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## **ESOF2006 SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER – 013**

### **FEATURE ARTICLE**

#### ***Public-Private partnerships: an essential element for the European Research Area?***

Public private partnership is an essential element for the European research area. Modern sciences, especially natural sciences, are highly dependent on integrating the knowledge of different disciplines in order to achieve significant innovations. Molecular medicine, for example, is not thinkable without modern information technologies (bio-informatics) and not feasible without new materials and not possible without clear philosophical (not only ethical) considerations, just to give three examples.

In order to fully exploit what we know today in different disciplines, not only in scientific but also in industrial and commercial terms, we also need to incorporate the knowledge how to transform great ideas into applicable projects and products. Industry has to play its role in this context: Therefore, public partnership and especially public private partnership are an essential element of modern science.

Europe has a fundamental role to play in shaping and creating our future, and since science is a dominant, probably the dominant factor towards this effort, all European countries and European organisations must carefully frame conditions and opportunities for this type of partnerships. The creation of the European Research Council is an element which supports the origin of innovation, namely basic research, and which is at the beginning of the value-creating-chain. However, we desperately need further elements which help towards the postulated integration between disciplines, institutions, and also between the public and the private sector.

*Written by Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Günter Stock*

### **EDITOR'S CHOICE**

#### ***Metaphors in science: friend or foe?***

Did you ever wonder who drives a gene taxi, how deep is the ozone hole or who wrote the genetic code? "Metaphors can be false friends" says session chair Marc-Denis Weitze, "if they have misleading connotations." Metaphors are abundant in our communication, and maybe even more abundant in science communication – be it among scientists or in science journalism (including this text, of course, starting with its headline). We need them to express our thoughts, but we should be aware of unwanted side effects.

"Using the metaphor 'genetic code' omits a lot of biochemistry" criticises Weitze. "And while a cryptographic code is assumed to be universal, in biology we know some exceptions. Moreover, the metaphor might imply that the 'code' was created, such as cryptographic codes."

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While some metaphors may imply certain meanings unintentionally, others are created to introduce a specific connotation. This is the case with metaphors describing science as a competition, as a race towards the breakthrough. Perhaps they were created to attract a wider audience to science. But it obviously had an effect on science itself – and maybe a victim among researchers: Hwang Woo Suk, who wanted to be the first to clone human embryos.

Popular metaphors can hardly be avoided, even if they transport misleading connotations. In this session, metaphors are discussed to shed light on the 'meaning ballast' they may carry, and to sensitise scientists as well as science communicators to the pitfalls of using metaphors.

*Written by Renate Ell*

### ***Great changes ahead? The European Research Council***

These are exciting times for European science policy. The European Research Council (ERC), funded through the EU Framework Programme, will become operational in January 2007. The ERC is the first pan-European funding agency for basic research, and "really a kind of revolution in European science policy," emphasizes session organizer Luc van Dyck.

What makes the ERC such a novelty in European science? First of all, the ERC acknowledges the importance of basic or frontier research, as it will fund this type of research only. Scientific excellence will be the sole criterion for funding. Secondly, the ERC attributes the central role in science funding to scientists themselves: All central decisions concerning the ERC will be made autonomously by the ERC's Scientific Council, which consists of 22 outstanding researchers from across Europe. And thirdly, the ERC holds the potential to develop long term research policies, and thus will help to structure and unify science in Europe.

While some structuring elements, such as the "Starting Independent Researcher Grant" for young researchers, are already well developed, several further policies, programmes and procedures of the European Research Council are still "under construction." Thus, one central task of this session will be to inform the audience on the latest developments in the establishment of the ERC. First-hand information is available, as the chair and vice chair of the Scientific Council are speakers in this session. A representative of the European Commission will give insight into the structure and mode of operation of the ERC's executive agency as well as into the ERC's funding guidelines.

There will also be room for discussion on all issues concerning the European Research Council and the innovations it is expected to bring about.

*Written by Barbara Schwerdtfeger*



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### ***Risk and governance: characterizing and managing uncertainty***

New technologies make our lives more comfortable, heal illnesses, or enable us to talk across long distances. However, these new products and applications are accompanied by side effects. "All innovations, and more generally, all human interventions into the natural, social or cultural environment contain opportunities and risks" says Ortwin Renn of the University of Stuttgart, Germany, who organizes this session. "They might affect our health and safety, the environment, the economy, or the fabric of society."

To enable sensible policy decisions concerning regulatory action, science has to provide knowledge about these risks. The aim is to identify a balance between being too cautious and risking to impede innovation – or being not cautious enough and thus risking to damage people and the environment.

"Risk governance" is how this process of assessing and evaluating risks is called. It identifies possible hazards and approximates their probability. The risks are then evaluated and strategies to manage these risks are developed. The process includes the participation of all groups in society that are or will be affected. Risk governance can be applied to risks with international and global implications.

An important task of risk governance is dealing with people's emotions and fears. "The psychological component in the perception of risks is enormous" emphasizes Renn. The anxiety about BSE is an example: Fear was and is well-founded, as 135 people have died of the human variant of BSE. However, during the same period of time, the identical number of people died from drinking lamp oil – a risk most of us have not even heard of.

In this session, Renn introduces a recently published framework for risk governance. Several speakers apply this framework to specific risks – for instance, to nanotechnology, one of the key technologies of the 21st century.

*Written by Barbara Schwerdtfeger*

## **ESOF2006 NEWS**

### ***Career programme – reserve a ticket now for a pre-registration event!***

The following Career Programm events require pre-registration:

**1. Job Interview workshop** - 18.07.2006, 14:30-17:00, Forum am Deutschen Museum, Room "Terra". To view the session abstract, please click [here](#).

This workshop is especially targeted to post-doctoral research fellows. Please understand that priority will be given to post-docs for registration. The number of participants is limited to 50.

If you want to take part in the workshop and if you want to experience an interview situation, please send a one-page CV to [julia.epp@euroscience.org](mailto:julia.epp@euroscience.org) Please don't forget to indicate if you are student/pre-doc/post-doc.



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You will have to pick up your ticket at the conference office (Forum am Deutschen Museum, Room Aurora, Ground floor) on the day of the event before 11.00. You will have to show this ticket when participating in the Job interview workshop.

**2. Pretzel with the Prof** – 16, 17, 18, 19 July, 12.30, Science Biergarten  
Meet the ESOF2006 plenary lecturers in a casual atmosphere!  
Two or more « Pretzel » discussions will take place in parallel every day. To view the session abstract, please click [here](#).

The number of attendees is limited to 10 per Prof. You can reserve a ticket for ONE Pretzel discussion (please give name of the Prof and date). Please send your reservation to [julia.epp@euroscience.org](mailto:julia.epp@euroscience.org)

You will have to pick up your ticket at the conference office (Forum am Deutschen Museum, Room Aurora, Ground floor) on the day of the event before 11.00. You will have to show this ticket when participating in the Pretzel discussion.

PLEASE NOTE : The remaining tickets will be available at the conference office (Ground floor) for spontaneous participants. They will be given away after 11.00 the day of the event.

For all changes in the Career Programme, please have a look at the Young Scientists' Corner (Ground floor, next to the elevators).

*Written by Julia Epp*

### ***Rectification - Rammal Award Ceremony at Euroscience Day***

The Rammal Award 2005 Ceremony will take place at 11.15 at the Euroscience Day on Monday, 17 July, 2006, Room Terra (and not during the Euroscience Reception, as previously announced). The Rammal Award 2005 will be handed over by the President of Euroscience, Jean-Patrick Connerade, to this year's awardee, El Hassan Saidi, professor at the University Mohammed V-Agdal, Rabat, Morocco.

Since 1999 Euroscience has been responsible for the attribution of this award created in memory of the great Lebanese physicist, Rammal RAMMAL (1951-1991). The Rammal Award honors each year an outstanding personality of strong scientific stature from a Mediterranean country, who, through his life and activity, has elevated scientific exchanges in this part of the world, rich with ancient tradition.

El Hassan Saidi is a physicist and mathematician and specialist of string theory. He will be honored for his contribution to building up a scientific capability in Morocco and in the region, notably by the Laboratoire de Physique des Hautes Energies (LPHE) at the University of Rabat, and for his engagement in the dissemination of science in Africa and the promotion of scientific cooperation between many Mediterranean countries.

More information on <http://www.euroscience.org/RAMMAL/rammal.htm>

*Written by Julia Epp*



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### ***EU Nanotechnology Projects in Action***

The European Union's exhibition area at ESOF2006 features nanotechnology research as an up-to-date example of how science and communication can and have to work together. Visitors will be able to take a closer look at major achievements from the science of the small, talk to leading scientists and communicators, participate in the demonstrations and contribute to the nanodebate.

Two of the projects are of particular interest to young people. They will be able to play the game developed by DECIDE to get involved in political decision-making in nanotechnology, while DOTIK will demonstrate to them a new training scheme for young science presenters. The NanoDialogue project that is currently presenting an exhibition on social aspects of nanotechnology at the Deutsches Museum will also take part in the demonstrations.

Two of the projects on show – Cornea Engineering and Safer- represent nanomedical research and Antistorm provides one of the first insights into the science of "man-made" weather in Europe. Nanologue will also disseminate information and NaPa will offer a comprehensive insight into the creation of nanometer-scale features on solid surfaces, known as nanopatterning.

ESOF2006 participants will also be able to learn more about the forthcoming ERAWATCH service, a European web-based platform which will gather information and data on national and regional research policies, actors, organisations and programmes. Data will be accessed on a country as well as at an aggregate EU level, and users will be able to customise the way data is presented and downloaded.

The new service will cover the 25 Member States of the European Union, countries associated to the European Community's Research Framework Programme, and for comparative purposes China, Japan and USA.

ERAWATCH is targeted at those interested and active in research policy making in Europe, for example decision makers, policy analysts, researchers, NGOs. It is developed jointly by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and the Joint Research Centre's Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, in collaboration with CORDIS, the official online research information service of the EU's Publications Office. For more information on ERAWATCH, ESOF2006 participants may visit the partners' stands, all present at the EU exhibition area.

The EU's Publications Office will feature on its stand daily presentations at 3 pm on "How to Benefit from EU Research Funding", provided by CORDIS.

*Written by Virginia Mercouri*