



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on the Launch of the “Ljubljana Process” - towards full realisation of ERA

*2871st COMPETITIVENESS
(INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY and RESEARCH) Council meeting
Brussels, 29 and 30 May 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. **RECALLS:**

- the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council held on 23 and 24 March 2000 in Lisbon , where the Lisbon Strategy was launched with the aim of making the European Union the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world and achieving full employment by 2010;
- the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council held on 15 and 16 March 2002 in Barcelona , where agreement was reached that the overall spending on R&D and innovation in the Union should be increased with the aim of approaching 3% of GDP by 2010, while two thirds of this new investment should come from the private sector;
- the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005 , where the Lisbon strategy was relaunched;

P R E S S

- the "Green Paper on the European Research Area: New Perspectives" adopted by the Commission on 4 April 2007, which proposed for debate a vision of the European Research Area based on six dimensions, namely: realising a single labour market for researchers; developing world-class research infrastructures; strengthening research institutions; sharing knowledge; optimising research programmes and priorities; and opening to the world through international cooperation in S&T;
 - the discussions among Ministers concerning new perspectives for the European Research Area at the informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness at Würzburg, Germany, in April 2007;
 - its Conclusions on the Future of Science and Technology in Europe of 23 November 2007, which called for an increase in public and private research funding and human resources;
 - the results of the public consultation on the Commission's Green Paper entitled "The European Research Area: New Perspectives" as presented in the Commission Staff Working Document of 2 April 2008 ;
 - the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of 14 December 2007 which called for work to be taken forward speedily in order to launch the next cycle of Lisbon process at the European Council meeting in March 2008;
 - the discussions during the Informal Meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness of 15 April 2008 under the Slovenian Presidency in Ljubljana, paving the way for a new course for the European Research Area;
2. RECOGNIZES the fundamental role of ERA as a primary pillar for the Lisbon objectives and as an engine for driving the competitiveness of Europe; and takes into account that Europe needs to develop a common vision and effective governance of the European Research Area (ERA), in order to improve the coherence and synergy among several good initiatives already launched at national and EU levels, so that a globally competitive, knowledge-based and innovative Europe can be created;
 3. ACKNOWLEDGES that Europe now needs to develop a common vision and effective governance of the European Research Area (ERA). Many good initiatives have been launched at national and EU levels but in certain areas, greater coherence and synergy can contribute to a globally competitive, knowledge-based and innovative Europe.
 4. WELCOMES the willingness expressed by the Member States, the countries associated to the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (hereinafter referred as FP), and the Commission to share responsibility for establishing the ERA of the future with a renewed commitment, with due respect for the roles and prerogatives of EU institutions and the principle of subsidiarity;
 5. AGREES to launch the "Ljubljana Process" of enhanced governance based on a long-term vision on ERA developed in partnership by Member States and the Commission with broad support from stakeholders and citizens.
 6. CONSIDERS that this long-term vision for ERA should be based on the broad Lisbon goals to make Europe a leading knowledge economy and society based on the "knowledge triangle" of research, innovation and education, as major drivers of competitiveness and quality of life. The vision should i.a. include the following features:

- a) free movement of knowledge, the ‘fifth freedom’, with excellent training and attractive career prospects for researchers moving and interacting freely across Europe;
 - b) modern universities and research organisations developing globally competitive poles and networks to deliver excellent science and technology throughout Europe with an optimal mix of specialisation and variety;
 - c) favourable conditions for all actors in research and the private sector, including SMEs, to investing in research and exploiting its results, having access to world-class research infrastructures (including those of pan-European interest identified in the ESFRI roadmap), participating in open and well-coordinated research programmes, sharing and using knowledge across sectors and borders, and developing strong links and coordinated cooperation with partners outside Europe;
 - d) benefits for citizens from the contribution of large-scale R&D efforts to solve major societal challenges;
7. STRESSES the need to endorse a first vision before the end of 2008, and to communicate it widely, in order to quickly focus policies and actions to make it happen, and, subsequently, to discuss, update and deepen it regularly as part of the ERA governance process set out below.
8. INVITES Member States and the Commission to set up improved political governance to steer and stimulate the development of ERA and to build links with other policies, such as education, innovation and cohesion policies. These efforts need to be intensified as soon as possible and to be gradually consolidated. WELCOMES the willingness of forthcoming EU Presidency trios to work closely with each other and with the Commission in order to ensure coherent and sustained progress in the near future.
9. CONSIDERS that improved governance of ERA should include the following principles:
- a) it is part of the Lisbon Partnership for Growth and Jobs, and is closely linked to education, innovation and other relevant policies;
 - b) it involves all Member States and associated countries including regional authorities, as well as stakeholders such as universities and research organisations, civil society and business which should be actively engaged in ERA governance;
 - c) it is aimed at realising the shared vision of ERA, for which purpose monitoring indicators and evaluation criteria should be defined, adopted and supported by an effective information system, which should be developed jointly by the Commission and the Member States, based on the Open Method of Coordination, and should enable overall progress towards the shared vision of ERA and the specific ERA initiatives to be monitored;
 - d) it is based on a long-term partnership between the Member States, the countries associated to the FP, and the Commission, involving relevant Community, relevant national and joint ERA initiatives. From the early phases of planning of initiatives to their implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the partnership should be guided at the political level;

- e) it avoids unnecessary complexity and improves coherence and effectiveness of ERA development;
10. INVITES the Member States and the Commission to make full use of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), as called for by the March 2008 European Council to improve multilateral surveillance, building on the ERA dimension of National Reform Programmes, mutual learning and peer review;
11. AGREES that it will develop the ERA governance including the following features :
- a. relying on the information system and on the enhanced OMC for in-depth and evidence-based discussions, Ministers would address, if appropriate, specific ERA developments and longer-term orientations at their meetings. This would thus help to orient and build consensus for future Council decisions;
 - b. CREST would be an important platform and should enhance its advisory role in the OMC, in order to support the Commission and the Council in the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of ERA initiatives;
 - c. countries associated to the FP should also be associated to ERA governance discussions.
12. CALLS ON Member States and the Commission to establish effective governance arrangements for each of the five ERA initiatives already planned in 2008 (joint programming in research; European researchers' partnership; legal framework for European Research infrastructures; intellectual property management; and a wide opening of the ERA to the world) and others to follow, based on a partnership between the Member States and the Commission built on the principles set out in point (8) above and involving, as appropriate, relevant specialised fora such as European Technology Platforms, ESFRI, ESF, EUROHORCS, and other structures."
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