

NZ signs Science & Technology pact with EU

To strengthen science and technology, New Zealand has entered into an agreement with European Union. This, first science and technology agreement between New Zealand – European Union, is called The New Zealand – European Union Science and Technology Cooperation (STC) Agreement.

Mr Pete Hodgson, Minister of Research Science and Technology, Government of New Zealand said, “One of the most significant aspects of the this Agreement is that it will allow New Zealand researchers to be eligible for European Union programmes that wouldn’t otherwise be accessible.”

New Zealand has a recognized reputation in a number of research fields that are of interest to the European Union. These include natural resource-based sciences (agriculture, plant and animal science, environmental science), medical, and information and communications technology (ICT) research.

The Commission’s research budget for Research and Technological Development for the 2007/13 period is around NZ\$100 billion (\$ 76.34 billion).

“I would like to particularly acknowledge the role of the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union in moving forward the STC Agreement. Links to European research are very important for New Zealand as the European Union is investing heavily in research areas critical to our future economic and social development,” he said.

The New Zealand Ambassador to the European Union, Mr Peter Kennedy, signed the Agreement on behalf of New Zealand. European Commissioner for Science and Research Mr Janez Potočnik and the French Minister for Higher Education and Research Ms Valérie Pécresse signed on behalf of the European Union.

Negotiations on the STC Agreement have allowed New Zealand to participate in the European Union’s International Research Staff Exchange Scheme, which supports collaboration between institutions based in Europe and countries such as New Zealand. The new STC Agreement will enter into force once full ratification has been completed by the European Union, expected by the end of 2008.