

The Santander-SANGRE meeting 2005

The SANGRE Group in the Santander network of universities is an active group of people working with Research Management at the member universities. During the recent five years Leeds University has arranged popular meetings in Brussels. The success of these meetings has been due to a pleasant mixture of workshop and seminars.

On the 2nd and 3rd of June 2005 the Santander Group and the Research and Innovation Services at Göteborg University (Sweden) arranged and sponsored a meeting in Brussels for 35 officials from European universities working with Research Management.

The meeting was held in Fondation Universitaire, and at The Centre.

The programme involved a lot of topics both concerning the ongoing 6th Framework programme for research (FP 6) and also, of course the coming one, 7th Framework programme (FP7).

The topics for the meeting were very interesting, and the meeting attracted the very best speakers from the DG Research in Brussels.

After an introduction made by Margareta Ahlqwist from Göteborg University and some welcome words by the Santander chairman Professor Stefan Jurga, Dan Andree, expert to the European Commission, started the meeting with a brilliant introduction of the latest news concerning the 7 Framework programme. One of the most popular words within the 7FP seems to be “simplification” but many of the participants were concerned that the word might also involve simplified costs basis rules, which might threaten the additional cost model, used by most universities.

The second biggest activity area within the framework programme is the area of Life Sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health. Therefore the audience was very interested to listen to Senior Scientific Officer Indridi Benediktson, from the Life Sciences programme, who talked about the topics in his area, now and in the future. He also reminded the audience that they have to be prepared for the last big call in the Life sciences programme, which is launched this summer with a deadline in the fall.

Megan Richards, who is head of Unit A3 (legal issues), is always a very popular and important speaker at Santander-SANGRE framework programme conferences. She held a discussion with the participants concerning contractual issues in the framework programmes. The discussion was very lively, ranging from questions concerning audits to operational autonomy for consortia and inappropriate coordinators. Megan Richards gave a lot of information than will help the audience in their daily work.

The second day, the meeting was held The Centre, Avenue Marnix. Also in the vicinity of DG Research.

The day started with information from one of the most popular activity areas of the 6FP: the Marie Curie Actions – Humans resources and Mobility. The Head of the Unit for Marie Curie Actions, Georges Bingen, informed us concerning the last calls in the ongoing programme and what is happening in the future. The mobility programme is so popular that one of the biggest problems has been the over-subscription. Therefore Georges Bingen hoped that the budget would increase in the FP7. The Mobility area will also continue to be an important part of the framework programme but there will be some changes in the implementation but for example the fellowship part will continue in about the same way as in the FP6.

One big issue discussed in Europe for the moment is the eventual funding of the European Research Council in the FP7. Anastasia Andrikopoulou informed the participants concerning the background and ongoing discussions concerning the council which will, if funded by the politicians, fund fundamental research only evaluated based on scientific excellence.

The meeting ended with a very lively discussion of the participants concerning the future of the SANGRE group and of knowledge exchange within the group. Everybody agreed that they wanted to have this kind of meetings yearly for the members of the Santander SANGRE group.

Tineke Dijkstra from the Santander Group was instrumental in the preparations and gave an excellent support during the meeting.

Margareta Ahlqwist and Gustav Bertilsson Uleberg

www.gu.se/sangre2005