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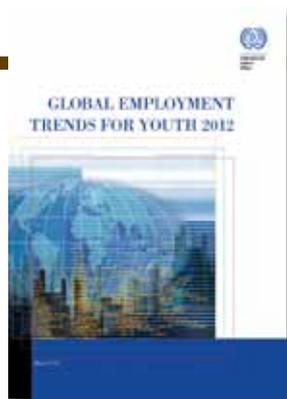
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ESNA's news section provides an easy-to-use format to learn about the latest developments in European Higher Education. The news are selected by our team from thousands of sources and drafted to provide you with the most comprehensive overview of events.

news

INTERNATIONAL: GLOBAL RESEARCH COUNCIL LAUNCHED

Research councils from 44 countries have formed the Global Research Council, aiming to foster international cooperation and consensus between national funding bodies. In its first year, the GRC will focus on strengthening scientific integrity and increasing open access.

A statement published by the GRC sets out six major principles to guide the assessment and selection of projects for review by new funding agencies: expert assessment, transparency, impartiality, appropriateness, confidentiality, integrity and ethical considerations. The principles will provide consensus for further cooperation between funding agencies.

The number of research councils involved is expected to double after more regional meetings and next year's council meeting in Berlin, where Germany and Brazil will co-host discussions on research integrity and open access.

Richard Van Noorden, writing for *Nature* magazine's science blog, questions whether the council will be able to provide detailed agreement on practical differences and research options, or whether it will just be limited to a 'talking shop', where much is said but no progress is made.



Statement of Principles for
Scientific Merit Review,
GRC, 15-05-2012
nsf.gov/news/

"At first blush, the creation of the Global Research Council might seem like a good idea to harmonize the support and practices of scientific research around the world. However, I am not so sure that further politicization and standardization of scientific research is so desirable. While a strong case can be made for international funding of a few large

A further politicization and standardization of scientific research is not desirable

scale projects for the common good, most research in academia and industry should be investigator-driven and collaborations should be dynamic and naturally arise from the science rather than the desires of politicians and bureaucrats to see further interactions with their favoured countries.

I find three trends related to the financing of scientific research endeavours particularly disturbing.

- *Firstly, financial support of scientific research is already subjected to immense political control by a relatively small number of individuals with their own agendas.*
- *Secondly, there is growing bureaucracy at the institutional, national and international levels for the administration of research support such that less money is available at the end of the day to fund the proposed scientific research.*

- *Thirdly, because of all of the burden associated with reviewing small projects, granting agencies tend to prefer to fund larger scale projects. As a consequence, research is being focused and steered into specific directions that are politically expedient in the short term, less of the money earmarked for research support is actually getting to scientists, and there is less scrutiny per dollar spent on research that is funding a smaller proportion of principal investigators.*

The newly minted Global Research Council has issued a very brief guideline that defines the six key principles of grant reviewing. It seems to me that nowadays such aims have been standard stated policies for most granting agencies in developed countries for many decades. I don't understand why the heads of science and engineering funding agencies from approximately 50 countries or regions (primarily comprising the G20 and OECD countries) had to get together at great expense to come up with such watered-down conclusions that are obvious or status quo. If such an organization gets more zealous in the future, I am worried that down the road, such consultations might result in lengthier, more onerous grant application guidelines that demand even more superfluous information from applicants and be yet more burdensome for reviewers."

A COMMENTARY
BY STEVEN PELECH,
PROFESSOR AT THE
DEPARTMENT OF
MEDICINE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Contributions to Bulletin N°137 - May 30, 2012: Tino Brömme (editor-in-chief), Harriet Bailey, Ana Jović, Armin Höhling and Fiona Troublanc-Brewster

INTERNATIONAL: GENDER GAP IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Breaking down barriers to gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship would create new sources of economic growth and help make better use of everyone's skills, according to a new OECD report.

Good progress has been made in education. Increased in educational attainment is responsible for half of the GDP growth across the OECD over the last 50 years. Every extra year of education of the population leads to an average increase of around 9% in GDP per capita.

In OECD countries, in 2009 nearly 60% of university graduate students were female. But men and women still choose different study and career paths. More than 75% of health and social science graduates are women, while some 70% engineering, manufacturing and construction graduates are men.

Employment rates are 13 percentage points lower for women than for men in OECD countries. Women are also much more likely to work part-time. Better and more affordable child care and more flexible work conditions are key to helping parents to be in paid work or increase hours and work full time, says the report.

Pay gaps also remain high: on average in OECD countries women earn 16% less than men and female top-earners are paid on average 21% less. Across the OECD less than one-third of managers and only 10% of board members are women.



Press release, OECD, 22-05-2012
oecd.org

AUSTRIA: ACADEMIC TITLE WITHOUT A-LEVEL

In autumn 2012, Austria wants to make a virtue out of necessity and create a 'third way' for higher education: so called 'Berufsakademien' or vocational academies.

Three problems are forcing the alpine country to act: the skills shortage, decreasing birth rates and the rising demand for higher education. If the parliament accepts the law on the vocational academies this year, new institutes can open their doors in winter 2013.

Ludwig Reisecker is one of ten human resources experts developing the new model of vocational academies where it will be possible to obtain a tertiary degree certificate without a high-school leaving certificate. The degree, called 'Bachelor Professional', will not make them qualified for a scientific career, he said, but it will make them more attractive to prospective employers.

Until now, places in higher vocational training were reserved for master craftsmen. Under the new model, also trainees are entitled. They can attend the academies directly after finishing their apprenticeships.

Similar approaches exist in Switzerland and Germany. Swiss 'Berufsakademien' have been the model for the Austrians, while in Germany an initiative called 'Advancement through Education' (Aufstieg durch Bildung) began already in 2008.

Press release, Austrian Economic
 Chambers (WKO)
wko.at

Press release, Avenir Suisse,
 Jan. 2012 (in German and French)
avenir-suisse.ch

FRANCE: NEW GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE UNIVERSITY FUNDING

France's new higher education minister has vowed to act to abolish the autonomy law that is crippling the French higher education system.

Geneviève Fioraso, Minister for Higher Education and Research, believes that a reform of the autonomy and responsibility of universities law (LRU) is essential. She also intends to increase the amount of funding that universities receive after a study showed that France came 26th out of 32 OECD countries, and lowest in Europe after Greece, for the amount of public budget devoted to higher education and research.

A proposal to abolish the autonomy law, brought in by the previous French administration in 2007, has been sent to the Senate. It suggests that France's former government used autonomy as an excuse for not properly financing universities, leading to a budget deficit at eight institutions last year. The law led to waves of disapproval against the power given to rectors and the inequalities that arose between well-financed universities and smaller ones.

Another major matter is the Guéant Bill. Last year's controversial bill restricts the number of French work permits offered to foreign students. "It is a matter of great urgency not only on a human level but also for the promotion of French higher education on an international level," declared Fioraso, who announced a revoking of the bill within a week.



Geneviève Fioraso
 (Photo: Bruno Moyon)

continues ▶▶▶

IDEX, the Excellence Initiative for French universities, the minister said, will be reviewed after the summer.

Law proposal, French Senate,
23-05-2012 (in French)
senat.fr/

The new government has scheduled for late autumn an official assembly on research and higher education, which will begin the much-needed process of communication with universities and research organisations.

SERBIA: ACADEMICS SUSPECTED OF CORRUPTION STILL TEACHING

Serbian academics are calling for a change in the law which allows professors undergoing legal action to continue to teach.

Milan Višnjić is the most prominent example. He was a candidate for the Vice-Chancellor position at the University of Niš even though he was under suspicion of hiring friends and family and advancing the positions of his son and daughter, who were both lecturers at the institution. In April, three professors from the Higher Business School in Valjevo were arrested for taking bribes for exam passes, while Predrag Stojanović, who was also recently suspected of taking bribes, has been re-elected as rector of the law faculty of the University of Kragujevac.

According to Serbia's laws, these academics are innocent until proven guilty, meaning that they can freely teach until they are dismissed. The state has said that it will not interfere in this process as universities are autonomous bodies. Čedomir Čupić, a member of the Anti-Corruption Council, condemned the laws to the press: "People who are under investigation should in no way be allowed to remain in teaching or to direct the college or university as a professor. (...) They should stay to conduct scientific research, but should not be able to work with students."

Report on Judicial Reform, Anti-
Corruption Council, 23-04-2012
antikorupcija-savet.gov.rs/

In April, the Anti-Corruption Council has published a report on judicial reform proposing first of all to dismiss a number of high ranking judges and to investigate the minister in charge of the judiciary.



Minister José Wert shows his best smile during the statement for the rectors, 23 May 2012 Image: RTVE

SPAIN: MINISTER WERT MOCKS RECTORS

The gap between the Spanish science and education community and the government is widening.

This week, all 60 rectors of public and private universities, represented by the Rectors' Conference CRUE, boycotted en masse a ministerial University Council meeting.

CRUE president Adelaida de la Calle said the decision came in reaction to the fact that the new law on universities from April 20th – regulating budget cuts, higher tuition fees and researchers' and teachers' workloads – were not on the meeting's agenda and the ministry did not react to the rectors' request for it. De la Calle said that the universities are ready to contribute to the present economic challenge and are not boycotting the austerity measures, but rather are demanding to be heard and to be taken seriously.

Other rectors had harsher criticism. Juan Casares Long, head of the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC), criticised Minister José Ignacio Wert's "complete lack of dialogue" and "lack of respect" for the higher education community. He and

his colleagues are now hoping for an intervention by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

Education and Science Minister Wert doesn't seem to care much. Talking to the press with a smile on his face, he said he was "infinitely surprised" at the rectors' behaviour, and instead of extending the hand of dialogue he lectured them about democracy: "They must understand that in a democracy, governments propose laws and parliaments approve them. And – end of the discussion."

The minister is taking a risky path by not avoiding conflict with the universities, as teachers and students have already started a wave of protests. 22nd May saw 80 percent of the national education personnel (according to the government only 20 percent) participate in a general strike.

Press release of CRUE,
23-05-2012 (in Spanish)
crue.org/

SWEDEN: FOREIGN STUDENT ENROLMENT DECREASES BY THIRD

Nearly 80 percent fewer foreign students have applied to Swedish universities this year following the introduction of tuition fees for students from outside of the EU.

Students from Pakistan and Bangladesh have turned away in their droves, with a 90 percent decrease in applications from these countries. Indian, Iranian and Thai students have also been put off with 80 percent fewer student applications.

Overall, the drop from 22,100 to 14,700 in foreign student enrolment only represents a fall of one third. The decline has not had a uniform effect; Lund University has retained much of its popularity and has experienced the smallest overall decline in foreign students with an 18 percent decrease, as compared to the University of Gävle with 70 percent.

Education Minister Jan Björklund explained that the introduction of fees in 2011 was to ensure that students were attracted to Swedish universities because of their high quality rather than simply because they were free. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education chose to focus on the positive fact that foreign students still account for 21 percent of university enrolments in 2011.



Press release by HSV,
23-05-2012 (in Swedish)
hsv.se/



Simon Brooks (Photo: EIB)

UK: £1BN FOR UK UNIVERSITIES OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The European Investment Bank plans to invest £1bn in UK universities to boost the struggling economy.

Over the next five years, the EIB will provide long-term, low-interest loans to help build infrastructure at UK universities, covering up to half the cost of capital projects, including teaching, research and campus facilities. The EIB has already spent £10bn on education projects across Europe in the past five years.

The offer of loans comes at a time when capital spending through the Higher Education Funding Council for England has been reduced by more than half, though the EIB says it is not aiming to replace public funding. Simon Brooks, vice-president of the EIB, told the *Times Higher Education Supplement* that he was "putting an emphasis on the UK because we think it's an area [where] we can make a real contribution."

The project, worth £200m per year, has so far not been the runaway success the EIB were hoping for. Currently, projects must be worth more than £100m and institutions with a 'strong research base' are favoured. But Mr Brooks said that the bank was considering funding small programmes.

Swansea University has already requested a loan for half of a £120m science and innovation campus, while three other institutions have expressed an interest.

Press release by EIB, 15-05-2012
eib.org/

daily Europe's higher education news online



In the book review section of your Bulletin, the ESNA newsroom will share with you its reviews and announcements of the latest publications on higher education policy, management and debate.

out now

ROLEX LEARNING CENTRE ENGLISH GUIDE

The école polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), an ambitious institute of technology, wanted to become one of the best institutes of technology in the world. For this, it needed to have a flagship learning centre, and the Rolex Learning Centre, designed by Japanese architects SAANA, answered their need exactly. According to the architects, it is "the kind of space that actively encourages the students where to go, to do their work or get together and talk with friends."

The novel architectural form of this building compelled the building engineers to come up with unprecedented structural, technical and logistical solutions. This richly illustrated guide provides an account of the extraordinary adventure to realise the centre and explains in detail the context of its construction, bringing to light the spatial subtleties of its architecture. In addition, it provides the visitor of the building with all the needed technical information and many novel facts and figures.

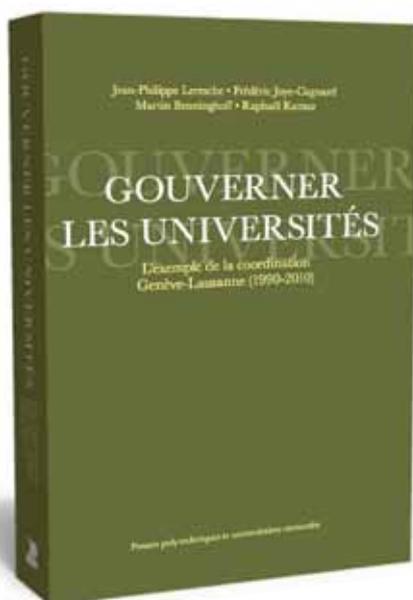
The authors, Francesco Della Casa and Jacques Perret, followed the progress of this extraordinary worksite from its beginnings and questioned the architects and engineers who carried out the project. The photographer Alain Herzog provides a detailed visual record of the progress at the worksite on a day-by-day basis. The guide ends with a series of interviews with some of the main characters behind the Rolex Learning Centre.

Francesco Della Casa, Jacques Perret
PPUR | 2012
ISBN: 978-2-940222-51-3
English paperback 100 pages €15.45

Order



Photo: EPFL/Alain Herzog



Jean-Philippe Leresche et al.
Original title: "Gouverner les universités. L'exemple de la coordination Genève-Lausanne (1990-2010)"

Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes | 2012
ISBN: 978-2-88074-931-6
French 528 pages
paperback €36.90

Order

Klaus-Henning Hansen, Wolfgang
Gräber, Manfred Lang (eds.)

Waxmann | 2012
ISBN: 978-3-8309-2595-8
English 240 pages
paperback €29.90

Order

THE NEW CAPITALIST SCHOOL

This book, writes Luc Boltanski in *Le Monde*, offers a well-informed and thorough review of the measures that have gradually changed the contours of education in France. It can be used as a kind of clear and well-documented handbook of contemporary neo-liberalism.

Following in the footsteps of Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron ('La reproduction', 1970) and of Christian Baudelot and Roger Estabélet ('L'École capitaliste en France', 1971), the four authors who are researchers and members of the trade union FSU deliver a detailed analysis of the general transformations and renew the critical sociology of education by contextualising changes in the schools and universities within contemporary capitalism. By doing so, they offer the tools of analysis to those concerned with this highly political issue – a tool to build a convincing alternative.



Christian Laval, Francis Vergne, Pierre Clément, Guy Dreux
Original title: "La nouvelle école capitaliste"

La Découverte | August 2011
ISBN: 978-2-707-16948-8 | French 240 pages softcover €19.80

Order

GOVERNING UNIVERSITIES

This book analyses the cooperation between the universities and their influence in all other areas of society, especially government. It reviews the main reasons for the universities to work together, concluding that it increases competition and brings the country a competitive advantage. It tries to answer questions on how these corporations work, their regulation and autonomy, how they are made and political influences on them.

Alliances within higher education can bring development, especially in the area of research. Concrete examples of successful collaborations are shown by the cooperation between Lausanne Polytechnic Federal School, the University of Geneva and the University of Lausanne in the period between 1990-2010, which brought developments in scientific disciplines such as biology, physics and social sciences. During the past twenty years, this alliance has passed through different phases, keeping their work central in diverse areas, designing projects, experiments and innovations from natural sciences to social ones and this book is particularly adept at describing them and their transition period. The process of their work has changed: in the beginning, they were faced with financial difficulties and austerity measures, whereas selective investments in science and a change in government came later.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES IN SCIENCE TEACHER EDUCATION

This book is based on the European Comenius project CROSSNET with eight case studies about innovation and science teacher education in six European countries. Guiding questions were how teachers, policy makers and teacher educators collaborate in the process of change and how local background projects respond to opportunities for the exchange of experiences and reflection in terms of a common theoretical framework of boundary crossing. The case studies were conducted by local coordinators and contracted teachers. They are supplemented by a cross-case analysis of common and distinct features in the projects and an essay about the relationship between boundary crossing, transformative learning and curriculum theory. Main outcomes are about school-based reform and collaboration for science education.

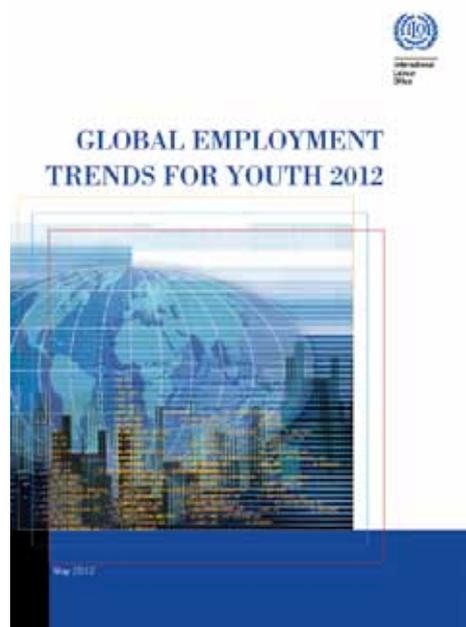
Each copy of your ESNA bulletin will provide information on studies which have captured our attention as pieces that may contribute to our common understanding of higher education. Our priority is to keep ESNA readers at the forefront of the knowledge pool on higher education and provide an arena for the issues raised in these studies to be heard.

new studies

GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR YOUTH 2012

The report by the International Labour Office (ILO) focuses on the global youth unemployment crisis in 2012. Youth unemployment in the EU and other developed countries soared 26.5% from 2008 to 2011; in comparison, joblessness among young people decreased by 12% between 1998 and 2008. The report underscores that developed economies and the European Union have been hit hardest by the global economic crisis and its aftermath. Around the world, ILO reports that nearly 75 million, or 12.6% of young people, were unemployed in 2011 – an increase of more than 4 million since 2007. It predicts that the global youth unemployment rate will grow this year to 12.7% and that by 2016 is projected to remain the same.

The report covers subjects such as temporary employment and part-time work and whether this helps or hinders the situation, and the case of students postponing their entry in to the job market in order to gain extra qualifications. The report also outlines youth employment policies, such as macroeconomic and growth strategies and active labour market policies and programmes. ILO also wants to increase social protection for young people and create partnerships for youth employment.



International Labour Office
May 2012 | English

[Download](#)

Original title: 'Il ruolo del capitale umano nel settore ICT'
Fondazione Ugo Bordoni
April 2012 | Italian

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THE ROLE OF HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE ICT SECTOR

The purpose of this research was to explore the dimension of skills shortage in the ICT sector in Italy, focussing on graduates of electronics, informatics, management and telecommunications. The study contains qualitative and quantitative aspects, considering data for the supply side of graduates (AlmaLaurea) and the demand side (Excelsior), and 15 in-depth interviews with HR managers of the most important Italian enterprises (PosteItaliane, Telecom Italia and ENEL amongst others).

Global Research Council
May 2012 | English

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STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT REVIEW

Research councils from 44 countries have formed the Global Research Council (GRC), aiming to foster international cooperation and consensus between national funding bodies. The GRC, in its inaugural summit in mid-May, hosted by US federal funding agency the National Science Foundation (NSF), published a statement that sets out six major principles to guide the assessment and selection of projects for review by new funding agencies: expert assessment, transparency, impartiality, appropriateness, confidentiality, integrity and ethical considerations. The principles will provide consensus for further cooperation between funding agencies.

Bahram Bekhradnia
HEPI | May 2012
English

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THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AT ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES

This study, published by the Higher Education Policy Institute, is the survey on the student experiences in UK universities, including the amount of contact students have with their staff, the size of teaching groups, and the overall number of hours they devote to their studies. It updates the results of earlier surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007, and reflect on some of policy lessons to be drawn from the results.

All European Higher Ed Conferences

upcoming events



Edinburgh
25 may

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM BY PUTTING CONTEMPLATION BACK INTO HE

The focus of this event is the application of Classroom Performance Systems (CPs) to enhance students' ability to learn in any subject. It will be explored the evidence and potential of such practices to help students develop their ability to focus and through this, to increase their effectiveness as learners. This implies integrating such practices in the curriculum. This seminar will explore how CPs may be used to create high-impact curricula by deepening the learning experienced by students through enhanced attention.



Brussels
27 june

THE FUTURE OF UNIVERSITY RANKINGS EUROPE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

This conference has as an aim discussing the latest developments in and future outlook for the U-Multirank initiative. Its aim is the design and testing of a new multidimensional university ranking system, one with a more global outreach. The symposium offers an invaluable opportunity to discuss the dynamics between international rankings and national initiatives developed in various countries, collaborate and communicate strategies and share best practices.



Rhodes, Greece
5-7 july

ICICTE CONFERENCE 2012

This International Conference on Information Communication Technologies in Education (ICICTE) seeks to address the many challenges and new directions presented by technological innovations in educational settings. ICICTE 2012 will bring together an international community of scholars and practitioners in a forum setting. Opportunities for discussion on current thinking and practices in applications of technology to education are enhanced by the limited number of participants.



London
14-16 august

19TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING

This year's main topic is New Media, Multi-Modality, and Learning. The Conference will address a range of critically important themes relating to education today. Among the huge range of themes, they are divided in four chapters: Educational Values and Values in Education, Learning How to Communicate, Represent and Mean, Humanizing Science and Technology and Sites of Learning.



Oslo
12-14 sept

ACADEMIC DEMARCATIONS DISCIPLINES AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

This conference will discuss the interdisciplinarity of higher education today and the importance that institutions place on established disciplines. The peer review system will also be examined to discover how it works in such a discipline-focused environment. It also asks the questions about whether disciplines still condition research and teaching in profound ways or whether disciplinarity is an inherent operative mode of modern academia? They also seek to find out to what extent should our institutions provide for interdisciplinarity?

calls for proposals

Deadlines ▶ **LINKS**

PILOT PROJECT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIPS

The current call for proposals builds on the success of the pilot project launched in 2011 which provides direct support for the implementation of Knowledge Alliances. These pilot projects are a first, tangible move towards ever greater trans-European cooperation. This call and the selected projects will also contribute to the preparations for the implementation of the forthcoming Erasmus for All programme with a view to a much greater scope for Knowledge Alliances partnerships in future.

28 June 2012 ▶ **EAC/S03/2012**

EUCARINET 2012 TRAVEL GRANT SCHEME

The aim of the scheme is to promote exchange between Caribbean and European researchers as well as to encourage contacts between research institutions so that they may explore possibilities for joint participation in the FP7 for Research and Technological Development.

The Travel Grant consists of two components: The participation of Caribbean researchers at 2012 info-days and brokerage events, and visits to specific research centres/institutions with existing contacts or acquaintance between the grantee and European or Caribbean researcher or research group. The travel grant works as a mechanism to facilitate further networking or even joint proposal writing.

20 July 2012 ▶ **CORDIS**

EDULINK II – ACP-EU COOPERATION PROGRAMME IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This call for proposals was launched on March 19 on the EuropeAid website. EDULINK II is open to public or private higher educational institutions, networks of and regional institutions of higher education. It is designed to continue fostering co-operation between the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the European Union. The Programme aims at promoting innovation in the ACP group of States member countries and, hence, at ensuring their competitiveness in the global environment. The two main priority thematic areas are: Energy access and efficiency, and Agriculture and food security. The specific objectives are to increase the capacity of ACP higher education institutions at the management/administration and the academic level. Proposals will aim at helping to create new and upgrade existing curricula and teaching methods, reinforce links between teaching, modern technologies, lifelong learning and research, as well as strengthening their management and administration capacity. The budget is €23.3m

30 July 2012 ▶ **EDULINK**

still open

MARIE CURIE INTRA-EUROPEAN FELLOWSHIPS (IEF) FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

16 August 2012 ▶ **EC RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

MARIE CURIE INTERNATIONAL INCOMING FELLOWSHIPS (IIF)

16 August 2012 ▶ **EC RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

MARIE CURIE INTERNATIONAL OUTGOING FELLOWSHIPS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT (IOF)

16 August 2012 ▶ **EC RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

