



## Launching the Steering Platform on Research

### Editorial

Dear readers,

This is the first edition of the eJournal of the 'Information Office of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries'. This publication will provide a basis for information and opinion exchange. Further information can be found on our project-website <http://see-science.eu>. I would like to strongly encourage all our readers to participate in the discussions by providing information, commenting on articles and sending us your opinions. The specific section 'letters to the editor' will be reserved for your input!

This issue aims at providing in-depth information on the launch of the Steering Platform and its aims. It features an article on international cooperation in the 7th European Framework Programme for RTD (pg. 3) and also includes a special focus on the thematic field of 'Health' (pg. 8). We have contributions from SEE-ERA.NET, which informs about the current project activities and George Bonas who reports on the ongoing IPA initiative (pg. 4 and 5). Inger-Ann Ulstein from Norway provides a summary of the Norwegian initiatives towards the Western Balkans and Annelese Stoklaska gives an overview on the achievements of the Austrian EU-Presidency. We have the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science sharing their insight on the Albanian S&T system in the 'country profile' and the eJournal summer 06 is rounded off by event and book announcements.

We look forward to a lively dialogue on the topics of S&T in the Western Balkans and the European Union!

Elke Dall

Project Manager of the Information Office  
[see-science.eu](mailto:see-science.eu)

### Imprint

Information Office of the Steering Platform on Research for the  
Western Balkan Countries  
c/o ZSI - Centre for Social Innovation  
Linke Wienzeile 246, 1150 Vienna, Austria  
tel. +43 1 4950442-62, fax -40  
mail [office@see-science.eu](mailto:office@see-science.eu)

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At the launching event of the 'Steering Platform on Research for Western Balkan Countries', in Vienna on June 26, 2006, Commissioner Potonik set the tone for the role of the Steering Platform which lies in strengthening cooperation in science and technology (S&T) between the Western Balkan countries (WBCs) and the European Union. He was supported on his views by Austrian Science Minister Elisabeth Gehrer and all delegates present.



More than just information exchange, the Steering Platform aims to be a clearing house for ideas and joint activities, intensifying the work already underway since the 2003 EU-Balkan Countries Action Plan in Science and Technology.

The Steering Platform aims at going beyond the 7th European Framework Programme for RTD (FP7) by creating synergies with other stakeholders e.g. the Pre-accession Funds (IPA). Therefore Commissioner Potonik called on the representatives of the Western Balkan countries as well as on the Member States to actively involve themselves in this process. Regarding contextual topics of mutual interest, a lot of good ideas came up. While some of them require discussion in projects such as SEE-ERA.NET or ERA Westbalkan, others are well positioned to be taken up by the Steering Platform, especially those of a more political and strategic nature. In the working sessions, a majority of participants concluded that it was time to reflect on the working modalities of the Platform and agreed that a mission statement and a work plan for the Steering Platform are required. The discussion on the mission statement is initiated in the article on the next page.

(ed)

Links

to information regarding the launch:  
<http://see-science.eu/news/105.htm>  
to a transcript of Mr. Potonik's  
speech: <http://see-science.eu/doc/106.htm>

## Letters to the editor

We cordially invite you to comment the eJournal summer 06 through letters to the editor, which will be published in the next issue and posting comments to the respective online versions when logged in (apply for an account via <http://see-science.eu>).



Furthermore, the Information Office currently prepares 'Country Reports' on the situation of S&T in the Western Balkans that will be provided to the Steering Platform in autumn this year. We are looking for expert reviewers of these documents, if you would like to contribute to this task, please contact Ms. Elke Dall at [dall@zsi.at](mailto:dall@zsi.at).

## Mission Statement Under Construction

During the process of developing a mission statement, all stakeholders should have the possibility to put forward ideas and suggestions. In order to develop the discussion further, the draft statement prepared by the Information Office requires inputs from you:

The 'Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries' interacts between the Western Balkan countries, the EU Member States and states associated to the European Framework Programme for RTD and the European Commission as a discussion forum, a clearing house for joint ideas and activities and a mutually utilised know-how and information transfer centre. It is the main think tank to deal with European, multilateral and regional issues of S&T policies in the Western Balkan countries. In this spirit, it continues and intensifies the progress achieved under the 'EU-Balkan countries Action Plan in Science and Technology'.

The bi-regional dialogue under the Steering Platform will also:

- < Develop, promote, organise and structure the participation of the Western Balkan countries in FP7 and other research programmes
- < Facilitate the identification and the prioritisation of common research areas of mutual interest and benefit
- < Facilitate the uptake and use of research and innovation activities, monitor performance and effects of international S&T cooperation across the Specific Programmes of FP7

Kindly post your comments on the website <http://see-science.eu/news/111.html> or address them directly to Ms. Elke Dall, [dall@zsi.at](mailto:dall@zsi.at). Information about the results will be available in future meetings and through this newsletter.

**Author** Klaus Schuch and Elke Dall  
Centre for Social Innovation, Austria  
<http://see-science.eu/org/29.html>

## View from the European Commission: Possible Actions

"From what we have learned so far, priority action in the WBCs appears necessary in four different areas, without indicating any priority or specific action at this stage, as follows:

- < General awareness actions: role of research policy; how to design an integrated research policy; links with other EU policies; Lisbon strategy;
- < Benefits of collaborative research; association to FP7; mapping; setting priorities;
- < Human resources: facilitate movement of researchers; attract best researchers; and
- < Infrastructure: improve research capacity (laboratories, institutes, equipment).

Given the fact that research requires substantial investments, it is clear that all the above objectives cannot be achieved without creating synergies between research programme funding and other EU financial instruments such as the Pre-accession Funds (IPA).

Coordination of actions with other stakeholders should also actively be pursued. This is in the first place the case with the S&T policies for WBCs from the Member states and candidate countries but also other stakeholders such as the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe; the COST or the Eureka programmes are to be part of these coordinating efforts.

In addition, it should be considered how research can contribute and facilitate the realisation of the overall political objectives such as compliance with *acquis communautaire*; administrative capacity building and institutional stability."

This text is an extract of the paper distributed by the representatives of the European Commission as a background paper at the first meeting of the Steering Platform in Vienna, June 26, 2006.

**Links** to the background document:  
<http://see-science.eu/doc/273.html>  
provided by: Tania Friedrichs  
<http://see-science.eu/users/161.html>

## International Cooperation in FP7



During the next years, from 2007 to 2013, the 7th European Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (FP7) will be the key instrument of the European Commission to further develop the European Research Area (ERA). It is focused on reaching the Lisbon targets, thus strengthening Europe's competitiveness and economic growth by investing in research and science.

In order to become the 'most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010', a strong and coherent international research and technology policy will be necessary. Therefore, fostering the international dimension in FP7 is a crucial issue and combines two objectives:

- < Support European competitiveness through strategic partnerships with third countries in selected research areas and through attracting top quality researchers from these countries for conducting research in Europe
  - < Address specific problems that third countries face or that have a global character, on the basis of mutual interest and mutual benefit
- Such cooperation will also be used to reinforce the Community's external relations and other relevant policy areas.

International cooperation is envisaged mainly in the Programmes

- < 'Cooperation': international cooperation in specific thematic research areas
- < 'People': international measures to promote human resources
- < 'Capacities': horizontal support actions for international cooperation

(refer to box below for more information).

Steps were also taken to enhance the participation in FP7. In the Commission Staff Working Document 'Simplification in the 7th Framework Programme' the authors develop a set of concrete measures for the facilitation of the processes. An important measure concerning international cooperation is a clearer and more user-friendly style of information material for better accessibility to non-specialists and first-time applicants.

Further Information: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/>

Author

Evelina Santa  
Austrian Research Promotion Agency  
<http://see-science.eu/users/123.htm>

### International Cooperation in the Specific Programme 'Cooperation':

1. All activities carried out in the nine thematic areas are open to researchers and research institutions from the Western Balkans
2. Specific cooperation actions in each thematic area are dedicated to third countries in case of mutual interest in cooperation on particular topics, such as
  - Health: pandemics, global health issues, AIDS, etc. (see further information on page 8)
  - Energy: measures to reach the millennium development goals, environmental consequences of energy policies, etc.
  - Environment: climate change, biodiversity, desertification, etc.

### International Cooperation in the Specific Programme 'People':

As a fundamental component of human resources in R&D in Europe, international cooperation is addressed through dedicated actions in terms of

1. Career development measures for researchers from EU member states and associated countries, such as 'outgoing international fellowships' with mandatory return and 'return and international reintegration grants' for experienced researchers after an international mobility experience
2. Strengthening international cooperation through 'incoming international fellowships' to attract highly-qualified third-country researchers to Member States and through partnerships between several research organisations in Europe and one or more organisations in countries covered by the European neighbourhood policy and countries with which the EU has an S&T agreement

### International Cooperation in the Specific Programme 'Capacities':

The international dimension in this programme is supported via specific action lines for international cooperation, which include:

1. Regional definition of core issues and strategies for scientific-technological cooperation
2. Strengthening and upgrading of partnerships for S&T cooperation including structural measures and networks
3. Supporting the coordination of national strategies and measures for international S&T cooperation, including evaluation of the efficiency of ongoing bilateral initiatives



## G. Bonas: Update on IPA Initiative

### Background



Since the adoption of the EU - Balkan countries Action Plan in S&T in 2003 and in every meeting or conference involving S&T policy makers of the Western Balkan countries (WBCs) and of EU Member States, the CARDS Programme has been identified as one of the most important sources that could provide funding for the implementation of the Action Plan and more specifically for the renewal of infrastructure. However, until today such support from CARDS has not occurred. There are several reasons for this situation, among which we can state: the absence of S&T in the priority fields of intervention for CARDS, the timid support from representatives of the EU Member States in the CARDS Committee and, last but not least, the lack of adequate demand from the WBCs for such projects (with the exception of Serbia).

Currently the CARDS Programme for the WBCs is coming to an end and the European Union is finalising a new development aid scheme in line with the European Neighbourhood Policy: the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA).

### The Instrument for Pre-Accession

The regulations for the new instrument (IPA), which will cover the period 2007-2013, are being finalised. Even if S&T is not among the main objectives of IPA, support to S&T related activities could be envisaged. This significant change is the result of the dynamics that have been created through:

- < The adoption of the Action Plan that explicitly makes reference to the necessity to use CARDS as a possible source for the financial support of its goals. Subsequent meetings and conferences consolidated this need.
- < The formal request to CARDS from Serbia for S&T related activities and the backing of this request by ministers of EU Member States, who sent support letters.
- < The SEE-ERA.NET project that addressed particular attention to this issue and proceeded to specific contacts with officials from the European Commission.

However, even if in principle support for S&T related activities could be envisaged in IPA, the implementation of such activities will mainly depend on the following:

First, formal requests need to be addressed by the country concerned and negotiated with the European Commission. If a WBC does not include S&T related activities in its national priorities, nothing can be done. As mentioned above, Serbia presented a request under CARDS. If a similar request were re-iterated under IPA, there would be significant chances for a positive reply. This could pave the way for equivalent activities in other WBCs.

In addition, it will depend on the understanding of what type of

activities could be supported. These could for example include infrastructure renewal (in terms of laboratory equipment and/or construction) and possibly some soft actions (e.g. studies/re-organisation of the research systems), but not support to research itself.

Since environment, sustainable development, trade, etc. will most probably remain among the main goals of IPA, the possibilities for 'dual use' equipments need to be investigated (e.g. a laboratory equipped for environmental measures which can also be used for research purposes). In any case, close contacts with the European Commission services in the WBCs are necessary in order to propose acceptable topics and well-structured projects.

### Conclusions / Recommendations

It is reasonable to believe that S&T related activities in the WBCs could be supported through IPA. As this support is in principle accepted from the side of the Commission and of the EU Member States, the main effort and responsibility lies in the hands of the WBCs: the need to formulate relevant requests.

To achieve success, the following steps are important for the S&T policy makers and administrators in the WBCs:

1. Identification of the national authorities and persons who are responsible for the definition of the national priorities towards IPA
2. Formulation and submission of adequate topics to the aforementioned authorities, to be taken into account when proposing and negotiating the activities considered for the country with the Commission services

The SEE-ERA.NET project and moreover the recently launched Steering Platform could be supportive in this process, acting as a forum for the exchange of experiences and best practices among the WBCs as well as through focused and coordinated interventions towards the European Commission services and the EU Member States, where ver necessary.

**Author** George Bonas  
General Secretariat for Research and  
Technology, Ministry of Development,  
Greece  
<http://see-science.eu/users/144.html>

### Latest News: IPA officially adopted

European Parliament adopted a favourable opinion on the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) on July 6, 2006 in Strasbourg; on July 17, 2006 it has also been adopted by the EU Council, which means that this instrument has now been officially adopted by the European Union

For the full document visit <http://see-science.eu/link/260.html>





WWW.SEE-ERA.NET

## Calling for RTD Cooperation in the Western Balkan Countries

In summer 2006 most of the SEE-ERA.NET partners committed themselves to a first 'Pilot Joint Call for Research Proposals'. This pilot initiative increases RTD networking between research institutions and universities of at least 11 European countries including all Western Balkan countries. The Call will be open between November 2006 and March 2007 and published under <http://www.see-era.net>. The assessment of the project proposals will be dedicated to scientific excellence.

### The SEE-ERA.NET project

The Southeast European Era-Net (SEE-ERA.NET) is a networking project of RTD funding ministries and agencies. All of the collaborating institutions run nationally funded programmes that are dedicated to (bilateral) RTD collaboration with Western Balkan countries. SEE-ERA.NET aims at interlinking these existing RTD programmes, for example, by launching joint calls for RTD proposals. The overall objective of this project is the development of a sustainable system for improving the integration of research institutions from the Western Balkan countries into the European Research Area. This initiative is supported by the European Commission under FP6.

"In this project we want especially to build on the already existing research potential in the Western Balkan countries. The bilateral S&T relationships represent a significant potential for the establishment of the European Research Area", says Peter B. Mayr, SEE-ERA.NET coordinator from the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) in Austria.

### Researching the RTD situation

In the beginning of the project a thorough assessment of the RTD situation in the Western Balkan countries was conducted:

- The nationally funded programmes in the Western Balkan partner countries were externally evaluated by the Croatian Ivo Pilar Institute.
- A study about the national RTD programmes was conducted by Maria Hinsenkamp on behalf of the National Office of Research and Technology (NKTH) in Hungary.
- Prof. Milica Uvali from the University of Perugia, Italy, conducted a scientific study on the national systems of research in the Western Balkan countries in joint collaboration with researchers from the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) and experts from the Slovenian Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MHEST).

- Furthermore the MHEST published a study on the RTD needs of the Western Balkan countries.
- And, finally, a clustering of the already funded bilateral projects by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science aimed at the mapping of existing collaboration potential in the region.

The results of these studies contribute to the future plans of the SEE-ERA.NET consortium. For example, they will help to find the funding regulations for the upcoming 'Joint Calls for Proposals'. Furthermore, the findings highlighted capacity problems in the region such as the lack of RTD infrastructure and management potential as well as differences in project proposal evaluation systems of the individual countries.

### The Pilot Joint Call for Proposals



This first Joint Call for Research Proposals is a Pilot activity.

"This call will be a milestone for all parties involved. It is a first step towards more targeted funding for more research institutions. And, the internationalisation aspect: with the support of small, but multilateral research projects, we open the door to new ideas and bigger projects under FP7 or other RTD funding bodies.

What we learned by now is that SEE-ERA.NET is all about trust. If we can prove to our internal decision makers that this Pilot Joint Call is successful we have made a first, important step to test the technical aspects of the new cooperation between the collaborating funding agencies and ministries", mentions Peter B. Mayr, SEE-ERA.NET coordinator.

The budget for this first call will be around 800,000 EUR to 900,000 EUR with funding in three thematic areas.

An external 'Central Administrative Body' will be responsible for the administration of the process. The evaluation of the project proposals will be done externally by internationally respected scientists.

The members of SEE-ERA.NET aim through these activities at contributing to the emerging wider European Research Area and at strengthening the collaborations of the scientific communities within Europe.

Author  
 Florian Gruber  
 Centre for Social Innovation, Austria  
<http://see-science.eu/users/114.html>



**Featured:**  
<http://see-science.eu>

The website is for registered users and password-protected. The internal site offers a directory (who is who) and a document service (upload of relevant documents for S&T policies). Interested parties can apply for an account for see-science.eu, members of the Steering Platform have been pre-registered by the Information Office with special user and access rights. The website offers comprehensive ways to search (a full text search, possibilities to browse by country focus and between the entries of personal contacts, organisations, documents and links). You can also apply for a contributor account and publish directly or send any targeted information which you would like to disseminate ([office@see-science.eu](mailto:office@see-science.eu)). Furthermore, each item published on the site is open for comments. We hope the website proves useful to enhance the mutual exchange of information on issues of S&T in and for the Western Balkan countries.

## Education and Research in the WBCs – Priorities during the Austrian EU-Presidency



Austria has tried hard to meet the expectations of her partners in the Western Balkan countries related to the Austrian EU Council Presidency. This also applies to the fields of education, science and research.

After extensive preparations, a number of meetings, conferences and workshops took place in the first half of 2006 which altogether brought along at least two memorable and hope fully sustainable actions:

Ministers from Western Balkan nations met in Vienna over the past months to agree upon an Education Pact with the EU. As of 2007, countries of the Western Balkan will be able to participate as equal partners in the EU's Life-long Learning Programme.

As to research, the European Commission and the Austrian EU Council Presidency jointly launched a Steering Platform for strengthening research cooperation between the Western Balkan countries and the EU within the framework of the European Research Area (ERA).

Moreover Minister Gehler forwarded a joint letter to the European Commission signed by the Ministers of Education and Research of the pre-accession countries which stressed the importance of giving education and research sufficient priority in the IPA.

Well tailored activities in the fields of education and research will certainly contribute to supporting the Western Balkan Countries' integration into the even wider European Knowledge Area and to unlocking the potential of this region.

**Author** Anne Liese Stoklaska  
 Federal Ministry for Education,  
 Science and Culture, Austria  
<http://see-science.eu/users/126.html>

## Norway's S&T Initiatives towards the Western Balkan



The Norwegian Cooperation Programme with the Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia-Montenegro) in Research and Higher Education.

Norway and the Western Balkan countries have been cooperating in the fields of research and higher education since the year 2000. The programmes are managed by the Research Council of Norway and the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU), which has signed an agreement with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this activity.

The cooperation has been organised in two programmes:

The cooperation has been organised in two programmes:

Phase 1: 2000-2004: 80 million NOK (1€=prox 8 NOK) were allocated to projects focusing on social science, language, solutions for environmental problems and higher education.

Phase 2: 2006-2009 has a total budget of 75 million NOK. The objective of the cooperation is to initiate, develop and fund collaboration between universities, university colleges and research institutions in the Western Balkans and corresponding Norwegian institutions. Projects funded by this programme will contribute to improving competence and building capacity at research institutions and institutions of higher education in the Western Balkans.

Two thematic areas were prioritised:

- < Governance and democracy building
- < Environmental protection, management of natural resources and marine issues

During spring 2006, 16 new projects were initiated. These projects focused on topics within social science, language, marine issues and environment will run for 4 years. Altogether 51,800,000 NOK (approx. 6,500,000 EUR) are allocated to these projects for this period. At least 50% of these funds shall be allocated to the partners in the Western Balkan countries.

**Author** Inger-Ann Ulstein  
 Research Council of Norway  
<http://see-science.eu/users/262.html>  
 Further information: <http://see-science.eu/link/261.html>

# S&T in Albania



**Location:** Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, Greece, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (Kosovo/UNMIK)  
**Total area:** 28,748 sq. km  
**Population:** 3,134,982 (January 1, 2005) - source: INSTAT  
**GDP - per capita:** 2,140 EUR (2005) at official exchange rate - source: WIIW



In Albania the responsibilities for universities, research centres and research institutes are distributed among several ministries and the Academy of Science. The newly elected government of Albania has recently decided on a reform of the research system, especially with regard to its management aspect.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) of Albania is responsible for strategic planning and legislative aspects of S&T, the development of national programmes, technological development and international scientific cooperation. The ministry prepares the calls for proposals and evaluates and monitors the implementation of the funded projects.

A significant part of the Directorate of Scientific Research is devoted to bilateral scientific and technical cooperation. This includes the exchange of scientists and PhD students, but also of documentation and information. It provides help for joint research projects, for the sharing of scientific and research tools and for the participation in conferences and seminars.

Since the year 2000 three protocols for S&T cooperation have been signed with Greece: 19 joint projects in 2001-2002, 22 joint projects in 2003-2004, and 32 projects have been supported during the last period 2005-2007. At the same time two protocols have been signed with Italy: 119 projects (only for mobility) in 2002-2004 and 67 projects (39 for mobility and 28 with common financing) for the years 2005-2007 are supported.

## Agreements and Protocols

In Albania only the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the right to sign a new intergovernmental S&T agreement, but the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the implementation through protocols. The administration of bilateral intergovernmental RTD programmes is implemented by the Directorate of Scientific Research. Currently one major aim in Albanian policy is to increase bilateral cooperation. Therefore this year the Ministry of Education and Science, via its Directorate of Scientific Research, has signed protocols with the FYR of Macedonia and Slovenia.

## The Science and Technology Policy Framework

### S&T management of Albania:

1. Council of Ministers
2. Council of Scientific Policy and Technological Development (CSPTD)
3. Ministry of Education and Science with Scientific Research Directorate
4. Ministries, Academy of Science, Community
5. Universities, Research Institutes, Research Centres, NGOs

### The legal framework is provided through:

1. Law on Science and Technological Development
2. Law on Higher Education
3. Law of Academy of Science
4. Governmental Decisions
5. Decisions of the Council of Scientific Policy and Technological Development
6. Ministerial Regulations

### The central institutions of S&T in Albania (2003) are:

1. The Academy of Sciences (13 institutes / 253 scientists)
2. Ministry of Education and Science (2 institutes / 27 scientists) Universities and similar (10 institutes / 1,208 scientists)
3. Ministry of Agriculture and Food (14 institutes / 144 scientists)
4. Ministry of Industry and Energy (8 institutes / 359 scientists)
5. Ministry of Territory Arrangements and Tourism (4 institutes / 202 scientists)
6. Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (2 institutes / 46 scientists)
7. Ministry of Transportation (1 institute / 18 scientists)
8. Ministry of Public Health (1 institute / 62 scientists)

Total: 55 central scientific institutions and 2,319 scientists

## Challenges in S&T

Albania has faced a difficult and turbulent decade. It was characterised by the lack of rule of law and economic collapse. Although considerable progress has been made in Albania since 1999, a lot remains to be done. Albanian research suffers from a lack of up-to-date equipment. Existing equipment is often provided through international cooperation projects and Albania has little, if any, major scale equipment. Even maintenance and running costs of the modest equipment that does exist is a major strain on Albanian public resources. Effort has been made to create an academic communications network and IT system in Albania, and other modern technologies are gradually being invested in.

Author

Adriana Gjonaj-Kumbaro  
 Ministry of Education and Science,  
 Albania  
<http://see-science.eu/users/119.html>

## Latest News: Commission visit

From June 27-29 the European Commission (DG RTD, Directorate N1 together with JRC) was on a fact-finding mission in Tirana to discuss opportunities under FP7 and assess the research capacity in Albania. The mission was regarded very informative and will certainly be followed up by both parties.



## Medical Research Initiative South Eastern Europe



A project recently launched by six partners from Austria, Croatia, Italy, Serbia-Montenegro and Slovenia is designed to contribute to the dialogue on medical research on the level of individual researchers and projects: The EU-FP6-funded 'Medical Research Initiative South Eastern Europe' (MedResIn SEE) sets out to strengthen cooperation in biomedical research in Central and South Eastern Europe. Specifically, it aims at setting up a sustainable network between researchers and research institutions in the field of biomedicine in the region. In addition, it intends to help establish and consolidate contacts with researchers in EU Member States. This initiative facilitates the development of cooperative research projects by providing a platform for researchers to present and interlink their ideas.

The aim of the Medical Research Initiative South Eastern Europe (MedResIn SEE) is thus to create good starting conditions for biomedical researchers in South Eastern Europe to participate in FP7 and to support their integration into the ERA. Tailor-made capacity building measures contribute to the development of joint EU research projects and improve access to FP7.

Basically, MedResIn SEE tries to interlink the Framework Programme's top-down approach with ideas submitted by researchers in a bottom-up process. The ideas must meet the following criteria:

1. Being in line with FP7 priorities
2. Relevance to a certain number of researchers
3. Potential to attract a group of researchers committed to work on a project proposal up to the point of submission

The researchers are invited to participate in training sessions and proposal building meetings specifically focussing on their own interests.

Specifically, the initiative's activities include

- < Compiling a catalogue of research activities, expertise and interests in the region
- < Providing top-quality training in acquiring European (FP 7) research funding
- < Organizing tailor-made 'proposal building sessions', in which researchers get a chance to develop joint project ideas and to draft joint proposals

The opportunity for researchers to enter their profiles into the survey is open at <http://www.meduni-graz.at/medresin/profiles.html>

Information about the first training and proposal building meeting is available at the following link:

<http://www.meduni-graz.at/medresin/maribor.html>

Carolin Auer  
Medical University of Graz, Austria  
<http://see-science.eu/users/264.html>

## Health as a priority area

In the 'Commission proposal for the 7th Research Framework Programme', 'Health' is the first priority area in the 'Cooperation' programme. With a budget of 6,050 million EUR according to the Council's agreement of July 2006, it is also one of the most highly funded research areas - second only to 'Information and Communication Technologies'. 'Health' is an extension of the former FP6 Thematic Priority 1: Life Sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health'. It aims at improving the health of European citizens and at increasing the competitiveness of European health related industries and businesses, boosting their innovative capacity. At the same time it addresses global health issues such as identification and prevention of emerging epidemics. 'Health' is divided into three main activities.

### The three activity areas of the 'Health' programme:

Biotechnology, generic tools and medical technologies for human health  
High-throughput research  
Detection, diagnosis and monitoring  
Predicting suitability, safety and efficacy of therapies  
Innovative therapeutic approaches and interventions  
Translating research for human health  
Integrating biological data and processes including large scale data gathering and systems biology  
Research on the brain and brain related diseases, human development and ageing  
Translational research in infectious diseases  
Translational research in major diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity, rare diseases and other chronic diseases such as rheumatoid diseases  
Optimising the delivery of health care to European citizens  
Translating clinical research outcome into clinical practice  
Quality, efficiency and solidarity of health care systems including transitional health care systems  
Enhanced disease prevention and better use of medicines  
Appropriate use of new health therapies and technologies

Similar to previous Framework Programmes, there are likely to be significant opportunities for biomedical researchers in other thematic areas and in the 'People' programme. (ed)

### Further aspects in FP7 interesting for biomedical researchers:

Theme 2 - Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology  
Animal health  
Diet related diseases and disorders  
Nutrition, health benefits of food and diets  
Theme 3 - Information Communication Technology  
Applications research on ICT for health, diagnostics and treatment  
Theme 4 - Nanoscience, Nanotechnologies, Materials and new Production Technologies  
Applications research in nano-medicine, new materials, impacts on health  
Theme 6 - Environment  
Climate change, pollution and risks: environment and health risks  
Theme 8 - Socioeconomics and Humanities  
Demographic change: ageing and migration, health and quality of life





### Potočnik in Serbia

In a high-level meeting in Belgrade on July 14, 2006, Janez Potočnik, the EU Commissioner for Science and Research and Aleksandar Popović, Minister of Science of Serbia were discussing the opening-up of EU funds in research for the Serbian scientific community. "Integration is an ambitious goal, but research is the key tool for realising it. This is a field that opens many doors and we now need to focus on the importance of research in order to achieve this goal", says Potočnik, who also asserted his personal commitment and full support for the Serbian scientific community.

### Six new Walk-in Internet Centres for the University of Montenegro

The Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Austrian Embassy, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Montenegro and the University of Montenegro signed an agreement on July 28, 2006 for the establishment of six walk-in Internet centres for the University of Montenegro. The existing Internet centre in Podgorica will be renovated and additionally four new Internet centres in Podgorica, Kotor, Cetinje, Bijelo Polje and Nikšić will be established. This initiative underlines the Austrian efforts to help the Montenegrin nation in improving its Higher Education system in accordance with EU standards. (News provided by Sreten Škuljetic, University of Montenegro.)

### "Why invest in Science in South Eastern Europe?"

September 28-29, 2006, Ljubljana, Slovenia

... is the title of an international conference organised jointly by the UNESCO Office in Venice, the Slovenian Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices. The event takes place in Ljubljana on September 28 and 29, 2006. The conference will provide the knowledge base for policy-makers to improve allocation of funds for investments in science and research and to identify accompanying measures which will lead to enhanced socio-economic development in South East European countries as well as in other parts of the world.

The conference will convene for two days and discussions will be organised in four sessions:

1. Science, Innovation and Wealth Generation: State of the Art and 'best practices'
2. Globalisation vs. Marginalisation of Innovation Systems in SEE: Country Perspectives
3. International Co-operation and External Assistance for Science and Innovation Systems in SEE
4. High-level Round Table: Science and Innovation Policies in SEE

Presentations will be done by Commissioner Janez Potočnik, Assistant Director-General at the UNESCO, Walter Erdelen, ministers and scholars from the SEE countries and around the world.

Links <http://www.aso.zsi.at/en/slo/veranstaltungen/1765.html>  
Contact: Iulia Nechifor, Slavi Krusic, Miro Polzer  
<http://see-science.eu/news/283.html>

### Marie Curie Workshop Celebrating Nikola Tesla

October 7-11, 2006, Zagreb & Belgrade

2006 marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Nikola Tesla (1856-1943), one of the world's great inventors in the fields of physics, electricity, magnetism and mechanical engineering. His patents and theoretical works form the basis of modern alternating current (AC) electric power systems, including the polyphase power distribution systems and the asynchronous motor, marking the dawn of the Second Industrial Revolution. This anniversary is of special national importance in Serbia and in Croatia: Nikola Tesla was an ethnic Serb born in Croatia. The Serbian and Croatian governments therefore initiated a joint event to commemorate Nikola Tesla. Workshops held under the auspices of the European Commission will be organised in Zagreb and Belgrade from October 7-11, 2006. Commissioner Janez Potočnik shall take part in both venues, giving his support to this joint events. About 100 Marie Curie fellows and students from Serbia and Croatia are expected to participate. (News provided by Ivan Vidonovic, Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection.)

The detailed plan and preliminary programme can be found at [www.mnr.sr.gov.yu/MarieCurie2006](http://www.mnr.sr.gov.yu/MarieCurie2006) and [www.hatz.hr/MarieCurie2006](http://www.hatz.hr/MarieCurie2006)

### Westbalkan Science Day

November 13, 2006, Vienna, Austria

An information and networking day for RTD in the Western Balkan countries will be held on November 13, 2006 at the University of Vienna. Invited are researchers and research managers from Austria and the Western Balkan countries. The aims are to establish and promote networking activities (partnering), as well as to strengthen existing cooperations between researchers from Austria and the Western Balkan countries for further research activities.

The Science Day concentrates on three thematic domains:

- < Social Sciences
- < Economics and Business Administration
- < Information Society Technologies (IST)

The morning session provides information about funding possibilities at national and European level. The keynote speech will be given by Mr. Erhard Busek, coordinator of the Stability Pact. The afternoon is reserved for networking and for developing new project ideas and future cooperations in each of the three thematic workshops.

The event is organised by the Austrian Science and Research Liaison Offices Sofia and Ljubljana, the University of Vienna, the Austrian Research Promotion Agency, WUS-Austria, SEE-ERA.NET and supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Links <http://www.aso.zsi.at/en/slo/veranstaltungen/1742.html>  
Contact: Andrea C. Mayr  
ASO Coordinating Office at the Centre for Social Innovation





### Modernisation of Science Policy and Management Approaches in Central and South East Europe

This book, published 2005, is the result of joint efforts of a majority of the participants in the NATO Advanced Training Course 'Modernisation of Science Management Approaches in Central and South East Europe' that was held on November 28-29, 2003 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The articles in this publication are based on the presentations given by the participants, with additional studies in the first three chapters that deal with the situation of science in this part of Europe.

Kobal, Edvard, Slavo Radosevic (eds.): Modernisation of Science Policy and Management Approaches in Central and South East Europe. NATO Science Series, Series V: Science and Technology Policy - Vol. 48, IOS Press, 2005.

Links  
Copies of this book can be ordered at <http://www.booksonline.iospress.nl/Contents/SSSI2Book/BookSeriesVolumeContents.aspx?bsid=1&vid=48>  
ISBN: 1-58603-517-7



### Research and Development in South East Europe

The Austrian 'Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Forschung' (GFF) published a book on 'Research and Development in South East Europe' - based on a collaborative research project which pursued the objectives to identify strengths and weaknesses in the R&D structure of national innovation systems in South East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia including Kosovo/UNMIK and Romania) and to link the information to the Austrian innovation system and its current activities towards the region.

Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Forschung (ed.): Research and Development in South East Europe. Neuer Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, Wien/Graz, 2006.

Links  
Copies of this book can be ordered via the publishing house:  
Neuer Wissenschaftlicher Verlag  
office@nwv.at  
ISBN: 3-7083-0377-6



### Science, Technology and Economic Development in South Eastern Europe

The UNESCO Office in Venice launched its Science Policy Series with a study entitled 'Science, Technology and Economic Development in South East Europe'. The five countries concerned are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. The publication underlines the urgent need for decision makers to take steps necessary to ensure that science and technology regain a leading role in national development strategies as a key element for the integration of concerned countries into the knowledge based society.

Uvali, Milica: Science, Technology and Economic Development in South Eastern Europe. UNESCO Science Policy Series, Volume Nr. 1, UNESCO Venice Office, 2005.

Links  
A pdf version of this text can be downloaded via:  
<http://see-science.eu/link/269.html>  
(for free)



### National RTD programmes for Southeast Europe

This study provides an analysis on the RTD programmes of the SEE-ERA.NET partner countries. Main concern is the analysis of the applied management mechanisms and the available funding tools, from the activities on both the national and the multilateral level. From the resulting 'best practices' conclusions are presented on how to develop promising approaches for future cooperation.

Hinsenkamp, Maria, et al.: National RTD Programmes for Southeast Europe - A Comparative Summary Report. SEE-ERA.NET publication, Zagreb, December 2005.

Links  
A pdf version of this text can be downloaded via:  
<http://see-era.net/doc/important>  
(for free)

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Editors: Florian Gruber and Elke Dall

Layout: Maroš Kollár

Proof Reading: Angeleika Gruber

Contact: [office@see-science.eu](mailto:office@see-science.eu)

