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Europe

Spain Takes Over Presidency of EU Council

Spain has pledged to drive forward the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA) during its six-month Presidency of the Council of the EU, which started on January 1st. Innovation and equality are at the heart of the Spanish Presidency programme, explained Science and Innovation Minister Cristina Garmendia who added that "Promoting the construction of the ERA is key to the success of this programme."

It is only by having a common shared space for knowledge, the ERA, in which scientists and ideas can move freely, that research and innovation will be able to act as engines for economic and social progress over the coming decades", she writes. "For this reason, they should be at the heart of European Union policies."

Spain has identified three 'axes' to drive the ERA forward: integration, involvement and inclusion. The integration axis refers to the importance of integrating research and development (R&D) policies into other policies - and specifically into the EU's strategy for 2020. Through the involvement axis, Spain will seek to ensure that all instruments supporting R&D and innovation in Europe, whether they are regional, national or pan-European in nature, address the major challenges faced by society today. These include climate change, the search for new sources of energy, ageing and disease, and globalisation. Finally, the inclusion axis focuses on the role science and innovation can play in promoting social cohesion and tackling poverty and exclusion.

Writing on CORDIS, the Spanish Presidency explains that "Europe has the duty and the opportunity to lead the battle against inequality and to put science and technology to use in this fight". Looked at more broadly, Spain's priorities for the next six months include: consolidating Europe's social agenda, paying special attention to gender equality and the fight against domestic violence; getting out of the economic crisis; energy security and climate change; creating a safer EU, particularly with regard to the challenge of immigration; and enabling Europe to speak with its own voice on the international scene. Spain will head up the EU Council for the first half of 2010, before handing over the reins to Belgium on 1 July.

For more information, please visit: www.eu2010.es

ICT Profiles Supports R&D Players to Find Appropriate Partners

Austria has launched a new on-line directory called ICTprofiles, which provides the user with a professional and entirely web-based platform for successful partner searches. ICTprofiles allows its users to find collaboration partners with a focus on Information and Communication Technology (ICT):

In all relevant research areas (e.g. FP7);

In commercial areas; and

In governmental areas.

This directory enables R&D players from all over the world to review the R&D core competencies and publications of the Austrian Information and Communication Technology community. The clearly represented profiles inform the visitors about expertise, interests and aims of the organisation.

In order to ensure the continuous high quality of the database, all published profiles are updated on a regular basis. In the past few months approximately 300 Austrian R&D profiles have passed the quality check and were published by the Austrian ICT National Contact Point, who is also the operator of this database. A newly developed search mechanism allows expeditious searching or browsing through more than 60 different ICT sectors. In addition, a keyword search application is available, which is progressively filled up by the user and is monitored by an operator.

Interested parties benefit from this broad pool of R&D profiles for potential strategic partnerships and international R&D cooperation. Also, all previous involvements in EU funded projects, of the potential partners and their contact details are published in detail on this database. ICTprofiles is a free-of-charge, on-line service and is operated by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), European and International Programmes Division.

For more information, please visit: www.ictprofiles.at

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