

Event Report: Potočnik meets with ERA-Link Members

WASHINGTON, DC—European Union (EU) Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, met at the Embassy of Austria with members of ERA-Link, a network of European researchers, scientists and scholars abroad, where he introduced the European Research Area (ERA) and the Seventh Research Framework Program (FP7), an initiative to support and promote research and technology development in the EU.

Potočnik was a participant in a series of presentations that included the Ambassador of the Embassy of Austria in Washington, DC, Eva Nowotny, the Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Washington, DC, Angelos Pangratis and ERA-Link member and European Research Council starting grant recipient, Jan Eeckhout.



*Janez Potočnik, EU
Commissioner for
Science and
Research*



*From left to right:
Ambassador Eva
Nowotny, Jan Eeckhout,
Angelos Pangratis, Janez
Potočnik, and Mary Minch,
Director of International
Affairs of the European
Commission*

The event, organized by ERA-Link USA, focused on the future of the ERA, a platform developed in 2000 by the EU for European researchers to interact and trade information and creating and maintaining ties and partnerships within Europe and around the world.

Some ERA-Link members raised questions during the event regarding the lack of sufficient funding for start-up research in Europe and a cumbersome application process. This is a growing issue with ERA-Link members, many of whom have six or less years of experience and may encounter more problems acquiring grants than fellow researchers with more years of experience. Although some European researchers have expressed the desire to return to

Europe to work, offers abroad have seemed more enticing. However the ERA hopes to change this circumstance.

In the beginning of 2007, the European Commission launched with the Green Paper on the ERA, a debate on ways to build solidarity and make a more desirable ERA with the goal of making a greater contribution to the renewed Lisbon strategy. The Green Paper points out key areas for planned development: creation of a single labor market for researchers, creation of leading research infrastructures, generation of programs and international cooperation. With these developments, Potočník says that ERA is working on “making Europe a spring of knowledge.”

This report was written by Juliet M. Beverly, Editorial Assistant for “bridges,” the OST’s online magazine on S&T policy in Europe and North America.

About the OST:

The Office of Science & Technology at the Embassy of Austria in Washington, DC, is a strategic interface for science, research and science policy between Austria and North America.

Our mission, “Building bridges of knowledge and expertise between Austria and North America,” is crystallized in the following core areas of expertise:

- * Initiation and maintenance of the network of Austrian scientists and scholars in North America*
- * Policy advice in the sciences, research and science policy*
- * Consulting and support in initiation of new R&D cooperation*