid to promoting entrepreneurship, access to finance, improving framework conditions and foresight, identifying skills needs, developing new cluster concepts and better business and innovation support services.

The Commission will contribute 7.5 million Euro of innovation support to the development of creative industries through the proposed 'European Creative Industry Alliance' initiative but significant financial and human resources will be expected from committed partners in these actions. The Commission hopes to mobilise 100 million Euro of additional innovation support.

For further information please visit the Europe Innova website:

http://www.europe-innova.org/web/guest/home/-/journal_content/56/10136/175523

Future strategies of the Lifelong Learning Programme are discussed at the conference 'Social inclusion in and through education'

The European Commission considers the implementation of coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning (LLL) strategies and policies that could encourage learning opportunities from early childhood to post retirement in a variety of learning contexts. LLL strategies and policies are considered crucial for economic growth and employment as well as for social inclusion, and fall within the scope of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training ET 2020 as well as of the overarching Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Pascal Smet, Flemish Minister for Education, opened the 'Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage-Social Inclusion in and through education Conference' by stressing that making these strategies and policies effective at national, regional and local levels while increasing their impact for learners, especially for disadvantaged groups, remains a challenge for the majority of EU Member States.

Michael Teutsch from DG Education and Culture confirmed that problems remain in the field of implementation and cooperation between policy-makers, stakeholders and practitioners. As a means of reconciling this dilemma the speaker suggested that the focus be placed on the implementation process (the "how"), and less on the policy substance (the "what").

In meeting these challenges, the Commission identified several broad 'critical factors' for lifelong learning strategies and policies at different levels of policy making that must be tackled during the implementation process in order to achieve change on a larger scale. These factors range from attracting people to learning activities to developing adequate infrastructure of lifelong learning and building the capacity of education and training institutions.

There was a general consensus amongst participants that the overall goal of lifelong learning strategies and policies is to support meaningful lifelong learning. This, however, can only be achieved by ensuring that learning achievements are relevant to the individual's goals- be it labour market insertion, career progression, reintegration to education and training, personal development, or active participation in society.

Several members of the audience suggested that the lifelong learning vision requires a certain number of fundamental changes including the acceptance and recognition of the fact that learning takes place in all contexts (and not only in formal learning institutions), and that the ways through which an individual can achieve the expected learning outcomes can vary. Demand for learning should not only come from the labour markets, but also from the individuals, and one that promotes the evolution from models based on teaching, to models based on learning which respect the nature of the learning process and account for the role of aspects such as emotions and social structures in the way individuals learn.

There is therefore a need for lifelong learning strategies and policies to address the lack of coordination of policy intervention mechanisms in the area of education and training; the lack of participation, especially of certain groups such as migrants; and the relevance of the available learning activities for the labour market, for society and for individuals.

For more information please visit the Commission's website on Lifelong Learning:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

News Round Up

- The European Commission recently published its **new innovation strategy, 'The Innovation Union'** in which the EU has committed to steering structural funds and public procurement towards innovation. This strategic plan for promoting innovation pledges to remove the obstacles that make it difficult for knowledge to be turned into marketable products. The Commission will also review structural funding and help member states to the €86 billion earmarked for research and innovation. Plans were also unveiled for the first 'Innovation Partnership', which will be dedicated to healthy ageing. This new approach to research and innovation aims to include future initiatives in energy, smart cities, water efficiency, agriculture and raw materials. The strong political and commercial focus on reaching clear, measurable goals will streamline existing initiatives (e.g. Joint Programming and Joint Technology Initiatives) adding new actions and ideas where necessary, such as joint procurement schemes.
- Strengthening **higher education cooperation between Europe and Africa** was the subject of the White Paper 'Africa-Europe Higher Education Cooperation for Development: Meeting regional and global challenges' published by a consortium of European and African higher education organisations, led by the European Universities Association. The paper presents conclusions drawn from the Erasmus Mundus funded project 'Fostering Trust and Exchange between Europe and Africa 2008-2010' and aims to highlight the contribution that higher education can make to development policy. The publication addresses the need to develop a coordinated approach to creating sustainable and efficient university partnerships through research programmes e.g. collaborative doctoral programmes. Recommendations are also made to create concrete measures to increase the mobility of European students and researchers to Africa and to reduce 'brain drain'.
- The European Commission is looking for input on the objectives, activities and support for the future **EU programme for culture**. The current programme (2007 – 2013) has a budget of €400 million and supports trans-national cultural cooperation, exchanges and festivals. The consultation consists of an online survey, available [here](#), and the deadline for responses is 15 December 2010.

- Almost 5,000 researchers submitted an application to the **Marie Curie Fellowships** scheme for the 2010 call, a 20% increase on last year and 70% on 2008. The scheme will grant around 800 fellowships to researchers, worth a total of €150 million. With transnational mobility an important focus of this year's call, support is available for researchers moving within Europe and also to other parts of the world, in addition to researchers from outside the EU wanting to work in Europe. In response to this announcement, Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth emphasised importance of the Marie Curie fellowships to the research community because of the international experience that it offers. In 2011 it is anticipated that the budget for Marie Curie actions will total €722 million.
- European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso's State of the Union speech in September highlighted his vision for 'a Europe that is strong in science, education and culture' with Europe's universities 'attracting the brightest and the best'. His comments placed emphasis once again on the **Commission's modernisation agenda for universities**, which outlines ways in which academic contribution to innovation and the economy could be enhanced. It is hoped that higher education will now become critical to policy discussions on economic growth, putting it back in the spotlight after the economic situation dominated much of the EU's recent concerns.
- While the current financial constraints remain in place on most member states, MEPs voting on the EU's budget for 2011 at a Strasbourg plenary session in October emphasised the need to continue with **promoting investment in the areas of education, research and innovation**. In particular, the Parliament asked for a re-evaluation of the amount devoted to the Lifelong Learning Programme, currently more than €18 million. Before the budget can be formally approved in November, the final figures must be agreed by the Parliament and the Council.

Diary of events

We would be grateful if you could please contact WHEB if you plan to attend any of the following events in Brussels. In this way we can offer you facilities in Wales House while you are in the city and inform you of any other opportunities while you are here. It will also help us to plan the Brussels events that we will attend. Thank you.

NOVEMBER			
Date	Title	Location	
12 th or 15 th Nov	Lifelong Learning Programme 2011 Infoday	Brussels	The European Commission is providing two opportunities to find out about the European funding opportunities in the LLP. The same programme is planned for both dates.
29 th , 30 th	"Energy Research Infrastructures - ENERI 2020"	Brussels	The Belgian Presidency Conference will provide information on the 2010 update of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure (ESFRI) Roadmap in the energy field, and a forum to open a debate on the development of a comprehensive strategy for energy research infrastructure within the context of the Grand Challenges and the European Strategies Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan).
29 th , 30 th	ETAP Forum on Eco-Innovation	Brussels	The programme for the event, 'Financing the eco-innovators', will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of EU actions supporting eco-innovation; • Case studies from private enterprises and financial institutions
15 th , 16 th	Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan Conference	Brussels	A broad range of stakeholders will participate as the European Commission reports on the progress of all action lines of the SET Plan. The conference will also launch the European Industrial Initiatives for bio-energy and nuclear energy.

December			
Date	Title	Location	
1 st	High Level debate “The future of GMES after 2014 from a regional perspective” The Belgian Presidency	Brussels	The debate will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional concerns regarding GMES and its future operability; • Views of the European Commission; • Role of Europe’s regions post 2014 Please register via this website http://www.nereus-regions.eu/home For a programme and more information contact Lowri Jones ljj@aber.ac.uk . Registration closes 19 Nov.
3 rd	Mobility under the magnifying glass: new insights, old challenges, future perspectives	Brussels	This policy seminar is organised by the Academic Cooperation Association to investigate the challenges facing student and staff mobility and to debate on future policies.

Annex

List of EU electronic newsletters by theme

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/newsdigest/archive_en.htm

AUDIOVISUAL AND MEDIA POLICIES

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/menu.cfm

COMPETITION

<http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/publications/cpn/>

CONSUMER PROTECTION

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/newsletters_en.htm

CULTURE POLICY

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/index_en.htm

DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN AID POLICIES

<http://ec.europa.eu/development/body/press-forum/c5-m1.html>

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/een/index_en.htm

EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

<http://www.erasmus.ac.uk//news.html>

http://www.europa.eu/youth/index.cfm?l_id=en

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/main/index.php?page=home>

http://www.etf.europa.eu/Web.nsf/pages/ETF_Newsletter_EN?Opendocument

<http://www.eun.org/portal/index.htm>

<http://www.leonardo.org.uk/events/news.htm>

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/esmail_en.cfm

ENERGY

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/newsletter/index_en.htm