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... says local investment in sustainable technologies can restore EU's 'competitive edge'



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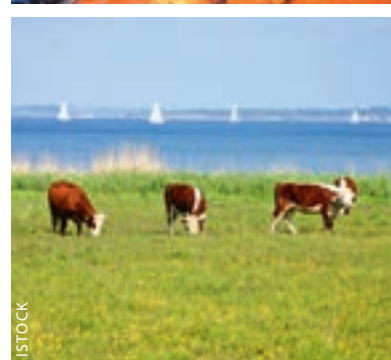
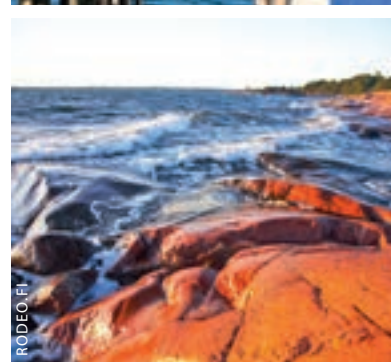
BONUS values strong **stakeholder engagement, partnerships** and **close collaboration** with key partners such as HELCOM, EUSBSR, BDF, BSSC, BSRP, CBSS, ICES, JPI Oceans, OSPAR, VASAB, WWF and many others who share a **common goal on the knowledge based governance** of the Baltic and other regional seas in Europe.

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By generating **fit-for-purpose knowledge**, BONUS ensures that many of the aims of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region as well as the knowledge needs of the policymakers are met, and that new innovative tools are developed as identified in the **BONUS strategic research agenda 2011–2017** (update published in 2014). To date **over 800 stakeholders in the region have contributed** to the development and updating of the strategic research agenda.

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BONUS is funded jointly from the national research and innovation funding institutions in the eight EU member states around the Baltic Sea and the European Union's Seventh Programme for research, technological development and demonstration. Russia participates in BONUS through bilateral agreements.



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Juncker media frenzy proves importance of European elections

With the results of the European parliament elections now in, I hope that the observed shift to the right will require and oblige pro-European groups to be more concerted, for them to collaborate more systematically across legislative actions – in the first instance on the election of the commission president. But also, I hope that the leadership of the parliament, especially of the four pro-European groups, will be able to use this experience to be more strategic, clever and far-sighted than they have been in the last parliament.

I think that if the parliament fails to support Juncker, it will have sacrificed the advantages we've gained from the Spitzenkandidaten experiment. It was up to us to promote this idea and to try it out and I think to a great extent it has worked. Look at the media frenzy around the Juncker question that is going on at the moment. To me this is proof that the elections to the parliament matter more now than they have done in the past, and I think it is important that parliament exploits the advantage that it has gained from this increased interest.

It is too early to say if a workable parliamentary majority can be achieved as the distribution of seats between the groups is still rather fluid and volatile as new members find out where they choose to be grouped. The turnover is extremely high, and it is probably near 60 per cent of MEPs that are new. Of course some of them are re-treads, but all the same, the problem of continuity between one parliament and the next is fairly acute. I have to say the increase in turnout for the elections is most definitely a very good thing. I would have preferred it to turn up a little bit more, of course, but if you look at places like Slovakia, where only 13 per cent voted, there are obviously some serious problems there and I will be speaking to Maroš Šefčovič, the Slovakian commissioner who was an MEP candidate, to find out from him first-hand about just what went wrong. However, the fact that the overall decline has stopped and that the graph has turned up a little bit at the end is undoubtedly a democratic achievement. ★

Andrew Duff is a member of parliament's constitutional affairs committee

ON THE COVER | EUSEW 2014

Committee of the Regions president and newly elected MEP Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso kicks off our cover story feature on EU sustainable energy week, saying that the “seismic shift towards a resource efficient economy must be driven through our cities”. For the Spanish deputy, a commitment to investing in new sustainable technologies at the local level could restore Europe’s “competitive edge”. Valcárcel Siso points to the importance of EU funding, writing that it “offers local and regional governments the much needed stimulus to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy in our cities”. Head of the commission’s sustainable energy policy unit Marie Donnelly says, “Europe has high ambitions to build a competitive and secure energy system that ensures affordable energy for all consumers.” Donnelly also calls for the EU to prioritise buildings and industry in its energy efficiency “ambition”. **See pages 17-29**





European Network of Fibromyalgia Associations

(ENFA iwz)



Most of us have had flu and suffered aches and pains all over our bodies and just wanted to sleep until it all goes away.

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Healthcare must address ‘specific long-term needs’ of the elderly

In Europe, we know the number of Europeans over 65 years of age will double in the next 50 years – 150 million is foreseen in 2060 compared to 85 million in 2008, and the number of citizens over the age of 80 will almost triple. Life expectancy is also on the rise, but, as it stands, living longer unfortunately does not necessarily mean living healthier or with a good quality of life in Europe. At present, in the EU we know a person will live on average one fifth of their life in poor health, caused mainly by the development of one or more chronic diseases (such as diabetes, dementia).

Age-related government spending is projected to increase in the EU and with that health and care systems need to be reformed to address the specific long-term needs of the older population, and to adapt to the financial pressure caused by demographic trends. But ageing can also

be a source of growth; an increase in jobs in the area of health and care related to the ageing population is expected between now and 2020. The public sector can innovate as well, and EU industry boosted to develop new services and products to answer a growing demand. This is known as the ‘silver economy’ opportunity for Europe.

“At present, in the EU we know a person will live on average one fifth of their life in poor health”

stakeholders at EU, national and regional levels, across the whole research and innovation supply and demand chain, to support local and regional implementation of active and healthy ageing solutions.

The European innovation partnership on active and healthy ageing was launched in 2011 as a pilot to draw lessons on how Europe can successfully build innovation ecosystems to meet the demands of an ageing population. It involves bringing different initiatives together and involving all relevant

Sharing best practice, harnessing political will and engaging all stakeholders is crucial to developing healthy and active ageing, writes **Maria Iglesia Gomez**





One of the aims when setting up the partnership was to develop a shared vision on active and healthy ageing in the EU. By 2020, the partnership aims to increase the average number of healthy life years for an EU citizen by two, and by doing so secure a 'triple win' for Europe. First to improve the health status and quality of life of citizens, second, to support the long-term sustainability and efficiency of health and social care systems, and third, to enhance the competitiveness of industry and of markets for new innovative products and services.

The role of the European commission has been to stimulate and support the emergence of solutions that are currently being developed on the ground, at a local level. The partnership has enabled the participants to exchange information and practices on relevant issues like improving adherence to medical plans by older people, introducing better coordinated services

within the health system and between health and care services or promoting prevention of frailty through actions focused on adequate nutrition or physical exercise. Importance is also given to the operational framework to ensure interoperability between the ICT systems and platforms that can be adopted to prevent falls, connect patients with their health practitioners or support their ties with their relatives. Not only health issues are at the core of the process: the capacity to design age-friendly cities and environments which take into account the specific needs of older people, such as housing or ICT apps, are all important areas that we promote to improve older peoples' quality of life in the EU.

Many solutions for ageing well in our society are already implemented. The innovative approach is to highlight the most-advanced ones, to take inspiration from those and to create the conditions for their transfer to other contexts. We

"The priority the commission gives to healthy ageing is illustrated in the links with the new round of funding programmes"

Maria Iglesia Gomez is head of the innovation for health and consumers unit at the European commission's DG Sanco

This Thought Leader article is sponsored by Fit For Work Europe



can avoid replicating the same uncertain experiments, save time and resources, thanks to a 'virtuous circle'. The partnership can highlight that in Europe we are able to thrive on our differences. Many regions and local communities have progressively expressed their interest in joining the experience. Setting up a forum for this collective learning, based on a 'bottom-up' approach, shows how the commission can play a role in achieving common goals.

The priority the commission gives to healthy ageing is illustrated in the links with the new round of funding programmes: Horizon 2020, the public health programme, active and assisted living research and development programme, and structural funds. These, among others, include funding streams dedicated to active and healthy ageing.

The partnership has demonstrated that there are good, evidence based solutions which can bring about real improvements for older people. We need to learn from each other, to secure political will and engage more actors in our efforts towards active and healthy ageing in the EU. ★

The Fit For Work checklist aims to keep muscle and joint pain high on the political and professional agenda, writes **P.C. Baart**



The Parliament Magazine's

Thought leader

Europe's population is ageing fast, with the proportion of people aged 65 and over expected to rise from 16 to 26 per cent – an increase of more than 50 per cent – over the next 40 years, according to a report published by the international social security association. With an ageing population, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are on the rise and are set to affect up to 50 per cent of working-age populations by 2030. This projected increase is due in part to the fact that people are working longer. With an ageing population comes unique issues that we must address if we are to see a return to robust productivity levels and an improvement in the quality of life of our citizens.

In the Netherlands, MSDs affect over two million people. In order to address this issue, Fit For Work Europe, the multi-stakeholder coalition working toward a better alignment between the work and health agendas in the EU and an improvement in care delivery for people with MSDs, has supported the development in the Netherlands of a pilot tool, the Fit For Work checklist.

Based on the concept of workability, the checklist is intended to help make muscle and joint pain a regular conversation topic between stakeholders. In developing the checklist, we have considered the aspects that affect employers, employees and healthcare professionals and the way they interact with each other. Individual checklists for each category of stakeholder can be customised, addressing the need for practical guidance in encouraging workforce participation of those suffering from MSDs.

Our checklist is an important tool to increase awareness about workability, MSDs, and the importance productive employment plays in a person's physical, social, and psychological wellbeing. Its use

by stakeholders can have a significant impact on the lives of those living with MSDs and it can be used as a model throughout Europe and beyond. To that end, the checklist has been adapted for use in Canada, and several countries in Europe are in the process of adapting it to their own labour market and health systems. In the Netherlands, pilot programmes will assess healthcare providers' efforts and approaches to making workability a key component of an individual's treatment and recovery process.

In order to ensure the success of the checklist and other initiatives aimed at addressing the needs

of a population increasingly affected by MSDs, the active engagement of policymakers across Europe is essential. Later this month on 18 June, the European commission hosts the Frailty in Old Age conference in Brussels, bringing together stakeholders to flesh out recommendations for building a European policy on frailty. The conference will be an opportunity to address key issues facing countries with ageing populations. We are calling on the conference's attendees and participants to look at initia-

tives like the Dutch workability checklist that offer real solutions to an increasingly urgent problem.

Forward-thinking leadership is imperative if we are to promote a cultural step-change that will prioritise the importance of work as a clinical outcome for ailments affecting an ageing workforce, including MSDs. Ensuring people remain in work and continue to live happy, productive lives as long as possible is not only vital to the quality of life of our citizens, it is crucial to a strong, competitive Europe.

"Forward-thinking leadership is imperative if we are to promote a cultural step-change"

P.C. Baart is chair of the Dutch Fit for Work coalition

The CHANCES* project

Consortium on Health and Ageing: Network of Cohorts in Europe and the United States



The challenges associated with the global ageing of populations are among the major concerns of modern-day societies. An efficient approach, towards this direction, was chosen by the CHANCES team: to bring together 17 partners and 15 cohorts from Europe and North America in a consortium, whose efforts are channelled through specific Work Packages with the ultimate goal of enhancing the evidence on healthy ageing.

Four groups of chronic conditions/disabilities are addressed: Cancer; Diabetes/Cardiovascular Diseases; Fractures/ Osteoporosis; Cognitive Decline. The project has developed an efficient and flexible infrastructure for conducting overall-cohorts (pooled) analyses to estimate the prevalence, incidence, mortality and economic implications of the indicated conditions, as well as to identify/confirm socio-economic, environmental, lifestyle, and nutritional determinants. Genetic profiles and biomarkers associated with ageing are also investigated. Deliverables of the project include a series of reports and publications on the above-indicated research hypotheses. A standardized instrument to assess ageing-related outcomes (Health Module) in a comparable fashion in European ageing populations will be also created. In the longer term, CHANCES will form a base for a well-established network of ageing cohorts and provide a platform for further collaborative projects investigating the role of various health determinants and outcomes in the elderly.

**The project has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement no. HEALTH –F3-2010-242244*



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Physical activity could be key to reducing Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease, together with mild cognitive impairment, is expected to attain epidemic dimensions in developed countries in the future. Data from the US show that the number of affected individuals will multiply almost by three times between 2010 and 2050. Alzheimer's is a devastating disease that ruins the life of the affected subjects and that of their relatives. Moreover, national health services will be subjected to a difficult stress test of being able to cope with the expenses involved in medication and care. Despite intensive research in the field, the availability of drugs with potential for prevention or treatment seems distant at the moment, but is that really the case? Can we take effective measures against the disease? Recent epidemiological research and new technology may possibly provide answers.

The impact of regular exercise on susceptibility to Alzheimer's has been discussed in recent years. Data, however, have not been consistent, possibly because the self-reported level of exercise is subjected to many inaccuracies in older people. Furthermore, the exercise itself does not include the more general physical activity concept, in which daily activities are better reflected. New technology in the form of devices capable of tracking the whole physical activity has revolutionised the area. A prospective study has followed 716 older individuals free of dementia for four years within the Rush memory and ageing project in the US. The participants were subjected to a battery of 19 cognitive tests. Exercise and non-exercise physical activity was recorded continuously for up to 10 days with actigraphy, a technology developed by Philips healthcare. The impressive result after four years was that daily physical activity was associated with a reduction of about 50 per cent in incident Alzheimer's cases.

This information adds to a wealth of data implicating physical activity in the reduction of the impact of other chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular, osteoporosis, or cancer. This conclusion fits particularly well with the European innovation partnership for active and healthy ageing (EIP-AHA) launched by the European commission. Several groups across Europe are developing commitments where alternatives to warrant compliance to the physical activity programmes

are being tested. The cohort chronic ailment reduction after menopause (CARMEN) in Valencia, Spain, is introducing new technologies, based upon internet and electronic devices, to extend the use of physical activity. This cohort concentrates in women, who experience a specific profile in susceptibility to disease, including Alzheimer's disease. Additionally, the empowerment of the participants through non-profit women's associations, together with the interest of the municipality, is developing a social network of mutual support that is becoming particularly cost-effective.

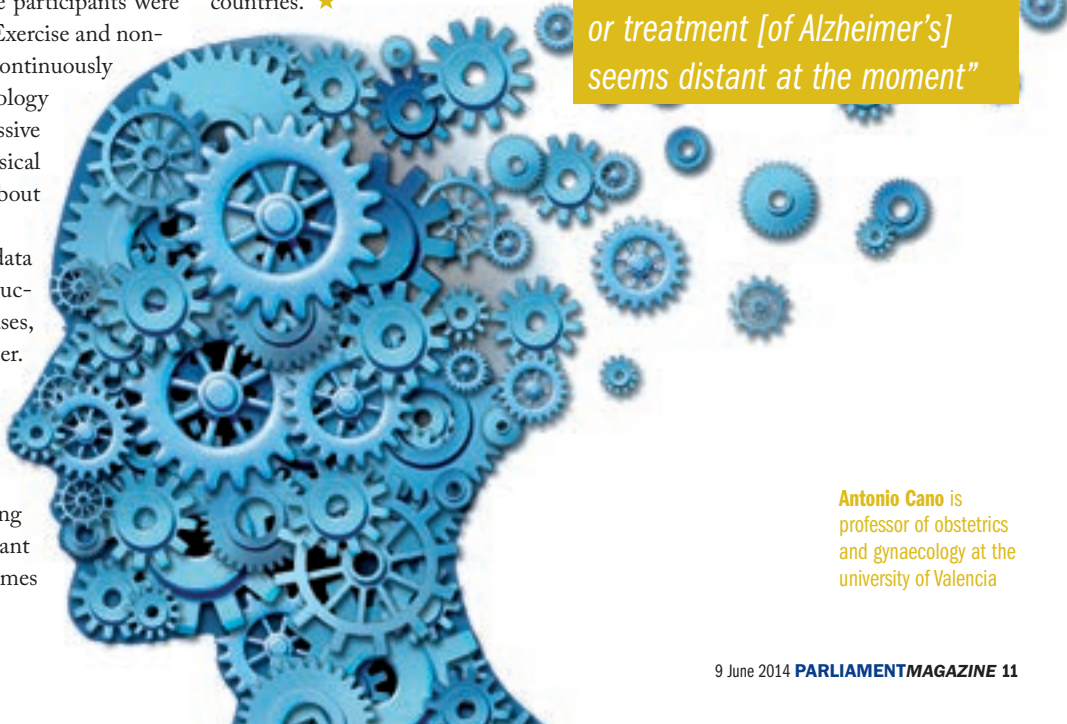
There are also a bunch of groups within the cognitive decline subgroup of the A3-Frailty in EIP-AHA. Academia, public health services, research institutes, and SMEs are represented in an initiative aiming at extending the practice of effective preventive measures and at progressing in better knowledge of the disease.

The European parliament can help by promoting legislative changes to help those sections of society that are sensitive to the problem and have demonstrated enough versatility and motivation. Cost-effectiveness is another feature, in part because of the frequent implication of volunteers. Moreover, these movements can be found across the European countries. ★

Research suggests that exercise could have a significant effect on the prevention of Alzheimer's disease, Antonio Cano explains

"Despite intensive research in the field, the availability of drugs with potential for prevention or treatment [of Alzheimer's] seems distant at the moment"

Antonio Cano is professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the university of Valencia





Healthcare ‘must do better’ for frail patients

Leadership is needed if the provision of healthcare, especially to frail patients, is to change for the better, argues **Kenneth Rockwood**

Frailty challenges healthcare and so offers opportunity. As people age they are more likely to die, but not everyone of the same age has the same risk of death. Those at higher risk, compared with others their own age, are frail. Likewise, people at lower risk are fit. As populations age, more people become frail. It is not clear exactly why. Frail older adults typically have many health problems, and, crucially, as frailty worsens, come daily to depend on others. Frailty can also occur in younger people, such as many with intellectual disabilities or HIV/Aids.

Having a lot wrong, and depending on others, has important policy implications because modern healthcare expects otherwise. It has succeeded largely through greater precision, reflecting ever greater understanding of particular illnesses. Typically this is achieved with greater specialisation, accompanied by more expensive tests and treatments. For many, success is clear, with remarkable results every day.

That is less so for frail patients. Their multiple, interacting medical and social problems leave them ill served when we focus on a ‘most responsible’ diagnosis. Instead, they must be treated as whole persons, whose many problems need attention, and who, to manage, must daily rely on others – chiefly family, usually women. Obliging them to fit narrowly focused care that ignores their dependence is not just ineffective and expensive, it can expose them to high risk, with little chance of benefit.

Changing how we provide care is difficult. It takes time to recognise that when patients do not fit the system, the system must change. Without leadership, systems are slow to accept that patients get sick the only way they know how. Without

leadership, instead of reform we get derision: frail patients are ‘unsuitable’ or ‘social admissions’. Tragically, the patients being so denigrated have often been harmed by interventions from which they had very little chance to benefit: unable to go home, they become ‘bed blockers’. We cannot oblige frail people to be better patients. Instead, healthcare systems and providers must change. This is not new. It is the same mistake of generals who plan not for the war that they face, but for the war that they know. Healthcare must do better, because, largely, we know what to do. We just can’t do it without leadership.

Getting the incentives right is essential. We must measure patient-centred outcomes. We must evaluate how care changes patients’ function, cognition and social interactions. Declaring surgery successful because the patient hasn’t died after 30 days can no longer be acceptable, especially if it is done in patients at unevaluated, but high risk of catastrophic disability, cognitive impairment and needing a nursing home. Even so, the focus must be effective action, not endless assessment. Likewise, physicians should not be allowed to opt out of dementia care by claiming that there is nothing to be done.

Attitudes must change. Too often we believe that the best care providers should treat only young people with single system problems. In truth, many such patients will survive even indifferent care. Frail older people, however, need highly skilled care to get through. They offer early warning of system inadequacies. In consequence, any reforms that help them will improve care across the board. This is the opportunity: facing up to frailty can result in better, more cost-effective healthcare for everyone. ★

“We cannot oblige frail people to be better patients. Instead, healthcare systems and providers must change”

Kenneth Rockwood is professor of geriatric medicine at Dalhousie university, Canada and the university of Manchester, UK

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Still getting lots of questions asking if UEFA will do something about match-fixing. If only I were Commissioner for Football..



@JanAlbrecht Jan Philipp Albrecht MEP

If the #EUCO doesn't accept a #Spitzenkandidat as #EU Commission president I'll be part of a heavy resistance. And we'll beat them! #EP2014



@Hannes_Swoboda Hannes Swoboda S&D Group chair

Lithuania is invited to join the #Euro.That is strengthening the importance of Euro. But the real support comes from growth and employment



@SeanKellyMEP Sean Kelly MEP

Congratulations to @ManfredWeber our new @EPPGroup Chair in #EP -looking forward to working with him #believeinpeople



@SarahLudford Sarah Ludford MEP

Showed new AfD MEP I found lost in #EP the way to @ecrgroup secretariat. Not expecting thanks from either Cameron or Merkel.



@BarrosoEU European commission president José Manuel Barroso

It is in the interest of all #G7 members to advance towards a low carbon, competitive and energy secure future. #G7Brussels



@StefanFuleEU Enlargement and European neighbourhood policy commissioner Štefan Füle

#Turkey #youtube accessible again, welcome implementation of Constitutional Court decision which ended an anomaly.



EU commits €246m to aid Palestine's refugees

EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton and enlargement and neighbourhood policy commissioner Štefan Füle signed a joint declaration pledging €246m in support for Palestine refugees.



The commitment, made to UN relief and works agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA), will assist in providing education, health, relief and social services. Ashton said, "The EU's continuing support to UNRWA is a key element in our strategy to promote stability in the Middle East. It also contributes to securing access to basic social services, reducing poverty and improving refugees' living standards." Füle added, "UNRWA is implementing its humanitarian, developmental and protection programmes against a backdrop of extraordinary operational challenges." The EU has supported Palestinian refugees since 1971. Between 2007-13 the EU provided more than €958m, and last year contributed 43 per cent of UNRWA's budget. The news came after the Palestinian central bureau of statistics, Food and agriculture organisation, World food programme and UNWRA released a joint press statement warning of high food insecurity in Palestine. According to the statement a third of households in the region were food insecure in 2013, which the agencies attribute to "an ongoing decrease in funding for critical UN programmes". focused on assisting those in greatest need".

EPP group elects Weber as chair

The European parliament's EPP group has elected German MEP Manfred Weber as its new chair, succeeding the outgoing Joseph Daul. Weber, who was previously the group's vice-chairman, was the sole candidate and was elected with 190 votes from a potential 192. Speaking after the vote, Weber said, "The EPP group, as the largest political force in the European parliament, has once again received the trust of Europe's voters, representing the political centre of the new parliament. "It is also the first political group that will, as of this week, have fully constituted itself," he added.

The newly elected group chair also discussed the role of the European parliament, saying, "as the only directly-elected



European institution... [it] has to play a leading role in strengthening trust in the EU". "In order to improve the transparency of decision making processes, we need clear-cut responsibilities.

European citizens must know who is responsible for what, this also includes binding commitments and policy goals," he concluded. Daul, who will remain president of the EPP, but stands down as an MEP, congratulated Weber, saying that the elections show "that the EPP group is united and ready to start work". "His experience and personality embody the EPP's core values: the conviction that Europe is stronger united, coupled with the firm belief in the importance of building an EU closer to its citizens and able to deliver real added-value."

The 'green line' that cuts through the Republic of Cyprus, preventing refugees and displaced persons from returning to their homes and lands

Cyprus: a lesson in hypocrisy

Over the last few weeks the leaders of the USA, the UK and other EU member states have been quick to condemn what they refer to as a 'land grab' by Russia of the territory of Crimea. These leaders have continually stated that Russia's annexation will never be recognised and have applied sanctions on Russia. Yet these are precisely the same states and the same leaders that continue to turn a blind eye to Turkey's illegal land grab and 40 year-long occupation of the northern area of Cyprus.

In July and August 1974 over 35,000 Turkish troops invaded Cyprus. Thousands of Greek Cypriots were murdered, tortured, raped or 'disappeared'. 200,000 Greek Cypriots were ethnically cleansed from their homes and replaced with more than 300,000 illegal immigrants from Turkey in a deliberate and cynical policy of ethnic engineering. This was followed by the catastrophic devastation of the European cultural heritage of Cyprus through the destruction of hundreds of churches and cemeteries by Turkey, an aspiring EU member state.

Invasion, occupation and violation of territorial integrity are precisely what the West now criticises Russia of committing in Ukraine; although it has to be said Russia has not shown the scant disregard for human rights that Turkey has in Cyprus.

In order to avoid taking a hypocritical stance one would expect full support from these Western leaders for Greek Cypriot positions on Cyprus. However, we believe they have chosen to prefer hypocrisy. Rather than condemn the continuing occupation of the northern area of Cyprus they continue to pressure the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, a full UN member state since 1960 and EU member state since 2004,

to accept a political settlement that will legitimise this illegal state of affairs and condone Turkey. Such a settlement, which will effectively create the legal partition of Cyprus along ethnic lines, is disguised as a 'bizonal bicomunal federation'. But what is this creature? Where else in the world can one be found? The answer is nowhere. Anyone who has

Perhaps the time has come to search for a settlement in Cyprus that respects basic human rights and international law

studied the current proposals and predecessor plans such as the 2004 Annan Plan will see that the plan is to create two ethnically separate zones, one Greek one Turkish, joined within a loose federation, which does not respect property ownership rights on either side of the artificial divide and which creates apartheid. Unsurprisingly this model has not been followed elsewhere.

Artificial divides on racial grounds within multicultural states are abhorrent especially in the 21st century and within the EU. With the carving up of an existing EU member state along ethnic and religious lines,

such a settlement sets a dangerous precedent for the EU. Will this not encourage groups within other EU states to seek separation? In any event we cannot understand how creating legalised borders can be said to be a way of unifying a country. Calling this a federation is an exercise in semantics. It is legalised partition and nothing more.

Perhaps the time has come to search for a settlement in Cyprus that respects basic human rights and international law; something that no bizonal bicomunal solution can ever achieve. Without genuine respect for fundamental freedoms, we cannot see how any Cyprus settlement can be made to work.



www.lobbyforcyprus.org
[www.twitter.com/lobbyforcyprus](https://twitter.com/lobbyforcyprus)
admin@lobbyforcyprus.org

Lobby for Cyprus is a non-party-political organisation with the aim of reuniting Cyprus

HYDROGEN MEANS GREATER ENERGY SECURITY FOR EUROPE

Photo: Solar platform by CIEMAT ©, courtesy of Hydrosol project

The Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking will start its second phase this year, through to 2020; a move which marks Europe's continued confidence in and support for hydrogen and fuel cells as key technologies for decarbonising our energy system, and creating a secure sustainable energy supply capable of generating new jobs.

Hydrogen can be produced from renewable energy sources, including solar, wind and biomass, offering the means to provide clean fuel, a challenge which most deeply affects the transport sector which currently relies on oil for 96% of its needs¹. Moreover, hydrogen offers the ability to store electricity, providing a solution to manage intermittency issues associated with renewable energy generation. Coupled with highly efficient fuel cells – fuel cell cars, for instance, are about 3 times more efficient than a conventional car – hydrogen opens up new horizons for decreasing Europe's dependency on imported fossil fuels.

The Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH JU) was established in 2008, with the objective of accelerating the market introduction of fuel cell and hydrogen technologies in Europe. The FCH JU constitutes a unique public-private partnership between the European Commission and Europe's fuel cell and hydrogen industry and research communities. During its first phase (2008-2013), the FCH JU, together with its partners, funded over 150 projects, to the tune of about one billion euros. Projects cover research and technological development as well as demonstration activities of fuel cell and hydrogen technologies in various applications, primarily transport and energy.

The FCH JU has achieved a real, strong, reliable and committed European platform on fuel cells and hydrogen where Industry, Research, and Local, National and European officials act to address, through the technology, major socio-economic and environmental challenges. The second

phase of the FCH JU (the FCH 2 JU) will reinforce this commitment: on 6th May 2014, the Council of the European Union formally agreed to continue the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Technology Initiative under the EU Horizon 2020 Framework Program. This phase (2014-20), will have a total budget of 1.33 billion euros, provided on a matched basis between the EU represented by the European Commission, industry, and research.



The FCH 2 JU will officially launch on 9th July 2014 and will see the presence of key industry CEOs and Commissioners, confirming their joint vision of the FCH 2 JU as a key enabler for achieving EU energy and transport targets.



For information, contact Zeynep MUSOGLU at communications@fch.europa.eu

Visit our website: www.fch-ju.eu

¹ See COM(2011) 144 final. White Paper "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system" 28/03/2011, at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0144&from=EN>



Cities 'taking up challenge' of energy efficiency

The challenge to ensure a safe, secure and affordable flow of energy to homes and businesses continues to dominate debate in Europe. Half of all our energy needs are met from imports – an industry worth €1bn every day. Price hikes continue to outstrip household income and it is now estimated that many as 150 million citizens suffer from energy poverty. Nevertheless, Europe 2020 demonstrated that there is a broad consensus that if we are to compete on the global market and tackle climate change, creating a resource efficient economy must be based on a sustainable approach to energy. Given that nearly 70 per cent of citizens live in urban areas in Europe today, cities are increasingly viewed as the catalyst that can spark innovation and help us move to a more sustainable future.

Giving Europe the competitive edge means investing in new technologies locally. This was why the EU allocated €6.5bn to the Horizon 2020 programme offering financial support to

innovation and research with the sole intention of delivering 'secure, clean and efficient energy' between 2014-2020. Cities are taking up the challenge and finding novel ways to make their communities more energy efficient. Micro-generation, for example, has become a growth market allowing individuals, businesses and communities to take advantage of technology to exploit small-scale energy sources. In Birmingham – the UK's second largest city – the drive to a low-carbon economy has looked to photovoltaic, solar thermal and energy efficiency technologies. City initiatives – such as Birmingham energy savers which is investing €123m to refurbish 15,000 homes with energy efficiency measures – have been complemented by large scale European funded projects worth €45m which will support the development of smart grid technology linked to small scale generation.

Smart grids are part of the solution in helping empower consumers, drive competition and create a "more integrated,

Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso says investing in new sustainable technologies at the local level can restore Europe's 'competitive edge'

"Making this seismic shift towards a resource efficient economy must be driven through our cities"





“EU funding and support offers local and regional governments the much needed stimulus to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy in our cities”

competitive and flexible” energy market. They offer endless possibilities to improve the integration of renewable energy, promote electric vehicles and deliver power through consumer controlled technology. A commission report identified 281 smart grid projects taking place across the EU, Croatia, Switzerland and Norway with investment totalling €1.8bn using a mix of EU, national government and private investment. In the French cities of Grenoble and Lyon, €40m has been invested in smart grids. Two technological platforms are being developed across both cities, covering 1000 residents and 40 businesses and demonstrating just how partnerships between private companies and local authorities is driving innovation.

The ring-fencing of five per cent of European regional development funds in the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework for urban sustainable development is a step in the right direction. It reflects a clear acknowledgement that making this seismic shift towards a resource efficient economy must be driven through our cities. Collaboration and partnership with local authorities is cutting emissions and contributing to the energy efficiency agenda. Through the EU-backed green solar cities project, Copenhagen and Salzburg collaborated closely to improve building energy performance and use local renewable energy. Copenhagen – the winner of the European green capital award in 2014 and which has its sights on becoming CO2 neutral by 2025 – aimed to supply 15 per cent of all electricity in the Valby area using renewable energy before

expanding the scheme to cover the entire city. Through the introduction of energy efficient design and the expansion of renewables, Lehen in Salzburg has also seen a saving of 40 per cent of energy per year through a solar thermal system and solar energy.

With the general austerity policy drive of many of Europe’s governments imposed by the economic and financial crisis, EU funding and support offers local and regional governments the much needed stimulus to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy in our cities. The covenant of mayors, which voluntarily commits local and regional authorities to meeting and exceeding the EU’s 20 per cent CO2 reduction objective by 2020, has attracted over 5000 signatories, showing the level of ambition found locally. But the urgency to liberalise Europe’s energy market is being restricted by a lack of flexibility and decision making at national level. Sub-national governments should be given greater freedom to decide how to use EU investment. Europe’s cities are taking the lead, but without more coordination between all levels of government and a renewed commitment towards renewable energy, we will continue to struggle with our overreliance on costly imported energy. ★

Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso is president of the committee of the regions and a newly elected MEP

EU must develop ‘competitive and secure energy system’

Launched in 2006 as an initiative of the European commission, the ninth edition of the EU sustainable energy week (EUSEW) will take place from 23-27 June 2014. It has become a reference point for public authorities, energy agencies, private companies, NGOs and industry associations engaged in helping to meet the EU's energy and climate goals. For those interested in where Europe is heading in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency, it is an important date in the calendar. It brings together stakeholders from across the EU and beyond to exchange ideas and experiences, and to build alliances in the transition towards a more sustainable energy future for Europe. This year's EUSEW takes place at a particularly exciting time for the union in terms of energy and climate policies.

Europe has high ambitions to build a competitive and secure energy system that ensures affordable energy for all consumers, increases the security of the EU's energy supplies, reduces dependence on energy imports and creates new opportunities

for growth and jobs. An important part of the work currently going on is to track progress in regard to the EU 2020 targets for climate and energy, namely 20 per cent improvement in energy efficiency, 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases compared to 1990 levels, and 20 per cent energy consumption from renewable sources.

Achieving the energy efficiency goal is crucial and an important part of the commission's current work in the energy field. The energy efficiency directive required the member states to lay out their own national indicative targets for 2020 in April 2013. Member states are also committed to achieving specific energy saving targets between 2014 and 2020 through measures designed to drive efficiency in households, industry, and transport. The review of member states' progress towards the 20 per cent efficiency target is scheduled for the summer of 2014. It will not only simply evaluate their progress but will set a strategy for energy efficiency by indicating the optimal level of savings for 2030.

The EU should ‘prioritise’ buildings and industry in energy efficiency ‘ambition’, writes **Marie Donnelly**



“Europe has high ambitions to build a competitive and secure energy system that ensures affordable energy for all consumers”



Energy security is inseparable from the 2030 framework for climate and energy. The transition to a competitive, low-carbon economy will reduce the use of imported fossil fuels by moderating energy demand and exploiting renewable and other indigenous sources of energy. Therefore, in response to the crisis in Ukraine and because of the overall importance of a stable and abundant supply of energy for the EU's citizens and economy, the European commission released an EU energy security strategy on 28 May 2014. This strategy is based on an in-depth study of member states' energy dependencies, and proposes actions in five key areas.

Increasing energy efficiency and increasing energy production in the EU, including renewables, were two of the proposed actions that the commission highlighted in the strategy. In the area of energy efficiency, priority should be on buildings and industry which use 40 per cent and 25 per cent of total EU energy, respectively. The higher the level of energy efficiency ambition, the more rapidly Europe can reduce its dependence on imported energy – particularly gas. Every additional one per cent in energy savings leads to a reduction of about 2.3 per cent in gas imports. The European energy security strategy should be managed together with the 2030 policy framework on climate and energy. In this context it is therefore also important that decisions are taken on the framework soon, and this has also been signalled by the European council.

The EUSEW plays an impor-

tant role in keeping all these goals at the top of EU and national agendas. At the core of the EUSEW is a high level policy conference in Brussels featuring more than 30 sessions on sustainable energy over three days at the commission's Charlemagne building. Alongside the conference, local energy days are being organised throughout June, in Brussels, across the EU, and beyond. Energy days are not-for-profit events that promote energy efficiency or renewable energy. From exhibitions to workshops, concerts and guided tours, the aim of energy days is to promote the benefits of energy efficiency and renewables to the public, stakeholders, and the media. This year, it can be organised during the entire month of June and this will be an excellent opportunity to keep attention on the importance of energy policy. ★

Marie Donnelly
is head of the EU
sustainable energy
policy unit at the
European commission's
DG energy

"Energy efficiency priority should be on buildings and industry which use 40 per cent and 25 per cent of total EU energy"



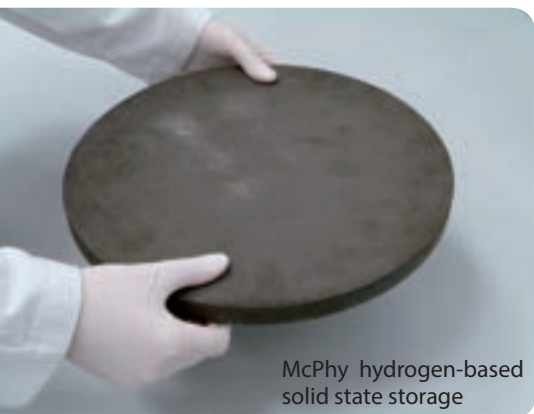
High-capacity hydrogen-based green-energy storage solutions for grid balancing



The problem

The increasing energy demand and the rising penetration of decentralized fluctuating renewable energy sources (RESs) often situated in areas with **weaker power connection (at the end of Medium Voltage/Low Voltage lines)** are challenging power networks stability, security and congestion level, due to the electricity surplus available in periods of low demand. Moreover the actual decoupled operation of energy distribution networks (electricity, gas, heating) results in inefficient energy supply and calls for holistic interconnected energy networks management.

Hydrogen energy storage is a promising way to **enable a paradigm shift from "power" to "energy"** Smart Grids, where larger **flexibility** allows to integrate large shares of RESs, thanks to its high potential for integrated operation of **different energy infrastructures**.



McPhy hydrogen-based solid state storage

The system

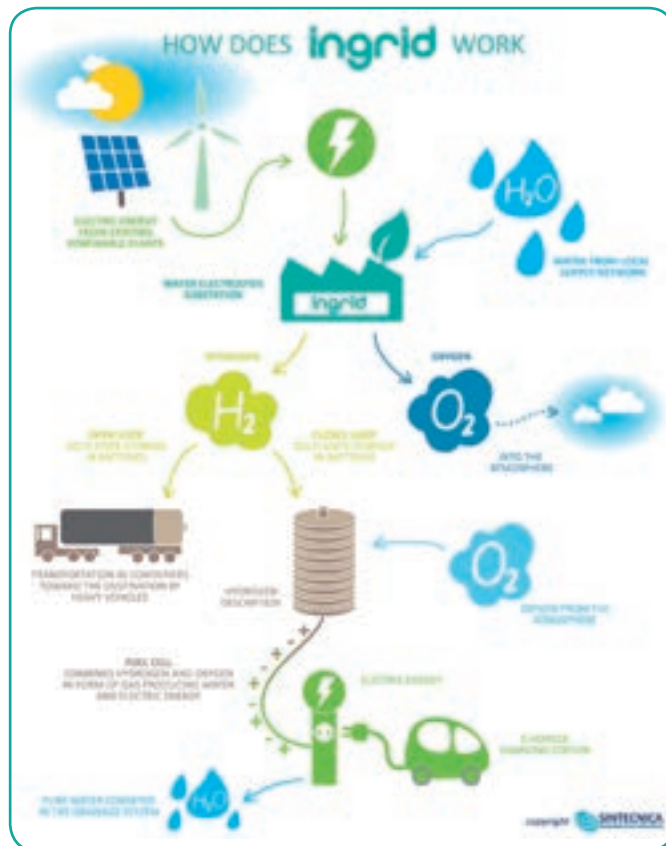
INGRID 23,9 MEUR R&D European project has been demonstrating technical and economic viability of **Solid-state Hydrogen Energy Storage System** aimed at operating a **Hybrid Multi-Network Energy Management System**, which integrates electricity and hydrogen networks operation.

The INGRID system includes a 1,2 MW water electrolyzer connected to the primary power substation, working as controllable load while producing hydrogen to alleviate power network congestion; a magnesium metal hydrides solid storage subsystem, which stores the hydrogen generated by the electrolyzer at higher volumetric density than compressed or liquid gas; and the energy delivery subsystem, consisting of a fuel cell serving electric cars chargers or providing Low Voltage regulation services to power distributors (**Closed Loop Operation**). Otherwise, the hydrogen surplus is made available to the hydrogen value chain either injected into nearby gas distribution networks (**Open Loop Operation**).

The **Energy Storage Management (EMS)** is in charge for the optimal allocation of hydrogen surplus through the Closed and/or Open Loop modalities, depending from technical/operational constraints or economic opportunity.

The facility

The INGRID technology is about to be demonstrated through the deployment and operation of a 39 MWh hydrogen energy storage facility with more than 1 ton of stored hydrogen in the Italian Puglia region, where over 3.500 MW of solar, wind and biomass are already installed. The optimal



operation of the facility is expected to relieve the congestion of the MV branch of the power network.

Consortium

Engineering Ingegneria Informatica (ITA, Coordinator); ARTI – Puglia Regional Agency for Technology and Innovation (ITA), Enel Distribuzione, RSE (ITA); McPhy (FRA); Hydrogenics (BEL); Tecnalia (SPA).



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EESC pushes for 'European energy dialogue'

The EU's future climate and energy policy should be realigned to better take into account security of supply, economic competitiveness, as well as the social consequences of rising energy prices. Climate change is our foremost, long term challenge, but it has to be connected to economic competitiveness and affordability for both enterprises and consumers. The European economic and social committee (EESC) therefore welcomes the commission's climate and energy package for 2030 and broadly agrees with the proposals. Europe needs to provide a stable, long-term framework for investment and a level playing field for industry within the EU and globally. The EESC supports, for example, the target of a 40 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, as well as the common target of at least 27 per cent for the share of renewable energy sources. On some issues, however, we want to go further.

The EESC urges decisive action without delay, including finally ensuring the full functioning of the internal energy market. Consultation, coordination, and cooperation between member states must be strengthened and even made mandatory before the making of far-reaching decisions. Decisive action by the EU needs to be taken to decrease

the very high energy dependence on unreliable sources. A genuine European energy community would help to increase energy security and reduce prime costs. Moreover, the EESC insists that a level playing field is set by phasing out harmful subsidies and scrutinising public support schemes. We also need to consider investments in other energy sources including nuclear energy or exploitation of unconventional hydrocarbons through fracking when member states decide to do so – as part of their right to decide on their energy mix. Full transparency, highest security standards, and comprehensive information of the population concerned have to be guaranteed.

Europe has a huge potential, and with the agreed three per cent of the GDP increased budget for research and development, energy efficiency techniques should have top priority. We have to consider sectorial targets for energy efficiency, for instance in the building sector, in order to tap the huge potential of this most promising way towards energy and climate policy goals.

The debate on European energy policy has gradually shifted from purely technical and economic aspects to questions of social justice, inclusion, price and citizens' participation. This is a very positive development. The EESC has been a

Pierre Jean Coulon says member states and civil society need to 'talk to each other' about where the EU's energy comes from and how it is used, now and in the future

"The debate on European energy policy has gradually shifted from purely technical and economic aspects to questions of social justice, inclusion, price and citizens' participation"



frontrunner in addressing such concerns: In our opinions, we have repeatedly called for more Europe in the fight against energy poverty, in what has to be a joint European strategy in the face of growing social exclusion due to the rising cost of energy.

Stakeholders and wider society should have regular opportunities to influence national and European energy strategies and their implementation. When designing the proposed national energy plans, member states shall involve civil society which brings in views from consumers and producers similarly. Small and medium sized enterprises already play an important role in energy efficiency measures, consumer groups are engaged in various energy savings actions. We need to talk to each other about where energy comes from and how we use it, now and in the future. This conversation needs to involve all aspects of energy supply and use. This is why the EESC is promoting the European energy dialogue as a new dialogue and cooperation platform able to bridge across member states' different energy policies.

The EESC considers the EU's emission trading system (ETS) a key instrument in EU climate and energy policy and supports the proposal to establish a market stability reserve aimed at achieving both the EU's climate objectives and maintaining our

industrial competitiveness. In this respect, the committee backs EU-wide support measures to avoid carbon leakage by energy-intensive industries – industries that could otherwise move abroad in search of laxer emissions controls. In the transition to a low carbon economy, the proceeds of ETS auctions should be used to support efficient businesses and clean technologies. At the global level, the EESC considers it essential that the EU makes every effort to create a fully-fledged international carbon market, spreading efficient allowance trading mechanisms, open to all major partners across the world.

The international development of climate policy has to be on top not only of the European agenda, but also internationally. Europe can provide global leadership in securing an ambitious international agreement at next year's crucial conference of the parties to the United Nations framework convention on climate change in France. This requires speaking with one voice. Only then Europe's influence and leadership is big enough to hopefully also achieve a change internationally.

From the outcome of this conference our future political framework on climate and energy policy will be largely influenced and determined. The EU alone cannot save the planet – a comprehensive agreement is therefore paramount for the future of our globe. ★



"The EU alone cannot save the planet"

Pierre Jean Coulon is EESC co-rapporteur on making consumers real players in the energy market

Drinking is not a crime. **Rape is.**



No matter how much she's drunk...
No matter what she's wearing...
No matter if you've already kissed...
... sex without consent is rape.

If there's any doubt about whether a woman has drunk too much to give consent, assume she hasn't given it.

Responsibility for rape will always lie with the rapist.

Find your local Rape Crisis Centre at www.rapecrisis.org.uk
or call Rape Crisis freephone helpline 0808 802 9999

(12n-2.30pm / 7-9.30pm every day)

eMobility more than 'just electric cars'

Making European transport more efficient requires a firm EU commitment to sustainable mobility, argues Jos Dings

The Ukraine crisis highlights the urgent need to rethink Europe's energy use and dependence. Two thirds of EU oil use is in transport, and transport itself is still almost 100 per cent dependent on oil. A third of the EU's oil comes from Russia, entailing a massive capital transfer of around €100bn a year. All this burning oil has led to transport becoming (on a par with energy) the highest emitting sector, responsible for 32 per cent of the EU's CO₂ emissions and growing year on year.

It has become politically correct to say that energy efficiency is a triple win for climate, people and the economy – but it remains true. EU legislation to make cars more fuel efficient entered into force six years ago. Carmakers have to make cars 30 per cent more fuel-efficient by 2021 and the results are already on display, with cleaner models coming in all the time and mainstream models becoming more fuel efficient too. It's now time to fix the next step of standards for 2025, so that industry can start preparing and investing in the next generation of technologies and cars.

Fuel economy standards for lorries are also overdue – the US, China and Japan already have them in place. We cannot afford to fall behind in this global technology race which brings so many benefits.

We also need to think more strategically on how we can best organise the transition towards sustainable eMobility. Electric mobility has to be more than just replacing today's fleet of private cars with more electric ones. The eMobility boom is already upon us: for every electric car sold in 2013, Europeans bought 62 eBikes. Our railways, metros and trams are already largely electric, and there are more and more buses. Smart mobility apps make different mobility choices much more attractive. As well as this, young people are less interested in buying cars and keener on biking, public transport and car-

sharing, which lends itself very well to eVehicles. We need coordination to make sure that the end result is more than the sum of all the hundreds of eMobility initiatives that are taking place across Europe.

On trains, Europe has ambitious targets for the modal share for rail in 2030 and 2050, but there is little progress beyond better rules for cohesion funds. The EU's unhealthy obsession with high-speed rail drains funds from more cost-effective conventional rail projects where there is far more passenger demand, and risks converting rail from a service for people into a subsidy for business. Passengers seem to get forgotten during the in-fighting over rail liberalisation, which distracts from common-sense policies, like ensuring cross-border tickets can be bought anywhere, online. These common sense policies will surely win over more passengers and save more emissions than pouring billions into a few prestige projects.

Arguably the biggest anomaly in the EU's transport system, and its policy, is aviation. The EU still forbids national governments from taxing aviation fuel and levying VAT on tickets.

These prohibitions are both unacceptable and unnecessary. But the EU also turns a blind eye to subsidising aviation through state aid for airports and airlines and generous (lax) enforcement of these rules. All this costs each European taxpayer around €150 per year, whether they fly or not.

The EU enters into a new five year period with a clear choice: either be at the forefront of smart and sustainable mobility, or fall behind and pay the – oily – bill. ★

"The eMobility boom is already upon us: for every electric car sold in 2013, Europeans bought 62 eBikes"



Jos Dings is director of Transport and Environment

EUSEW programme

Tuesday 24 June 2014

de Gasperi

09:00-13:00

Covenant of Mayors, Smart Cities & Communities, and ManagEnergy at the service of energy users

15:00-16:30

Energy Efficiency Policy – A Policy for Security of Supply, Competitiveness and Sustainability

16:45-18:00

The Way Forward for European Energy Efficient Product Policy

18:00-19:00

Awards ceremony

Jenkins

09:00-10:45

Impact of weak institutions and corruption on energy investment in Southeast Europe

11:15-13:00

EU and MENA: Market potentials and opportunities for synergy

14:30-16:15

A heating and cooling strategy for Europe – Euroheat & Power, COGEN Europe

16:45-18:30

Bon voyage: hitting the clean roads of Europe

Mansholt

09:00-10:45

PV and flexible distribution grid management – collective power for Europe

11:15-13:00

Tools to support the European Electricity Grids Initiative: The roll-out of smart grids

14:30-16:15

Are the 2030 RES targets achievable without energy storage?

16:45-18:30

Decarbonising road transport: the path to 2050

Wednesday 25 June

De Gasperi

09:00-13:00

The challenge of energy transition in the supply of heating and cooling for consumers and industry

14:30-18:30

A new vision of the retail energy market – the consumer at the centre

Jenkins

09:00-10:45

Financing energy renovation of buildings with Cohesion Policy funding

11:15-13:00

Quizzing the stakeholders: How to make energy efficient buildings more visible and more attractive to citizens

14:30-16:15

Towards a pragmatic energy (and resource) efficiency policy for buildings along the supply chain

16:45-18:30

Energy systems integration – a global innovation challenge

Mansholt

09:00-10:45

Community energy: accelerating sustainable energy roll-out in Europe

11:15-13:00

From 2020 to 2030 and beyond: How to bridge the gap and cut costs?

14:30-16:15

Pan-EU conformity assessment of energy related products: The key role of European Commission co-funded projects

16:45-18:30

Europe's energy label: modernising the success story

Thursday 26 June 2014

de Gasperi

09:00-13:00

Renewable energy: A major player on the 2030 energy market –

14:30-18:30

Energy efficiency (investments) – market evolution and prospects

Jenkins

09:00-10:45

Positive energy buildings – wishful thinking or (built) reality?

11:15-13:00

Teaming up with policy makers for a future EU nZEB building stock

14:30-16:15

The European Energy Performance of Properties Analysis – International cooperation for better transparency and investments in energy efficiency

16:45-18:30

Funding innovative low-carbon technologies: the NER 300 programme

Mansholt

09:00-10:45

Smart metering implementation in Europe: A year on

11:15-13:00

'Pull factors' in achieving a low carbon energy system: The role of consumers and regulators in enabling demand-side flexibility

14:30-16:15

Decentralised energy systems: Engaging citizens in Europe's energy future

16:45-18:30

Buy Smart+ green procurement in Europe ★



Energy consumption in buildings 'essential' to EU energy policy

With 40 per cent of European energy consumption taking place in buildings, moving towards sustainable construction and renovation is crucial, writes **Bogdan Atanasiu**

We spend most of our lives in buildings, either at our homes or at work, and in order to fulfil our needs we consume energy. Energy is used for heating or cooling the living-space, lighting, powering all the electrical and electronic equipment of the house. Therefore, energy is a key element for achieving high living standards.

Currently in the EU, energy consumption in buildings accounts for around 40 per cent of total energy consumption and generates around 37 per cent of the overall carbon emissions. As estimated, by 2050 three quarters of actual buildings will be still in place while one quarter will

represent new buildings constructed from today onwards. Therefore, energy consumption in buildings became an essential part of all strategic lines of the EU's energy policy in terms of energy security, competitiveness and environmental and climate respectfulness.

"The sustainability of buildings becomes a stringent need in the context of a fast growing population in an era of resource scarcity"

In brief, the building sector is an important element in all the EU's long-term strategies, having set the following indicative objectives. First, it is necessary to properly address the high "energy efficiency potential in new and existing buildings", which is identified by the energy roadmap 2050 as being key to enhancing energy security and competitiveness. Second, it is important to reach



Over the last decade, building policies in the EU increased in their scope and coverage and are moving towards an integrated approach taking into account the energy, environmental, financial and comfort related aspects. Specifically, the recast energy performance of buildings directive stands as an important milestone for building policies, requiring all EU member states to introduce energy performance requirements for buildings and building elements both for new and renovation of existing buildings, to uniform approaches and methodology for setting these requirements and to construct only near-zero-energy buildings from 2020 onwards. The recast energy efficiency directive (EED) completes the legislative framework for reaching the EU 2020 target of saving 20 per cent of the union's primary energy consumption by 2020 compared to projections. Among others, the EED ask the EU countries to prepare long-term renovation plans and to foster the energy renovation of public buildings.

The existence of a long-term renovation framework will provide, on one hand, the necessary investment predictability for building owners and investors, and, on the other hand, will increase the macroeconomic benefits and eventually lead to the transformation into a sustainable building sector. Nevertheless, the EU legislation can be still improved. A specific energy efficiency target by 2030 that would include binding measures for buildings may consolidate actual progress while facilitating the definitive step forward towards sustainability.

the decarbonisation goals of 88 per cent to 91 per cent by 2050 as identified by the EU roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy. And finally, to radically reduce the use of resources as buildings are identified by the roadmap to a resource efficient Europe as being among the three key sectors – together with food and transport – responsible for 70-80 per cent of all environmental impacts.

By using existing energy efficiency technologies, we can reduce our energy demand, while the use of renewable energy may implicitly contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions from our buildings. Moreover, buildings-related activities have a significant impact in economic and social terms, influencing many industries and quality of life for citizens. On top of these, the sustainability of buildings becomes a stringent need in the context of a fast growing population in an era of resource scarcity. Consequently, buildings policies should address the complexity of the problem while supporting economic development and providing societal benefits.

“Currently in the EU, energy consumption in buildings accounts for around 40 per cent of total energy consumption and generates around 37 per cent of the overall carbon emissions”

However, acknowledging the variety in buildings culture, traditions and climate throughout European countries and following the subsidiarity principle, the EU's energy policies don't ask for a standard common approach in implementing them, but require the member states to draw up specific implementation rules adapted to national context. Therefore, there are important discrepancies between implementation approaches among the EU countries. On top of everything, implementation of buildings legislation become key for reaching the anticipated

results and for making a 'healthy' progress towards a sustainable building sector. Consequently, member states have to undertake more significant actions, by improving the regulatory, administrative and investment environment.

Moving towards sustainable buildings in the EU it is not an arbitrary request but a common and at the same time particular interest of each member states. The transition has already started and it will soon become even more evident that sustainability generates vigorous economic development and social welfare. Europe is not rich enough to afford cheap and temporary measures. ★

Bogdan Atanasiu is head of research at the buildings performance institute Europe (BPIE)

CYPRUS BOUNCING BACK STRONGER

Every challenge brings forth new opportunities. 2013 undoubtedly posed significant challenges for Cyprus, however the country approached the situation as an opportunity for a new beginning. Prospects are now looking up as the country transitions into a new phase, veering towards stability and fiscal consolidation while examining new engines of growth as *investors continue to show confidence in the country.*

Bouncing back stronger

In its attempt to build a stronger future for the country, the government of Cyprus has implemented a series of measures and reforms to boost the economy and attract investments through modernising legislation, promoting development projects, diversifying tourism, introducing investment, tax and employment incentives while also speeding up licensing procedures.

The government's efforts are now bearing fruit and have been acknowledged on an international level. In its first four reviews since the bailout, the Troika confirmed that Cyprus's reform programme "is on track" and repeatedly expressed its satisfaction with the implementation of the economic adjustment programme.

To this end, the Cyprus economy has received three upgrades by credit rating agencies in a period of just a few months, while the recession is expected to ease in 2014, and much needed growth is set to return as early as 2015.

The government has also embarked on a privatisation plan, which covers a wide range of state-owned entities performing commercial operations, and for which significant interest from international investors is expected.

Furthermore, Cyprus is soon expected to have an integrated casino resort that will enhance and enrich the country's tourism product, thereby attracting not only FDI, but also, more tourists.

Cyprus retains unique expertise and service capability to support investments across many sectors including shipping, tourism, large-scale development projects, banking and financial services, the investment funds industry, education, health, research and development, and of course renewable energy. The country's highly educated and professional people are what make the difference.

To add to these, the discovery of natural gas reserves in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone creates immense prospects for investment and cooperation in the energy field, having already created a new impetus to encourage opportunities for cooperation between Cypriot and foreign enterprises. As such, the country appears destined to play a vital and strategic role as the energy hub of the Eastern Mediterranean.

After a long journey, Cyprus became a full member of the EU in 2004 and in 2008 joined the Eurozone. Accession to the EU was a natural choice for Cyprus, driven by its culture, civilisation and history, as well as its unwavering commitment to the values of democracy, freedom and justice. EU membership helped Cyprus to develop into an international quality business centre. The country has now moved into a new phase, reshaping its economy and creating an improved and more diverse economic model which will be more solid, resilient and flexible, allowing for sustainable growth and shared prosperity.

For more information and guidance on investments in Cyprus please contact Invest Cyprus at:
tel: +357 22 441133 | **Fax:** +357 22 441134
email: info@investcyprus.org.cy
website: www.investcyprus.org.cy



Invest
Cyprus

EU must pick 'best candidate' for commission president

Most readers of the Parliament Magazine probably haven't even heard of Ally MacLeod or don't know much about the humiliating failure of the Scottish 1978 World Cup campaign in Argentina. Perhaps before reading any further you should get Google loaded up as there are likely to be a few references that are fairly obscure outside the world of Caledonia. The wounds of Argentina '78 still run deep in the Scottish psyche. It was a turning point of sorts for Scottish football that led to major changes in the way the sport was managed and perhaps even more fundamentally, the failed campaign changed the relationship between ordinary Scots and the then footballing establishment. Drawing parallels between that debacle and the results of the European elections is tenuous at best and as dodgy as an Alan Rough perm at worst (told you that you'd need Google), but sifting through the media coverage the day after the elections, it wasn't hard to think that perhaps somewhere along the line the EU elite had scored a number of own goals in the run up to the 2014 elections campaign.

Take the Spitzenkandidat process; was there ever any doubt that Jean-Claude Juncker, Martin Schulz and company would be substituted in injury time? Even before EU leaders began discussing the transfer market for the EU commission president last week, the legal uncertainty that surrounded the whole Spitzenkandidat campaign was as shaky as a Partick Thistle offside trap. Listening to Juncker proclaim that he "won" the elections wasn't as excruciatingly embarrassing as Scotland's defeat by footballing minnows Peru and a hapless draw with lowly Iran, but it's close. Juncker's humiliation by Angela Merkel, and the subsequent self-righteous outcry from many in the EU political bubble merely serves to highlight the delusional world that many in the European parliament elite and their pan-European political groups got themselves into with the idea that their winning candidate would automatically be chosen by member states as the next commission president.

"This time it's different", we were told. Martin Schultz would "knock the vote" (whatever that meant), →

The European parliament must listen to voters and change in order to 'restore pride' in EU, writes **Brian Johnson**

"It wasn't hard to think that perhaps somewhere along the line the EU elite had scored a number of own goals in the run up to the 2014 elections"





Juncker's 'experience' would somehow make up for the fact that nobody outside Luxembourg knew who he was. Voters would understand that they were voting for the next commission chief. Er... really? Let's face it, the Spitzenkandidat campaign has been as mortifying as Scotland's 78 'Ally's Army' World cup song. The team selection process was as convoluted and opaque as anything Sepp Blatter could devise. The televised debates were as dreary as a warm up match and the team, well, let's just say that their star players' striking skills weren't as good as their dribbling.

There's an infamous and discomfoting photo of the then Scottish manager Ally Macleod, sitting in a dugout, head in hands, wondering where it had all gone wrong. The current crop of EU leaders could do worse than take a moment to ponder that image and perhaps learn something from Scotland's failure. The EU has, in Scottish footballing parlance, been given a 'drubbing'. Many of its citizens, for a number of reasons, have lost faith in their star players and managers. The injury-time success of the Eurosceptics and the far-right in the European elections shouldn't really have surprised anyone. The previous EU team hadn't been playing well for quite some time. But the EU can and should look to counter the result of the elections by

fielding its best squad, by bringing in fresh blood and new tactics. It's perhaps time for those in the parliament and Europe's political parties to give up and retire their journey-men players and let the real managers pick the best candidate for European commission president.

Of course, the parliament still has a key position to play, for despite the fact that the Scottish team failed to win the World Cup, it was arguably the most talented squad ever fielded by Scotland. Parliament also has a talented squad, a bit reduced this time round, but still talented, with some senior players and a fresh crop of eager hopefuls. The parliament, like national football squads carry the hopes and dreams of its supporters. Even when the team is playing badly, true supporters stick with the team they believe in. But supporters also want their team to listen to their concerns and change tactics when necessary. That's what makes the best football teams into great ones.

Argentina in 1978 was a crisis moment for Scottish football, yet Archie Gemmill's goal against Holland has been rated as one of the best world cup goals ever, and went a long way in restoring pride to a demoralised team. Let's hope the new European parliament intake has a few Archie Gemmills waiting for their chance to score. ★

"The EU can and should look to counter the result of the elections by fielding its best squad, by bringing in fresh blood and new tactics"

Brian Johnson is managing editor of the Parliament Magazine



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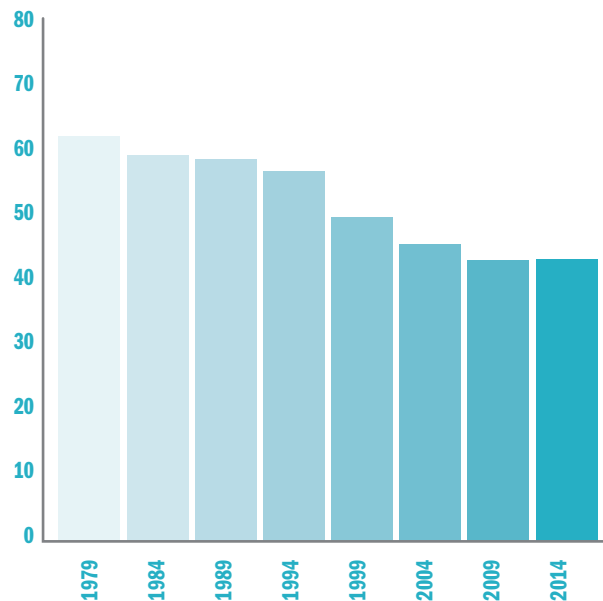
With the grappling among the various political groups still ongoing, the make-up of the parliament and the possible permutations of a workable majority in the form of a grand coalition are still firmly up in the air. In the last parliament it was possible for the EPP group to form alliances that provided a near-majority with ALDE, while the Liberals could also side with an S&D/Greens leftist coalition. In this legislature, however, EPP and S&D must unite for this to be the case. Despite the centre-right and the left being united in their pro-European stance, there are many policy pitfalls awaiting what will be at best a fractious working relationship, and at worst will be a potentially embarrassing and unifying political bunfight. Now more than ever, with Eurosceptics making key gains, the pro-EU forces must champion and demonstrate the conciliatory and cooperative nature of European politics.

Newly elected MEPs have until 23 June to form groups for the next parliamentary term and things are already starting to shift. The EFD is staring extinction in the face as its MEPs jump ship and go for membership of the ECR grouping, and, along with Marine Le Pen's newly formed EAF, are struggling to garner the required representation from at least seven member states necessary for a formal parliamentary grouping, with the increased funding and speaking time this entails in jeopardy. Stung by the relatively improved fortunes of Eurosceptic elements, the pro-EU forces in parliament appear to be closing ranks against overtures from the council to consider alternatives to self-proclaimed electoral victor and commission president in waiting Jean-Claude Juncker.

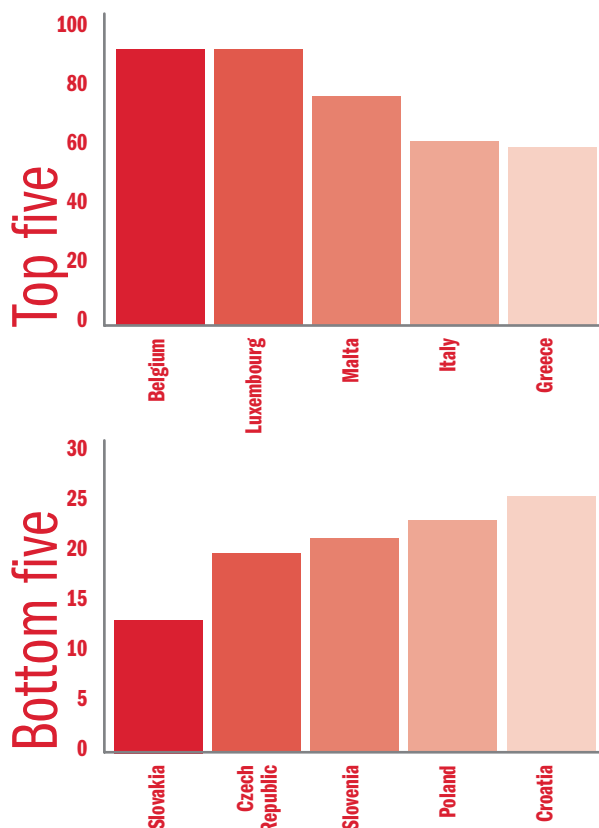
PES presidential hopeful Martin Schulz has been appointed the S&D group's official negotiator on the allocation of the EU executive's highest position, and the German deputy has publicly backed Juncker's "mandate to try to find a majority in the EU parliament", but at the same time warned that the Socialists would "only support a commission president ready to take up the fight against austerity".

Parliament's EPP group were quickest off the mark, having elected their new chair Manfred Weber in the middle of last week, immediately following this up with the appointment of 10 vice-chairs. With ALDE having already lost some members, and the Greens facing some minor internal schisms, the ECR and GUE-NGL are hoovering up all the members they can, and, with the Conservatives looking to flex their muscles in a possible kingmaker role, the potential for intrigue in the build up to the 23 June deadline is high. ★

European elections turnout



Member state turnout



Election winners by member state

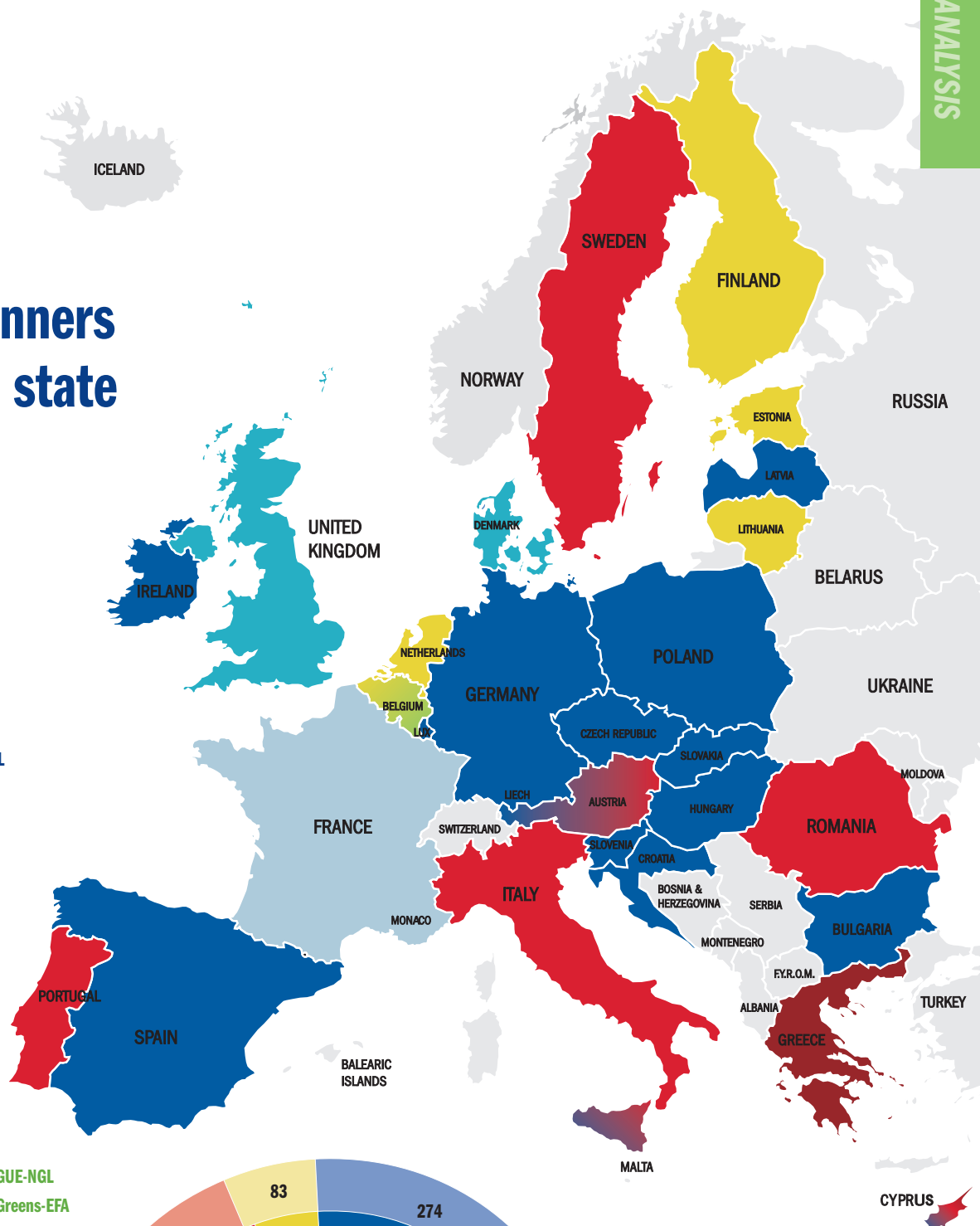
- GUE-NGL
- Greens-EFA
- S&D
- ALDE
- EPP
- ECR
- EFD
- EAF
- NI

Austria – EPP/S&D

Belgium – ALDE/Green

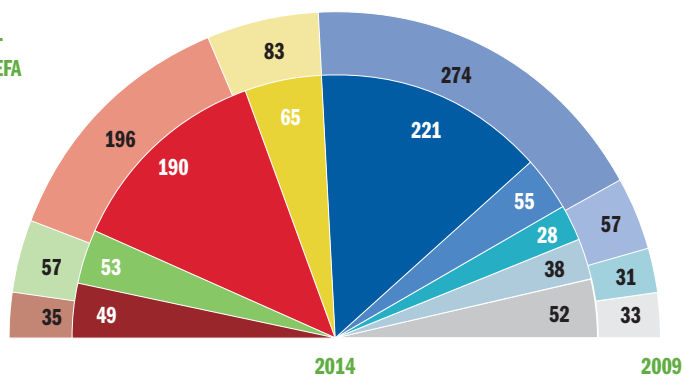
Cyprus – EPP/ S&D/GUE-NGL

Malta – EPP/S&D



Seat change

- GUE-NGL
- Greens-EFA
- S&D
- ALDE
- EPP
- ECR
- EFD*
- EAF*
- NI



Main parliamentary groups to form 'super grand coalition'

The new parliament will seek a majority through unity on common issues, but could face problems over divisive policy areas, says **Doru Frantescu**

While the dust is settling over the European elections, is the new European parliament preparing for its business as usual? The political groups are now in the process of appointing their leaders and negotiating the committees' chairmanship, as they usually do in this part of the electoral cycle. But how will things work once the effective, legislative work of the new parliament starts, now that around 30 per cent of its seats are occupied by members that are, albeit to different extents and for different reasons, sceptical about the European project?

The gains made by the nationalists and the so-called Eurosceptics raised a lot of eyebrows during election night and on the morning after, generating immense media interest even beyond EU borders. In fact, the concentration of the media and political commentators on this side of the story overshadowed the rest of the results, for example, the fact that the neck-and-neck competition between the Socialists and EPP was eventually won by the

latter, and as a result Jean-Claude Juncker is now in pole position for achieving the European commission presidency. This 'surprise' among some analysts is in itself rather surprising, as the polls indicated it already a few months before. PollWatch2014, a project developed by VoteWatch Europe in partnership with Burson-Marsteller/Europe Decides, has tracked the opinion polls in all 28 countries and published projections of the next balance of power in parliament, during the months before the elections. It correctly predicted 97 per cent of the seats won by each of the political groups, and 90 per cent of seats won by each national party. Even at the very first projection in February 2014 the figures were showing a clear shift towards the Eurosceptics and, as the weeks passed and new predictions were released, it became clear that things were not going to change much until election day.

"No matter how possible coalitions are put together, neither centre-right nor centre-left will have an absolute majority to pass its policy preferences"



What does this mean for the work of the new parliament? It probably means that the first few months of the term will be more agitated than usual, and that the outcomes of a number of dossiers are unpredictable. No matter how possible coalitions are put together, neither centre-right nor centre-left will have an absolute majority to pass its policy preferences. As a result, on issues where the big groups, EPP and S&D, can agree easier, such as constitutional affairs and EU budget, they are likely to go for a 'grand coalition'. Given that even though they only have a fragile absolute majority of around 55 per cent, they will probably invite the ALDE group to join them and create a pro-European 'super-grand coalition'.

However, on issues where the votes in the 2009-2014 term have shown that there are stronger ideological divisions, such as economic affairs, environment, energy, international trade, internal market, civil liberties and security, it is not clear who will get the upper hand, and therefore what the shape of the dossiers in these areas is going to be. The outcome of votes in these policy areas will depend on the internal discipline of the centrist groups which vary from one policy area to another, but also on the positions of the new national parties, including the Eurosceptic ones among which there is a great variety of opinions in the above-mentioned areas.

For the time being, VoteWatch Europe predicts that the European parliament positions will shift slightly away from strict budget discipline oriented doctrine and allow more public spending at the level of national governments. The support for the continuation of the transatlantic trade and investment partnership negotiations is unclear, as both the far-left and far-right oppose it, while the Greens/EFA and the S&D group have raised objections concerning environmental and social standards, and oppose the integration of the investor-state dispute settlement in the agreement. A majority of MEPs are likely to support the creation, also via EU-funded projects, of a pan-European energy infrastructure. Such a majority is likely to position in favour of continuation of nuclear energy in the EU energy mix, while supporting new measures for renewables, energy efficiency and CO2 reduction.

On the other hand, the stronger presence of MEPs that oppose strengthening the EU institutions will put migration more often on the parliament's agenda, and is likely to more often question the EU's external action as a whole. It remains to be seen to what extent these foreseen developments will be confirmed, when MEPs start their work – and VoteWatch Europe starts reporting on all of this. ★

"VoteWatch Europe predicts that the European parliament positions will shift slightly away from strict budget discipline oriented doctrine and allow more public spending at the level of national governments"



Doru Frantescu
is policy director
and co-founder of
VoteWatch Europe

Born to be drugged, hunted and shot. Fair game?

Kimba was a tiny cub, just two days old, when he was taken from his mother and hand-reared for the savage 'sport' of canned hunting. South Africa's canned hunting industry is the most extreme and barbaric form of trophy hunting, and it's on the rise. When the price is right, lions are locked in caged enclosures with nowhere to run – sometimes even drugged beforehand – and shot by trophy hunters. These blood-thirsty tourists are prepared to pay extravagant fees to kill a lion, and males with an impressive mane can fetch up to £37,000.

Kimba was one of the lucky ones. Although he'd already been offered as a trophy on the internet, we managed to secure his safety and he's now living as head of a pride at our LIONSROCK sanctuary.

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- ☐ £50 which could help pay for a complete health check for a lion on arrival at LIONSROCK
- ☐ £100 which could help towards the cost of transporting a lion to the safety of LIONSROCK
- OR my own choice of £ _____

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Regions have 'strategic role' to play in EU recovery

It is a pleasure to welcome the week of innovative regions in Europe (Wire) to Greece. Organised by Greece's national documentation centre, in collaboration with the general secretariat for research and technology, we believe that Wire is one of the most promising events held during the Greek EU council presidency.

Competitiveness and innovation have become key words again, especially now when the economic recession urgently calls for both national and regional initiatives to help cope with problems such as unemployment, the brain drain, poverty, climatic changes, low-cost energy. In every field of endeavour, we must focus on the aspects where value comes from new, innovative ideas. Innovation is a systemic procedure and takes place within the context of participation from a wide number of stakeholders – industry, research, national and local government.

Today, significant opportunities are created for recovery and regions have a strategic role to play. Regions should identify competitive areas of innovation potential through smart specialisation strategies (S3) and use all available resources – including the structural funds and European programmes such as Horizon 2020, Cosme, Interreg, coupled with the national strategic framework for research and innovation (NSRF) 2014–20 – to implement them for growth. The general secretariat for research and technology (GSRT) strongly supports regional stakeholders in this dynamic endeavour.

Our vision for 2020 is to restructure and strengthen the area of research, technology and innovation in order to become the key pillar for improv-

ing the competitiveness and productivity of Greek enterprises through the production, dissemination and integration of new knowledge and innovation in existing and new production systems and value chains. We hope to do this while addressing the new social and regional inequalities generated by the lack of access to new technology.

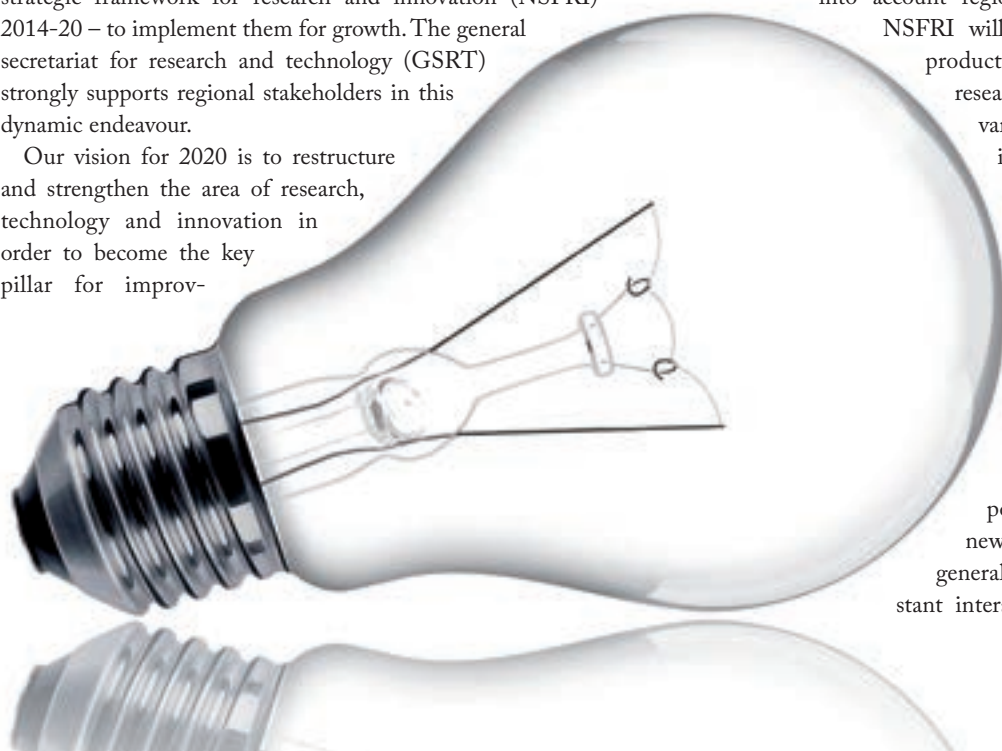
Our target is to mobilise the necessary resources so that all public and private research spending rises from 0.67 per cent of GDP in 2012, to 1.2 per cent in 2020. To achieve this goal, the funding of business R&D should be increased from 0.23 per cent of GDP in 2012 to around 0.38 per cent of GDP in 2020.

The NSRF 2014–2020 is based on the national research and innovation framework for smart specialisation taking into account regional perspectives. The

NSRF will fund major projects, productive partnerships and research organisations under various shapes – research infrastructures, clusters, partnerships, PPP – which will produce innovative products or services with high added value, linking with industry and business, creating sustainable jobs, exports (where possible), training of potential businesses to new technologies and will generally act as an area of constant interaction and application

"Our target is to mobilise the necessary resources so that all public and private research spending rises from 0.67 per cent of GDP in 2012, to 1.2 per cent in 2020"

Europe's regions must work to identify innovation potential and exploit it through smart specialisation strategies, writes **Christos Vasilakos**



of new knowledge in production.

The GSRT has already selected an initial set of priority areas at national level, with criteria such as: added value in the Greek economy, sustainability, job creation, scientific excellence and commercial potential. The priority areas are: agro-food, tourism and the experience industry in synergy with the creative industry, economic activities related to art, energy efficiency and renewable energy resources, ICT for health, tourism and emerging advanced technologies, technologies and services for environmental protection and sustainable development – including eco-innovation and blue economy, health products and services, pharmaceuticals, diagnostic products – including eHealth, transport and logistics. GSRT has initiated eight innovation platforms with wide participation from the private sector, the competent public authorities, and the research and academic organisations in order to discover the activities in these areas which with their interactions will support innovation among and between these sectors. In the development of these areas, emphasis will be given to the integration and development of key enabling technologies which can stimulate all sectors and productive activities, increasing productivity and added value.

These priority areas constitute the basis of a wide dialogue at national and regional level. At regional level, the Greek regions have been invited to participate in the S3 through a continuous entrepreneurial discovery process with all regional stakeholders. GSRT has embraced and supported the whole process through continuous policy guidance on research, technology and innovation issues and regular interaction with all stakeholders. Especially in the less favoured regions, the role of universities and research centres in unlocking their innovation potential is critical in the transformational approach to regional change.

Emphasis has also been given to the integration of research and innovation infrastructures, which constitute a major component of the European research area, to the S3, both at national and regional level. For the efficient implementation of the regional strategies and the development of a sustainable innovation ecosystem, GSRT fosters: clear provisions for stimulating synergies between national and European funds, interregional collaboration for mutual shared interest and knowledge-based growth, diffusion of research results and knowledge re-use in – priority area, in regional production systems and critical sectors of the country, and transparent indicators for evidence-based innovation policies, monitoring and evaluation.

“Our vision for 2020 is to restructure and strengthen the area of research, technology and innovation in order to become the key pillar for improving the competitiveness and productivity of Greek enterprises”



Christos Vasilakos
is general secretary
for research and
technology at Greece's
ministry of education
and religious affairs

Wire 2014 will cover important thematic areas, such as the optimal design and implementation of smart specialisation strategies to counterbalance the impact of the financial recession, the adaptation of policies to territorial specificities, business contribution to the regional ecosystem for growth and creation, innovative business transforming the regional environment, open data or regional innovation, the role of clusters in regional development, scientific excellence as competitive advantage of regions and synergies between research institutions local government and knowledge intensive companies. ★

Cohesion policy ‘strengthening’ EU innovation

Cohesion policy programmes play a crucial role in strengthening Europe’s innovation and research potential with an overall allocation of €53.2bn to ‘core’ innovation and research priorities in the period 2007-13. A considerable amount of resource has been dedicated to the physical development of research infrastructures and activities in business or science parks, incubators and centres of competence. In addition, soft measures have also been supported like technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks, assistance to SMEs in research and technological development (RTD) and eco-innovation uptake and developing human potential in research and innovation (R&I). This support contributes to transforming knowledge into growth and better jobs with concrete targets to be achieved through supporting more than 80,000 RTD projects and creating above 30,000 research jobs.

The reform of cohesion policy for 2014-20 will also ensure maximum impact on boosting research and innovation at national and regional levels.

To help Europe make a sustainable recovery from the economic crisis we need actions and investments that help countries and regions to unlock new growth potential and to raise their game when it comes to innovation, productivity and competitiveness. We have therefore earmarked €110bn for innovation investments – close to one third of the €351.8bn cohesion policy funds for the next seven years. This money will be spent on RTD and innovation, ICT, competitiveness of small and medium-sized businesses, and the shift towards a low-carbon economy.

The introduction of the smart specialisation concept in the strategic planning of EU member states and regions has been a key factor in aligning the European regional development fund (ERDF) with other growth policy measures through intelligent policy design. It is also a tool to achieve a higher effectiveness and strategic relevance, as well as increased efficiency of the EU cohesion policy support to research and development and innovation. The approach was triggered by including smart specialisation strategies as an ex-ante conditionality for investment priorities under RTD and innovation for all member states.

The common provisions regulation for the European structural and investment fund endorsed the proposal of the →

Charlina Vitcheva explains how the European commission’s regional policy has contributed towards innovation and growth in the regions

“The introduction of the smart specialisation concept in the strategic planning of EU member states and regions has been a key factor in aligning the European regional development fund with other growth policy measures through intelligent policy design”





specialisation strategies can unleash economic transformation through modernisation, diversification or radical innovation in all regions of the union.

This is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, but rather an innovation-driven, place-based, entrepreneurial process. It targets the economic transformation of EU regions towards higher added value and more knowledge intensive activities. That is why we have asked all member states and their regions to develop smart specialisation strategies and made this a condition for receiving funding from the new programmes under the ERDF.

Each member state and region can define, through their smart specialisation strategy, their priority investment agenda for knowledge-based jobs and growth. This opens up excellent opportunities for joining forces and for coordination between regional and national bodies and across borders, as well as exploiting synergies between different European and national instruments to enhance Europe's global competitiveness and industrial renewal.

In the coming years, the commission will support action plans to develop and implement the remaining regional innovation smart specialisation strategies, support the regions and member states in their efforts to strengthen the inter-regional and trans-national cooperation on smart specialisation fields in order to achieve critical mass, complementarity and the transformation of value-chains and internationalisation clusters (thematic smart specialisation platforms), monitor the implementation of the research, innovation and smart specialisation strategies of the member states and regions and strongly support cooperation across borders. ★

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[†] World Forest Resources, 1953 and UN FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010

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'Knowledge-based economy' promotes EU regional development

This summer in Athens, the regional dimension of innovation is coming into focus. Athens hosts the 'week of innovative regions in Europe 2014' (Wire) which is organised by the national documentation centre of Greece (EKT) and the European commission, in collaboration with the general secretariat for research and technology, under the auspices of Greece's EU council presidency. Following the success of previous conferences, Wire 2014 will bring together leading agents in the field of policymaking and business to share knowledge, experience and enlightening discussions on the key priorities for research and innovation policies in the new programming period.

The launch of the Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation, and the new EU cohesion policy for 2014-2020 are timed excellently for this year's Wire. The 2014 edition of Wire takes place as the EU adopts a new perspective on regional policy for research and innovation, one which relies on smart specialisation strategies to eliminate innovation disparities in Europe and promotes cooperation and synergies that will lead to a new research and development landscape. The novel approach to innovation policy in European regions requires the direct involvement of regional authorities and innovation players in the policy design process and the adaptation of strategies to local contexts, thus it is highly dependent on the capacity of regional institutions to coordinate and facilitate interventions and to strengthen regional research capacities.

In this context, key actors, such as EKT, are placed at the very heart of the strategy design and implementation process. EKT has a long tradition of excellence in supporting research, education and business communities, and a mission to enable access to knowledge and facilitate research, development and innovation. As a strategic partner and essential building block of the European research area, EKT undertakes activities and projects that contribute to the production, transfer and diffusion of knowledge and experience between regions.

The production of science indicators and metrics contributes to the formation of evidence-based policies and seeks to provide the adequate incentives for the development of effective collaborations among all stakeholders in the innovation value chain. In this phase, EKT highlights a growing need for coordinated strategies to produce and exploit knowledge based capital so that Europe can address the economic turnaround, especially in the

countries of southern Europe and can exploit the opportunities for growth and innovation that effective management of open knowledge create.

During the two day conference in Athens, regional authorities are invited to share their experience and best practices in research and innovation strategies' utilisation of EU funds and discuss how to build and implement successful regional innovation strategies and synergies. The conference will highlight the role of a knowledge-based economy in promoting regional development and the role of science and technology indicators and metrics in designing, planning and measuring evidence-based regional policies. It is also expected to produce recommendations, feedback and proposals on the interaction of different instruments for addressing the widening innovation divide among European regions, as well as guidelines on open innovation and knowledge diffusion for efficient regional policies.

Wire 2014 will build on the outcomes of previous conferences to provide a stimulating and fruitful forum for the investigation of the dynamics of regional performance that allows some regions to grow more rapidly than others, and will also provide a starting point for the exploration of the new role of regions in reshaping innovation. ★

Wire 2014 aims to build upon previous conferences and provide a 'stimulating and fruitful forum' for regional innovation, says **Evi Sachini**

Evi Sachini is director of Greece's national documentation centre



"The novel approach to innovation policy in European regions requires the direct involvement of regional authorities and innovation players in the policy design process and the adaptation of strategies to local contexts"

Research and innovation needed to reduce regional GDP gap

Richard Tuffs says stronger synergies between regional and research funding programmes are needed to boost growth and innovation across Europe

Since 2010, the Week of innovative regions in Europe, or Wire, has been established as the most significant European forum dedicated to regional strategies, innovation and development. Wire is important because it is one of the few conferences where research and innovation is discussed from a regional perspective. Thus for regions, each year Wire provides not just a focal point on state-of-the-art thinking on regional research and innovation strategies, but also an excellent opportunity for regional actors to network and exchange best practices.

This year in Athens, the Wire 2014 conference is hosted by the Greek EU council presidency and is organised by the national documentation centre of Greece and the European commission, in collaboration with the general secretariat for research and technology. The conference will have a specific focus on the recently launched 'Horizon 2020' programme, and the new regulation for the European structural and investment funds and smart specialisation strategies announced within the first semester of 2014.

In Athens, the fifth Wire conference will examine the new European research and innovation framework and then discuss how regions can maximise impact from their smart specialisation strategies. The conference will also discuss how business can contribute to driving regional innovation ecosystems and shed light on the new territorial cooperation agenda starting in 2015. Coupled to these classic areas of interest to regions, sessions on open data, metrics and monitoring tools and knowledge re-use and entrepreneurship will complete a packed two-day conference.

The conference comes at an important time for regions. Although there are signs that Europe is slowly exiting from the crisis, the speed of the exit varies from region to region. It is accepted that there is a correlation between regional innovation and GDP growth. Therefore, in order to reduce the gap between regions in terms of GDP, all regions, but particularly those categorised as less-developed, need to improve their regional research and innovation ecosystems. This means stronger synergies at the regional level between structural funds and research and innovation programmes at the European level such as Horizon 2020.

The synergies debate is not new but it is gaining momentum and all regions are facing up to the difficult task of taking the



"Although there are signs that Europe is slowly exiting from the crisis, the speed of the exit varies from region to region"

debate from Brussels and implementing it on the ground as new operational programmes are being approved and the first calls for Horizon 2020 have just passed. Wire V will give all regions present the opportunity to benefit from sharing best practice and how to avoid the barriers and pitfalls in the process. 'Synergies' is becoming the buzz word of 2014 but interestingly enough it was one of the key demands of the first Wire conference in Granada in 2010. The conclusions from Granada included a plea for more synergies between EU programmes, more simplification, smart specialisation and strategies for multi-level governance – all of which have since led to the introduction of active policy measures.

So the Wire conference does have an influence on shaping policy and this year in Athens will be no exception as the conference will have the opportunity of putting forward some 'Athens ambitions' for 2015 as Europe welcomes the new commission and the mid-term review of Europe 2020 strategy. ★

Find out more about Wire 2014 at www.wire2014.eu/contact/ and the EKT at www.ekt.gr/en/

Richard Tuffs is director of ERRIN



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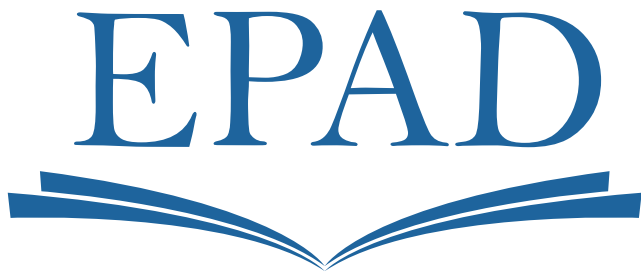


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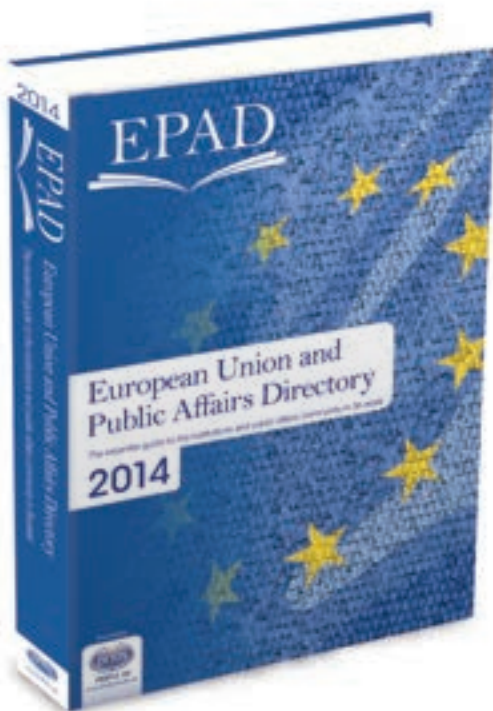
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Wire conference mobilises 'unique community'

We were delighted to host the 'week of innovative regions in Europe' (Wire) 2013 conference in Cork last summer under the auspices of Ireland's EU council presidency. Opened by Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, European commissioner for research, innovation and science, and Seán Sherlock, Ireland's minister of state for research and innovation, it gathered 300 delegates from 20 countries and focused on aspects such as regions and competitive advantage; regional policy in an international context and putting strategies to work. It was an exciting time, occurring at the final stages of the design and legislative process for the European Union's funding programme, Horizon 2020, when crucial decisions were being made that would shape the 2014-2020 term.

Regions and competitive advantage addressed the place-based mobilisation of talent by matching research and innovation capabilities with business needs and capacities. It also considered Horizon 2020, smart specialisation, and closing the innovation divide in Europe. At the conference, we summed it up as 'focusing on the implementation zone', a simple summary but one that can be challenging to achieve for regions in their initial steps to differentiate themselves.

Regional policy in an international context focused on the selection of a few priorities on the basis of specialisation and integration on international value chains and the role of cities' and regions' solutions to societal challenges of global significance identified in Horizon 2020. It was all about the need to be outward looking – building exports for example.

Putting strategies to work considered issues relating to critical mass and the need to provide arenas for cross-cutting links between sectors which drive specialised technological diversification. It also examined the role of collaborative leadership where efficient innovation systems operate as a collective endeavour based on partnerships between private and public entities and syner-

gies between funding instruments from the EU, national and regional policies. It highlighted the knowledge base, and in this case the 'community of practice' which was brought together by the Wire conference, with the region at its centre. It was exciting to be part of such a unique community, which brings together European commission staff, policymakers, researchers and enterprises that don't normally mix outside their own immediate sectoral interests.

Here in Ireland, Wire 2013 was a great opportunity to directly engage with the regional and business communities, bringing them together with national and European stakeholders, including public organisations, policymakers, research communities and enterprises to address, develop and progress the strengthening of regional ecosystems in the areas of research, technological development and innovation. The knowledge we gained at Wire 2013 has fed in to the development of Ireland's research and innovation strategy for smart specialisation in the months after the conference as we prepared for the next round of European structural and investment funds. Indeed, Ireland has even joined the joint research centre's S3 platform since then, a crucial step in the strategy's development and implementation.

I'm looking forward to chairing the Wire 2014 session on business driving regional innovation. We have an exciting line up with speakers who should give us fresh perspectives on regions we haven't seen at Wire before – from companies in Greece and Norway to regional representatives in Andalucía – and commission representatives bringing

us the latest news on EU policy developments. I wish the organisers every success and look forward to engaging with the Wire community of practice in Athens and in the future. ★

Wire 2013 provided Ireland with a 'great opportunity' to directly engage with all innovation stakeholders, writes **Imelda Lambkin**



"The knowledge we gained at Wire 2013 has fed into the development of Ireland's research and innovation strategy for smart specialisation"

Imelda Lambkin was Enterprise Ireland's 'week of innovative regions in Europe' (Wire) 2013 organiser

Shared knowledge will boost EU regional innovation

The period 2014-2020 presents Europe with a 'unique chance' for interregional cooperation to play a leading role in innovation policies, argues **Nicolas Singer**

Very often, regions face similar challenges. They can save a lot of time and money if they look more closely at experiences from elsewhere. Learning about how others tackle similar issues can help regions adopt new approaches and improve their policies. That is what interregional cooperation is, it's not about reinventing the wheel.

From 2007-2013, over 14,000 organisations applied to INTERREG IVC. Innovation was a popular topic from the very start. Out of 204 approved projects, there are 39 on innovation, involving 395 partners from 26 EU member states and Norway. These projects address a wide range of issues related to innovation, from technology transfers or cluster support to commercial use of research or the triple helix. Thanks to the projects, more than 1100 staff members of public authorities have already built up their professional capacity and expertise. The project partners transferred 63 good practices among their regions and improved 75 policies in the field of research and innovation.

Innovation will remain a key topic under the future interregional cooperation programme. One fourth of its budget, approximately €80m, is dedicated to this topic. In terms of actions, INTERREG Europe will continue supporting the 'traditional' projects, in which a limited number of regions exchange and transfer their experiences in a specific field of regional development. But the programme will also develop a new type of action called 'policy learning platforms'. Following the example of the smart specialisation strategies (S3) platform of Seville, INTERREG Europe platforms will optimise policy learning for all interested regions in Europe including those that are not involved in the projects.

The 2014-2020 period presents a unique chance for interregional cooperation to play a greater role in the EU cohesion policy in general and in regional innovation policies in particular. First, the focus of interregional cooperation has shifted. During the past 20 years, interregional cooperation was aimed at improving regional development policies in general. Now, EU regulation requires interregional cooperation to improve cohesion policy specifically. In other words, INTERREG Europe is there primarily to make the implementation of structural funds programmes, particularly those for the investment for

growth and jobs, more effective. Furthermore, the concentration principle developed in the regulation established that a bulk of structural funds is channelled into only a few priorities, one of them being innovation. The fact that all regions in Europe now have to work on similar policy fields greatly improves the opportunities for exchange and transfer of experience. Finally, cooperation plays an important role in the concept of S3. Getting inspiration from other regions and ensuring effective benchmarking are key elements of a good S3.

Yet, there are some challenges interregional cooperation will face in the future. One of them is INTERREG Europe's ability to reach the bodies in charge of structural funds, more precisely the managing authorities of the investment for growth and jobs goal programmes. In the specific field of innovation, this means that future applicants will have to explain how their project fits into the smart specialisation strategy of each participating region. In complementarity with the Seville platform, INTERREG Europe will offer an excellent learning opportunity for all those involved in these strategies. ★

"The fact that all regions in Europe now have to work on similar policy fields greatly improves the opportunities for exchange and transfer of experience"

Nicolas Singer is head of the project unit at INTERREG IVC's joint technical secretariat



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