



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 9 December 2008 (16.12)  
(OR. fr)**

**16767/08**

**RECH 410  
COMPET 550**

**OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

---

of: Competitiveness Council on 1 and 2 December 2008

---

No. prev. doc. 16012/08 RECH 379 COMPET 502

---

Subject : Council conclusions on the definition of a "2020 Vision for the European  
Research Area"

---

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on the definition of a "2020 Vision for the European Research Area", as adopted by the Competitiveness Council at its meeting on 2 December 2008.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE DEFINITION OF A  
"2020 VISION FOR THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA"**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. RECALLS:

- its Resolution of 15 June 2000 establishing a European Research Area (ERA)<sup>1</sup> following the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council held on 23 and 24 March 2000<sup>2</sup> in Lisbon, where the European Union adopted the Lisbon Strategy with the goal of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world;
- the Conclusions of the European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005<sup>3</sup>, at which the Lisbon Strategy was renewed placing the main emphasis on knowledge, innovation and the optimisation of human capital;
- the "Green Paper on the European Research Area: New Perspectives"<sup>4</sup> adopted by the Commission on 4 April 2007, which proposed a number of priority objectives with a view to deepening and widening the ERA so that it fully contributes to the renewed Lisbon Strategy;
- the Conclusions of the European Council of 13 and 14 March 2008, which called for the creation of a "fifth freedom" to remove barriers to the free movement of knowledge;

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 205, 17.7.2000, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> SN 100/00.

<sup>3</sup> 7619/1/05 REV 1.

<sup>4</sup> 8322/07 + ADD 1.

- its Conclusions of 23 November 2007 on the Future of Science and Technology in Europe, which called for an increase in public and private research funding, as well as an increase in human resources for research;
  - its Conclusions of 30 May 2008 on the launch of the "Ljubljana Process - Towards full realisation of ERA" aiming to establish an enhanced governance for the ERA, and which stressed in particular the need to develop a long-term vision for the ERA based on the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy;
  - the Commission communication of 26 November 2008 entitled "A European Economic Recovery Plan for growth and jobs", which proposes in particular measures to support the knowledge-based economy, including measures for research-intensive SMEs which are at particular risk in the current financial crisis.
2. ENCOURAGES the Community and the Member States to further coordinate their research and technological development activities so as to ensure that national policies and Community policy are mutually consistent;
  3. REAFFIRMS the importance of strengthening scientific and technological bases across Europe and developing its competitiveness in pursuit of sustainable development including protection of the environment, and satisfying the needs of its citizens, by achieving a European Research Area (ERA) in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely;
  4. STRESSES that coordination and cooperation activities in the ERA are organised on a voluntary basis and that their implementation takes place in variable geometry in the spirit of close cooperation between the Community and the Member States with appropriate involvement of the countries associated with the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and with due respect for the principle of subsidiarity;

5. RECALLS that in addition to the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development there is a variety of other important initiatives at European level, such as EUREKA and COST, that continue to be essential to the creation of a true spirit of cooperation. Moreover, there are a variety of top-level scientific institutions in Europe, including intergovernmental scientific organisations and laboratories<sup>5</sup>, which contribute to the worldwide recognition of European research;
6. RECALLS that the Community patent would constitute an important part of the operational IPR framework which the EU is gradually putting in place, and that the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) together with its forthcoming Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) should be instrumental in bringing closer together research, innovation and education across Europe;
7. REAFFIRMS that the ERA constitutes a core element of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs and STRESSES the necessity to ensure that the ERA is fully operational and fully contributes to the "knowledge triangle" of research, innovation and education driving the international competitiveness and sustainable development of Europe and underpinning its ambitions to become a leading knowledge-based economy and society;
8. in that context, CONSIDERS that the increasing world-wide competition in research and the emergence of global societal challenges call for accelerating the full realisation of the ERA, including its external dimension;
9. ENDORSES the attached "2020 Vision for the ERA", which was developed in partnership by the Member States and the Commission in the context of the first phase of the "Ljubljana Process";

---

<sup>5</sup> Such as the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN), European Space Agency (ESA), European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO), European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and others.

10. INVITES Member States and the Commission to communicate this common vision widely to stakeholders and society at large, to quickly focus policies and actions to make it a reality, and, subsequently, to discuss, update and deepen it as part of the "Ljubljana Process";
  11. INVITES Member States and the Commission to take this vision into consideration in their reflections on the Lisbon Strategy post-2010;
  12. INVITES future Presidencies to take this vision and its potential evolution into consideration in the development of their proposals for the future governance of the ERA and STRESSES the need to use the full potential of existing coordination structures such as CREST in dealing with ERA initiatives;
  13. INVITES the Commission to propose by the end of 2009 a limited number of monitoring indicators and evaluation criteria to measure the progress made in achieving the "2020 Vision for the ERA".
-

**"2020 VISION FOR THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA"**

*By 2020, all players will fully benefit from the “fifth freedom” across the ERA: free circulation of researchers, knowledge and technology. The ERA provides attractive conditions and effective and efficient governance for carrying out research and investing in R&D intensive sectors in Europe. It creates significant added value by fostering healthy Europe-wide scientific competition whilst ensuring the appropriate level of cooperation and coordination. It is responsive to the needs and ambitions of citizens and contributes effectively to the sustainable development and competitiveness of Europe.*

***THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA (ERA) IS FIRMLY ROOTED IN SOCIETY AND RESPONSIVE TO ITS NEEDS AND AMBITIONS IN PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT***

The European publicly-supported research and technology base plays a key role in responding to the needs of citizens and business, through world-class cutting-edge research.

Major challenges are addressed by high levels of public and private investment in research and by strategic partnerships involving the Community, Member States and Associated States in variable geometry, based on common foresight.

Research also supports the development of national and EU policies and provides decision-makers with accessible, diverse and up-to-date scientific evidence.

The ERA builds on mutual trust and continuous dialogue between society and the scientific and technological community. The freedom of research is fully recognised. Research carried out in the ERA respects the ethical principles of the EU and supports its democratic values as well as the cultures and identities of Member States.

The ERA enables Europe to speak with one voice in international fora and with its main international partners. Public authorities at all levels jointly promote consistency between their R&D cooperation activities and develop joint initiatives that give Europe leadership in addressing global challenges and reaching sustainable development goals.

***THE ERA DEFINES THE EUROPEAN WAY TO EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AND IS A MAJOR DRIVER OF EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS IN THE GLOBALISED WORLD***

**THE MODERNISATION OF RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND INNOVATION SYSTEMS GO HAND IN HAND**

Strong interactions within the "knowledge triangle" (education, research and innovation) are promoted at all levels, from individual researchers, funding organisations, universities and research institutions to SMEs and multinational companies, and are supported by appropriate European mechanisms.

Research, education and innovation policies and programmes are jointly designed among public authorities at all levels with appropriate involvement of relevant stakeholders, whenever this is necessary to optimise their effectiveness, efficiency and value to society and the economy.

The supply of human resources in science and technology is in line with the demand by public and private research players, and the ERA contributes to the development of appropriate structures for the training and balanced circulation of scientific talent as well as for a favourable work-life balance.

**THE ERA UNDERPINS THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS ...**

Business is stimulated to innovate and invest in Europe, in particular in R&D. Firms operating in the ERA benefit from a single market for innovative goods and services and excellent export potential in growing markets worldwide. They fully exploit the possibilities of open innovation through a single market for knowledge including an operational IPR framework.

Across the ERA, firms, including young innovative firms and SMEs, can easily engage in research partnerships with a European public research base and benefit from attractive framework conditions, based on proactive standard-setting and coordinated public procurement, improving their access to European high-growth markets for innovative ideas, goods and services.

**... AND PROVIDES COORDINATED SUPPORT TO RESEARCHERS AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN EXCELLENT RESEARCH**

Public authorities across the ERA contribute to world-class S&T excellence in Europe relying on cooperation and coordination where there is clear added value. To that end, national and regional



research systems, policy objectives, dissemination and support mechanisms and programmes, which are core elements of the ERA, are developed in a simple and coherent manner.

A significant share of public funding of research is provided through ERA-wide open competition based on the quality and relevance of the research, thus gradually promoting the necessary specialisation and concentration of resources into units of excellence of optimum size and improving the effectiveness of research funding.

Public funding leaves a large margin for bottom-up creativity and a healthy diversity of approaches in the ways challenges are addressed. This includes fully open, non-oriented research funded via the European Research Council and national funding organisations, which are open to direct applications within and across national borders in the EU from individual researchers or teams.

**AT THE SAME TIME, S&T CAPACITY BUILDING IS PROMOTED ACROSS THE EU**

Utilising their research potential fully, all Member States and all European regions are building on their strengths while maintaining or gaining access to complementary specialised knowledge and capacities in the rest of Europe. This is achieved with significant support from the cohesion policy and appropriate transnational coordination to ensure optimum deployment across Europe of scientific and technological capacities.

As part of the diversified and rich landscape of top-level scientific institutions, major research infrastructures in the ERA promote excellence in science on a globally competitive basis and are jointly funded at EU level where appropriate, with rapid development of new distributed infrastructures. They offer equitable access to world-class modern research facilities and technology demonstrators.

***THE ERA PROVIDES A SEAMLESS AREA OF FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE, EXCHANGE AND INTERACTION OPEN TO THE WORLD***

The ERA provides for open circulation of knowledge across national borders. Public authorities at all levels jointly pursue an outward-looking approach to collaboration with third countries, based on mutual benefit and appropriate intellectual property management and protection. The ERA is at the core of all major global networks of scientific and technological knowledge producers, distributors and users.

Common frameworks, guidance and, where appropriate, legislation facilitate the establishment and functioning of the transnational markets and networks in which the ERA actors can interact with each other effectively and efficiently.

Research institutions across the ERA have the strategic, financial and managerial autonomy to engage in durable partnerships and alliances across Europe and beyond, and to interact effectively with business and other players. These interactions are facilitated by an open market for contract research and appropriate guidance for intellectual property management.

Players are able to access, manage and share knowledge (including via open access) across the ERA using interoperable high-performance information systems.

European research institutions provide attractive working conditions for researchers from all parts of the world, both men and women, in the framework of a single labour market which enables mobility between countries and sectors with minimal financial or administrative obstacles.

