

FUNDING

Horizon 2020 funds

European Union (EU) member states should not use the region's central funding to prop up national research budgets, says Anne Glover, chief scientific adviser to the president of the European Commission. Speaking in London on 22 October, Glover warned that the 28 EU member states — 23 of which have cut research spending in recent years, she said — should not expect funds from the Horizon 2020 initiative to bail out their research operations. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU's Horizon 2020 programme is set to distribute some €70 billion (US\$97 billion) for research — such as transnational projects — that would not otherwise be funded by individual states.

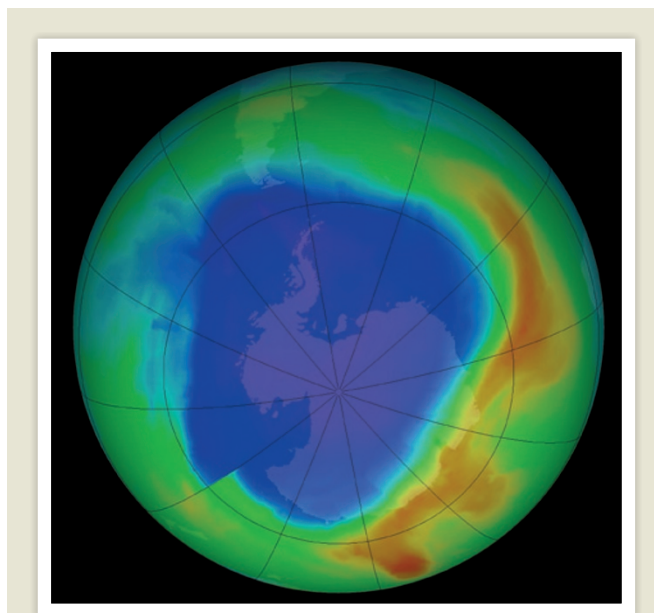
POLICY

Fishing vote

The campaign to reform Europe's fisheries inched forwards on 23 October, when the European Parliament voted against using part of a roughly €6.4-billion (US\$8.8-billion) subsidy package to fund new fishing vessels. Part of the fund will, however, support upgrades to boat engines, which some scientists say will exacerbate overfishing in European waters. Lawmakers also voted to use a portion of the money for data collection (see go.nature.com/brbctr and *Nature* 502, 420; 2013).

Indian power

A controversial nuclear power plant in India began generating electricity last week, after weathering years of protest (see *Nature* <http://doi.org/ckcr86>; 2011). The first unit of the Kudankulam



Ozone hole shrinks

The seasonal ozone hole over Antarctica (pictured, blue) was slightly smaller this year than in past years, measuring around 21 million square kilometres in late September, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported last week. “We cannot say that this represents recovery, but it is certainly good news,” says NOAA researcher Bryan Johnson. Chlorine levels at the poles, once raised by ozone-depleting foams, sprays and refrigerants, are now on the decline, the agency notes. The use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) as an alternative to these chemicals has raised other concerns, however, because HFCs are powerful greenhouse gases. Last week, negotiations in Bangkok fell short of an agreement to regulate HFCs under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. See page 593 for more.

Nuclear Power Project in Tamil Nadu was hooked up to the country's electrical grid on 22 October. The unit will increase India's capacity for nuclear-derived electricity by 1,000 megawatts, bringing it to a total of 5,780 megawatts.

Greenland uranium

The parliament of Greenland voted 15–14 on 24 October to lift a ban on the mining of radioactive materials such as uranium, as well as rare-earth metals used in the aerospace, electronics and

energy industries. Greenland, which is a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark, has significant uranium deposits, and the policy shift could lead to significant investment from China.

Citizens weigh in

Two European campaigns last week each collected the 1 million signatures they needed to reopen political debate on controversial research topics. The Stop Vivisection campaign seeks to ban the use of animals in

research, while the One of Us campaign aims to block European Union (EU) funding for research involving human embryonic stem cells. The campaigns are among the first to succeed in the EU's new initiative in participatory democracy. Once the signatures are verified, the groups will present their cases in public hearings before the European Parliament.

Food czars faulted

Too many members of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) maintain close ties with the food industries they regulate, according to a report published last week by the Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO). Based in Brussels, the CEO seeks to expose the effects of lobbying on European policy-making. The report found that nearly 60% of EFSA scientific panel members had at least one self-reported conflict of interest. The EFSA's panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies was the worst offender, with 113 conflicts of interest found among 17 of its 20 members.

RESEARCH

Data dash

NASA has set a new record for beaming information between the Moon and Earth, the agency announced on 22 October. The Lunar Atmosphere and Dust Environment Explorer (LADEE), launched in September and currently orbiting the Moon, sent data encoded in a pulsed laser beam across roughly 384,400 kilometres at a rate of 622 megabits per second — five times the previous rate. The information was received by a ground station in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

LLNL LADEE is carrying NASA's first two-way communication system to use lasers instead of radio waves (see *Nature* 499, 266–267; 2013).

PubMed comments

Got a bone to pick? Researchers will soon be able to comment on each other's work on PubMed, an online database of life-sciences papers. The US National Center for Biotechnology Information, which runs PubMed, launched the pilot phase of its new programme, PubMed Commons, on 22 October. Although only invited participants can view and post comments at present, the programme will soon allow all PubMed authors to write comments, which will be visible to the general public, under their real names. See page 593 and go.nature.com/dgftwk for more.

TB assessment

Some 3 million people infected with tuberculosis (TB) went undetected by global health systems in 2012, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on 23 October. In its annual report on the disease, the WHO also flagged major shortcomings in the testing and treatment of people with drug-resistant forms of TB. Overall, however, the organization found that the world is on track to meet the

United Nations Millennium Development Goals of cutting TB incidence rates by 2015, and halving mortality rates compared to 1990 levels. See go.nature.com/gtuvpv for more.

Planck plug pulled

The European Space Agency gave the signal on 23 October to shut down the Planck satellite, a mission to study the magnetic afterglow of the Big Bang. Launched in 2009, Planck has created ultra-precise maps of the cosmic microwave background, helping to refine theories about the Universe's early structure and its evolution over billions of years (see *Nature* 495, 417–418; 2013 and go.nature.com/szagdh for more.)

PEOPLE

Caltech president

Physicist Thomas Rosenbaum has been appointed as the next president of the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena. Rosenbaum has been provost of the University of Chicago in Illinois since 2007. There, he oversaw the establishment of the Institute for Molecular Engineering, which launched the university's first graduate programme in engineering in May 2013. Rosenbaum will take the helm at Caltech in July 2014.



Weapons lab head

Penrose 'Parney' Albright (pictured) is stepping down as director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California (LLNL). The physicist, who has led the laboratory since December 2011, announced his resignation on 24 October, saying that he will continue to pursue his interests in US national security. Bret Knapp, who directs weapons programmes at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, will take over on 1 November as interim LLNL director until Albright's successor is appointed.

BUSINESS

Genetics spinout

Investors hope to squeeze more profits out of the once-bankrupt firm deCODE Genetics, with the 23 October launch of NextCODE Health, a spinout company. NextCODE,

COMING UP

1–5 NOVEMBER

Genetic liver disease, liver transplants and treatments for hepatitis C are highlighted at the 64th Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases in Washington DC. go.nature.com/y2oadd

4–7 NOVEMBER

At the International Conference on Regional Climate in Brussels, topics include the use of regional climate data in disaster-risk reduction, food security and health. go.nature.com/66dlqh

based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has secured US\$15 million in private funding to look for disease-causing variants in DNA sequence data using deCODE's database of genetic and medical records. Reykjavik-based deCODE filed for bankruptcy in 2009, and was later acquired by biotechnology company Amgen in Thousand Oaks, California (see go.nature.com/kygrxz).

Alzheimer's drug

The US Food and Drug Administration on 25 October approved the second radioactive drug to aid the evaluation of Alzheimer's disease. Vizamyl (flutemetamol) from GE Healthcare, headquartered in Pollards Wood, UK, binds to β -amyloid protein, which accumulates in the brains of people with the disease, and allows the protein to be seen by positron emission tomography imaging. A positive result should be used with other tests to diagnose Alzheimer's, the agency noted.

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TREND WATCH

Reports that government researchers in Canada experience political interference in the practice and communication of science have been backed by the results of a survey of more than 4,000 scientists. The study, conducted in June and released this month, was commissioned by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, which represents workers in 40 government agencies. Since 2007, federal environmental scientists have had to get approval before speaking to the press.

STIFLING SCIENCE

A survey puts numbers to perceptions that government scientists in Canada are being muzzled.



90%
Feel that they cannot speak freely to the media about their work



48%
Had seen information withheld, causing the public or government to be misled or misinformed



86%
Could not report actions that might harm the public without fear of censure



43%
Had been asked to exclude or alter information in government documents for non-scientific reasons



50%
Had seen public health and safety compromised by political interference in science



37%
Had been blocked from answering media requests in the past 5 years