



## European Funding Update – Thursday, 5 March 2020

*This bulletin has been issued a day early due to tomorrow's UEA Annual UKRO Visit (Friday, 6 March 2020). We are holding two identical plenary sessions tomorrow for UEA researchers from any School/Faculty who may be interested in hearing about the continuing opportunities in Horizon 2020. We now know the UK will remain an eligible participant for the remainder of this EU research framework programme, on exactly the same basis as any other country (meaning we will be funded for the whole duration of any successful projects). **The two plenary sessions will be held from 11am to 12.30pm, and from 2.30pm to 4.00pm, in the Queens Building 1.03.** UKRO European Adviser Jennifer Morgan from Brussels will be here to run these sessions, offering her perspectives and advice on upcoming European funding calls. (UKRO is the European office of UK Research & Innovation (UKRI).)*

### Brexit

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has updated its Horizon 2020 web pages to include a dedicated section with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to the UK's continued participation in Horizon 2020, following its withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020. The FAQs reflect a range of questions put forth by universities and cover a number of topics, including:

- *What the transition period means for Horizon 2020;*
- *Horizon 2020 calls that continue into 2021; and*
- *Horizon 2020 project coordination.*

The ERA-LEARN website has published a short article confirming that the UK continues to be eligible to participate in ERA-NET Cofund actions and other types of Horizon 2020 funded partnerships, for the lifetime of the projects. This covers both live projects and future bid successes. Both UK-based funding organisations co-financing transnational calls, and project partners involved in implementing transnational projects, will continue to receive EU funding on the same terms as partners from EU Member States for the lifetime of the projects. This statement is in line with the European Commission's update, published on the European Commission's Funding & Tenders Portal, and the statement published in early February by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to reflect the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement.

On Monday, 2 March 2020, trade talks officially commenced between the UK and the EU. The Council of the European Union (representing the 27 EU Member States) has, once again, formally nominated the European Commission (Michel Barnier) to act as lead EU negotiator. Negotiations will take place once every two or three weeks from now until the summer at least, alternating between Brussels and London.

The Council's negotiating directives, which serve as the mandate to the Commission for the negotiations, state that the EU wishes to develop an ambitious, wide-ranging and balanced economic partnership with the UK, and would like to establish a Free Trade Agreement with the UK that ensures zero tariffs and quotas apply to trade in goods. The

mandate also contains provisions for future cooperation in areas such as digital trade, intellectual property and public procurement, as well as UK participation in EU programmes for research and innovation (Horizon Europe).

**Similarly, the UK Government's 30-page document, which outlines its priorities for the trade talks, gives the green light for the UK to negotiate participation in the successor programme to Horizon 2020, 'Horizon Europe' (2021-2027).** The UK negotiating document says:

- *The UK is ready to consider standard third country participation in certain Union programmes where it is in the UK's and the EU's interest that we do so.*
- *The UK will consider a relationship in line with non-EU Member State participation with....Horizon Europe....and Copernicus.*
- *The UK will consider options for participation in elements of Erasmus+ on a timelimited basis, provided the terms are in the UK's interests.*
- *Any agreements relating to Union programmes should contain fair terms for UK participation. This should include fair treatment of participants, a fair and appropriate financial contribution.*

The document also says the UK's aim is for a trading relationship with the EU similar to the ones the EU has with Canada, Japan and South Korea. The UK Government wants to agree – in the next four months – a "broad outline" of a deal with the EU "capable of being rapidly finalised by September". In other words, **the UK will walk away from trade talks in June unless there is a "broad outline" of a deal.** The UK would then have to decide whether to switch focus to trading on WTO terms from 2021. The UK's negotiating team will be led by the Prime Minister's Europe adviser, David Frost.

**The UK Government has launched its new Global Talent Visa (GTV), which essentially extends the existing Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route. The new provisions apply to applicants from the scientific and research community who are outside the European Economic Area (EEA), and also outside Switzerland.** The new GTV route includes a new fast-track scheme overseen by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to encourage world-leading scientists, top researchers and mathematicians to come to the UK. This marks the first time that UKRI will endorse applicants, and not the Home Office. This is to ensure that suitable applicants are quickly assessed and fast-tracked by those qualified to assess their scientific credentials, rather than immigration officials. There will be four routes to apply for a GTV, reflecting different roles within research (this is a broadening of the criteria for who is eligible for these visas compared to the current Exceptional Talent Visas):

- **Senior Appointments:** *professor, associate professor, reader, senior group leader or equivalent at any UK higher education institution (HEI) or eligible research institute;*
- **Fellowships:** *fast-track endorsement for applicants awarded a fellowship on the list approved by the British Academy, Royal Academy of Engineering and Royal Society;*
- **Endorsed Funders:** *those whose name or job title is listed in a grant awarded by a recognised funder, which has been subject to peer review (which includes 'European Union Horizon 2020 programmes' as one of them).*
- **Peer Review:** *individuals who submit an application for review by The British Academy, Royal Academy of Engineering or The Royal Society.*

Senior Appointments, Fellowships and Endorsed Funder routes will all be fast-tracked for endorsement. Following endorsement, applicants should have a decision on their Visa within three weeks.

**The UK Government also announced the introduction of a new points based immigration system to come into effect from 1 January 2021. The new system will apply to both EU and non-EU citizens, as it prioritises the skills a person has to offer, not where they come from.** The new immigration system will assign points for specific skills, qualifications, salaries or professions, and visas will only be awarded to those individuals who have gained enough points. The Government announcement said the UK would "give top priority to those with the highest skills and the greatest talents: scientists, engineers, academics and other highly-skilled workers." A recommendation of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), to lower the general salary threshold from £30,000 to £25,600, has been accepted. Migrants will still need to be paid the higher of the specific salary threshold for their occupation, known as the 'going rate', and the general salary threshold (£25,600). However, under this proposed points-based system, applicants will

*If you have any questions or queries on EU funding, or no longer wish to receive this fortnightly update, please contact:*

*Ian Beggs, European Funding Manager I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk or 01603 593399*

be able to 'trade' characteristics such as their specific job offer and qualifications, against a lower salary. The Home Office will continue to refine the points based system and will consider adding further flexibility as time moves on.

## **Key Calls for Research Proposals**

**\*NEW\*** The Innovative Medicine Initiative 2 (IMI2) has launched an emergency €45m Call (Call 21) on the development of therapeutics and diagnostics combatting coronavirus infections. (IMI is a partnership between the EU and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). The initiative is working to improving health by speeding up the development of, and patient access to, innovative medicines, particularly in areas where there is an unmet medical or social need. It does this by facilitating collaboration between the key players involved in healthcare research, including universities, the pharmaceutical and other industries, SMEs, patient organisations, and medicines regulators.) **Call 21 is single-stage and has a deadline of 31 March 2020.** Considering that this is a newly-identified virus, the scope of this topic remains broad but must address at least one of the following objectives:

- *Development of antivirals as well as other types of therapeutics to address a rapid response to the current COVID-19 outbreak;*
- *Development of therapeutics to address the current and/or future coronavirus outbreaks;*
- *Development of diagnostics, ensuring rapid evaluation of candidates based on existing technologies; and*
- *Development of fast and reliable tools that go beyond the state of the art for detection of COVID-19 carriers and symptomatic individuals suspected of COVID-19 infection.*

Preventive vaccines are specifically excluded from the scope of the Call.

A commitment of a similar scale is expected from the pharmaceutical industry so that the total investment could reach up to €90m. All topic texts, call documentation and details of how to apply can be found on the IMI website through the link above.

**On 12 March 2020, eight new Horizon 2020 Calls will open up under the banner 'Boosting the effectiveness of the Security Union'.** Part of Societal Challenge 7 ('Secure societies – Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens'), the Calls are for 'Research and Innovation Actions' (RIAs), and include the following topics:

- ***Intelligent security and privacy management;***
- ***Human factors, and social, societal, and organisational aspects of border and external security;***
- ***Human factors, and social, societal, and organisational aspects for disaster-resilient societies;***
- ***Technologies to enhance border and external security;***
- ***Technologies for first responders;***
- ***Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) cluster;***
- ***Human factors, and social, societal, and organisational aspects to solve issues in fighting against crime and terrorism;*** and
- ***Technologies to enhance the fight against crime and terrorism.***

(RIAs are for activities aiming to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. They may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing and validation on a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment.)

**The Calls will be single-stage, with a deadline of 27 August 2020.**

**On 5 May 2020, six Horizon 2020 Calls will open up under the banner 'Building a low-carbon, climate resilient future'.**

Part of societal challenge 3 ('Secure, clean and efficient energy'), the Calls are for 'Research & Innovation Actions' (RIAs), and comprise the following topics:

- ***Geological Storage Pilots;***
- ***European Energy and Climate Modelling Forum (2020-2024);***
- ***Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) aspects of the Clean-Energy Transition;***
- ***International Cooperation with USA and/or China on alternative renewable fuels from sunlight for energy, transport and chemical storage;***

---

If you have any questions or queries on EU funding, or no longer wish to receive this fortnightly update, please contact:

Ian Beggs, European Funding Manager [I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk](mailto:I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk) or 01603 593399

- *International cooperation with Japan for Research and Innovation on advanced biofuels and alternative renewable fuels*; and
- *International cooperation with Canada on advanced biofuels and bioenergy*.

The Calls are all single-stage, with a deadline of 1 September 2020.

On 8 April 2020, the €328m **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships Call 2020** will open up. As the UK has now departed the EU with a 'deal', the agreed transitional period will see the UK remain a full participant within Horizon 2020 for the remainder of the programme until 31 December 2020. As a result, **the UK is fully eligible for this MSCA IF Call, and will be treated as if it were an EU Member State**. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships aim to enhance the innovative potential of experienced researchers through advanced training, international and inter-sectoral mobility. There are two types: *European Fellowships* (1-2 years, undertaken at a host institution and open to researchers currently within or outside Europe); and *Global Fellowships* (which involve a 1-2 year secondment to a Third (non-EU) Country followed by a mandatory 12 month return phase at the host institution). Potential fellows must, at the deadline for the submission for proposals, be in possession of a doctoral degree or have at least four years full-time equivalent research experience. **The deadline for proposals is 9 September 2020.**

On 8 April 2020, the €100m **Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND Call 2020** will also open. **MSCA COFUND can support post-doctoral fellowship programmes or doctoral training programmes** and the scheme aims to stimulate regional, national or international programmes to foster excellence in researchers' training, mobility and career development. This is achieved by co-funding new or existing regional, national, and international programmes to open up to, and provide for, international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary research training, as well as transnational and cross-sectoral mobility of researchers at all stages of their career. COFUND is a bottom-up scheme, meaning that the research training programmes can be on any topic. **The maximum co-funding rate is 50%. The upcoming Call will have a single-stage deadline of 29 September 2020.**

#### Key Calls for Networking and/or Dissemination Activities

On 12 March 2020, three new Horizon 2020 Calls will open up under the banner '**Boosting the effectiveness of the Security Union**'. Part of Societal Challenge 7 ('*Secure societies – Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens*'), the Calls are for 'Coordination & Support Actions' (CSAs), and include the following topics:

- *Human factors, and ethical, societal, legal and organisational aspects of using Artificial Intelligence in support of Law Enforcement*;
- *Developing a research roadmap regarding Artificial Intelligence in support of Law Enforcement*; and
- *Pan-European networks of practitioners and other actors in the field of security*.

(CSAs are primarily for accompanying measures such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising and communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies, including design studies for new infrastructure and may also include complementary activities of strategic planning, networking and coordination between programmes in different countries.)

The Calls will be single-stage, with a deadline of 27 August 2020.

#### Key Calls for 'Close to Market' Activities

On 12 March 2020, nine Horizon 2020 Calls will open up under the banner '**Boosting the effectiveness of the Security Union**'. Part of Societal Challenge 7 ('*Secure societies – Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens*'), the Calls are for 'Innovation Actions' (IAs), and include the following topics:

- *Information and data stream management to fight against (cyber)crime and terrorism*;
- *Cybersecurity in the Electrical Power and Energy System (EPES): an armour against cyber and privacy attacks and data breaches*;
- *Intelligent security and privacy management*;

If you have any questions or queries on EU funding, or no longer wish to receive this fortnightly update, please contact:

Ian Beggs, European Funding Manager [I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk](mailto:I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk) or 01603 593399

- *Pre-normative research and demonstration for disaster-resilient societies;*
- *Demonstration of applied solutions to enhance border and external security;*
- *Chemicals: intelligence, detection, forensics;*
- *Cybersecurity in the Electrical Power and Energy System (EPES): an armour against cyber and privacy attacks and data breaches;*
- *Secure and resilient Artificial Intelligence technologies, tools and solutions in support of Law Enforcement and citizen protection, cybersecurity operations and prevention and protection against adversarial Artificial Intelligence;* and
- *Prevention, detection, response and mitigation of combined physical and cyber threats to critical infrastructure in Europe.*

(IAs are for ‘close to market activities’ e.g. actions directly aimed at producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services - including prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication. Such project proposals may include limited research and development activities, however.)

**All Calls will be single-stage, with a deadline of 27 August 2020.**

**On 5 May 2020, four Horizon 2020 Calls will open up under the banner ‘Building a low-carbon, climate resilient future’.** Part of societal challenge 3 (‘Secure, clean and efficient energy’), the Calls are for ‘Innovation Actions (IAs), and comprise the following topics:

- *Demonstration of innovative and sustainable hydropower solutions targeting unexplored small-scale hydropower potential in Central Asia;*
- *Industrial (Waste) Heat-to-Power conversion;*
- *Low carbon industrial production using CCUS;* and
- *Efficient combination of Concentrated Solar Power and desalination (with particular focus on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.*

**The Calls are all single-stage, with a deadline of 1 September 2020.**

**On 5 March 2020, a new Horizon 2020 Call will open up under the banner: ‘Building a low-carbon, climate resilient future’.** Part of Societal Challenge 3 (‘Secure, clean and efficient energy’), the Call will be for ‘Innovation Actions’ (IAs) and is entitled:

- *Upgrading smartness of existing buildings through innovations for legacy equipment.*

**The Call will be single-stage, with a deadline of 10 September 2020.**

### **Key Calls for Action Grants**

**In April 2020, the EU LIFE Programme is expected to launch its 2020 Calls for Proposals.** LIFE is the EU’s funding instrument for climate action, nature conservation and the environment. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental policy and legislation through the co-financing of pilot or demonstration pan-European projects. The programme has two sub-programmes; one for ‘Environment’, which covers three priority areas of environment and resource efficiency, nature and biodiversity, and environmental governance and information; and one for ‘Climate Action’, which covers climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, and climate governance and information. **The 2020 Calls, which cover both LIFE sub-programmes – ‘Environment’ and ‘Climate Action’ – have a variety of deadlines, ranging from June 2020 through to September 2020. Outline dates can be found [here](#).** The Environment Programmes operates a two-stage application process, whereas the ‘Climate Action’ Calls are single-stage.

*(Action Grants are generally where a funding body makes direct financial contributions, in the form of grants to specific projects, in order to implement EU programmes that support EU public policy aims.)*

## Other European Funding Opportunities

**\*NEW\*** The European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO) invites applications for its grants and early-career fellowships. ECCO is a non-profit medical association, focusing on Inflammatory Bowel Disease. The Organisation acts inside Europe and encourages collaboration beyond Europe's borders. Members of ECCO can apply for the following opportunities:

- An **ECCO grant** worth €80,000, looking to promote innovative scientific research in bowel disease; and
- **ECCO Fellowships** worth €60,000 for 12 months at an institution outside of the researcher's own country.

Individual membership costs an annual fee of €120. **Both opportunities have a deadline of 3 June 2020.**

**The European Association of Cardiothoracic Anaesthesiology (EACTA) invites applications for its 2020 Research Grants.** Applicants should be members of EACTA and aged of 40 years or younger, either intending specialists or within the first years of appointment as a cardiothoracic specialist. Each application must identify the background to the project, the study hypothesis, and proposed methodology. The expected duration of the study, justified appropriately, should be included. **Up to €30,000 per grant is available. The application deadline is June 15, 2020. More information can be found here.**

**The European Foundation for the Study of Diabetes (EFSD), the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), and Lilly, invite applications for research grants under their European programme in type 1 diabetes research.** These aim to promote the highest quality of basic and clinical biomedical research, expedite the practical application of scientific advances, encourage clinical translational research and increase awareness of type 1 diabetes. Projects may be within any area of basic or clinical research related type 1 diabetes, including treatment and monitoring. Applications are invited from single non-profit institutions or groups of such institutions from Europe and associated countries. Investigators must be employed full-time at a non-profit institution and the study must be performed at their place of work. Grants are worth up to €100,000 for a minimum period of one year. Grants of up to €250,000 will be considered in exceptional cases. **The deadline for proposals is 1 July 2020. More information can be found here.**

## International Prizes and Awards to Bid for

**\*NEW\*** The Roger De Spoelberch Foundation invites application for its Roger De Spoelberch Prize, worth €750,000. This recognises a clinical and basic scientific research project within the field of neurodegenerative diseases and psychiatric disorders. The Foundation looks to promote medical and scientific research to accelerate the discovery to find new means of fighting neurodegenerative diseases. At least 66% of the award must go to the research costs. **The Prize has a deadline of 30 June 2020, with more information available [here](#).**

The European Commission is inviting applications for its annual '**EU prize for women innovators**', under the '**Science with and for Society**' part of **Horizon 2020**. This prize aims to raise awareness of the need for more female entrepreneurs and honour the achievements of female entrepreneurs running innovative companies. Female residents of an EU Member State or H2020 Associated Country may apply. **Applicants must be founders or co-founders of an existing and active company registered before 1 January of the year previous to the contest (i.e. before 1 January 2019).** Up to four prizes are awarded. Three prizes, worth €100,000 each, are available. Additionally, one prize worth €50,000 is available for a young innovator under the age of 35. The deadline for applications is 21 April 2020. **More information can be found [here](#).**

## Key Consultations

The European Commission has launched a consultation entitled: '**Human rights – review of EU 'Anti-Torture' Regulation (2016-20)**'. The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the Regulation; including on the scope of

*If you have any questions or queries on EU funding, or no longer wish to receive this fortnightly update, please contact:*

*Ian Beggs, European Funding Manager [I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk](mailto:I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk) or 01603 593399*

prohibited and/or regulated goods and/or its procedural provisions. The target audience includes, in particular, civil society (NGOs, specialised policy organisations, think tanks), university and/or academic institutions, International organisations, government / public administrations as well as economic operators relevant to the trade in goods covered by the Regulation. **The consultation will remain open until 13 May 2020.**

**The Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT) at the European Commission has launched a consultation entitled: ‘[Consultation on the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence - A European Approach](#)’.** The White Paper proposes measures that will streamline research, foster collaboration between Member States and increase investment into AI development and deployment. It also proposes policy options for a future EU regulatory framework that would determine the types of legal requirements that would apply to relevant actors, with a particular focus on high-risk applications. The consultation is designed to enable all European citizens, Member States and relevant stakeholders (including civil society, industry and academics) to provide their opinion on the White Paper and contribute to a European approach for AI. **The consultation will remain open until 31 May 2020.**

### **Key Events and Workshops That May Be of Interest**

**\*NEW\*** Registration is open for the Croatian EU Council Presidency Conference on ‘*Better Future of Healthy Ageing 2020*’ (BFHA 2020) will take place in Zagreb from 6 to 7 April 2020. The overall aim of the Conference is to stimulate research, implementation and the scaling up of innovations to manage the health and wellbeing of ageing populations. BFHA 2020 is a scientific conference that will enable discussion on transformation of health and care services into more digitised, long-term, integrated and personalised care models, while promoting innovative ecosystems in order to deliver a better quality of life among the elderly. **More information can be found [here](#).**

**\*NEW\*** The European Commission, in association with the European External Action service, is holding an ‘*International Ocean Governance Forum*’ on 22-24 April 2020 in Brussels. The IOG Forum will provide a platform for interactive dialogue on ocean challenges and governance solutions in support of the follow-up and further development of the EU International Ocean Governance Agenda. The focus will be on improving the international ocean governance framework, reducing pressure on oceans and seas and creating the conditions for a sustainable ‘blue’ economy and strengthening the ocean knowledge system. **More information as well as the registration page can be found [here](#).**

TRA (Transport Research Arena) is holding the largest European research and technology conference on transport and mobility, from 27-30 April 2020 in Helsinki, Finland. Themed ‘*Rethinking transport – towards clean and inclusive mobility*’, TRA2020 brings together experts from around the world to discuss the newest innovations and future of mobility and transport. **Registration can be found [here](#) and the full four day programme can be found [here](#).**

**\*UPDATE\*** Registration is now open for the European Commission’s ‘*Information and Networking Day*’ on the 2020 LIFE Programme Call for project proposals, being held on 30 April 2020 in Brussels. The LIFE Programme is the EU’s principal funding programme for environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout Europe. The event is open to interested parties who wish to share their project ideas on green technology, protection of nature and climate action. The day will be divided between an information session on the 2020 LIFE call in the morning and a networking session in the afternoon. This networking session will allow attendees to meet with fellow participants to share experiences, match with potential new partners and meet representatives of the LIFE programme from the European Commission. **The registration page can be accessed [here](#).**

**The INSPIRE 2020 Conference will take place in Dubrovnik, Croatia from 12-15 May 2020.** The conference will focus on sustainable digitalisation and digital sustainability. The Conference will look at digital developments and how they

---

*If you have any questions or queries on EU funding, or no longer wish to receive this fortnightly update, please contact:*

*Ian Beggs, European Funding Manager [I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk](mailto:I.Beggs@uea.ac.uk) or 01603 593399*

interact with data ecosystems, as well as the trade-offs and negative effects of digitalisations and how to mitigate them can also be raised, in particular when the link to the data themes is made. **More information is available [here](#).**

**The European Maritime Day (EMD) 2020, organised jointly by the European Commission, the City of Cork and the Our Ocean Wealth Summit, will be held on 14 and 15 May 2020 in Cork City Hall.** ('Our Ocean Wealth' is Ireland's flagship annual event for the marine sector and will be held back-to-back with the 'SeaFest', Ireland's largest free family-friendly maritime celebration.) The EMD aims to be an interactive experience to catch up on the current state of play on a broad range of issues concerning the blue economy and the marine environment and discuss ways of moving forward. **More information is available [here](#).**

**The European Food Safety authority (EFSA) is holding a scientific colloquium on 8-9 June 2020.** The topic of the event is '*A coordinated approach to assess the human health risks of micro- and nanoplastics in food*'. **Online registration is not yet available, however further information can be found [here](#).**

**The 2020 edition of the European Commission's 'European Development Days' (EDD) will be held in Brussels on 9 and 10 June 2020.** EDDs bring the development community together each year to share ideas and experiences, to inspire new partnerships and innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. Since 2006, EDD has established itself as a key fixture in the world's development calendar and is now widely considered as the 'Davos of Development'. EDD 2020's overarching title is "*The Green Deal for a Sustainable Future*" with the two themes '*A Green Economy for People and Nature*' and '*Protecting Biodiversity and People*'. **Further information about the EDD 2020, including the theme, will be provided [here](#) shortly.**

**The European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG R&I), and the European Space Agency (ESA) are jointly organising the Earth Observation (EO) for Polar Science Workshop from 17 to 19 June 2020 in Copenhagen, Denmark.** The objective of the workshop is to review the latest advances in the use of EO technology for Polar research and to move forward with the definition of a scientific agenda that may drive future ESA and DG R&I coordinated R&D investments. The workshop will be structured as a combination of state-of-the-art scientific talks in plenary and break-out working sessions. The working sessions will be dedicated to identifying key scientific challenges for the future. **More information is available [here](#).**

**The next annual 'EU Sustainable Energy Week' will take place in Brussels from 22 to 26 June 2020.** As part of the 2020 event, a Policy Conference will take place from 23 to 25 June 2020 - the biggest European conference dedicated to renewables and efficient energy use in Europe. Sessions organised by the European Commission and energy stakeholders will focus on sustainable energy issues, debate new policy developments, best practices and sustainable energy ideas. Past speakers and participants have come from city councils and the European institutions, private companies and research organisations, citizen groups and NGOs. **Registration for the conference will be launched in April 2020. Further information will be posted [here](#).**

**The North Sea Interreg programme has announced that its next [North Sea Conference](#) will take also place during the week 22-26 June 2020 but in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.** More information about the event and how to register will be provided in due course. The North Sea Programme supports cooperation projects between Denmark, Flanders, northern Germany, the Netherlands, western Sweden, the eastern half of the UK, and non-EU Member State Norway across four priority areas. The maximum rate of funding is 50% of the total eligible costs of the project. **More information can be found [here](#).**

The European Commission, in collaboration with University of Milan-Bicocca, Brunel University London and University of Ca' Foscari, is organising the 7th 'Health Econometrics workshop' (HEW 2020) in Ispra, Italy on 13-17 July 2020. The workshop welcomes research empirical (applied econometrics) papers that evaluate current or past health policies and undertake analyses which shed light on important health policy questions. The workshop will consist of plenary sessions only, which will host keynote speakers, along with the presentation of selected papers submitted through a call for papers. **More information can be found [here](#).**

**\*NEW\*** The European Center of Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the Canadian Institute of Technology, will hold the 8th ICSD 2020 International Conference on Sustainable Development in Rome on 9-10 September 2020. The Conference theme is 'Creating a unified foundation for the Sustainable Development: Research, Practice and Education'. The Conference is opportunity to share ideas and research findings relevant to the Sustainability Science, through the European network of academics. This interdisciplinary forum is for scholars, teachers, and practitioners from any professional discipline who share an interest in—and concern for— sustainability in an holistic perspective, where environmental, cultural, economic and social concerns intersect. Virtual participation is available for those who are unable to attend the conference in person. **More information can be found [here](#).**

The European Commission, has announced that European Research & Innovation Days will be organised in Brussels on 22-24 September 2020. More information will be available soon. The event was organised for the first time last year and video recordings of the individual sessions are available [online](#).

**\*NEW\*** SAVE THE DATE: The next edition of the most important ICT event in the EU calendar will take place in Cologne, Germany from 1-3 December 2020. The event, co-organised by the European Commission and the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union, will include the following elements:

- a high-level conference on digital policies;
- an exhibition of EU-funded research and innovation projects in the field of ICT;
- a series of networking activities.

Further information will become available later in the year.

### Other European Funding News and Developments

A five year, €80m European research programme on soil was launched on 26 February 2020, involving 26 partners from 24 countries (including the UK – the Agrifood and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)). The aim is to create a research community on agricultural soil management that can contribute to food security and climate change mitigation. The 'European Joint Programme (EJP) on Soil' has been allocated €40m from the EU's Horizon 2020 R&D programme, with the other half of the funding coming from participating organisations. The programme will be "closely aligned" with the mission on soil health and food planned for the EU's 2021-27 research framework programme 'Horizon Europe', according to the Research Executive Agency (REA), the body tasked with implementing aspects of EU R&D funding delivery by the European Commission. "An integrated framework for soil research in Europe is required to overcome current fragmentation and unleash the potential of healthy agricultural soils to contribute to mitigation of and/or adaptation to climate change, while preserving or increasing agricultural functions," the REA said. The programme will focus on boosting collaboration between its partners and will "set up a common strategic research agenda, implement trans-national calls, and foster capacity building and societal understanding of agricultural soil management". It is being coordinated by INRAE, the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment. There are now six EJPs, with the other five covering research into health, nuclear fusion, radiation protection, human bio-monitoring and rare diseases.

**The EU's Research & Development Commissioner Mariya Gabriel said in a press conference on 28 February 2020 that non-EU countries that wish to associate to the EU's Horizon Europe programme (2021-2027), the successor research framework programme to Horizon 2020, will have to associate to entire programme 'pillars', rather than selected individual funding schemes.** Horizon Europe will have three main pillars, with the first covering excellent science (which includes European Research Council grants and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions), the second covering global challenges and industrial competitiveness, and the third covering 'innovative Europe'. Precise rules for association are yet to be agreed by EU Member States, with further talks due in the coming months. Agreements with specific countries will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

**The European Commission's Executive Agency for SMEs (EASME) has released a report on the future of the EU Life Programme in the next EU budget period (2021-2027) as a result of a conference on this topic which took place in Brussels in November 2019.** (The LIFE Programme is the EU's principal funding programme for environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout Europe.) The aim of the November 2019 conference was to gather the views of stakeholders on the key challenges/issues where LIFE can help make a difference, the solutions that could be supported by LIFE and how to make the solutions happen. The report includes a number of recommendations in the following key research areas covered by the LIFE programme: Nature and Biodiversity; Circular Economy and Quality of Life; Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; and Clean Energy Transition.

**The European Commission has published a Communication entitled 'Shaping Europe's digital future', setting direction for digital transformation in Europe.** Over the next five years, the Commission plans to focus on three key objectives:

- *Technology that works for people;*
- *A fair and competitive economy; and*
- *An open, democratic and sustainable society.*

Policy areas within the strategy include data protection, better access to online goods, designing the right environment for digital networks, ensuring that citizens and businesses can take advantage of opportunities provided by digitalisation and defining Europe as a role model and leader for a society empowered by data. The digital strategy will be implemented, among others, through 'Horizon Europe', the successor programme to Horizon 2020. Under that new research framework programme, due to start in 2021, the Commission proposes to invest €15bn in the 'Digital, Industry and Space' cluster, with AI as a key activity to be supported.