

## €800M TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND MOBILITY

**B**RUSSELS: The European Commission has published the first tranche of funding for research grants totalling €800m in 2014 under the new Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

The first calls are targeted at research organisations, universities, companies and NGOs. Overall, the MSCAs will receive more than €6bn during Horizon 2020.

The MSCAs are under the responsibility of Androulla Vassiliou, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. She said: "We are building on a great success story since the launch of the MSCA scheme in 1996. In the next seven years we will be able to fund a total of 65,000 researchers, who will make a vital contribution to science and innovation in Europe."



Research institutes, universities, companies and NGOs involved in research can apply for funding through the MSCA's Innovative Training Networks, which are aimed at early-stage researchers without a PhD. The training provides experience outside academia to develop transversal skills to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and employability. Non-European organisations can also take part in the Innovative Training Networks (ITNs), enabling doctoral level candidates to gain experience outside Europe.

ITNs have the largest share of the MSCA budget, awarding more than €40m under this call. Of this amount, €25.5m will be allocated to European Industrial Doctorates and €30m to European Joint Doctorates.

11 December, 2013

## MINISTERS ADOPT H2020

**B**RUSSELS: European ministers have officially passed the legislation regarding Horizon 2020.

Professor Dr Dainius Pavalkis, Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science, and current chair of the Competitiveness Council, has said: "The Lithuanian Presidency is proud to have accomplished its major goals in research and education by successfully setting two new programmes –Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ –into motion. It is an effective and timely result of the big efforts of several players and a good co-operation among them.

"We thank the Danish, Cypriot, and Irish Presidencies, as well as the European Commission and the European Parliament, that all have been working towards the common goals of an open and growing Europe. These two programmes hold great promise for European future – jobs, growth and our youth."



During the meeting, EU research ministers agreed general approaches on a new generation of nine public and private partnerships, which will allow the carrying out of large scale and long-term innovation activities under Horizon 2020.

Five public private partnerships will be conducted in the fields of bio-based industries, aeronautics, electronics, fuel cells and hydrogen, as well as innovative medicines. Four public-public partnerships will be established for the joint implementation of national research programmes in the fields of active and healthy ageing, clinical trials in African countries, metrology and research and development performing small and medium enterprises.

3 December, 2013

## VISION 2030

**S**WEDEN: ARTEMIS and ITEA are preparing to host their annual Co-Summit in the Swedish capital, Stockholm.

The sixth edition of the co-summit, organised by the ARTEMIS Joint Undertaking on embedded systems and ITEA (the EUREKA Cluster on software-intensive systems and services), focuses on the role that software and software innovation can play in boosting the prospects for high-tech employment and industry in Europe.

Speaking on the eve of the event, Professor Dr Heinrich Daembkes, president of ARTEMIS said: "We are at an important transition. Vision 2030 shows that digital technologies are defining key performances, making products and services more intelligent and environmentally compatible, and creating great opportunities for European industry."



There is a special focus planned on smart cities, an area the European Commission has been keen to support in recent years. Leaders from the Swedish Government and city of Stockholm, industry and academia will speak at the event.

The Vision 2030 report will also be officially launched, highlighting how software innovation can have an impact on revenue and jobs. The conference will also provide an insight into the next ARTEMIS calls.

3 December, 2013

## ISRAEL COMPROMISE AGREED

**B**RUSSELS/ISRAEL: The EU and Israel have come to an agreement on the signing of a Horizon 2020 pact.

Israeli Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, came to a compromise following many months of discussions. The EU had rejected various proposals until Livni presented Ashton with wording the EU felt it could accept, Israeli officials have announced. The deal was reached on two clauses in the Horizon agreement that had stopped Israel signing.

One clause relates to adding an appendix to the pact stating that the conditions of the agreement would not prevent the EU from implementing the Settlement Guidelines regarding allocating of funds to the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Golan Heights. The parties decided to formally disagree on this clause. The EU will add the appendix, while Israel will attach another



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disputed areas or have extensions or branches in the settlements. The EU was concerned that it would be unable to verify that European money would not make its way to those areas.

28 November, 2013

## COMMISSION WELCOMES PARLIAMENT'S COSME DEAL

**B**RUSSELS: The European Commission has welcomed the European Parliament's adoption of the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME).

Antonio Tajani, European Commission Vice-President with responsibility for Industry and Entrepreneurship, commented: "I am particularly delighted by the vote of the Parliament as it is the outcome of months of hard work of the EU institutions. We are firmly committed to help European businesses, in particular SMEs, as the latter are the backbone of the EU economy, providing 85% of all new jobs. Bearing this in mind, COSME will make the



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life of SMEs much easier by supporting their access to finance; an issue identified as crucial for SMEs in the EU."

COSME aims to ease the credit problems that small businesses currently face.

With a €2.3bn budget for 2014-2020, COSME will provide a guarantee facility for loans to SMEs of up to €150,000. From now until 2020, 330,000 EU firms are expected to benefit from this facility.

COSME will also provide entrepreneurs with easier access to markets in the EU and beyond, allowing EU citizens who wish to become self-employed to receive tailored services and assistance.

26 November, 2013

## LITHUANIA FOCUSES ON EUROPE'S DIGITAL FUTURE

**V**ILNIUS: The Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė has opened the 'ICT2013: Create, Connect, Grow' conference in Vilnius, the largest ICT event in Europe and one of the biggest under the Lithuanian Council Presidency. The three-day event will see around 6,000 participants gather in the Lithuanian capital.

Addressing delegates in the opening plenary, the president said: "The future belongs to innovative and ambitious people. Europe should invest more in research, look for new solutions and show more resolve in implementing interesting ideas. The digital economy offers huge opportunities for growth,



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job creation and competitiveness. Therefore, Lithuania, as the EU presiding member state, devotes special attention and efforts to building the Digital Single Market. We hope this market will be fully operational by 2015."

The president also emphasised the importance of cyber security and establishing proper data protection rules. She added that it was essential to effectively use the funding under Horizon 2020 for the development of innovation and research.

Neele Kroes, European Commission Vice-President with responsibility for the Digital Agenda, is also attending the event and will participate in the signing of the National Coalition for Digital Skills and Employment Promotion in Lithuania. The conference will last until 8 November, 2013.

6 November, 2013