Focus on Malta: Knowledge-based industries take centre stage

We should examine other forms of financing, especially for businesses in certain fields of life sciences in which Hungary has world class research groups.
EUREKA is a European network for market-oriented R&D. Its aim is to strengthen European competitiveness by promoting market-driven collaborative research and technological development. EUREKA enables industry, universities and research institutes from 40 member countries and the EU to collaborate in a ‘bottom-up’ approach to developing and exploiting innovative technologies.

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‘Innovation is turning knowledge into money’

“The term ‘Innovation Union’ should be seen as an umbrella. And that is the new idea of Research and Innovation Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, which I welcome. The whole set of different programmes, with different rules needs to be more coherent. Unfortunately, many people think that this is another element adding to an already existing innovation policy. This is definitely not the case. The most important step is to simplify rules by unifying rules. To achieve the Innovation Union, we have to move towards more effective and target-driven approaches that not only experts can understand. We definitely need to have more success in services, products and in turning money into knowledge. We are good at turning knowledge into money but we need to be better!

The SMEs in the focus of previous European funding programmes complain about red tape. As I was myself very active in shaping the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), I know that reducing red tape was one of the major ideas of the European Parliament to boost innovation. Regrettably, we did not manage to simplify the rules. Now we have to make the next Framework Programme (FP) more attractive.

Furthermore, reducing red tape is also one of the most important preconditions for helping SMEs access finance. We have excellent instruments which have shown that by using modern financing products, we can have a leverage effect on investment. For instance, the Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) which gives the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) the possibility to use money from the FP to leverage private investment, it can correct the imbalance between loans and grants. We can create even more risk capital than there is currently on the market. SMEs could benefit as they need this venture or risk capital to get their products to the market.

The first and most important measure to create a fully functioning European Research Area (ERA) is to concentrate on ideas and results. If we look at what has been achieved by FP7 and FP6, one could hardly mention any ‘man on the moon’ project. Personally, I think that we should concentrate on two mega-themes: One could be the question of storage; notably energy storage, where we are behind our Asian competitors. If we fail, we risk not achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy targets. The second mega-theme is health; if we can add another two healthy years to the lifetime of every European citizen through good research and innovative products that would be for the benefit of everybody in Europe and make EU added-value visible to everybody.

To help SMEs innovate better, first we have to make people understand that SMEs are key to innovation. If we define innovation as turning knowledge into money by delivering a service; a product or a patent, people will understand that we need to have better results and market them in Europe. There are too many examples of European innovations marketed elsewhere. We cannot keep our wealth, if we don’t use our knowledge for the market. Unfortunately, in many Member States, there is no innovation culture and innovative results are not awarded as such by policy.

The EU has to bring these elements of innovation culture to every Member State and there, EUREKA, being an intergovernmental initiative, can help. EUREKA is best suited to compare examples and share best practices with its member countries and partners across Europe and beyond. We can learn from countries outside Europe, like Israel and Turkey which have good records in terms of innovation. Also, Finland and the UK have the best financing facilities. To share the best practices and improve results, EUREKA can play a role.

Dr Jorgo Chatzimarkakis MEP

Member of the European Parliament
Jorgo Chatzimarkakis MEP is a member of the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). He was elected Member of the European Parliament for the German Liberal Party in 2004 and re-elected in 2009. Chatzimarkakis has been actively involved in developing directives on innovation and research policies. In the 6th term of the European Parliament, he was Rapporteur for the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). He joined the German Free Democratic Party (FDP) in 1991, of which he is Member of the National Board. He has been Secretary General of the Regional FDP branch in Saarland in the years 2002-2010. Chatzimarkakis studied agriculture and political sciences in Bonn and Oxford, he holds a PhD in political science, obtained from the University of Bonn in 2000.
Project showcase

EURIPIDES CERAMJET

The CERAMJET project was aimed at the main ceramic components and interconnection manufacturers in Europe, with the expectation of dramatic competitive advantages, using a rupture innovative technology. Targeted direct and immediate applications of the CERAMJET were: MLCCS (capacitors), fine-line thick-film circuitry, LTCC (low-temperature cofired ceramic), HTCC (high-temperature cofired ceramic), ceramic sensor or actuators (Mems) systems on ceramic (SOC).

In each of these domains, several manufacturing technologies are necessary to design electronic components (screen printing, tape casting, cutting, and lamination). These technologies request specific tools and each set limitations to the design, as well as to the level of achievable discrete resolution. Inkjet printing technology dedicated to electronic materials allows users to design in digitally 3D multi-material electronic components in one single step of contact-less and tool-less manufacturing. Its discrete printing resolution level is below 50µm and its additional features enable the production of elements with new and more competitive and challenging designs.

CERAMJET consortium unified a laboratory in process science (SPCTS), a worldwide leader in manufacturing of precious metals, an equipment manufacturer in the field of printed electronics and three main representatives of the main ceramic electronics applications (c-Mac).

The results were very positive. Indeed, complex thick film circuits were printed and reached the same performances after sintering as screen printing (conductivity, sticking ...). Multi-layered ceramic capacitors were shaped in a single stage of manufacturing and they were sintered without cracks or delamination. Finally, a new inkjet printer was introduced to the market and already released in more than 10 models for the ceramic industry, but also to the organic printing world, for the shaping OLEDs, organic photovoltaic or electronic circuits on flat and flexible substrates.

The CERAMJET project has been positive for the whole consortium. The three years of development have allowed the marketing of a new printer, made in France, for the highest added value sectors of electronics and newer energy technologies. The business turnover andhirings were accomplished thanks to the marketing of inkjet printing equipment. Some 24 to 36 months of additional development will be necessary for industrial customers (components manufacturers and project partners) to generate the full added value. The results of this project are positive enough for Eurofarad and c-Mac to continue their collaboration with Ceradrop.

It is also important to mention that this project allowed Eurofarad and SPCTS to proceed with another collaborative project in the development of new magnetic components manufactured by inkjet printing processes.

Ceradrop, as project leader on behalf of all partners, expressed its thanks to EURIPIDES, DGCIS, the Limousin Region authorities and the European FEDER funding as well as all their personnel for their dynamic and pro-active help and support, to solve the difficulties met during the course of CERAMJET project.
Project showcase

E4 5044 AQUASUN

Floating solar panels

Most of the solar energy systems on the market today bear two major weaknesses: they require vast land areas in order to be built, and the costs related to fabrication and maintenance are high. A new technology is about to overcome these challenges: floating solar power plants.

The project results from a collaboration between Solaris Synergy from Israel and the EDF group from France. EUREKA provided the supporting platform, which enabled the enhancement of both companies’ partnership. ‘We are very pleased with the collaborative dimension of the project,’ says Dr. Elyakim Kassel, coordinator of the AQUASUN project and business development manager at Solaris Synergy.

The team is now aiming to launch the implementation phase by the end of 2011. Tests will take place in Cadarache, France. A prototype will operate onsite for a period of nine months, while assessing the system’s performances through seasonal changes in water levels. The research team members believe that by next year they will have all the information required to allow the technology’s entry to the market.

A win-win situation

As even leading photovoltaic companies struggle to find land on which to install solar power plants, the project team identified the almost untouched potential of solar installations-on water. The water basins, on which the plants could be built, are often already in use for other purposes.

After solving the question of space, the team also took on the problem of cost. The developers were able to reduce the costs linked to the implementation of the technology by two means. First, they reduced the quantity of solar cells used thanks to a sun energy concentration system based on mirrors, while keeping steady the amount of power produced.

Secondly, the team used a creative cooling system using the water on which the solar panels are floating. Thanks to this cooling method, the photovoltaic system can use silicon solar cells, which tend to experience problems linked to overheating, unlike more expensive standard type cells.

Made of electricity of modules

The system is designed in such way that it is possible to assemble as many identical modules as needed for the power rating desired, each module producing a standard amount of 200 kilowatt of electricity.

The team also worked on the environmental impact of the technology, which acts as a ‘breathing surface’ through which oxygen can penetrate to reach the water. This feature ensures that a sufficient amount oxygen reaches the underwater life.

The project was featured at the 4th International Eilat-Eilot Renewable Energy Conference in Israel giving the public the occasion to observe the functioning of the first floating photovoltaic system. According to Solaris Synergy’s CEO, Yossi Fisher, the installation in Eilat has been a milestone, opening the way for “many future implementations in Israel and throughout the world”.

It’s a win-win situation, since there are many water reservoirs with industrial uses that are open for energy production.

Dr. Kassel, coordinator of the AQUASUN project

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Country focus: Malta

Knowledge-based industries take centre stage

Located at the centre of the Euro-Med region, the small but highly ambitious island of Malta has become one of the most attractive investment locations in the region and is well on its way to achieving its vision of becoming a centre of excellence in a number of knowledge-based industries.

**How has the economic environment in Malta changed in recent years?**

Malta has in recent years implemented various reforms that have not only enabled it to become a member of the European Union and the Eurozone, but also to embark on an extensive strategy that is aimed at transforming the country into a regional hub and a centre of excellence in a number of strategic growth industries.

Traditionally a low-cost manufacturing base that was more renowned for its sun, sea and beaches, Malta has managed to diversify its offering and move up the value chain by taking advantage of its highly-skilled and efficient workforce as its only natural resource.

With a sound regulatory framework, an attractive incentives package and one of the most friendly tax regimes in the EU, Malta has ensured it remained competitive even in the midst of the global economic crisis. Indeed, Malta was one of the last countries to enter the recession and one of the first to emerge from it, as testified by European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek while on a visit to the country in early 2011.

Furthermore, Eurostat figures show that the rate of economic growth in Malta in 2010 stood at 3.2 per cent – one of the highest rates across the EU and almost double the average, which stood at 1.8 per cent. This is coupled by a very low unemployment rate, the fifth lowest of the 27 EU Member States.

**Which are the strong industry sectors and what is Malta’s vision for the future?**

Malta’s strategy is to focus on a number of sectors that have registered significant growth in recent years and have good potential for even further positive results. These sectors, which have been identified in the government’s ‘Vision 2015 and Beyond’, include ICT, healthcare and life sciences, value-added manufacturing, financial services, educational services, tourism and eco-sustainability.

These knowledge-based industries represent high value-added sectors in which the country can fully exploit its investment attractiveness, competitive advantages and, above all, its major resource – its people, their knowledge and abilities.

As part of its strategy, the government is committed towards creating the right environment to fuel further growth in these sectors.

**How do R&D and innovation fit in this picture?**

One key lesson learnt from the hardships encountered during the global crisis is that businesses and industries capable of renewing themselves are those most able to overcome the difficulties. In Malta, the government was on hand to assist those companies in difficulty to invest in new lines of operations and retrain their workers. This enabled them to live through the tough period and they are nowadays reaping the results of that innovation.

R&D and innovation processes do not necessarily need to lead to a new or significantly improved product or service, but even to a novel way of carrying out a process that has more benefits than the previous way of doing things.

In this sense, Maltese enterprises are highly innovative. While there is a significant space for growth, a number of large multinational companies operating in Malta already conduct significant R&D in key sectors like pharmaceuticals, materials development, ICT, manufacturing design and automation, etc.

Our drive to boost R&D and innovation throughout the various sectors of our economy - amongst others through our membership in EUREKA and recently even through Eurostars, as well as through the administration of tailor-made schemes and incentives including European-funded assistance – will also make R&D and innovation more accessible to small and medium sized enterprises.

**Gross domestic product:**

(Source: National Statistics Office, 2010) 6.2 billion euro

**GDP real growth:**

(Source: Eurostat, 2010) 3.2%
Growth Leaders amongst Moderate Innovators

Innovation Growth Rate:

is hosted by the local economic development corporation - Malta Enterprise - provides greater synergy with the other necessary components for the management of R&D projects, including further incentives and business support. Moreover, Malta Enterprise serves as a one-stop-shop for business services as well as negotiates all the incentives on behalf of Government. This gives the added advantage of a central point of contact and focus as well as a reliable and authoritative partner for business success. Maltese people themselves are very open to trade and business and often form partnerships with foreign companies or partners. One finds, therefore, that Maltese businessmen are very willing to listen and engage in projects as they realise that technology and knowledge-transfer is for their own benefit especially in order to grow their local operation and eventually internationalise.

Ultimately, the aim is to foster a culture in which the use of R&D and innovation is even more widespread, thereby maximising the returns on the human capital that is available in Malta.

This is also the logic underpinning our investment of around 26 million euro into Malta’s first Life Science Park which will bring together the University of Malta, Mater Dei Hospital and Malta Enterprise in an R&D nexus for the budding life sciences industry in Malta.

What would be the benefits of having a project partner in Malta?

Malta’s small size, which in the past was often considered as a barrier, has turned out to be a relative advantage as the authorities have the possibility of being close to the roots, enacting business-friendly legislation and taking prompt responsive action whenever this is called for. For R&D, Malta’s small size provides an excellent ‘living lab’ for the mass testing and prototype launching purposes as the island’s size and remoteness can provide suitable protection and scalability. Furthermore, the fact that the EUREKA Office is hosted by the local economic development corporation - Malta Enterprise - provides greater synergy with the other necessary components for the management of R&D projects, including further incentives and business support. Moreover, Malta Enterprise serves as a one-stop-shop for business services as well as negotiates all the incentives on behalf of Government. This gives the added advantage of a central point of contact and focus as well as a reliable and authoritative partner for business success. Maltese people themselves are very open to trade and business and often form partnerships with foreign companies or partners. One finds, therefore, that Maltese businessmen are very willing to listen and engage in projects as they realise that technology and knowledge-transfer is for their own benefit especially in order to grow their local operation and eventually internationalise.

Is there any assistance or financial support available to companies operating in Malta?

Companies operating in Malta can benefit from a number of incentives and wide-ranging assistance aimed at encouraging investment, such as tax credits on investment, access to finance including loan interest subsidies, assistance for training of the workforce, allocation of industrial space at competitive prices, as well as other schemes to encourage R&D, innovation and competitiveness.

Amongst other schemes for R&D and innovation, Malta offers both cash grants and tax credits for covering the costs of work on R&D, while through funding from the European Regional Development Fund over 8.5 million euro were contracted under two separate schemes for R&D and innovation. Alongside this financial assistance, further support is provided to enterprises in activities not only directly related to R&D, but also in doing other work that is part of the whole process such as patent filing and licensing, market research, manufacturing start-up, tooling and redesign for the manufacturing process.

Additionally, with intellectual property increasingly becoming a strategic asset that individuals and enterprises can exploit to generate wealth, Malta has enacted legislation whereby royalty payment, or similar income for granting the exploitation of knowledge protected under a qualifying patent, may qualify for income-tax exemption. This is an added fiscal advantage which is amongst the most favourable within the European Union and which also reiterates Malta’s support to R&D and innovation. Despite the positive take-up, from time to time the schemes and incentives available in the country are reviewed and updated in order to better address the needs of the businesses and industries within the context in which they operate, in line with the strategy outlined in Vision 2015 and Beyond.

About the EUREKA Office in Malta:

Malta is one of the more recent additions to the EUREKA network, having become a member in June 2006. The programme is hosted by Malta Enterprise, the Government’s Corporation for the promotion of trade and investment. Malta Enterprise’s mission is to act as a single point of contact for enterprise, attract, grow and retain foreign direct investment in the Maltese economy, and help in the growth and development of local industry. Its package of assistance includes professional pre-investment advice and support, fiscal and financial incentives, as well as a range of post investment services and aftercare facilities. Further details on www.maltaenterprise.com, or contact eureka@maltaenterprise.com.
EUREKA at the EU Institutions

EUREKA and Eurostars presented at the European Parliament’s STOA panel meeting

On 12 May, EUREKA’s Strategy and Evaluation Manager David Garlot presented the joint EUREKA-EU Eurostars Programme at the European Parliament’s body for Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA). EUREKA was warmly welcomed by STOA’s Chairman Paul Rübig MEP, also rapporteur for the Eurostars Programme at its launch in 2008. David Garlot continued presenting the complementarities of the Eurostars Programme to the Framework Programme thanks to its bottom-up approach and its simple, fast and transparent participation rules. The presentation attracted attending MEPs’ interest on the programme’s cost-effectiveness, sustainability and its alignment with Europe’s 2020 strategy. “Eurostars is a programme with good results and a good geographical distribution,” highlighted António Correia de Campos MEP and STOA panel Vice-Chair. Responding to the questions of all seven MEPs present, David Garlot stressed that the programme being specifically dedicated for R&D-intensive SMEs aims at providing a ‘one-stop-shop’ to help SMEs along the innovation cycle and to overcome the death valley of funding. With its 25 years of experience, EUREKA represents all EU27 Member States and enhanced cooperation with the newer EU12 Member States is one of the incoming EUREKA Hungarian Chairmanship’s priorities.

The MEPs present were STOA Chairman Paul Rübig (AT), Vice-Chair António Correia de Campos (PT), Vice-Chair Malcolm Harbour (UK), Teresa Riera Madurell (ES), Philippe Lamberts (BE), Adriana Silvia-Ticau (RO) and Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (HU).

STOA is an official organ of the European Parliament, but its work is carried out in partnership with external experts. These can be research institutes, universities, laboratories, consultancies or individual researchers contracted to help prepare specific projects. STOA increasingly focuses upon round-table expert discussions, conferences and workshops with associated or consequent studies. Members of Parliament and invited experts from EU institutions, international institutions, universities, specialist institutes, academies and other sources of expertise worldwide can jointly participate in the analysis of current issues at these events.
EUREKA at the EU Institutions


The Interim Evaluation of the Eurostars Programme was presented during the meeting of the European Parliament’s Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) on 5 May 2011 by Anne Laperrouze, Chairwoman of the Expert Group of this report. ITRE committee members were present, as well as representatives from the EU Commission and the EU Council. Laperrouze concluded that, with 72% of the projects participating in Eurostars being R&D-performing SMEs, the target of the programme has been reached. Benefits of the programme, according to the participants, are its easy accessibility and the central evaluation at EU level. She recommended the time-to-contract be faster and funding rules harmonised. Among MEPs’ comments, Edit Herczog agreed that member countries’ rules often have a ‘distortion effect’ on European policies. She questioned whether it was not up to Eurostars participating countries rather than to the EU to do something about it.

António Fernando Correia de Campos said the Eurostars Programme was an example of success that should be continued and EU programmes should find inspiration in it, especially for the future Framework Programme. Bernd Reichert from the Commission’s DG Research and Innovation added that the programme will continue within the common framework until 2013.

EUREKA’s European Parliament Dinner Debate on ‘Governance Mechanisms for Research and Innovation’

EUREKA, in cooperation with the K4I Forum and its members COST and CEFIC, co-organised, a dinner debate on 3 May 2011, at the EU Parliament. Research and innovation strategic objectives needed in developing a common European vision and enhancing governance for the application and coordination of national and European policies and their joint implementation were the main topics of discussion. Danuta Maria Hübner (PL), the hosting MEP stated that research and development are not the same as innovation. Governance should cover much more than just R&D and innovation-led growth needs to be promoted. David Harmon, Member of the Cabinet of European Research and Innovation Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, highlighted the need for a stronger European Research Area (ERA) and governance structures. Head of EUREKA Secretariat Luuk Borg presented the funding model of the Eurostars Programme, which helps R&D-performing SMEs introduce their products to the market.
Israeli Chairmanship event

EUREKA and its Clusters strengthen role as major players in R&D&I

In its latest debate in the European Parliament in Brussels, ‘Effectively supporting transnational cooperation in industrial innovation’ and the third under Israeli Chairmanship, EUREKA once again stressed its pivotal position in the European Research Area and demonstrated that research and innovation are more than ever ‘crucial to addressing global challenges’, adding that ‘innovation can be more effectively addressed at regional or even local level’.

Over 90 high-level stakeholders from the EUREKA network, EU institutions, industry and academia got involved in a lively debate on the different R&D support measures for hi-tech SMEs along the value chain and heard the view of big industry on strategically-significant R&D segments and the importance of networks.

German European Parliamentarian Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, host of the event broadcasted a brief welcoming address to participants where, on behalf of the European Parliament, he stated that EUREKA’s expertise is needed to make the next funding programme more effective than the previous one.

Vittorio Prodi MEP said that, despite no longer being involved with the ITRE Committee, he had a long-standing relationship with EUREKA. The network’s philosophy of combining expertise across frontiers and collaborative working was the right one to ensure that Europe becomes more competitive.

Eli Opper, EUREKA Chairman said that new mechanisms are needed because stakeholders are cautious of risk-taking and because Venture Capital funds are not focused on long-term gains.

Julian Sesena, MaPeEr SME coordinator, highlighted in his presentation that there should be a better promotion of contacts with Venture Capital and other contact needs that SMEs might have after a research activity is carried out, adding that grants should be complemented with loans.

Luuk Borg, Head of the EUREKA Secretariat and moderator of the whole event, explained in further detail the EUREKA network and especially the Eurostars Joint Programme with the European Commission. He focused on the answer of EUREKA to the Eurostars Mid-Term Evaluation report, stressing the fact that, the Eurostars model fits largely SMEs needs and that its strong added value relies on EUREKA’s well-established network of national project coordinators (NPC) and national funding bodies (NFB), which have a deep local implementation and an extensive experience in supporting SMEs.

Yigal Erlich from the Israeli Chair and Chair of EUREKA’s Round Table Financing Innovation, explained the benefits of public and private funding joining efforts while praising the governance structure flexibility of the EUREKA network.

Three EUREKA Cluster Chairmen (Enrico Villa-CATRENE, Rudolph Hagenmueller-ITEA2 and Jose Jimenez-CELtic) presented the added value of industry in developing generic technologies of key importance for European competitiveness and stressing the success of a bottom-up approach and flexibility, allowing industry a quick and efficient response to changing parameters.

Magnus Madfors, Director R&D Policy at Ericsson, suggested that SMEs and big enterprises need to find a way of working together as an ecosystem. ‘There is a big difference between playing to win and playing not to lose and sometimes in Europe we are playing not to lose’ he concluded.

Vice President at Israeli SME Runcom Eli Sofer showcased a number of projects and success stories done with the cooperation of EUREKA Clusters and called for a stable funding environment to be created in order to relieve the uncertainties accompanying the setup of a new consortium between project partners.

To consult the presentations, please visit www.eurekanetwork.org.
Sándor Erdő Vice-President of the Hungarian National Innovation Office and future EUREKA Chairman

Sándor Erdő is Vice-President of the Hungarian National Innovation Office and the country’s EUREKA High-Level Representative. In July, Hungary assumes the EUREKA Chairmanship, with Erdő at the helm. EUREKA News caught up with him last month in Brussels at the European Business Summit to hear of the country’s hopes and ambitions for its Chairmanship, which follows its six-month Presidency of the EU.

EUREKA News: The NIH (National Innovation Office of Hungary) is a new government agency. What is its mission?

Sándor Erdő: The NIH has a dual role. It deals with international innovation policy issues, from EU Framework Programme affairs to bilateral agreements – and, of course, EUREKA and other European instruments; it also has a governmental advisory capacity on these issues. Second, it handles domestic innovation issues, from strategic planning to the coordination and monitoring of public R&D programmes. The NIH is a governmental office supervised by the Hungarian Ministry for National Economy.

EN: In a recent presentation on Hungary’s forthcoming EUREKA Chairmanship, you speak of a desire to continue on the route of your Israeli predecessors. Can you be more precise?

SE: Yes, we have a number of our own priorities, but we also intend to continue the work of the previous Chairmanships, primarily the Germans and the Israelis on several subjects including the theme of ‘financing innovation’. This very current topic is a vast one – the Israelis have particularly focussed on the Venture Capital market and ‘financing through the value chain’. We also plan to look at improving additional financial instruments and services and taking a closer look at loan systems, perhaps through the European Investment Fund. Any such scheme needs to be very carefully designed, taking into account the relatively high risks involved.

We should not neglect, however, the need to examine other forms of financing, especially for businesses in certain fields of life sciences, for example, in which Hungary has world class research groups. Here, there is great innovative potential, but the risk is high and the need for various forms of public support also.

Hungary has a small but established network of Business Angels; however, most venture capital is from foreign sources.

We acknowledge the need, along with our EU colleagues, to remove gaps in the innovation chain. We need to develop tools – or expand existing ones, but this, along with our other Chairmanship priorities, is ambitious.

Israel has also made good progress in developing a mutually-beneficial relationship between EUREKA and Canada, which should culminate in a formal association agreement under our Chairmanship. This is part of EUREKA’s continuing ‘Internationalisation Strategy’, which involved the association of the network with South Korea in 2009. We are watching the evolution of this relationship with great interest, as Asia and North America represent both important R&D partners and critical growth markets for Europe.

EN: Which of the so-called EU ‘Grand Challenges’ will the Hungarian Chairmanship be addressing?

SE: In addressing the Grand Challenges, we will build on the experience gained and tools developed by the Israeli Chair but in addition we foresee an increased cooperation with European Technology Platforms. We’ll be particularly focussing on project generation and new mechanisms, building on the added value of a cross-disciplinary approach.

As far as technology fields are concerned, we will address in particular the challenges related to the agro-food sector such as food safety, healthy food, also utilising the cross-fertilising effect of manufacturing and ICT technologies. These are all significant contributors to the Hungarian economy. Agriculture has always played an important role in Hungary, but now we must look at development further along the agro-food chain, particularly in the food processing industry.

We’ll also be promoting the regional dimension of EUREKA, enhancing cross-border cooperation to generate more projects and promoting synergies and coherence with strategies and funds at regional levels. The regional dimension has not been actively addressed by EUREKA in the past and we think the network can learn and benefit a lot by observing best practice in regional cooperation models, where transnational research partnerships are dynamic and successful.

www.nih.gov.hu
EUROGIA+, the EUREKA Cluster for innovative energy technologies

EUROGIA+, EUREKA Cluster for the whole energy mix

EUROGIA+ is the international industry forum promoting technology development and innovative applications addressing innovative energy technologies that reduce the carbon footprint of energy production and use and facilitate the migration to a sustainable economy, including technologies for solar, wind, biomass, waves, and geothermal energy and energy efficiency.

EUROGIA+ is the only pan-European R&D programme dedicated to the whole energy mix, from fossil to renewable sources. It proposes a systemic approach which is essential to respond to the huge challenges the world is facing:

- satisfy energy demand and its continuous growth;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit climate change;
- ensure security of energy supply to all consumers;
- transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies, while achieving a rapid decarbonisation of the energy chain.

Achievements so far:

By January 2011, EUROGIA+ had received endorsement from 17 EUREKA member countries, which have committed financial support to projects submitted by partners from large industrial companies and SMEs, as well as research institutes and universities. At mid-term of its 5-year mandate, EUROGIA+ has been able to aggregate around 300 R&D organisations, which brought their most innovative ideas for the development of low carbon energy technologies. Successful total projects so far represent a total budget of over 90 million euro in 20 R&D projects:

- Nine labeled projects focus specifically on renewables (solar, wind, waves or biomass);
- Six on energy efficiency in various sectors;
- Three on Carbon Capture and Storage;
- One on smart grids;
- and one on generic offshore technologies.

Thanks to its efficient, cost effective organisation and world-class evaluators on the Cluster’s Technical Committee, the EUROGIA+ label has gained recognition and credibility. It is anticipated that, before year end, the number and budget of EUROGIA+ labeled projects will double and that, after Estonia recently joining, two more countries are likely to follow.

Eilat and the CleanTech Action:

EUROGIA+ has played a proactive role in the CleanTech action, the Israeli Chairmanship initiative towards a clean and safe environment, since its launch, late 2010.

EUROGIA+ travelled to Eilat in February this year, to hold Technical Committee and Board meetings, as part of its fifth call for proposal evaluation process. Ten project outlines were defended by proposers in front of the Technical Committee, with a total budget of more than 40 million euro - four of them were encouraged to go to full project proposal stage.

EUROGIA+ has already one running project with Israeli participation, one to be labeled soon, and two other proposals under evaluation.

EUROGIA+ Vice-President Raul Manzanas presented to EUREKA HLRs the point of view of an energy company on the importance of this Cluster for industry. EUROGIA+ Chairman Gabriel Marquette participated in the plenary session ‘Cleantech Innovation value chain - using EUREKA instruments’, organised at the Eilat-Eilot Renewable Energy Conference.

EUROGIA+ also played a leading role in the organisation of the CleanTech-Intercluster InfoDay, held on 23 February 2011.

In June, EUROGIA+ attended the last EUREKA Israeli Chairmanship meeting in Jerusalem to report upon the roadmap achievement half-way through its mandate and to describe its vision for the next two years.

A revised version of the EUROGIA+ White Book is available at www.eurogia.com.
News in brief

New EUREKA Members
Over the last months the EUREKA network welcomed among its members the following national high-level representatives (HLRs) and national project coordinators (NPCs):

Greece: Mark J. Assael (HLR); Bulgaria: Bogdana Vatashka-Anavi (NPC); Poland: Iwona Jedrzejczak (NPC); South Korea: Johng-Ihl Lee (NPC).

The EUREKA network is sad to see depart Jerzy Tokarski, former National Project Coordinator for Poland, who has greatly contributed to EUREKA’s development over the last 19 years.

EUREKA IPC Resolution commits growth in market-oriented R&D projects and to ‘fostering a culture of innovation’
On 31 May 2011, parliamentarians from across the EUREKA network countries gathered at the Knesset (parliament) for the 17th EUREKA Inter-Parliamentary Conference. They adopted a resolution which commits to growth in market-oriented R&D projects and to ‘fostering a culture of innovation’. The conference, chaired by Knesset Science and Technology Committee head Meir Sheetrit, in the presence of US-Israeli Nobel Prize laureate Robert Aumann, adopted the resolution unanimously, setting five key goals, including expansion of EUREKA’s services to support through all phases of the value chain and becoming an investment promotion centre to interact with public and private financial stakeholders. In response to these goals, Dr Eli Opper, current EUREKA Chairman, said that the global economy was changing quickly and that EUREKA must adapt accordingly.

Eurostars National Funding Bodies Conference reconfirms the priority of SMEs for the European Commission and the EUREKA Network
On 19 May 2011, the EUREKA Secretariat in Brussels held a third edition of the Eurostars National Funding Bodies (NFB) Conference. Over 40 participants, representing EUREKA member countries and their funding agencies across and beyond European frontiers, listened to presentations and discussions on the successful Eurostars Programme’s possible role in the next Common Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation funding (CSFRI). Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General of the European Commission’s DG Research, who was instrumental in the creation of the Eurostars Programme, opened the Conference and referred to the key importance of SMEs for boosting innovation and increasing growth in Europe.

Eurostars SMEs in the driving seat
Eurostars has proven its ability to put R&D-performing SMEs in the driving seat, helping them to lead and develop their collaborative project with the support of other private and public organisations. As underlined in the Mid Term Evaluation of the Eurostars Programme, the demand for the programme has exceeded original expectations with a large number of applications and it has mobilised predominantly R&D-performing SMEs with close-to-market, bottom-up projects.’ Of the 1,470 projects applications submitted for the first five evaluations, some 400 projects were shortlisted for funding; 70% of participants are SMEs. Who are Eurostars SMEs? What are their expectations? Discover more at www.eurostars-eureka.eu.

The EUREKA Innovation Award 2011 – Results!
A Lithuanian-led EUREKA environmental technology project has scooped this year’s EUREKA Innovation Award, announced in a ceremony in the Israeli capital on 23 June. Israeli television presenter Yigal Ravid, handed over the prize – a trophy and a media package worth 15,000 euro – to a delighted Monika Kavaliauske, Manager at JSC Biocentras, a Vilnius-based SME, which led the project E! 2522 OPTISOIL CLEAN. The finalists were: E! 2678 SS TESTER; E!2522 OPTISOILCLEAN and E! 3080 BIODI EXPERTISE. This year’s focus was on projects in the broad field of ‘green technology’, but projects were also partly judged on revenues generated by the product of the research undertaken in the project. The three projects shortlisted involved partners from France, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Read the next edition of EUREKA News to learn more.

EUREKA develops its impact assessment toolbox
A group of EUREKA National Project Coordinators and experts met on 4 May to discuss the final steps to be taken on
European Commission publishes its response to the Eurostars Programme Interim Evaluation Report

On 8 April, the European Commission (EC) published its response to the Interim Evaluation Report of the Eurostars Joint Programme. The Interim Evaluation was carried out by a Group of Independent Experts between July and December 2010 chaired by Anne Laperrouze, former MEP and Vice-Chair of the ITRE Committee. In its communication, the EC welcomes the strong SME interest in Eurostars and highlights its support for the current programme (until 2013). According to the panel’s report, the Eurostars Programme - the first European funding and support programme to be specifically dedicated to SMEs – is an ‘attractive programme for R&D-performing SMEs and should be continued’. Its bottom-up approach, the easy access to participation and its central evaluation system at EU level are assessed as some of its key strengths.

EUREKA continues its successful partnership at the 2011 European Business Summit

EUREKA continued its important partnership at the European Business Summit for 2011. It was present with a stand showcasing two projects: E14031 RECONOMAD, dedicated to data acquisition and handwriting recognition technology and the ITEA2 ESNA for networking based on low-cost wireless sensors. Most importantly, EUREKA also contributed to the opening panel debate. Luuk Borg, Head of the EUREKA Secretariat was present in ‘Entrepreneurship and SMEs: from declaration to implementation’, alongside other high profile panellists: Zsolt Becsey State, Secretary of the Economy of Hungary, Daniel Calleja Crespo, SME Envoy and Deputy Director General for Enterprise and Industry; Hugh Morgan-Williams, President of the SME Committee of BUSINESSEUROPE. Borg presented the successful Eurostars joint programme, dedicated to high-tech SMEs and added that ‘the way to success is to boost those SMEs – particularly in the technology sector – which, if successful, will then promote growth.’

UK’s Technology Strategy Board develops a strategy for business innovation

The Technology Strategy Board (TSB) - the UK’s national innovation agency – publishes its strategy for business innovation for 2011-2015. With its concept to commercialisation, the TSB aims to accelerate economic growth by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation. Important references are made to the Eurostars Programme as a best practice example to strengthen help for companies accessing EU innovation funding and support for SMEs. TSB’s budget for the period 2011-12 to 2014-15 is over 1.13 bn euro. In partnership with business and other funders, this will generate investment of around 2.84 bn euro to drive economic growth.

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Open Innovation Day | 99 € HT
IP in Industry | 490 € HT
IP Strategies | 490 € HT
IP in BRIC | 490 € HT
4 days | 990 € HT

Legacy