14 days

decisions are expected by December, or January 2008.

Janez Potocnik, the Research Commissioner, has pledged the Commission's "unwavering" support for ERC. Addressing the Scientific Council of the ERC at a Portuguese presidency event in Lisbon on 3 July, Potocnik said the ERC was the "flagship" of Framework 7 but it would need to establish its position amongst the more experienced players. "The ERC is the 'new kid on the block'," said Potocnik. "Maybe it arrived in a shiny new car and is being invited to all the best parties—the German Chancellor came to its christening after all! But it will need to establish its position among long established peers: the national research funding agencies for example. The adjustments will not necessarily be easy, but I am sure we will see enduring friendships."

The **European Coalition to End Animal Experiments**, which represents anti-vivisection groups from different European countries, launched a campaign on 27 June to ban the use of primates in EU labs in directive 86/609, the lab animal directive. The directive is current being reviewed by the Commission and an updated version is due to be published in draft later this year.

ideas

The responsibilities of research managers in building on the European Research Area was the main theme at the **13th European Association of Research Managers and Administrators** annual conference held in Warsaw from 29 June to 1 July. The need for professional certification of European research management and administration also emerged as a key theme, with delegates arguing it was necessary in order for institutions to further recognise and value such individuals. Attended by almost 200 delegates, the discussions will form the basis of EARMA's response to the ERA consultation. MEP Jerzy Buzek, a member of Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy opened the conference. "We need to develop new governance models in order to increase the number of research administration professionals," he told delegates.

The EU could learn from **the US culture of innovation**, C Boyden Gray, the US ambassador to the EU, has said. "We probably do a little better with innovation and entrepreneurial culture," Gray said in an interview with Parliament. "You can learn from us how to draw better on the intellectual property in every university and then make it more easily transferable to commercial activity. It will actually benefit the public."

nations

The **French** National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) has set out its main aims for the future in a 12-part strategy including plans to strengthen its profile at home and abroad. The Horizon 2020 plan emphasises the need to encourage dialogue between the main disciplines of scientific research, create a strong network of cooperation at the domestic level and establish a sound base for research in all areas through technological innovation. Publication of the objectives comes just as the president and director general of the CNRS were forced to release a statement to reassure researchers at publicly funded institutes that they would remain employees of the CNRS despite recent speculation in the French press.

A "cooperation agreement" between **Estonia** and the European Space Agency was signed in Tallinn on 20 June. It is the first of the new EU countries to sign such an agreement, and education is likely to feature as a strong area for links. Estonia intends to become a "European Cooperating State" in a few years time with an increased financial contribution to space activities.

The EU signed an agreement with **Switzerland** at the last Competitiveness Council in Luxembourg on 25 June to allow the country to join Framework 7. The agreement will afford Swiss research institutes, companies and universities the same benefits they have enjoyed since joining FP6 in 2004. Switzerland will add about 1.4 million euros to FP7.

Portugal is to appear at the Court of Justice for failing to comply with Euratom obligations governing nuclear research reactors. The Commission believes the country's Instituto Technologico e Nuclear research reactor in Lisbon has contravened EU rules. The rules state that each member must ensure the best possible protection of their population from ionising radiation exposure, something the Commission says Portugal has failed to do.

letters

Opening access

Dieter Imboden's opinion piece on open access publishing is *excellent*: exactly on target, it raises all the crucial issues, and is still very timely [*RE 29/3/07, p7*].

> *"Today, we are confronted with a paradox over access to [scientific] knowledge, which has defeated even the Commission, at least for the moment, judging by its communication last month on open access publishing."*

Professor Imboden is quite right to point out this defeat by the publishing lobby of the Commission's proposed mandate for self-archiving [of results from research funded under Framework 7]. Let's hope that this defeat is only a temporary one.

> *"The clamour of the research community for open access publishing…"*

The clamour is actually for "open access", and not necessarily for open access publishing (Gold OA), which is only one of two ways. The surer or faster way is open access self-archiving (Green OA).

> *"Open access means 'free online access to all peer-reviewed journal articles'. Obviously, this would bring the traditional reader-paid publication system to an end."*

That outcome is perhaps likely, but it is not obvious. No one knows how long there will still be a demand for the print edition, nor whether and when Green OA would make subscriptions unsustainable. The only sure and obvious thing is that 100 per cent Green OA self-archiving will provide 100 per cent open access.

> *"When libraries began to cancel journal subscriptions for financial reasons, funders saw an important pillar of their research policy dwindling. [So,] many signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities in October 2003."*

Many may have signed for reasons of journal affordability, but many signed because of research accessibility. OA is not primarily about journal economics but about research access.

> *"The declaration requires researchers to deposit their manuscripts in an open-access repository or to make sure that papers published in traditional journals are accessible free of charge after not more than 6 to 12 months."*

Alas, the Berlin Declaration itself does not require this. However, Berlin 3 (Southampton 2005) does recommend this requirement, and ROARMAP (Registry of Open Access Repository Materials Access Policies) lists around 30 institutions and funders that have already adopted it.

> *"In reality, however, still only a small fraction of authors fully exploit the potential of the traditional system."*

Yes, and this is because only about 30 institutions and funders have as yet required it. Movements are afoot, however, in the UK, Europe, the US, Brazil, Australia and Asia, to increase the number of institutions and funders adopting the Berlin 3 policy recommendation.

Continued on page 8

Wintermantel view from page 7

for the run on German universities? I am afraid the answer has to be "yes and no".

The pact is, without doubt, a milestone in German HE politics. It underlines the necessity of co-operation at the Federal and the Länder level, and it will provide much-needed funds for the universities that will enable them to continue to do excellent work. But let me try to explain why the high expectations of universities and universities of applied sciences have not been entirely met, and why the sector as a whole will remain underfunded.

THE AVERAGE annual cost per undergraduate student at a German university is currently 7,300 euros. Although this sum varies substantially for individual disciplines, it would, by and large, have ensured a sensible basis for the creation of around 90,000 additional university places between 2007 and 2010. However, due to an uneven spread of demand and demographics in the 16 Länder, and the financial implications of evening out these differences, the available annual sum per student will be as little as 4,260 euros for most universities, which will not cover costs by any means. In other words, there is a very real danger that higher education institutions will have no choice but to create university places in "cheap" disciplines whether these disciplines are in demand or not.

Another structural problem with the Pact as it was signed last month is that, despite its name, it covers only the period until 2010. The peak of first-year students, however, will not be reached before 2014.

Well, what's the bottom-line, then?

The HRK definitely welcomes the pact between the Federal and Länder governments as it will pour fresh money into the system, more than 1.1 billion euros by 2010. On top of that, it has secured a 20 per cent allowance towards overheads on projects funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), which the DFG, the HRK and the universities have been claiming for a very long time.

At the same time, we are convinced that a unique opportunity will be missed if we do not manage to equip our universities with the resources to train and educate first-class graduates who are desperately needed in all sectors of society and on the job market. The HRK will continue to argue this case and try to convince the decision makers.

More to say? Email: comment@ResearchResearch.com

Letter from page 3

> *"Some (mostly private) funders, such as the Wellcome Trust and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute … ask their grantees to publish exclusively in pure or hybrid open-access journals, with free online access to author-paid articles."*

Strictly speaking, they merely require that their authors make their articles OA, whether the green or the gold way.

> *"If a library pays for online access, it means that access to articles supported by HHMI or the Wellcome Trust is paid for twice. Thus, at least during a transition time, the well-intended initiative of some funders will pump even more money into the commercial publishing system."*

This is absolutely correct, and points out a deep strategic error, or shortsightedness, on the part of HHMI and Wellcome. Funders should *not* pay for hybrid Gold OA at this time. They should only mandate Green OA self-archiving.

> *"…changing to a total open-access world would shift the financial burden from institutions to funders [and] the distribution of public money for research would have to change accordingly—either by reducing support to institutions or by increasing the budgets of funders."*

This shift would happen only if we agreed to pay pre-emptively for Gold OA now. Instead, if we mandate only Green OA, and let time and the market decide whether and when subscriptions become unsustainable, then, if and when subscriptions do become unsustainable, (a portion of) the resulting institutional windfall subscription cancellation savings themselves can be redirected to pay for Gold OA, without the need to divert any new research or institutional funds. There is already more than enough money "in the system" (as Peter Suber, author of the *Open Access News* blog, puts it) now to pay for publishing. Gold OA will not cost more; indeed, it will cost a good deal less (only the cost of peer review, with institutional repositories taking over the distributed burden of archiving and access-provision).

> *"If every funder, small or large, weak or powerful, has to negotiate individually with the various publishers, we will be back where we began—in a publishing world where economic power dictates the deals between libraries and publishers. Was not the feeling that scientists and libraries were at the mercy of big publishing companies one reason for the open-access initiative in the first place? It would be a tremendous mistake just to replace one victim by another—that is to free the institutions at the expense of the funders. What can we do instead? Remember: the main issue is not to save money, but to provide fairer access to scientific information."*

Hear, Hear! Pre-emptive payment for hybrid Gold OA is a Trojan Horse, and funders and institutions would do well to heed Professor Imboden's words.

> *"So, funders and institutions should proceed together on the route to open access. The green route is easy and without major problems, but a good and just strategy for the golden route is still missing. Even if the intentions are good, we should not rush into unknown territory without considering the consequences."*

Again, research funders and institutions would do well to heed Professor Imboden's cautions about pre-emptive Gold OA, and the need to think things through carefully, for both scalability and sustainability. Meanwhile, full speed ahead on mandating Green OA!

> *"Not all the funders have the same opportunities. Not all the disciplines are as powerful as particle physics, which, according to CERN director Robert Aymar, can easily finance the transition of the few journals in the field to complete open access."*

Not all physicists are so sanguine about CERN's pre-emptive move toward Gold OA, (see *Debating the future of physics publishing*, Letters, Physics World 29 (3):22).

> *"Let us—scientists, funders, institutions, libraries and publishers—talk together, before too many new boundary conditions make a rational solution difficult."*

Indeed. And meanwhile, full speed ahead with Green OA mandates!

Stevan Harnad
American Scientist Open Access Forum, and professor of cognitive science at the universities of Southampton and Quebec.