

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA – THE FUTURE

The European Research Area must maximise our potential through new discovery, innovation and education to provide Europe's citizens with worldwide scientific leadership

EURAB strongly believes that if the ERA is to significantly contribute to the political objectives set out by the European Council in Lisbon (2000) and Barcelona (2002), and thereby achieve world leadership, European research has to base its activities on three pillars: discovery, innovation and education. This calls for radical reform. If these three elements are boosted, with new structures and adequate levels of investment, and interact properly, EURAB is convinced that Europe can meet the political objectives.

To develop such a leading role Europe needs a research system which acknowledges both science, driven by the intellectual independence of scientists to explore, question and challenge accepted views and concepts, and innovation, in pursuit of economical and social goals, and as a tool for the development of technologies that meet the needs of a knowledge based economy. Discovery and innovation are intimately related and strength in one is dependent on strength in the other. Both research and innovation are dependent on a robust education system which must underpin the European Research Area.

European and national research efforts need to secure synergetic effects wherever possible and avoid unnecessary duplication, and must develop ways to support scientific research at a level of quality and diversification that goes beyond what most national initiatives can achieve separately.

To make it effective Europe needs a system that is based on its strengths, such as diversity, and needs to reinforce its capacity for discovery and innovation through scientific challenges, competition, coordination of national efforts, promotion of joint ventures and partnerships, particularly between academia and industry. This should result in a system open and attractive to talent from everywhere in the world.

EURAB is conscious that the future of ERA, as we see it, will need new structures to cope with different mandates as compared with today's situation and that therefore a modification of the Treaty of Union will be needed.