

FACT SHEET

"ERA Chairs" FP7 Pilot Call

Under the future Multi-annual Financial Framework (2014-20), increased synergies will be established between the research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, and cohesion funding. Cohesion funding should build research and innovation capacities based on smart specialisation strategies and provide a "stairway to excellence" from which researchers and innovators can successfully participate in Horizon 2020. To complement this, a set of targeted measures is proposed for Horizon 2020 to contribute towards closing the research and innovation divide in Europe. One of the new elements in this set of measures is "ERA chairs". To prepare the ground for Horizon 2020, the Commission is launching a pilot call under FP7.

The "ERA Chairs" Concept:

The objective is to support public universities and other eligible research organisations, with a demonstrated potential for research excellence, in developing their potential so that they can achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

Research organisations interested in appointing an ERA Chair will have to commit to introduce measures and activities to facilitate the structural change and put in place the conditions needed to develop excellent research and to fully benefit from the ERA Chair. This should include the necessary investments in facilities and infrastructures and the interaction with national and/or regional authorities to mobilise support, including from Cohesion funding, so that synergies between cohesion and research funding are strengthened. Smart specialization strategies provide an excellent vehicle to articulate and plan such synergies.

The research organisations must also demonstrate their commitment to implement ERA principles set out in the ERA Communication, such as open and merit based recruitment¹, gender equality, open access, external peer assessment.

¹ The ERA Communication is due to be presented by the Commission shortly. The ERA principles include the Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, C(2005) 576 of 11.3.2005

Successful research organisations will receive funding towards the salary costs of an ERA Chair holder and their research team. The funding may also provide a contribution towards research costs as well as costs associated to the implementation of ERA principles.

ERA Chair holders will be selected by the successful organisations through a transparent, peer reviewed, open-recruitment process. They should be outstanding researchers in the given field of research, with a demonstrated leadership potential. They should establish their own team and help the research organisation to significantly improve its research performance to become internationally excellent on a sustainable basis.

“ERA Chairs” FP7 Pilot Call:

The pilot call will be launched by the end of 2012 and will set out the full details, including legally binding rules and conditions.

The target participants for the FP7 Pilot call have to be located in regions detailed in the FP7 Research Potential Work Programme for 2012-13 which focuses in particular on convergence regions.

There is an indicative total budget of 12 million euros for five “ERA Chairs” in the FP7 Pilot call. There will be a maximum of one “ERA Chair” per country.