

10 November 2010

ANOTHER 50 EXAMPLES OF EU WASTE

€411,000 for a dog fitness and rehabilitation centre that was never built

In February 2009, Hungarian IT firm Gyrotech Commercial and Supplier Ltd¹ was granted roughly €411,000 from the EU's Regional Development Fund, with another €500,000 coming from other sources, for a project to "improve the lifestyle and living standard of dogs"². The company, originally an IT business, seems to have requested the money in order to branch out by developing a hydrotherapy system to "improve dogs' wellbeing". The company used the funds to build new offices for the centre. However, the offices have remained empty and overrun with weeds and the dog centre has yet to materialise³.

Local residents claim that they have never seen any of the company's 'employees' near the vicinity.⁴ Despite this, in April 2009, Gyrotech received a further €13,307 from the EU this time for a Web-Shop management project, seemingly unrelated to the proposed dog rehab centre⁵. In August 2010, local authorities in Dregelypalank initiated a federal investigation into Gyrotech Ltd's activities and funding.

€5.25m for fleet of limousines for MEPs in Strasbourg

The European Parliament's records show that in 2009 the EP awarded Biribin Limousines a contract worth €5.25m for transporting MEPs around Strasbourg in chauffeur driven cars.⁶ The limousine company's website states that its chauffeurs hold the 'Grand Remise' license, which includes a "confidentiality clause guaranteeing absolute discretion"⁷. Estimates commissioned by the Green Party already show that travelling between and maintaining the European Parliament's two seats in Strasbourg and Brussels already costs European taxpayers €200m and creates an extra 18,884 tonnes of CO2 every year.⁸

¹ See firms' website: <http://gyrotech.unas.hu/>

² See *Hungarian National Development Agency*, Approved Funding, North Hungary, Nograd county, Balassagyarmat municipality, Dregelypalank GOP 1.3.1-08/1, <http://www.nfu.hu/content/58>

³ See *Hirextra* 'Egymást ütik a kormány döntései' October 7 2009, <http://www.hirextra.hu/2009/10/07/egymast-utik-a-kormany-dontesei/>

⁴ See *Magyar Nemzet* 'Európai kutyafitnessz' August 21 2010 <http://mn.mno.hu/portal/731726>

⁵ See *Hungarian National Development Agency*, Approved Funding, North Hungary, Nograd county, Balassagyarmat municipality, Dregelypalank GOP 2.2.3-08, <http://www.nfu.hu/content/58>

⁶ *European Parliament*, 'List of contracts awarded in 2009 with a value greater than €25,000'; http://www.europarl.europa.eu/tenders/march_attribues_2009.htm

⁷ See website: <http://www.biribinlimousines.com/en/services/our-chauffeurs>

⁸ *Eco-Logica Ltd*, 'European Parliament two-seat operation: environmental costs, transport and energy', November 2007; http://www.greens-efa.eu/cms/topics/dokbin/180/180441.eu_and_climate_change@en.pdf

€16,000 to Tyrolean farmers to boost their emotional connection with the landscape

A grant of €16,394 was given by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), with an additional €24,119 coming from the Austrian government, towards a project in Austria aimed at raising awareness of the Tyrolean landscape and its diverse features and to “increase farmers’ emotional connection with the landscapes they cultivate.”⁹ The main method of achieving these objectives was interviewing various farmers who were “expected to reconsider their relationship with the landscape and become more aware of their emotional reactions to it compared to their prevailing rational economic ones.” Other farmers would then be “influenced” by exhibitions of the work “by receiving affirmation and taking pride in the distinctive and positive way in which their job is presented”¹⁰.

€5,000 on a “Europe Horse” to promote the EU to German children

“Eurogaloppo” the German “Europe-Horse” is a colourful cartoon figure designed for an EU initiative to inform children and teenagers in Niedersachsen of the workings of the EU and their role within it.¹¹ A booklet has been produced chronicling Eurogaloppo’s trip from Germany to Brussels, in which the cartoon horse meets and interviews various high-profile EU figures along the way, including former European Parliament President Hans-Gert Pottering, Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso.¹²

Eurogaloppo’s questions include asking the Minister for Lower Saxony Christian Wulff “So it’s because of the EU that we’ve lived in peace for so long?” The following exchange with Commission President Barroso is also recorded:

Eurogaloppo: “I have so been looking forward to finally meeting a commissioner!”

Barroso: “Do you mean a commissioner like in a crime programme?”

Eurogaloppo: (sheepish silence)

Barroso: (grins) “Actually, you are not far wrong. The EU Commission and the crime commissioners of the police have something in common: they are both authorities.”

According to the Lower Saxony authorities – which were very helpful and transparent when Open Europe approached them – roughly €5,000 has been spent on Eurogaloppo since 2003 through the EU information centre in the region, while another €40,000 has come from the Lower Saxony government.¹³

€900,000 for a golf course, hotel and spa whose guests include Chancellor Merkel

Counting Chancellor Angela Merkel amongst one of its guests¹⁴, the Strelasund golf park was given almost €900,000 by the European Regional Development Fund¹⁵ to

⁹ See the European Commission, page 58 in

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/innovative_use_eu_funds.pdf

¹⁰ WWF, “Innovative use of EU funds to finance management measures and activities in Natura 2000 sites” pg.58

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/innovative_use_eu_funds.pdf

¹¹ EU “European Information Centre Lower Saxony: we are making you fit for Europe” website for kids in Niedersachsen: <http://www.eiz-niedersachsen.de/eu-kinder.html>

¹² Available here: http://www.eiz-niedersachsen.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/PDF/eiz-publikationen/Eurogaloppo-2007_A4.pdf

¹³ Email from Achim Schipporeit, EIZ Niedersachsen, Niedersächsische Staatskanzlei (Referat 305), 10 November 2010. See also EU Europe Direct Network Lower Saxony page: <http://www.eiz-niedersachsen.de/europe-direct.html>

¹⁴ *Strelasund golf park*: <http://www.golfpark-strelasund.de/ihre-gastgeber/>

¹⁵ Found searching Mecklenburg Vorpommern’s EFRE funding database: <http://www.europa-mv.de/fonds/efreBestPractice.htm>

further develop and enhance the facility, including new machinery for green keeping and a 'wellness' hotel. With a "world-class" 18 hole course, a 9 hole island course, practice course, separate driving ranges, and putting greens, the platinum membership fee for the club is €1,100 per year¹⁶. The club members are also able to choose between the two hotels and new spa facilities, as well as the many tennis courts and a 'Nordic walking park'. The complex is located in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern on the North-East German coast – a region which suffers from high unemployment. Although the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern region lists the golf course as an example of "best practice" for how to spend EU funds, according to its own website, the golf course only employs 18 staff.¹⁷ It remains unclear whether the EU grant has actually led to any new, permanent jobs.

€7.5m of EU funding for PR campaign for EU funding

Andalucía's regional government has a €7.5m 'communication' budget for the period 2007-13, which aims to "reinforce the message of the achievements in Andalucía thanks to European funds". The funding is paid for by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF), the same funds that the PR campaign advertises¹⁸.

The official 'Communication Plan' outlines a campaign including plans for 596 TV adverts, 126 radio adverts and 40 colour adverts in the print media.¹⁹ One of the TV commercials for the campaign – "Andalucía on the move with Europe"²⁰ – involved 55 actors and extras, according to José-María Siles, a spokesperson for the European Commission's 'Team Europe'²¹.

Canal Sur TV, part of Andalucía's public broadcast service, runs a weekly programme, with an audience of 90,000, in which EU funded projects in Andalucía are explored.²² Bizarrely, the 'Communication Plan' outlines an agreement with Canal Sur TV which has led to its televised weather reports using stars in the style of the EU flag to represent the sun.²³

Inspiring people to learn languages through "virtual" swimming

Launched in 2008, the bizarre "swim the language challenge" was designed to teach EU citizens new languages via "virtual language pools". These "virtual pools" were accessible online but also at dedicated stands at high profile real-life European swimming events. The project boasted that it would give "participants the opportunity of learning the language needed to communicate at International Swimming Events by practicing different language areas"²⁴.

¹⁶ Golf-Park Homepage: http://www.golfpark-strelasund.de/unternehmen/golf/mitgliedschaften/#platin_show

¹⁷ See here: <http://www.golfpark-strelasund.de/ihre-gastgeber/>

¹⁸ Junta de Andalucía, "Plan de Comunicación", Pp. 74, http://feder.dipusevilla.es/opencms/export/sites/default/feder/galeriaFicheros/normativa/andaluza/PLAN_DE_COMUNICACION_PO_FEDER_Y_FSE_2007-2013_Andalucia.pdf

¹⁹ Junta de Andalucía, "Plan de Comunicación", Pp. 62-63, http://feder.dipusevilla.es/opencms/export/sites/default/feder/galeriaFicheros/normativa/andaluza/PLAN_DE_COMUNICACION_PO_FEDER_Y_FSE_2007-2013_Andalucia.pdf

²⁰ You can watch the advert here: <http://vimeo.com/16061525>

²¹ Europa, "José María Siles" http://ec.europa.eu/spain/team-europe-soy/jose-maria-siles_es.htm#

²² Junta de Andalucía, "Plan de Comunicación", p34; http://feder.dipusevilla.es/opencms/export/sites/default/feder/galeriaFicheros/normativa/andaluza/PLAN_DE_COMUNICACION_PO_FEDER_Y_FSE_2007-2013_Andalucia.pdf

²³ Junta de Andalucía, "Plan de Comunicación", p72; http://feder.dipusevilla.es/opencms/export/sites/default/feder/galeriaFicheros/normativa/andaluza/PLAN_DE_COMUNICACION_PO_FEDER_Y_FSE_2007-2013_Andalucia.pdf

²⁴ See project website: <http://www.swimthelanguage.org/compete.htm>

Virtual ‘races’ required competitors to learn useful ‘swimming phrases’, such as how to “catch a taxi to the pool” or “chat about your performance”, in one of four languages, Italian, Hungarian, Finnish and Slovenian²⁵.

The four winners of their heats were invited to ‘race’ each other in the language test finale held on the sidelines of the European Water Polo Championships in Malaga in July 2008 and the eventual winner was awarded a trip and accreditation to the Swimming Finals at the Olympic Games in Beijing.²⁶ The funding fell under the EU’s Socrates programme, within EU’s 2000-2006 budget, which paid out a total of €172m to various projects over the 2007-8 period.²⁷

€1.6 million to the Swedish King to cover his financial losses

Since 1995, when Sweden joined the EU, roughly €1.6 million (SEK14.7 million) in subsidies have been given to the King of Sweden for a farm estate he leases in the region of Flen in Sörmland.²⁸ The King, who has a wealth of roughly €30 million, rents the 2,200 hectare of land for a symbolic amount of €108 (SEK 1,000) every year, without paying any property taxes – terms that were set in the 19th century. In 2009 alone, he was given €209,000 (SEK 1,934,866) in agricultural subsidies from the EU, according to the Swedish Board of Agriculture.²⁹

However, Bensor, the King’s company that runs the estate, has suffered severe financial losses over the last decade. Between 2000 and 2006, for instance, the company lost €4.9 million, and according to an investigation by Swedish Television this loss has been covered by EU subsidies. “The [EU] subsidies make up a big part of our business, since we have these types of lands. It’s the topography and the pastures which don’t produce that much meat which give money [from subsidies]”, Jonas Kullgren, the land surveyor of the King’s estate said.³⁰

€5.1m “culture club” for EU bureaucrats in Luxembourg

In 2009, the EU bought the “Foyer Européen” in Luxembourg for €5.1 million³¹. The venue is home to the *Cercle Culture des Institutions Européennes* – the cultural circle for the European institutions – which is a network of clubs and societies that EU employees can participate in.³² The bottom floor of the building hosts a restaurant in which EU employees and their guests can dine³³, while the top floors are used for the various social and cultural clubs. The list of clubs includes the Scottish Highland Dancing club and a wine-tasting club. The space was rented prior to its purchase.

²⁵ The rules of the competition can be found here:

http://www.swimthelanguage.org/images/swimthelanguage_rules.pdf

²⁶ *Swim the language* press release, ‘Success at the finals’, 14 July 2008;

<http://www.swimthelanguage.org/result.htm>

²⁷ *EU budget online*; http://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/data/D2006_VOL4/EN/nmc-titleN16E0D/nmc-chapterN17256/articles/index.html#N17303

²⁸ The official records of the Swedish Board of Agriculture cover only 2008 and 2009, the estimates going back to 1995 come from an investigation conducted by Swedish Television, see

http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2035065/stora_forluster_for_kungens_lantbruk

²⁹ See Swedish Board of Agriculture’s register for recipients of EU farm subsidies, search term, “Stanhammars Godsforvaltning AB”;

<http://www.jordbruksverket.se/etjanster/etjanster/sokmottagareavstod.4.3f1d6bc122e5d59ab980003664.html> . See also <http://www.stenhammarsgods.se/>

³⁰ Swedish Television, “Stora förluster för kungens lantbruk”, 9 June 2010;

http://svt.se/2.22620/1.2035065/stora_forluster_for_kungens_lantbruk

³¹ Office for Infrastructure and Logistics purchases of above 25,000 EUR in 2009:

http://ec.europa.eu/oil/doc/list_ann_marches_2009.pdf

³² Cercle Culture Introduction, <http://www.cercleculturel.lu/cercleculturel.htm>

³³ List of Commission buildings in Luxembourg area:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/guide/maps/index_fr.htm#

Agricultural subsidies for motorsport clubs

The objectives of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy include food security and environmental protection. But bizarrely, farming and agricultural subsidies were paid to two motorsport clubs in the UK in 2009 - £1,631.92³⁴ to the Westmoorland Motor Club³⁵ and £716.24 to the Salop Motor Club.³⁶ The Salop Motor Club is home to the "world famous Hawkstone Park Moto Cross Circuit" which holds international moto cross events. The Westmoorland Motor Club holds 'trials' and 'hill climbs' for cars and motorcycles.

EU subsidy to scrap fishing vessel used to pay for a new boat

€500,000 was given to two Swedish fishermen to scrap their fishing vessel. The subsidy was given by the Commission and the Swedish government as part of the EU's effort to reduce the size of Europe's fishing fleet in order to address the region's huge problems with overfishing. The subsidy was enough to pay off the fishermen's debts and left them with a substantial amount of money to spare, according to the Fishermen's accounts.

However, instead of winding down their business, the two fishermen bought a new boat with the EU money and continued just as before. Extraordinarily, the owners were open with their plans all along, and didn't break any rules. This is because their new boat is less than ten metres long (9.95m in fact), which means that different rules apply and they can continue to fish in the North Sea. "We said exactly what we were going to do when we applied for the scrapping subsidy," one of the fishermen said³⁷.

The €8.5bn failure to deliver improved infrastructure in Sicily

Between 2000 and 2007, local administrators in Sicily spent all of the €8.5 billion provided by the EU to finance a framework programme called "Agenda 2000"³⁸. The money was supposed to help Sicily catch up with the rest of Italy and Europe. However, the final report by the committee in charge of monitoring the implementation of the project has revealed that almost none of the project's targets have been met.

€700 million was spent to improve water supply throughout the island but the percentage of families who experience a patchy "stop-and-flow" supply of water has actually increased from 33% in 2000 to 38.7% in 2008. €400 million was spent to improve the system of water purification. However, the share of population receiving purified water directly into their houses has only increased from 43% to 47%, compared to the 75% average in Italy as a whole.

Another €300 million was spent on improving rubbish collection and recycling. The EU recycling target was fixed at 35% of garbage collected on the island, but Sicily only reached 6%. €230 million was used to improve Sicily's railway network, but only 8km of track has been repaired, meaning a cost of almost €29 million per kilometre completed. Despite the project's failure to meet its own targets, Sicily has qualified to

³⁴ Found using DEFRA's CAP payments database here; <http://cap-payments.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx>

³⁵ See <http://www.westmorlandmotorclub.co.uk/index.php>

³⁶ See <http://www.hawkstonemx.co.uk/Travel.aspx>

³⁷ *Goteborgs-Posten*, 'Skrotbidraget gick till ny båt', 7 May 2010;

<http://www.gp.se/nyheter/goteborg/1.364884-skrotbidraget-gick-till-ny-bat>

³⁸ *La Repubblica*, 'Fondi europei, spesa fallimentare. 230 milioni per 8 chilometri di ferrovia', 24 September 2010

http://palermo.repubblica.it/cronaca/2010/09/24/news/agenda_2000_il_conto_finale_spesi_8_5_miliardi_senza_risultati-7374077/

receive a further €6.6 billion from the EU for the “Agenda 2007” framework programme, due to expire in 2013.³⁹

In a letter responding to the claims, Gaetano Armao, who is the member of Sicily’s local government in charge of economy, did not deny that targets have been missed, but pointed to other examples where the funding had achieved better results, such as a 39% increase in the number of off-season tourists visiting Sicily every year and the completion of the motorway connecting Messina and Palermo.⁴⁰

5-and-a-half million sighs

€5.5 million from the European Regional Development Fund are being used to build a luxury ‘Beach City’ on the shores of the Hungarian ‘Venetian Lake’ – 45 Km West of Budapest.⁴¹ The structure is to contain an artificial sandy beach, a shopping centre and hotel complex on the shores of the lake including, showrooms with fountains, heated indoor and outdoor promenades and a pedestrian bridge named the ‘bridge of sighs’ after Venice’s well-known ‘Ponte de’ Sospiri’. A local NGO, the Angelika Environmental Protection and Cultural Agency, has argued that “this will not lead to growth, but is a destruction of the environment, an unnecessary waste of money”⁴².

Local mayor Agnes Olah Suranyi claims the local council could make a profit of 115 million forint (€418,888) but this would only be possible if the resort were to attract over 418,000 tourists per year, which appears to be an unrealistic target, as in the recent years the total number of people visiting all of the lake’s resorts amounted to less than 400,000.⁴³

€4,273 to “media cocktail party” at the Rome Film Festival

The European Commission spent €4,273 on a “media cocktail party during the Rome Film Festival”, according to the EU’s Transparency System.⁴⁴

The European Parliament’s €250,000 a year film prize⁴⁵

Every year the European Parliament awards the LUX film prize to a film “illustrating or questioning the founding values of our European identity, Europe’s cultural diversity or providing insights into the debate on the EU integration process”⁴⁶. The winning film benefits from European Parliament financial support to pay for subtitling in the 23 official languages of the EU, including an adaptation of the original version for visually- or hearing-impaired people, and for producing a 35mm poster print for each EU member state or supporting the subsequent DVD release.

€7m given to Hannover Zoo to recreate the Canadian Yukon in Germany

³⁹ *Presseurop*, ‘Sicily, gobbler of EU funds’, 8 October 2010 (translation of the original article appeared in *La Stampa*)

<http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/356171-sicily-gobbler-eu-funds>

⁴⁰ Letter is available here: <http://www.ecodisicilia.com/palermo-la-lettera-di-armao-al-sunday-times.htm>

⁴¹ See *Hungarian National Development Agency*, Approved Funding, Mid Transdanubia, Fejerváros, Gardonyi municipality, Velence, p.2 KDOP 2.1.1/A, <http://www.nfu.hu/content/58>

⁴² Szentkorona Radio “ Sukoro II: Mutengerpart es plaza szabadstrand helyett”, 22. June 2010, http://szentkoronaradio.com/belfold/2010_06_22_mutengerpart-es-plaza-a-velencei-to-szabad-strandja-helyett

⁴³ Heti valasz “ Velencebol Beach city” July 1 2010, http://hetivalasz.hu/itthon/velencebol-beach-city-30393/?cikk_erteke=1&ertekeles=5

⁴⁴ Accessed here: http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm

⁴⁵ The EP confirmed the cost of the prize by responding to an Open Europe blog post. See:

<http://openeuropeblog.blogspot.com/2010/06/and-european-parliament-lux-prize-goes.html#comments>

⁴⁶ *EP press release*, ‘European Parliament LUX prize - 10-film 2010 official selection announced’, 28 June 2010; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20100628IPR77108/>

The Hannover Zoo was given €7 million by the European Regional Development Fund⁴⁷ to ship over maple trees, wolves and Caribou herds to create a “Yukon Bay” – although the managing authorities have not published details of the exact funding. A representative from the Yukon tourist board travelled from Canada to examine the authenticity of the project’s design.⁴⁸ While this kind of funding can boost jobs and growth, the head of the Zoo, Klaus-Michel Machens, said that the funding would only create 20 new jobs. If accurate, this translates into a cost of €350,000 per job created.⁴⁹

European Parliament spends €35,000 on designer “protocol presents”

According to its financial records, the European Parliament spent €36,860 on “protocol presents” such as “textiles, ties and scarves” in 2009⁵⁰. The gifts were bought from Nazareno Gabrielli – an Italian designer company specialising in luxury leather goods.⁵¹

Subsidising the Project Managers’ new wheels

Following allegations that the project had “wasted a mass of public money” and displayed a “lack of financial controls”, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) investigated CORE, which received £337,000 in EU funds between 1998 and 2003, to help small businesses grow and expand⁵². The NIAO report noted, “There was inadequate documentation in support of expenditure, such as invoices not being provided or with pages missing, and unsigned claims for travel and expenses.”⁵³

One example was the leasing of a car for the Project Manager at a cost of £18,778 over three years. The Program Manager had estimated that the car would lead to savings of between £3,500 and £4,000 on mileage claims. However, the auditors noted that, “It is not clear to us...how such savings would have been achievable, even with a very substantial increase in mileage.”

The car remained in the Project Manager’s possession while he was on long-term sick leave from August 2003 to June 2004, prior to his resignation in August 2004. The cost of the car was supposed to be offset by personal contributions from the Project Manager to cover personal use, but these contributions were “between some £1,600 and £2,100 less than agreed.”⁵⁴

€44,000 on cocktail parties to celebrate “Europe Day”

The European Commission’s Financial Transparency System reveals that the celebration of “Europe Day” on 9 May appeared to have been the highpoint of the

⁴⁷ The website of the Zoo specifies that the project is co-financed by the EU, <http://www.zoo-hannover.de/zoo-worlds/yukon-bay/yukon-bay-pressebilder.html?L=1>

⁴⁸ German press coverage of “Canada in Lower Saxony”: <http://www.magazine-germany.com/en/artikel-en/article/article/kanada-in-niedersachsen.html>

⁴⁹ Article outlining EU contributions:

<http://www.neuepresse.de/Nachrichten/Politik/Niedersachsen/Europas-Geld-fuer-Hannovers-Zoo>

⁵⁰ *European Parliament*, ‘List of contracts awarded in 2009 with a value greater than €25,000’;

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/tenders/march_attribues_2009.htm

⁵¹ <http://www.nazarenogabrielli.it/>

⁵² *Northern Ireland Audit Office*, ‘CORE: A case study in the management and control of a local economic development initiative’, 27 October 2010, p4-5;

<http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/pubs/2010/Core%20Report%20Final.pdf>

⁵³ *Northern Ireland Audit Office*, ‘CORE: A case study in the management and control of a local economic development initiative’, 27 October 2010, p9;

<http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/pubs/2010/Core%20Report%20Final.pdf>

⁵⁴ *Northern Ireland Audit Office*, ‘CORE: A case study in the management and control of a local economic development initiative’, 27 October 2010, p10-11;

<http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/pubs/2010/Core%20Report%20Final.pdf>

EU's cocktail calendar in 2009, with events held in Madrid, Vienna, Marseille, Lisbon, Sofia, Terrassa and N'Djamena in Chad for a total of €43,529.⁵⁵

€2.7m for virtual tours of the Mediterranean islands

The EU has spent €2.7 million through two different funding programmes⁵⁶ to finance the MEDISOLAE 3D project⁵⁷, aimed at establishing a “network of virtual islands”. Among the objectives of the project is the creation of software allowing people to make a “virtual visit” to more than 100 Mediterranean islands via the internet. The project description proudly states that “Tourists will no longer have to leave the comfort of their armchair to experience the splendours of the Mediterranean islands.”

The virtual tourism involves 3D aircraft landing simulations, on which the European Commission's CORDIS website enthusiastically comments: “MEDISOLAE 3D users will be able to 'fly over' Mediterranean islands and swoop down when something catches their attention; they could 'land' on a beach or in a village square, and move about to get a feel for the shops, restaurants and attractions. They could even make purchases, reserve tables and book hotels. Perhaps the funkiest aspect of this software is that if users don't like where they have landed, they simply 'swoop up into the air again' and try somewhere else – all without taking their eyes off their computer screen.”⁵⁸

€30,000 for bureaucrat bonding

The Luxembourg Office for Infrastructure and Logistics (OIL) was created in 2003 with the purpose of ensuring that the EU buildings “comply with health and safety regulations in the building”, “the provision and management of social welfare infrastructure” and that staff are well-housed on the Luxembourg site.⁵⁹ In 2009, the Luxembourg OIL branch utilised €31,871⁶⁰ of its budget for a “team-building”⁶¹ trip to a German four star hotel complete with “wellness” centre and top-class gym facilities.⁶²

£120,000 of EU farm subsidies spent in the UK in 2009 went to golf courses⁶³

Searching DEFRA's database of EU farm payment recipients reveals that, in 2009, nearly 40 different golf clubs received subsidies, with Alston Moor Golf Club receiving the highest amount of £28,123.

£5,000 in farm payments to a hunting club

The Melton Hunt Club⁶⁴ in Leicestershire received £5,027.72 in farm payments in 2009. The club organises horse racing, cross-country rides and has four hunts scheduled for 2010-11.

€1.3 million wrongly paid out to “Father Rambo”

⁵⁵ Accessed here: http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm

⁵⁶ European Commission, DG Information and Society website;

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/econtentplus/projects/geo/medisolae3d/index_en.htm

⁵⁷ The project website can be found here: <http://www.medisolae-3d.eu/>

⁵⁸ See European Commission CORDIS programme website, 'Tourists 'visit' the Med without leaving home'; http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=32665

⁵⁹ Office for Infrastructure and Logistics website: http://ec.europa.eu/oil/index_en.htm

⁶⁰ Type in Plaza Carree Hotel into the search engine: http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm

⁶¹ List of contracts over £25,000, Office for Infrastructure and Logistics, European Union website: http://ec.europa.eu/oil/doc/list_ann_2009.pdf

⁶² Park Plaza hotel in Trier, Germany: <http://www.parkplaza-trier.de/>

⁶³ Search for “golf” on DEFRA's CAP payments search engine; <http://cap-payments.defra.gov.uk/SearchResults.aspx?Page=2&Sort=>

⁶⁴ See <http://www.melton-hunt-club.org.uk/mhchunting.html>

Don Mario Loi, an Italian priest known as “Father Rambo” due to his previous work as a martial arts instructor, has been charged over an alleged misappropriation of €1.3 million of EU structural funds.⁶⁵ He was expected to use the money to refurbish an old school which now hosts a voluntary organisation called “Speranza Azzurra 2000”, which he founded. However, with the complicity of a local entrepreneur, he presented to the Piedmont Region a false invoice in order to obtain the money.⁶⁶ The invoice allegedly referred to refurbishment works which have never taken place.⁶⁷ The trial is on its way, no verdict has been delivered and no money has been recovered.

The Mayor’s virtual oranges

Roberto Vincenzo Sindoni – the Mayor of Capo d’Orlando, in Sicily – has been arrested for misappropriation of EU farm subsidies. He is the legal representative of Agridea, an agricultural firm which allegedly obtained €1 million⁶⁸ from the EU thanks to false documents about non-existent citrus fruit orchards and pieces of land actually owned by different companies. The investigations are ongoing, no verdict has been delivered and no funds have been recovered.⁶⁹

€2.5 million for an Austrian nomadic contemporary dance troupe

In 2008, €2.44 million⁷⁰ was donated to Vienna-based contemporary dance troupe “danceWEB-Europe”⁷¹, which travels around Europe meeting and dancing with other dance troupes to “contribute to the development of dance.”⁷² Supported by the EU, the scheme is intended to benefit “emerging European choreographers and dancers with the aim of improving their production conditions and to foster cultural diversity within Europe”⁷³. Every year it gives away scholarships to 50 dancers, which among other things guarantees them free accommodation in Vienna and individual coaching by artistic members of the foundation.

€500 booze bill for EU delegation in Fiji

⁶⁵ Speranza Azzurra 2000 received €4.7 million in total to refurbish the school, which can be found here: www.regione.piemonte.it/industria/docup/dwd/bdpu/misura_41.xls; The alleged fraud only relates to €1.3m of these funds.

⁶⁶ *La Repubblica*, ‘Malversazione di fondi europei, padre Rambo a giudizio’, 6 October 2010 <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2010/10/06/malversazione-di-fondi-europei-padre-rambo-giudizio.html>

⁶⁷ *La Stampa*, ‘Padre Rambo nei guai: ha gonfiato fatture per lavori mai fatti’, 28 May 2010 <http://www3.lastampa.it/torino/sezioni/cronaca/articolo/1stp/230582/>

⁶⁸ See for 2008: http://www.agea.gov.it/portal/page/portal/AGEAPageGroup/HomeAGEA/01DX_SERVIZI/14_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908/01_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908%20Beneficiari; and for 2009 http://www.agea.gov.it/portal/page/portal/AGEAPageGroup/HomeAGEA/01DX_SERVIZI/14_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908/01_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908%20Beneficiari

Figures reported in the Italian press refer to a longer period of time. However, AGEA archives only go back to 2008

⁶⁹ *Corriere della Sera*, ‘Truffa all’UE per un milione di euro: arrestato il sindaco di Capo d’Orlando’, 26 October 2010 <http://corrieredelmezzogiorno.corriere.it/napoli/notizie/cronaca/2010/26-ottobre-2010/truffa-ue-1-milione-euro-arrestato-sindaco-capo-d-orlando-1704029673002.shtml>

⁷⁰ Information can be accessed by searching for “danceWEB” as the beneficiary, and Austria as the country of origin on the EU’s Financial Transparency search engine: http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm

⁷¹ EU Culture Programme overview: <http://bit.ly/aM2dpD>

⁷² Austrian dance troupe “danceWEB- Europe’s” website <http://www.dancewebeurope.net/index.php?id=37>

⁷³ Homepage of Danceweb: <http://www.dancewebeurope.net/index.php?id=19>

In 2009 the External Relations department gave €488 to wine, spirits and beverage firms in Fiji. The reason cited is “expenditure of the delegations of the Commission of the European Communities.”⁷⁴

Phantom farm hands in Sicily

An agricultural firm owned by two Sicilian brothers received more than €260,000 of EU farm subsidies between 2002 and 2007. However, the brothers were charged by the Guardia di Finanza over suspicions that they had obtained the money by presenting over-inflated reports of their ‘activities’ to the AGEA – the Italian government’s agency responsible for the allocation of CAP funds. The documents included fake contracts for 69 people hired as farm hands, who allegedly did not spend one hour working on the farm but nonetheless received more than €370,000 from the Italian government in social security benefits for doing so.⁷⁵

The two brothers allegedly forged rent contracts for extra areas of land in order to provide evidence that their business was expanding. However, according to the Guardia di Finanza the real owners of these pieces of land did not know about the existence of such contracts. The investigation is ongoing, no verdict has been delivered and no funds have been recovered.⁷⁶

€40,000 in gifts to be presented by the EU Council

On 4 November 2010, the Council of the European Union put out a tender for a €40,000 contract for retailers to be gift-providers for various different items to be presented as gifts. The items include “jewellery”, “boiled sweets”, “watches” and “ties.”⁷⁷

€400,000 to the “Flying Gorillas” dance troupe

The EU’s Culture Programme funded the “Flying Gorillas” with €200,000 in 2007 and 2009⁷⁸. Hornchurch’s Queen’s Theatre described the show in 2005: “Using their own language of rhythm, music and gibberish, The Flying Gorillas explore ideas of friendship, tolerance, argument and understanding. Featuring the exciting Tango, the brilliant Smelly Foot Dance and the incredibly difficult Iguana Four-Step, Tango Argumentino has an all-acoustic score using saxophones, clarinets, steel pans, didgeridoo, musical saw, Chinese percussion, rhythm bananas and some spectacular belching.”⁷⁹ The project’s website says, “If there is any message, it’s that serious dance, music and theatre are fun.”⁸⁰

A €238 postcard for every MEP

⁷⁴ Information can be accessed by choosing Fiji as the country and choosing an amount of less than 1000. Data shows an overall total of 894 Euro with 488 going to Pleass Beverage Equipment Ltd and Victoria Wines and Spirits Ltd: http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm

⁷⁵ AGI, ‘Truffa a Stato e UE, 71 denunciati nel messinese’, 31 July 2010

<http://www.agi.it/palermo/notizie/201007311315-cro-rt10058-truffa-a-stato-e-ue-71-denunciati-nel-messinese>

⁷⁶ *Gazzetta del Sud*, ‘Frode all’Unione Europea ed all’Inps. Scoperti 70 falsi braccianti’, 1 August 2010
<http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/NotiziaArchivio.aspx?art=104887&Edizione=13&A=20100801>

⁷⁷ European Council “tender calls” advertisement:

<https://tendering.consilium.europa.eu/callview.ASPX?ID=1908>

⁷⁸ *European Commission*, ‘Financial Transparency System;

http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm; *Sun*, ‘EU twerps blow £400m on burps’, 10 July 2010; <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/3048737/EU-twerps-blow-400m-on-burps.html>

⁷⁹ *Queen’s Theatre*, <http://www.queens-theatre.co.uk/childrensshows/archive/2005.htm>, 2005

⁸⁰ See <http://www.flyinggorillas.co.uk/>

The “736 Ideas 4 a Dream” project was awarded €175,455 from the EU Citizenship Programme⁸¹ with a mission to create 736 postcards – one for each member of the European Parliament – “that reflects on the current problems in Europe that generate social exclusion in Europe, as well as specific ways to solve them”⁸². €175,455 for 736 postcards works out at €238 per card.

€50,000 to the “European laboratory for hip-hop dance”

With the goal of addressing the “lack of cooperation in the field” of European hip-hop, the “European hip-hop laboratory” in Lyon, France was given €50,317 in EU funding⁸³ to “improve the recognition and visibility of hip-hop dance in Europe.” And encourage interaction between hip-hop artists.”⁸⁴

€8.7 million wrongly claimed EU farm subsidies

Nicola Cappa, the former chairman of Confagricoltura Crotone – a confederation of local farmers in the Calabria region, Southern Italy – was arrested on the charge of misappropriating around €8.7 million of EU farm subsidies between 2002 and 2008.⁸⁵ He allegedly obtained the money by presenting forged invoices concerning the purchase of brand-new agricultural machinery.⁸⁶ However, investigators claim that the machinery mentioned in the invoices is either obsolete or was never bought at all. Furthermore, the invoices had been all issued by “Engineering and Business Sud” – a company which has been inactive since 2005.⁸⁷ The Guardia di Finanza confiscated various goods – including a yacht and several luxury cars – which he might have been bought with the EU funds. Cappa was released in September 2010, but he is not allowed to leave his home town until the investigation is completed. The investigation is still ongoing and no funds have been recovered.⁸⁸

€360,000 cross-border EU music awards

Every year the EU funds the “European Union Award for Contemporary Music/The European Border Breakers Award (EBBA)” via the EU’s Culture Programme. The 2011 awards will be hosted by Jools Holland in 12 January in Groningen’s Grand Theatre, on the opening night of the Eurosonic/Noorderslag festival. The awards are

⁸¹ European Commission, ‘Financial Transparency System;

http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm

⁸² See project website; <http://736ideas.eu/736/en>

⁸³ EU Culture Programme,

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2009/selection/documents/strand_121/02_projects_description.pdf;

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2009/selection/documents/strand_121/01_vol1_selected_projects.pdf (Project no 507499)

⁸⁴ See website; <http://www.banlieues-europe.com/>

⁸⁵ *Crotonews*, ‘Operazione Dioniso della Guardia di Finanza: arresti domiciliari per Nicola Cappa’, 2 August 2010; <http://www.crotonews.it/component/content/article/25-ultimissime/2230-operazione-qdionisoq-arresti-domiciliari-per-nicola-cappa>

⁸⁶ *Gazzetta del Sud*, ‘Truffa milionaria sui fondi del Pif. Cappa arrestato dalla Finanza’, 3 August 2010 <http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/NotiziaArchivio.aspx?art=105382&Edizione=6&A=20100803>

⁸⁷ Records of recipients of CAP funds only go back to 2008. The records show that Azienda Agricola “San Iorio” – €30,876 received in 2008,

http://www.agea.gov.it/portal/page/portal/AGEAPageGroup/HomeAGEA/01DX_SERVIZI/14_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908/01_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908%20Beneficiari, Azienda Agricola “Armando Cappa” - €36,232 received in 2008

http://www.agea.gov.it/portal/page/portal/AGEAPageGroup/HomeAGEA/01DX_SERVIZI/14_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908/01_Reg.%20%28CE%29%2025908%20Beneficiari. See also *Quotidiano della Calabria*, ‘Crotone, resta ai domiciliari l’ex presidente di Confagricoltura’, 12 August 2010 http://ilquotidianodellacalabria.ilsole24ore.com/it/calabria/crotone_confagricoltura_ex_presidente_nicola_cappa_resta_domiciliari_indagine_sviluppi_4785.html

⁸⁸ *Gazzetta del Sud*, ‘Il Gip dispone la liberazione di Cappa vietandogli di allontanarsi dalla città’, 15 September 2010

<http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/NotiziaArchivio.aspx?art=123242&Edizione=10&A=20100915>

presented to highlight debuting artists selling albums and touring outside their home country.

The Commission's tender contract for organising the awards in 2008 said that a total of €360,000 was earmarked "towards the total organisation and implementation costs of each annual prize."⁸⁹

€10,000 for a one day EU 'helps the aged' seminar complete with coffee and cake

Focusing on what the EU can do for those aged between 60 and 80, the event took place on 29 April 2009 and lasted from 10am-5pm⁹⁰ in Velden. Entitled "What is Europe doing for senior citizens?" the event was created in conjunction with the EIZ (European Information Centre) and featured various political speakers and politicians presenting seminars to EU citizens. Lunch was provided, as was a "summing-up with coffee and cake" and a performance from the "European Choir"⁹¹ Despite only being a seven hour event, the EU Financial Transparency System shows it cost €10,084.⁹²

€57,000 to the European Joysticks Orchestra

The EU's Culture Programme financed the "European Joystick Orchestra"⁹³, a high-tech orchestra that allows participants to make music through a computer joystick, currently operating across France, Belgium and Italy, with €56,970 in 2009⁹⁴. Activities of the European Joysticks Orchestra included the "composition of new works" and the "formation of orchestras of 'Young Joystickers' to play these works".

€200,000 to the Wind Art Festival 2011-12

The European Wind Art Festival has been given €200,000 from the EU's Culture Programme.⁹⁵ Its stated goals are a "need to increase audience for organ performances...in order to give the organ a natural role in cultural life." The festival aims to make Europeans "aware of the diversity of their common European cultural heritage" by exposing them to "new applications of art disciplines with organs." The festival aims to reach "40,000 people with 80 performances by ca. 200 artists from all over Europe at 50 venues at least"⁹⁶.

€1.8m for "3D Whale" project in Madeira

⁸⁹ European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc1098_en.htm; European Border Breaker Awards, <http://www.europeanborderbreakersawards.eu/what-is-ebba.html> ; European Commission 2008 tender contract available here

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/archive/culture_program/word/ebba/avis_jo_ebba_2010_en.doc

⁹⁰ European Information Centre Niedersachsen's invitation and outline for the event <http://www.eiz-niedersachsen.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/PDF/eiz-va/2009-04-29-Senioren.pdf>

⁹¹ European Information Centre Niedersachsen's invitation and outline for the event <http://www.eiz-niedersachsen.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/PDF/eiz-va/2009-04-29-Senioren.pdf>

⁹² Information can be accessed by choosing Germany and typing Niedersachsen into the beneficiary bar. Result is called "Senioren für Europa" on first page

http://ec.europa.eu/beneficiaries/fts/index_en.htm

⁹³ See project website; <http://www.pucemuse.com/index.php?id=139>

⁹⁴ EU Culture Programme,

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2009/selection/documents/strand_121/02_projects_description.pdf;

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2009/selection/documents/strand_121/01_vol1_selected_projects.pdf (Project No. 507470)

⁹⁵ EU Culture Programme,

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2009/selection/documents/strand_121/02_projects_description.pdf;

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/funding/2009/selection/documents/strand_121/01_vol1_selected_projects.pdf (Project No. 507642)

⁹⁶ See website: <http://www.festivalvoordewind.nl/p/52.html?m=26>

From 2008-2011, a total of €2.3m will be spent, including €1.8m of EU funds, to produce a “3D Whale” project on the tropical island of Madeira.⁹⁷ This project will see 11 digital films of whaling turned into a 3D interactive experience for the Museum of Baleia, located in the region of Machico, home to only an estimated 21,747 people. Afterwards, the exhibition will travel to other museums, schools and universities on the island. The population of Madeira in 2009 was around 247,399.

Farm subsidies for forests and rocks claimed as pastures

In their report on the EU’s 2009 accounts, the European Court of Auditors found that, in Greece, areas recorded as forest were claimed as permanent pasture and benefited from EU farming payments, although aerial photos clearly show a significant density of trees and rocks in the area.⁹⁸

Double counting sheep

In Italy, in 2009, the same sheep were counted for two different farmers in order to meet minimum numbers required to receive subsidies, according to the EU’s Court of Auditors.⁹⁹

Two €s for the work of one

According to the European Court of Auditors, one EU-funded research project claimed unjustified costs totalling €73,000 or 50% of the entire project funding. The recipients claimed for 42 person-months of work but the auditors found no evidence to suggest that more than 17 person-months had been worked. In addition, the claim for funding included travel costs which had no relation to the project in question.¹⁰⁰

€2.3 million for the re-creation of a Roman village in Saarland

Since 1997, the European Regional Development Fund has invested €2.3 million to recreate a Roman village in Perl-Borg, Germany. Situated in a town of 2,000 people and almost 30km from the nearest city, the reconstruction is complete with fake hot baths, authentically-made Roman food and meticulously manicured Roman gardens.¹⁰¹ The project also receives money as part of the EU’s Interreg II funded “Gardens without borders” scheme. The gardens stretch over the borders of three countries, impressing visitors with their “baroque and renaissance splendour”.¹⁰²

£39,049 a job in Wales

Official figures published by the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) show that £163.5 million of European Regional Development Funds have been “claimed and paid” since 2007. The same figures show that the number of “Jobs (gross) created” is 4,187. This equates to £39,049 a job.¹⁰³

Too much, too old

⁹⁷ Instituto de Desenvolvimento Regional, “3DWHALE”, 12 Feb 2010, <http://www.idr.gov-madeira.pt/portal/Details.aspx?IDConteudo=1025&IDMenu=2&IDSubMenu=137&Path=137>

⁹⁸ *European Court of Auditors*, 'Annual report concerning the financial year 2009', 9 November 2010, p72; <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/5926723.PDF>

⁹⁹ *European Court of Auditors*, 'Annual report concerning the financial year 2009', 9 November 2010, p74; <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/5926723.PDF>

¹⁰⁰ *European Court of Auditors*, 'Annual report concerning the financial year 2009', 9 November 2010, p121; <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/5926723.PDF>

¹⁰¹ *Villa Borg*, Introduction to the Roman Villa, 2010: <http://www.villa-borg.de/uebersicht.asp?Sprache=de>

¹⁰² *Villa Borg*, Introduction to the Roman Villa, 2010: <http://www.villa-borg.de/gaerten.asp>

¹⁰³ *WEFO*, 'Progress of 2007-13 Programmes', updated 7 October 2010; <http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/programmes/progress/?lang=en>; Open Europe contacted WEFO for an explanation of the figures but did not receive an answer.

In one youth exchange project funded by the EU's Education and Citizenship programmes 27 out of 48 participants were above the maximum age permitted, without any justification given. This led to "ineligible travel, visa and activity costs amounting to €12,460", 37% of the total costs.¹⁰⁴

Farm payments paid out without proof of any farming

The EU auditors noted that one EU farm payment of €30,000, made under the 'Single Area Payment Scheme', was wrongly paid out "without any proof of carrying out an agricultural activity". The company made a claim for more than 530 hectares of meadows and pastures but no proof could be provided to the auditors that the company qualified for aid by carrying out an agricultural activity – "i.e. production or growing of agricultural products, rearing or keeping animals for farming purposes, or maintaining land in good agricultural condition."¹⁰⁵

Over-inflated costs for fishing equipment

In 2009, one fisherman claimed EU fishing subsidies for expenses and machinery which were estimated at selling prices rather than based on the costs actually incurred. As the actual costs incurred by the beneficiary could not be provided, the EU's auditors were unable to say how much money had been mismanaged.¹⁰⁶

€505,000 to develop video games including a "history of puppet theatre"

Belgian university Provinciale Hogeschool in Limburg will receive €505,967 over 7 years in EU cohesion funds for "project GameHUB", to develop new computer games. One of the games highlighted on the PHL website highlights a pilot game that will educate people on the "history of puppet theatre." Players will also learn how to make puppets themselves, learning "more about the materials and the consequences of it".¹⁰⁷

Total funding for the GameHUB project, including co-financing, is €1.3m and aims "to equip small businesses with the tools to develop innovative products and services with added value" and wants to "improve existing knowledge to develop games".

SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD EU SPENDING

EU-funded cancer treatment secures further investment from pharmaceutical giant

In 2006, the small research-based pharmaceutical firms BioInvent and Thrombogenics, together with other partners, were granted EU funding amounting to €1.9m for a project called ANGIOSTOP¹⁰⁸. The Swedish and Belgian firms developed a new form of treatment that stops the growth of cancerous tumours through inhibition of angiogenesis, the process by which new blood vessels are formed in the body.

¹⁰⁴ *European Court of Auditors*, 'Annual report concerning the financial year 2009', 9 November 2010, p166; <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/5926723.PDF>

¹⁰⁵ *ECA*, 'Annual report concerning the financial year 2009', 9 November 2010, p64; <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/5926723.PDF>

¹⁰⁶ *ECA*, 'Annual report concerning the financial year 2009', 9 November 2010, p66; <http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/5926723.PDF>

¹⁰⁷ See website of Flemish authorities:

http://ae.vlaanderen.be/html_europees/efro_nieuw/html_europees/kaart/digitale_kaart.html and project's website: <http://www.phl.be/eCache/DEF/7/019.html&reason=0>

¹⁰⁸ *European Commission*, http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/pdf/19072010/angiostop_-_sme.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none; *Thrombogenics* press release, 15 January 2007; http://www.thrombogenics.com/html/documents/07_TG_02VASOPLUSEUgrantEN.pdf

In 2009, the companies' successful results secured a €50 million investment from global pharmaceutical giant Roche, with the possibility of increasing this amount to €450 million should the project reach certain development milestones.¹⁰⁹ This example illustrates how EU funds can be used positively and effectively. The project brought together firms from different EU countries and provided them with investment to create a marketable product and expand as businesses.

Grant for developing a blood test to detect cancer earlier

Oncimmune, the company set up to commercialise research undertaken by the University of Nottingham, received EU funding that resulted in a test to detect cancer at an earlier stage, known as the EarlyCDT-Lung test¹¹⁰. Initially devised for lung cancer, the simple blood test is the first to identify accurately the signals sent out by a person's immune system as a cancer germinates. The new test has been launched in the US and it is hoped that it will be available in Britain from 2011¹¹¹.

Professor Roberston, whose work laid the foundations for Oncimmune, said that the work on lung cancer followed through a European Union grant involving both the university and Oncimmune in a collaboration with a number of European partners.¹¹²

Team of researchers use EU start up grant to make breakthrough in leukemia treatment

A team of European scientists headed by Prof. Jan Cools from the University of Leuven, Belgium has identified a gene that can act as a tumor suppressor in cases of lymphoblastic leukemia, a disease that mainly affects children. Their research project was funded by the European Research Council with €1.4 million under the EU's 7th Framework Programme¹¹³. Professor Cools worked with a team of European researchers, including Dr Peter Vandenberghe of the Hôpital Saint-Louis in France. The encouraging findings were published in the *Nature Genetics* journal in 2010¹¹⁴.

EU funding allows Hungarian hospital to use solar energy to power water supply

Between 2004 and 2008, the main hospital in the south-east Hungarian town of Szeged received 147m forints (€380,000) to modernise its energy supply with solar panels to generate thermal energy. The project was completed on time and decreased the hospital's use of gas by 25-30% and helps heat 80% of the water supply in summer and 30% in winter¹¹⁵.

¹⁰⁹ *Bloomberg*, 'Roche Buys Cancer Drug From ThromboGenics, BioInvent', June 18 2008; <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=afwGsR09UjpU&refer=europe>; *BioInvent*, <http://www.bioinvent.se/partners/product-alliances#roche>

¹¹⁰ *Thorax*, 'Autoantibodies in lung cancer: possibilities for early detection and subsequent cure', 28 August 2007; <http://www.uncimmune.com/useruploads/files/ChapmanLungCancerAutoantibodiesThorax2007.pdf>; Oncimmune Ltd; <http://www.uncimmune.co.uk/d/1/Home.html>

¹¹¹ *Times*, 'Oncimmune develop simple blood test for early detection of cancer', 1 June 2010; <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/health/article7141460.ece>

¹¹² *PA*, 'Blood test "could detect cancer years earlier"', 1 June 2010

¹¹³ *European Commission*, http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS_PRES&ACTION=D&DOC=57&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=012beb161e83:8ae1:56b50649&RCN=32186

¹¹⁴ *Nature Genetics*, 42, 2010, pp530-535; <http://www.nature.com/ng/journal/v42/n6/full/ng.587.html>

¹¹⁵ *Mellekhatas*, 'Szeged: napkollektorok a kórházon - megérte!', 27 May 2008; <http://www.mellekhatas.hu/index.php?p=news&index.php?p=news&act=show&cid=3413>