



The University of Manchester

# ERAC Mutual Learning Seminar March 21 2013

## Session 1

### Effectiveness of national research systems

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An event of the  
European Commission



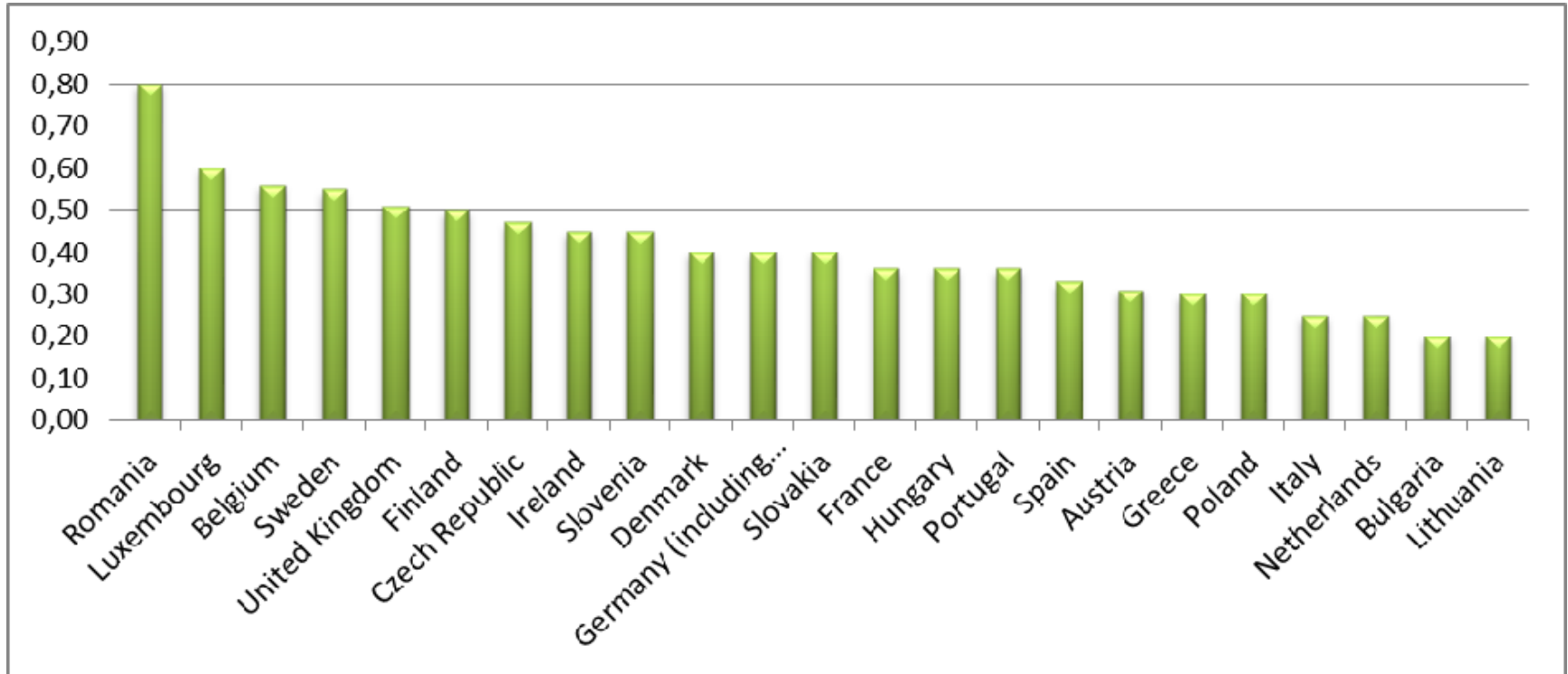
# AGENDA for Session 1

- Introduction by moderator of Session I PROF. Luke Georghiou - University of Manchester and Manchester Business School
- Discussion panel:
- Arie van der Zwan, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, Netherlands
- Per-Eric Yngwe, Dep Director at the Ministry of Science, Sweden
- Michael Keenan, senior analyst, Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry, OECD
- Prof. Philippe Laredo, Université Paris-Est and University of Manchester
- General discussion

# Context

- ERA priority - More effective national research systems – including increased competition within national borders and sustained or greater investment in research
  - Allocation of funding through competitive open calls for proposals with independent peer review
  - Assessing quality of research-performing organisations and teams and their outputs as a basis for institutional funding decisions

# Share of competitive funding



Increased competition is associated with higher performance levels but complex relationship

# Characterising research systems

- **Selectivity**
  - Which fields to support and how much focus to give priorities
- **Concentration**
  - Which institutions or research teams to support and how concentrated should funding be on the best performers
- **Sustainability**
  - Are the basic resources of people, money, infrastructure and institutions renewing themselves

# Benefits and Limitations of Competition

- **Benefits**
  - Incentivises researchers
  - Makes it harder to use hierarchy to get resources
  - Shorter timescales and higher granularity allows flexible application and simple accountability
- **Limitations**
  - High transaction costs
  - Institutional funding provides space for researchers to develop and institutions to be strategic
  - Can lead to hollowing out

# Peer review

- Increasingly internationalised
- Can be used to ensure parity of quality
- Potential formative role
- Limitations
  - Conservatism especially in high competition
  - Interdisciplinarity
  - Grade inflation
  - Establishing track record

# Institutional assessments

- Assessing the work of whole institutions or of major areas of research within them
  - May be with view to allocating block funding for research in a more concentrated (and hence competitive) manner
- Examples
  - UK Research Excellence Framework
  - German Excellence Initiative
  - Netherlands Standard Evaluation Protocol



# Issues for discussion

- **What is the optimum balance between competitive and block funding in a research system?**
- **What measures can be taken to improve national approaches to peer review?**
- **What is the most effective way to incentivise institutions to improve their research performance?**