

JRC inaugurates the new “research centre”

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A standing ovation accompanied the ribbon cutting for the two new buildings at the **Joint Research Centre in Ispra**. At the event this afternoon, there were the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation, **Máire Geoghegan-Quinn**, the Vice-President of the European Commission, **Maroš Šef?ovi?**, the Director General of the JRC, **Dominique Ristori** and the Member of the European Parliament **Vittorio Prodi**.

By the end of the year, the two buildings will house about **450 of the best European researchers**. The JRC in Ispra had not seen a construction this big since the 1950s, when the nuclear safety reactors were built. Nine thousand square metres, €43 million of investment, and collaboration between Italian and European companies involved in completing the project. The two new buildings are situated at the very centre of the research site, and by the first few days of 2014, will house the Institute for Environment and Sustainability and the Institute for Health and Consumer Protection.

During her speech, the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation emphasised the importance of these two buildings in view of “**Horizon 2020**”, the ambitious European program, which will officially start in 2014, the aim of which is to relaunch the European Union’s competitiveness. “Horizon 2020” will gather all European Union funding for research and innovation, in such a way as to simplify converting new scientific discoveries into innovative products and services.

“Today in Ispra, I’m very happy to see that these new buildings will strengthen the ability of the JRC to provide high-level scientific results,” said the Vice-President of the European Commission, Maroš Šef?ovi?, shortly after. “The Commission encourages the Member States to modernise their infrastructure, to bring it in line with the goals of Europe 2020. For the sake of our credibility, we wanted to apply the best quality standards to our infrastructure.”

The architect **Roberto Babich**, who designed the buildings, has shown how it is

possible to achieve these standards. There is a large heat pump and a wastewater treatment plant, to reduce energy consumption, and a multitude of solar panels placed on the roof and on the cantilever roofs of the car parks, to produce 80 per cent of the energy necessary to heat the water in the new buildings. The laboratories and the offices are still bare. Once the move from the old buildings is complete, **these will be demolished**, making available a total area of 13,000 m². This will contribute to improving the environmental impact of the whole Ispra site, the third most important in Europe.

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