

Consultation on European Commission's Green Paper "From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding"

The Irish universities welcome the unification of the different R&D funding streams within the Community Strategic Framework (CSF). The universities in Ireland have had a long history of involvement in European research funding programmes. There was a very high level of activity in the Framework Programmes up to FP5. Participation in FP's was vital for building international partnerships and raising the quality of research in Ireland. During the nineties, community structural funds were used to support research and research training programmes in Ireland. In 1998 a new major investment was begun by the State, building research infrastructure, attracting researchers to Ireland as part of economic development. The universities acknowledge the contribution of the diverse EU funds that support research and believe that it is time to consolidate these activities.

In the context of the Green Paper we support the national position as stated in the "*Response from Ireland to the EC Green Paper*" submitted by the Advisory Science Council (ASC)¹.

In addition, we would like to make some specific points:

- We believe that there must be greater openness and transparency in the involvement of universities in the consultation and development stage of the CSF.
- We stress the unique and central role that universities can play in contributing to addressing the "Grand Challenges". Universities have the integrated roles of teaching and research along with innovation and creativity. It is essential to understand that these activities are not separate but inextricably linked. The universities combine the roles of;
 - training the new generation of researchers,
 - carrying out research across a wide range of disciplines and linking these through interdisciplinary activities,
 - transferring new knowledge to address economic and social issues.

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http://ec.europa.eu/research/csfr/pdf/contributions/post/ireland/ireland_national_position.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none

- We endorse the need for continued support for research in the social sciences, arts and humanities. Their interdisciplinary research perspectives will be essential to effectively tackle societal “grand challenges” in the areas of energy, climate change, health, sustainable cities etc. This should be explicitly recognised in the future development of the Common Strategic Framework for future research and innovation funding.
- We emphasize the need to implement a greater trust based system as part of simplification. All of the universities in Ireland have been involved in EC funding for over 30 years and have a strong positive track record in this regard.

We believe that the Irish universities will continue to play an active role in the European Research Area. The universities are committed to excellence in all of their activities and believe that investing in European research and innovation is investing in the future of Europe.

IUA
20th May 2011