



## **CORDIS NEWS**

### **COMMISSIONERS TELL CONVERGENCE REGIONS HOW STRUCTURAL FUNDS CAN SUPPORT R&I**

Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potocnik and his colleague responsible for Regional Policy, Danuta Hübner, have highlighted how Structural Funds can be used to support research and innovation (R&I) in the EU's convergence regions.

Addressing a conference in Warsaw on 13 February, both Commissioners urged the EU's least competitive regions to see investments in R&I as an opportunity to create lasting growth and become an integral part of Europe's knowledge economy.

'Structural Funds, and particularly the European Regional Development Fund, already have a track record for contributing to RTD [research and technological development] -related investments,' said Mr Potocnik, pointing to the 10.5 billion euro spent on research, technological development and innovation infrastructure through the programme between 2000 and 2006.

'Links with [R&I and] the Structural Funds will now be encouraged even further: the draft regulations now in formal debate before the Council and European Parliament put [RTD] and the transition to the knowledge economy as a high priority in all three new Objectives (convergence, regional competitiveness and territorial cooperation),' the Commissioner continued.

In practice, Structural Funding will be used to support research infrastructures, human resources, innovative companies, science parks, incubators or specific research projects in eligible regions. While Mr Potocnik accepts that it would be impossible to use money from the research framework programme for a project funded by the Structural Funds, it would be possible to make use of both programmes to fund different phases of an infrastructure project, for example.

'However, the best way to achieve synergies between the Framework Programme and the Structural Funds would be to establish R&D priorities at the level of the countries and regions that could be considered as complimentary with those of the Framework Programme,' believes Mr Potocnik.

In her speech, Commissioner Hübner went into more detail on the ways in which convergence funding can be used to support R&I. She began however, by saying: 'Now, there are those who say that our focus in convergence regions should be on concrete investments in physical infrastructure, with much less emphasis on less tangible factors such as know-how and skills. But a lack of innovation - and of research as a source of innovation - is actually a key deficit in the economies of less-developed regions. Innovation is a necessity, not a luxury, in the process of convergence.'

Ms Hübner accepts that R&I potential varies significantly between different regions, making it impractical to set uniform targets for the share of funds to be invested in these activities. Also, she stressed that public intervention cannot create research or innovation clusters from scratch, and therefore investment should focus on existing or emerging poles of excellence.

However, the Commissioner did set out the five key approaches that she argues will make the best use of the Structural Funds in fostering R&I: first, by developing more sophisticated and ambitious strategies using tools such as regional foresight or innovative actions; second, by encouraging collaboration between the private sector, public research organisations and public authorities; third, ensuring that mechanisms are in place to translate research results into viable products and services; fourth, integrating small and medium sized businesses into multi-national supply chains to make the most of increases in foreign direct investment; and fifth, to support innovative clusters as a basis for lasting public-private cooperation.

'I firmly believe that the Structural Funds are essential to strengthening the research and innovation capacity of convergence regions,' concluded Ms Hübner. 'I exhort national and regional authorities to take full advantage of the unique opportunities which [they] offer, both for supporting structural reform and for creating a knowledge-based economy.'

To read the full text of both speeches (in PDF format), please: [click here and here](#)

**Information from the website:**

[http://icadc.cordis.europa.eu.int/fep-](http://icadc.cordis.europa.eu.int/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&RCN=25205&DOC=1&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1)

[cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN\\_NEWS&ACTION=D&RCN=25205&DOC=1&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1](http://icadc.cordis.europa.eu.int/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&RCN=25205&DOC=1&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1)

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**EuroAsia Auto 2006**

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II. International Automobile, Auto Spare Parts,  
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**09-12 March 2006**

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For further information: <http://www.euroasiaauto.com/en/default.asp>

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# *Training SMEs in becoming successful coordinators of Framework Programme projects*

The EC funded project "SME to Lead" (S2L) started in November 2005 with the aim of training SMEs to become successful coordinators within the EU's framework programme. This new project includes free-of charge training modules for SME potential coordinators of projects within framework programme 6 and towards the framework programme 7. The courses will present all aspects related to coordinating framework programme projects:

- Proposal writing
- Negotiation
- Administration
- Legal aspects

The training modules will be dedicated to SME participants; who will obtain certification of their training as well as a handbook following the courses.

The coordinator of S2L is PERA based in the U.K., a technology research centre with great expertise in the field of the framework programme. The other 9 partners of the project are from Denmark, Hungary, Spain, Latvia, Cyprus, Germany, Belgium, Portugal and Greece bringing in expertise from across the Framework programme and from working with SMEs in this field.

In total 24 courses will take place within a year, starting from September 2006. More than 360 SMEs will participate in the training with the aim of becoming successful coordinators.

For more information please visit the STL website: [www.smestolead.org](http://www.smestolead.org)

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## **REGinNET** *Technology Market Partner Search*



<http://www.ideal-ist.net/>



<http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/partners.cfm>



<http://www.managenergy.net/submenu/SPs.htm>

### TECHNOLOGY OFFERS FROM TURKEY, IRC-EGE

**Low and High Pressure Aluminium Casting Part Production for Automotive and Related Industries**

**(Open) 06 TR TEEU 0E5V**

A Turkish SME designs and produces special-purpose machines, fixture designs for CNC milling and

lathe machines, dimensional control equipment and aluminium pressure casting moulds for automotive sector. The company is seeking a joint venture agreement to produce aluminium casting parts for automotive and related industries in Turkey.

**Direct Determination of Sulphite in Food Samples by a Biosensor  
(Open) 06 TR TEEU 0E6W**

A research group at a Turkish university has developed a biosensor based on a plant tissue homogenate for direct determination of sulphite in food samples. Sulphite was enzymatically converted to sulphate in the presence of dissolved oxygen, which was monitored amperometrically. They are seeking industries for manufacturing agreement and license agreement.

**Utilisation of Leather Industry Wastes in Biodiesel Production  
(Open) 06 TR TEEU 0E7H**

A group of researchers at a Turkish university has developed know-how on the production of biodiesel of acceptable quality by utilising leather industry wastes. Evaluation of the product indicated that it was in accordance with the standards for use as a biodiesel fuel. The group would be interested in a license agreement and/or a manufacturing agreement that could lead to commercialisation of the process.

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