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Computerised Text Analysis Tools and Translation Quality

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This paper aims to show how computerised text analysis tools, along with the familiar word processing and spreadsheet applications, may aid the translator in identifying some key features of the source text before starting the translation and in producing and checking the target text. It is argued that such an approach may contribute to improving the quality of translations.

1. Introduction

Modern computerised translation tools like terminology management systems, translation memories or integrated translation environments can contribute a lot to improving the quality of translations, especially in a corporate or institutional setting. However, these tools are at present still relatively expensive, so it is not likely that many freelance translators with limited income are happy to invest in acquiring such tools. Fortunately, there are many free text analysis software tools available now, which can also be put to use in improving the quality of translation work. My aim in this paper is to sketch a translation workflow scenario that freelancers can use as a method of translation quality assurance. Apart from the tools that the translator is certain to have anyway, such as a word processor or a spreadsheet application, this method only involves the use of text analysis software that comes free of charge. This way I aim to prove that even part-time translators can do much to assure the quality of their translations with no extra investment required.

2. Aspects of translation quality

Based on the ISO 8402 standard, **translation quality** may be defined as the totality of characteristics of a target text that influence whether it can satisfy certain stated and implied needs. What this means, as Mossop (2001: 6) points out, is that the quality of a translation is always relative to the needs it is aimed to serve. One aspect of quality is the **adequacy** of the translation with respect to the target communication situation. But the definition above also means that these needs include not only those that are explicitly stated by the client but also

those that are merely implied by the task. The most important such implied need in translation is accuracy, because target readers will naturally assume that the translation is accurate. **Accuracy** in translation involves correctness of the target text with respect to the content and form of the source text and, also, the target language.

Accuracy of content (meaning) is commonly termed **equivalence**. But accuracy of content also depends on whether the target text has preserved all the information contained in the original. This requirement is referred to as **completeness** of content. Thirdly, accuracy also means that the translation preserves the **consistency** of the original on three levels: the terminology employed, the register of language use, including the phraseology used, and the style of language use with respect to the intended readership. Consistency can be thought of as an internal property of the text, but we can also talk about it as an external property, relating a text to other, similar texts (Kis and Mohácsi-Gorove 2008: 73).

Formal accuracy means two things. One is that the translation is divided into sections, paragraphs, often (though not necessarily) even sentences, in the same way as the original. This may be called the **conformity of division** requirement. The other is the requirement that translation and original should be characterised by **identity of typography**.

Accuracy with respect to the target language also involves two requirements. The first is that the translation is grammatically correct and the second is that it reads as easily as any target language text that is not a translation. These requirements may be referred to as **grammaticality** and **readability**. Readability of course is a rather fuzzy notion, but in general we can say that it depends on whether the text is written in clear, unambiguous, easy-flowing language.

To summarise, the target text, on the one hand, is expected to be adequate for a given purpose in a given situation and, on the other hand, it is also expected, implicitly if not explicitly, to satisfy the following accuracy requirements:

(1) Content
- Requirement of equivalence
- Requirement of completeness
- Requirement of consistency

(2) Form
- Requirement of conformity of division
- Requirement of identity of typography

(3) Language
- Requirement of grammaticality
- Requirement of readability

3. Method of quality assurance

Contrary to what many people think, translation quality assurance does not take place *after* the translation has been produced. It begins *before* the translation is started. The obvious first step is to read the source text (ST) to gain an understanding of its content. Second, technical terms in the text need to be identified and target language equivalents established. Third, recurring phrases need to be spotted that typify the given text or genre and their equivalents established. With these lists of terms and phrases ready, the actual translation process can begin.

When the first draft of the target text (TT) is done, it has to be revised. Following Mossop (2001: 165), **revision** in translation can be defined as the process of checking a draft translation for errors and making the appropriate amendments. Revision is mainly a bilingual operation consisting in a comparison of the first draft with the original. The reviser has to check whether the information in the original is carried through in the translation precisely and completely (nothing less and nothing more), the terminology and phraseology is accurate, numbers, measures, dates, etc. are precise, chapters, sections, paragraphs, tables, figures, etc. are all in order, the layout features of pages, paragraphs, fonts, tables, etc. are the same as in the source text, and the grammar, spelling and punctuation of the target text are all correct. As a final stage, the revised and amended translation can be edited stylistically, to ensure easy readability.

This process of quality assurance may be aided by simple text analysis software tools. They can be used to implement the procedures described above in the following steps.

Before translation:

- Looking for keywords to identify subject domain and topic of the ST
- Looking for technical terms in the ST
- Looking for recurring phrases to assess the internal homogeneity of the ST
- Producing a bilingual term list
- Producing a bilingual phraseology list
- Pretranslation in Word using the Find and Replace option

After translation:

- Checking the number of words (tokens) in the ST and TT
- Checking the number of paragraphs in the ST and TT
- Reading the TT and comparing it to the ST
- Spellchecking and grammar checking

4. Tools and material

Only three software tools are used here: *Microsoft Word* for word processing, *Microsoft Excel* for preparing term and phrase lists, and a free concordance program, *AntConc 3.2.1*, written by Laurence Anthony, used for analysing the source text and extracting terms and phrases. *AntConc* can be downloaded from Laurence Anthony's website: http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html.

The source text used for illustrating the process in this paper is a European Commission press release entitled "EU research and innovation funding: Commission consults on radical changes to create more growth and jobs", which was downloaded on 18 April 2011 from the webpage http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/138.

The official Hungarian version of the text is available at http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/138&format=HTML&aged=0&language=HU&guiLanguage=en. (Both texts are presented in the Appendix.)

5. Keywords

The Word List function of *AntConc* can be used to produce a list of all the word forms that occur in the source text, along with frequency information on each word (number of tokens for each word form in the text). The aim of this is to identify keywords in the text. A **keyword** for our purposes here can be defined as an item which occurs with outstanding frequency in the text. Function words like "the", "and", "to" etc. should of course be ignored. (It is possible to filter them out from the search with the help of a predefined stop list, but we can do without this option here.) By studying the keywords, translators can familiarise themselves with the topic of the source text. The following table presents a selection of the results.

Rank	Frequency	Word
6	21	innovation
8	16	research
9	14	eu
10	13	funding
11	11	framework
15	9	commission

From this table it instantly becomes clear that the text is about innovation and research funding in the European Union.

6. Concordances

The next step can be looking at concordance lines of the highest frequency keywords in the text. A **concordance** provides a list of the tokens of the selected word form along with the words that occur in its neighbourhood within a range specified by the user. The aim of this is to become familiar with how the words selected combine with other words. A sample concordance of "innovation" is presented below.

Hit	KWIC	File
1	y 9, 2011 EU research and innovation funding: Commission consu	IP-11-138_EN.txt
2	vements to EU research and innovation funding to make participat	IP-11-138_EN.txt
3	), the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)	IP-11-138_EN.txt
4	the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). This	IP-11-138_EN.txt
5	truments, along the whole "innovation chain" starting from basi	IP-11-138_EN.txt
6	pporting non-technological innovation, for example in design an	IP-11-138_EN.txt
7	ibution of EU research and innovation funding to the Innovation	IP-11-138_EN.txt
8	innovation funding to the Innovation Union and the Europe 2020	IP-11-138_EN.txt
9	missioner for Research and Innovation Máire Geoghegan-Quinn sai	IP-11-138_EN.txt
10	EU invests in research and innovation. We want EU funding to re	IP-11-138_EN.txt
11	nsibility for research and innovation, Vice-Presidents Kallas,	IP-11-138_EN.txt
12	access to EU research and innovation funding In its Green Pa	IP-11-138_EN.txt
13	truments covering the full innovation chain, including basic re	IP-11-138_EN.txt
14	nd industry and firm-level innovation. Flexibility will be prom	IP-11-138_EN.txt
15	success of EU research and innovation funding. The Commission	IP-11-138_EN.txt
16	nd the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme. The	IP-11-138_EN.txt
17	proposal for research and innovation spending under the future	IP-11-138_EN.txt
18	) The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme has a	IP-11-138_EN.txt
19	The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a	IP-11-138_EN.txt
20	stimulating world-leading innovation, through the pioneering c	IP-11-138_EN.txt
21	concept of Knowledge and Innovation Communities. The EIT rece	IP-11-138_EN.txt

This concordance makes it clear in the company of what other words the word form "innovation" typically occurs in this particular text. Such word companies are called collocations. Concordances can be sorted according to the n-th element to the left or right of the keyword, to bring out these patterns of use.

Below is a sorted version of the concordance above, arranged according to the second element to the left. This concordance of the word "innovation" alone enables us to find some of the key expressions of the text. But to produce a complete list of key terms and phrases, we can use the N-grams function of the program, which is part of the Clusters window.

Hit	KWIC	File
1	), the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)	IP-11-138_EN.txt
2	nd the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme. The (	IP-11-138_EN.txt
3	) The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme has a	IP-11-138_EN.txt
4	nd industry and firm-level innovation. Flexibility will be prom	IP-11-138_EN.txt
5	the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). This	IP-11-138_EN.txt
6	The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a	IP-11-138_EN.txt
7	concept of Knowledge and Innovation Communities. The EIT rece	IP-11-138_EN.txt
8	pporting non-technological innovation, for example in design an	IP-11-138_EN.txt
9	y 9, 2011 EU research and innovation funding: Commission consu	IP-11-138_EN.txt
10	vements to EU research and innovation funding to make participa	IP-11-138_EN.txt
11	ibution of EU research and innovation funding to the Innovation	IP-11-138_EN.txt
12	missioner for Research and Innovation Máire Geoghegan-Quinn sai	IP-11-138_EN.txt
13	EU invests in research and innovation. We want EU funding to re	IP-11-138_EN.txt
14	nsibility for research and innovation, Vice-Presidents Kallas,	IP-11-138_EN.txt
15	access to EU research and innovation funding In its Green Pa	IP-11-138_EN.txt
16	success of EU research and innovation funding. The Commission	IP-11-138_EN.txt
17	proposal for research and innovation spending under the future	IP-11-138_EN.txt
18	truments, along the whole "innovation chain" starting from basi	IP-11-138_EN.txt
19	truments covering the full innovation chain, including basic re	IP-11-138_EN.txt
20	innovation funding to the Innovation Union and the Europe 2020	IP-11-138_EN.txt
21	stimulating world-leading innovation, through the pioneering c	IP-11-138_EN.txt

7. N-grams

An **n-gram** is a sequence of n consecutive running words in the text. The aim of looking for n-grams in the source text is twofold. The first is to identify possible technical terms, while the second is to find recurring phrases to assess the internal homogeneity of the source text. This is done by finding maximal n-grams in the text. A **maximal n-gram** can be defined as an XP that does not occur as part of another n-gram which itself is an XP. (Thus the phrase "European Institute of Innovation" is not a maximal n-gram because it occurs as part of "European Institute of Innovation and Technology".

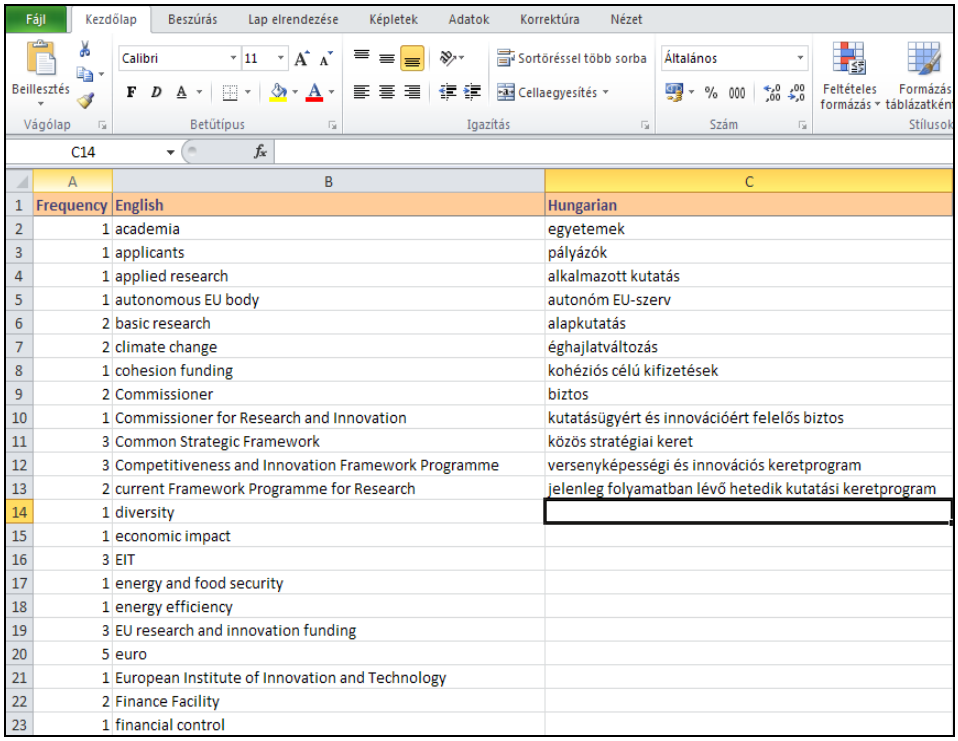
In *AntConc* we can set the minimum and maximum size of n-grams we are looking for, and can also define the minimum n-gram frequency for the search. Since a technical term can consist of a single word, the minimum size should be set to one. A convenient maximum size in this text seems to be 6. If we want to make sure we capture all possible technical terms, then the minimum frequency should be set to one. This will of course greatly increase the number of n-gram tokens found, which means the translator will need more time to browse through the list than in the case of a higher minimum frequency number. A fragment of the search results is presented below.

Rank	Freq	N-gram
132	2	current Framework
133	2	current Framework Programme
134	2	current Framework Programme for
135	2	current Framework Programme for Research
136	2	current Framework Programme for Research FP
137	2	efficiency
138	2	energy
139	2	EU funding to
140	2	EU research and innovation funding to
141	2	EUR billion
142	2	Europe
143	2	European Institute
144	2	European Institute of
145	2	European Institute of Innovation
146	2	European Institute of Innovation and
147	2	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
148	2	far
149	2	financial
150	2	food
151	2	food security
152	2	for research
153	2	for research and

The result of the search can then be saved into various file formats using the Save Output to Text File command. The simplest solution is to save the results in a .txt file, in which the n-grams are presented in a list, with rank and frequency numbers and n-grams separated by tabs. The next step is to browse through this list and weed out the irrelevant items. The result will be a clean list containing only technical terms and recurring phrases.

8. Processing data in Excel

Terminological and phraseological units can most easily be handled in a spreadsheet application such as MS Excel. First we can open a new Excel sheet and create a table of three columns with the headers “Frequency”, “English” and “Hungarian”. Rank information can be ignored. The data from the text file can now be imported and then the “Hungarian” column filled in, with the help of various terminological sources such as the EU’s IATE online database (iate.europa.eu), as illustrated below.

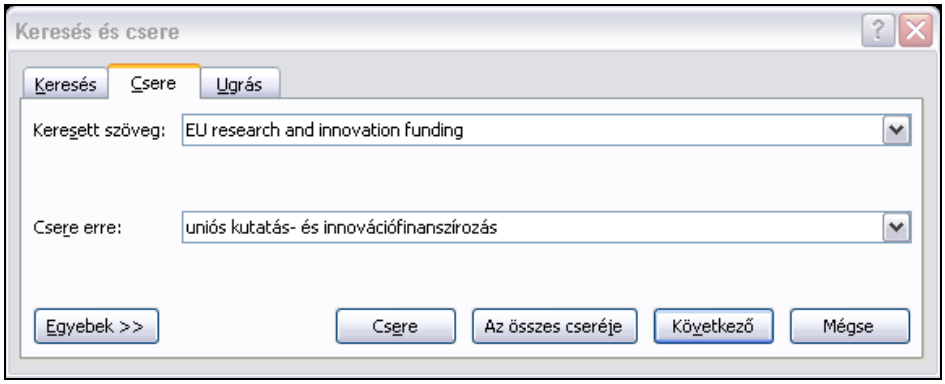


	A	B	C
1	Frequency	English	Hungarian
2	1	academia	egyetemek
3	1	applicants	pályázók
4	1	applied research	alkalmazott kutatás
5	1	autonomous EU body	autonóm EU-szerv
6	2	basic research	alapkutatás
7	2	climate change	éghajlatváltozás
8	1	cohesion funding	kohéziós célú kifizetések
9	2	Commissioner	biztos
10	1	Commissioner for Research and Innovation	kutatásügyért és innovációért felelős biztos
11	3	Common Strategic Framework	közös stratégiai keret
12	3	Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme	versenyképességi és innovációs keretprogram
13	2	current Framework Programme for Research	jelenleg folyamatban lévő hetedik kutatási keretprogram
14	1	diversity	
15	1	economic impact	
16	3	EIT	
17	1	energy and food security	
18	1	energy efficiency	
19	3	EU research and innovation funding	
20	5	euro	
21	1	European Institute of Innovation and Technology	
22	2	Finance Facility	
23	1	financial control	

When the table is ready, the data can be used to produce a preliminary translation of the text, in which the English expressions that occur in the table are replaced by their Hungarian equivalents.

9. Pretranslation

The aim of the pretranslation process is to make sure that technical terms are translated correctly and that recurring phrases are translated consistently. (If this kind of rigid consistency is not desirable in the target text, it can be eliminated during the translation or the editing phase.) The first step is to create a copy of the source text by saving it under a different file name. We will work into this new file in order to keep the source file unchanged. Then the terms and recurring phrases of the source text can be substituted by their Hungarian equivalents using the Find and Replace function of MS Word, as illustrated below.



The result of the pretranslation process will be an essentially English text that contains Hungarian terms and phrases. This is the point where the actual translation begins. To put it simply, the task now is to remove all signs of the fact that the text was originally formulated in English.

10. Translation

There are two fundamentally good ways to do the translation using the pretranslated text. One way is to move the cursor to the beginning of a paragraph and then hit the enter key to open a new paragraph. This way the new paragraph will inherit all the basic formal properties of the original one. Now we can write the translation in the new paragraph, copying Hungarian pieces of text from the original. When the paragraph is finished, the original one can be deleted.

The other way is to write over the original text using the Correction tool of Word. With the help of the Track Changes feature the changes we make in the text can be traced, and when we are ready with a sentence (or a paragraph), we can accept or modify the changes in the text.

11. Revising the translation

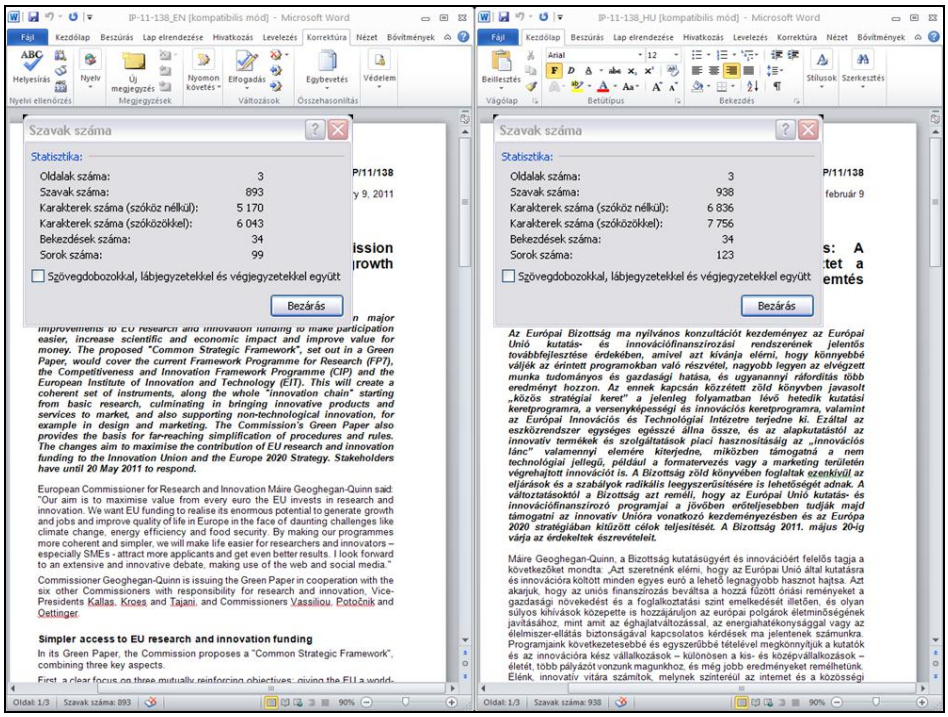
When the translation is finished, it will have to be revised from several points of view. The primary requirement in most forms of translation is that the target text conveys the same information as the source text. Revision should thus principally involve a checking of the completeness of the translation and the elimination of mistakes of logical meaning. Such mistakes may be mistranslations, as a result of misinterpreting certain segments of the source text, or ambiguities, as a result of a careless formulation of the target text. It must also be checked that the internal and external consistency of the source text comes through properly in the translation. In our present project this is ensured by the pretranslation of the text.

Secondly, revision also involves checking that the formal features of the first draft follow those of the original. If we follow the translation procedure

described above, this requirement will almost certainly be fulfilled. However, even in this workflow scenario, we need to carefully check if bold or italicised segments appear as they should in the target text.

Thirdly, revision also involves correcting any mistakes of grammar, spelling and punctuation in the target language.

In revising the target text, we can apply the following procedure. First we need to open the source as well as the target text. Then we arrange them side by side on the screen, using the Parallel View feature of Word. Next we can check the number of words and paragraphs in the two texts, as illustrated by the following figure.



The point of checking the number of words is this. It has been observed that in English-to-Hungarian translation the number of target text words generally shows an up to 20% increase compared with the number of source text words. If translators are aware of such general tendencies, then the fact that the target text is within or over this limit may indicate to them whether the translation is likely to convey the same amount of information as the original. But we need to remember that this comparison is only of an indicative nature and it does not provide decisive information in any case.

Then we check the number of paragraphs in the two texts. Normally no change in this number is expected in specialised translation, unless the target text is intended to be a summary of the original.

It would also be useful to check the number of sentences in the two texts, and some concordance programs do make this possible, but *AntConc*, the program we are using here does not offer such an option and nor does *MS Word* in its present version.

The next step is to carefully compare the target text with the source text sentence by sentence. In general, a good method is to read one sentence of the target text first and then the corresponding sentence of the source text. This has the advantage that we will be able to see the translation from the target reader's point of view, uninfluenced by the original (Mossop 2001: 123). If we do not understand the translation right away, without the help of the source text, there is definitely a problem with it.

When the translator has read through the text and corrected all errors of content, it will still have to be checked for possible mistakes of spelling, grammar and punctuation. This can be done using the Spellchecking and Grammar Checking features of Word. However, we need to be cautious with these features because for various reasons they will often come up with incorrect suggestions. In the end, it is always the responsibility of the human applying the computer to a task to make sure that the results are correct.

12. Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to show how computerised text analysis tools (concordancers) may be incorporated into the translation process to help the translator in identifying key features of the source text before starting the translation and also in producing and checking the target text. It is argued here that the use of such tools may considerably contribute to improving the quality of translations by making translation quality assurance more systematic. And since some of these simple programs can be acquired free of charge, the translator does not even have to invest money to make the translation quality assurance process more effective. Such tools thus are an ideal choice for part-time translators whose income is so limited that they cannot afford to buy more sophisticated CAT tools. Another potentially very useful area of their application is in translator training, where they can be used to raise the awareness of students of various textual features and also of the importance of quality assurance.

References

Mossop, B. 2001. *Revising and Editing for Translators*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

Kis, B. and Mohácsi-Gorove, A. 2008. *A fordító számítógépe* [The translator's computer]. Bicske: Szak Kiadó.

Appendix

IP/11/138

Brussels, February 9, 2011

EU research and innovation funding: Commission consults on radical changes to create more growth and jobs

The European Commission today launches a consultation on major improvements to EU research and innovation funding to make participation easier, increase scientific and economic impact and improve value for money. The proposed "Common Strategic Framework", set out in a Green Paper, would cover the current Framework Programme for Research (FP7), the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). This will create a coherent set of instruments, along the whole "innovation chain" starting from basic research, culminating in bringing innovative products and services to market, and also supporting non-technological innovation, for example in design and marketing. The Commission's Green Paper also provides the basis for far-reaching simplification of procedures and rules. The changes aim to maximise the contribution of EU research and innovation funding to the Innovation Union and the Europe 2020 Strategy. Stakeholders have until 20 May 2011 to respond.

European Commissioner for Research and Innovation Máire Geoghegan-Quinn said: "Our aim is to maximise value from every euro the EU invests in research and innovation. We want EU funding to realise its enormous potential to generate growth and jobs and improve quality of life in Europe in the face of daunting challenges like climate change, energy efficiency and food security. By making our programmes more coherent and simpler, we will make life easier for researchers and innovators – especially SMEs – attract more applicants and get even better results. I look forward to an extensive and innovative debate, making use of the web and social media."

Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn is issuing the Green Paper in cooperation with the six other Commissioners with responsibility for research and innovation, Vice- Presidents Kallas, Kroes and Tajani, and Commissioners Vassiliou, Potočnik and Oettinger.

Simpler access to EU research and innovation funding

In its Green Paper, the Commission proposes a "Common Strategic Framework", combining three key aspects.

First, a clear focus on three mutually reinforcing objectives: giving the EU a world-beating science base; boosting competitiveness across the board; and tackling grand challenges such as climate change, resource efficiency, energy and food security, health and an ageing population.

Second, making EU funding more attractive and easier to access for participants, for example through a single entry point with common IT tools or a

one-stop shop for providing advice and support to participants throughout the funding process. Furthermore, the Common Strategic Framework will allow a simpler and more streamlined set of funding instruments covering the full innovation chain, including basic research, applied research, collaboration between academia and industry and firm-level innovation. Flexibility will be promoted to encourage diversity and business involvement. Applicants should be able to apply for several different projects without repeatedly providing the same information.

Third, there will be much simpler and more consistent procedures for accounting for the use of the funds received. This may involve, for example, greater use of lump sum payments.

Greater simplicity will make financial control of EU taxpayers1 money easier and more effective.

Other ideas in the Green Paper include: further steps to pool Member States' national research funding; better links with cohesion funding; using EU funding to stimulate public procurement; more use of prizes; further strengthening the role of the European Research Council and of financial instruments such as the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) and the loan guarantee and venture capital investments; and drawing up a set of performance indicators to measure the success of EU research and innovation funding.

The Commission will launch in the coming weeks a competition to find the most inspiring name for the new common framework.

The Commission's proposals take fully into account the interim evaluations of the current 7th Framework programme (see IP/10/1525) and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme. The Commission's response to the FP7 evaluation is also published today (available via link below).

Next steps

The consultation is open for comments from today. The deadline for contributions is 20 May. On 10 June, the Commission will organise a major closing conference as a follow-up to the public consultation. The name for the new Strategic Framework will be announced there.

The Commission will then bring forward before the end of 2011 a legislative proposal for research and innovation spending under the future EU budget post-2013.

Background

The current Framework Programme for Research FP7 has a budget of EUR 53 billion (2007–2013). More than 9,000 projects have so far been funded. A study has estimated that projects selected for funding in 2011 alone will create up to 165 000 jobs (see IP/10/966)

The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme has a budget of EUR 3.6 billion (2007–2013) and has supported more than 100,000 SMEs through loan guarantees alone as well as innovative ICT pilot projects.

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an autonomous EU body stimulating world-leading innovation, through the

pioneering concept of Knowledge and Innovation Communities. The EIT received EUR 309 million from the EU Budget for the period 2007-2013.

Links

Consultation on the Green Paper
Innovation Union web page
European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
Seventh Framework Programme
Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme
European Research Council
Risk-Sharing Finance Facility
(RSFF evaluation)
Report of the FP7 interim evaluation expert group
Commission response on the interim evaluation report
April 2010 European Commission Communication on simplification

IP/11/138

Brüsszel, 2011. február 9

Uniós kutatás- és innovációfinanszírozás: A Bizottság gyökeres változtatásokról egyeztet a gazdasági növekedés és a munkahelyteremtés érdekében

Az Európai Bizottság ma nyilvános konzultációt kezdeményez az Európai Unió kutatás- és innovációfinanszírozási rendszerének jelentős továbbfejlesztése érdekében, amivel azt kívánja elérni, hogy könnyebbé váljék az érintett programokban való részvétel, nagyobb legyen az elvégzett munka tudományos és gazdasági hatása, és ugyanannyi ráfordítás több eredményt hozzon. Az ennek kapcsán közzétett zöld könyvben javasolt „közös stratégiai keret" a jelenleg folyamatban lévő hetedik kutatási keretprogramra, a versenyképességi és innovációs keretprogramra, valamint az Európai Innovációs és Technológiai Intézetre terjedne ki. Ezáltal az eszközrendszer egységes egésszé állna össze, és az alapkutatástól az innovatív termékek és szolgáltatások piaci hasznosításáig az „innovációs lánc" valamennyi elemére kiterjedne, miközben támogatná a nem technológiai jellegű, például a formatervezés vagy a marketing területén végrehajtott innovációt is. A Bizottság zöld könyvében foglaltak ezenkívül az eljárások és a szabályok radikális leegyszerűsítésére is lehetőségét adnak. A változtatásoktól a Bizottság azt reméli, hogy az Európai Unió kutatás- és innovációfinanszírozó programjai a jövőben erőteljesebben tudják majd támogatni az innovatív Unióra vonatkozó kezdeményezésben és az Európa 2020 stratégiában kitűzött célok teljesítését. A Bizottság 2011. május 20-ig várja az érdekeltek észrevételeit.

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, a Bizottság kutatásügyért és innovációért felelős tagja a következőket mondta: „Azt szeretnénk elérni, hogy az Európai Unió által kutatásra és innovációra költött minden egyes euró a lehető legnagyobb hasznot hajtsa. Azt akarjuk, hogy az uniós finanszírozás beváltsa a hozzá fűzött óriási reményeket a gazdasági növekedést és a foglalkoztatási szint emelkedését illetően, és olyan súlyos kihívások közepette is hozzájáruljon az európai polgárok életminőségének javításához, mint amit az éghajlatváltozással, az energiahaté-

konysággal vagy az élelmiszer-ellátás biztonságával kapcsolatos kérdések ma jelentenek számunkra. Programjaink következetesebbé és egyszerűbbé tételével megkönnyítjük a kutatók és az innovációra kész vállalkozások – különösen a kis- és középvállalkozások – életét, több pályázót vonzunk magunkhoz, és még jobb eredményeket remélhetünk. Élénk, innovatív vitára számítok, melynek színteréül az internet és a közösségi médiumok szolgálnak majd."

A zöld könyvet Máire Geoghegan-Quinn hat biztostársával: Siim Kallas, Neelie Kroes és Antonio Tajani alelnökökkel és Andrula Vasziliu, Janez Potočnik és Günther Oettinger bizottsági tagokkal közösen bocsátja ki.

Egyszerűbb hozzáférés az uniós kutatás- és innovációfinanszírozáshoz

A zöld könyvben a Bizottság egy úgynevezett közös stratégiai keretre tesz javaslatot, amely három hangsúlyos elemből áll.

Egyrészt egyértelműen három, egymást kölcsönösen támogató célkitűzésre összpontosít: arra, hogy az EU tudományos bázisa világelső legyen; a versenyképesség fellendítésére minden területen; valamint azoknak a legnagyobb kihívásoknak a megválaszolására, amelyek például az éghajlatváltozás, az erőforrás-hatékonyság, az energia- és az élelmiszer-ellátás biztonsága, az egészségügy és a népesség elöregedése területén előttünk állnak.

Másrészt vonzóbbá és könnyebben hozzáférhetővé kívánja tenni a résztvevők számára az uniós finanszírozást: egységes informatikai eszköztár alkalmazásával működő egyetlenegy belépési pont kialakítását és olyan „egyablakos ügyintézés" bevezetését javasolja, amelyen keresztül a résztvevők a finanszírozási folyamat valamennyi szakaszában értékes tanácsokhoz és támogatáshoz juthatnak. A közös stratégiai keret emellett lehetővé teszi a finanszírozási eszközök leegyszerűsítését és ésszerűsítését is a teljes „innovációs lánc" mentén, függetlenül attól, hogy alapkutatás, alkalmazott kutatás, egyetemek és ipari vállalkozások közötti együttműködés vagy vállalati szintű innováció támogatásáról van-e szó. A sokféleség és a vállalkozói szektor részvételének biztosítása érdekében rugalmasabbá válnak a finanszírozási rendszerek. A pályázóknak arra is lehetőségük lesz, hogy adataik egyszeri megadásával több elképzelésükkel is pályázzanak.

Harmadrészt jelentősen egyszerűbbé és következetesebbé válik a megkapott pénzekkel való elszámolás, és nagyobb tér nyílhat például az átalányösszeges kifizetések előtt.

Az egyszerűbb szabályok könnyebbé és hatékonyabbá teszik az adóbefizetések felhasználásával kapcsolatos ellenőrzéseket is.

A zöld könyv más elképzeléseket is tartalmaz: további lépéseket irányoz elő a tagállamok nemzeti szintű kutatási előirányzatainak együttes felhasználása érdekében; javítaná a kohéziós célú kifizetésekkel fennálló kapcsolatokat; javasolja, hogy az uniós források a közbeszerzést is ösztönözzék; felveti a pénzdíjak létrehozásának lehetőségét; tovább erősítené az Európai Kutatási Tanács és olyan pénzügyi eszközök, mint a kockázatmegosztási pénzügyi mechanizmus, a hitelgaranciák és a kockázati tőkebefektetések szerepét; és olyan teljesítménymutatók kidolgozását javasolja, amelyekkel mérhető az uniós kutatás- és innovációfinanszírozás sikere.

A Bizottság szeretne gondolatébresztő elnevezést találni a közös stratégiai keret számára, ezért erről a következő hetekben ötletpályázatot fog hirdetni.

A Bizottság javaslatai teljes mértékben figyelembe veszik a folyamatban lévő hetedik keretprogrammal és a versenyképességi és innovációs keretprogrammal kapcsolatban elvégzett értékelések eredményeit (lásd IP/10/1525). A Bizottság ma hozta nyilvánosságra azt a közleményét is, amelyben a hetedik keretprogram időközi értékelésére adott válaszát fogalmazza meg (lásd lejjebb, a hivatkozások között).

A következő lépések

A konzultáció keretében a mai naptól lehet észrevételeket tenni. Az észrevételek benyújtásának határideje május 20. A konzultációs folyamatot egy június 10-én megrendezendő nagyszabású konferencia zárja, melyen a Bizottság bejelenti a közös stratégiai keret új elnevezését is.

A Bizottság ezután 2011 végéig beterjeszti az uniós költségvetés következő, 2013 utáni ciklusában végrehajtandó kutatás- és innovációfinanszírozó programokra vonatkozó jogalkotási javaslatait.

Háttér

A jelenleg folyamatban lévő, 2007-től 2013-ig tartó hetedik kutatási keretprogram 53 milliárd euróból gazdálkodik. Eddig több mint 9000 projekt részesült finanszírozásban. Egy felmérés becslése szerint csak a 2011-ben finanszírozásra kiválasztott projektek mintegy 165 000 új munkahelyet fognak teremteni (lásd IP/10/966).

A versenyképességi és innovációs keretprogram – ugyancsak 2007-től 2013-ig – összesen 3,6 milliárd euró felett rendelkezik, és eddig csak hitelgarancia formájában több mint 100 000 kis- és középvállalkozásnak, valamint innovatív kísérleti IKT-projekteknek nyújtott támogatást.

Az Európai Innovációs és Technológiai Intézet (EIT) egy autonóm EU-szerv, mely az úttörő jellegű eszköznek számító úgynevezett tudományos és innovációs társulásokon keresztül a világszínvonalon is meghatározó innováció elősegítésére törekszik. Az EIT a 2007-től 2013-ig tartó költségvetési ciklusban 309 millió eurót kapott az Unió költségvetéséből.

Hivatkozások

Konzultáció a zöld könyvben foglaltakról
Az „innovatív Unió” honlapja
Az Európai Innovációs és Technológiai Intézet (EIT)
A hetedik keretprogram
A versenyképességi és innovációs keretprogram
Az Európai Kutatási Tanács
A kockázatmegosztási pénzügyi mechanizmus
(a mechanizmus értékelése)
A szakértői csoport jelentése a hetedik keretprogram időközi értékeléséről
A Bizottság válasza az időközi értékelésről összeállított jelentésre
Az Európai Bizottság 2010. áprilisi közleménye az egyszerűsítésről