

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA BOARD

At the ERAB Conference in Seville the Commissioner of Research and Innovation, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, laid down the challenge to bring forward 10 key recommendations to improve the European Research Area (ERA)

The conference was essentially a **public peer review of ERAB's first report:**

"Preparing Europe for a New Renaissance. A Strategic View of the ERA"
(http://ec.europa.eu/research/erab/publications_en.html)

and the subsequent 76 recommendations to improve the European Research Area that ERAB produced for consultation.

These had been previously circulated amongst a selected group of stakeholders and feedback emphasised that the need to create a fully effective ERA was very **ambitious but essential** if many of the Global Challenges were to be tackled. Moreover, the conference emphasised that any action should be undertaken with regard to its **global significance and in cooperation with international partners.**

A strong call was issued for the European Commission policy to **offer integrated policy solutions** for the Research and Innovation (R&I) deficit Europe faces in general and specifically with regard to addressing the Grand Challenges.

A continuous plea was made for the European Commission to **demonstrate strong and firm leadership driven by the search for excellence** in Research and Innovation (R&I) policy.

An overall sense of **urgency** pervaded the whole conference: time is running out.

Recommendations

1. Short-term (Immediate action)

1. Create a single **EU-wide patent** and an **Open Innovation Charter** (within 2 years).
2. Agree on a fast track timeline for a **full and widespread implementation of pre-commercial procurement** of Research and Development (R&D).

3. **Concentrate Research & Innovation (R&I) funding** around a selection of themes relevant for EU 2020 ("Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" - COM (2010)2020), driven by "man on the moon" projects that capture the public's imagination agenda. For example:

- smart and green growth: realise a zero carbon public transport system;
- aging graciously: a socio-tech environment to be able to live with dignity at home

4. Create an annual "**City/region of Innovation in Europe**", with criteria matching the Grand Challenges (for example honouring zero carbon emissions, 70% of all citizens engaged in "citizen science", 50% reduction in days lost on health grounds).

5. Issue an **EU Framework Directive on Research & Innovation** focusing particularly on creating a single market for Research and Innovation (R&I). This directive should address and make propositions to:

- harmonise and strengthen public and pre-commercial procurement schemes;
- create a European Research Certificate/Passport to enhance mobility of researchers;
- support pan-European Graduate/Research Schools focused on Grand Challenges, including the possibility of developing a high level European PhD;
- foster flexible cross border research funding;
- establish a European Peer review College for projects addressing Grand Challenges.

2. Mid-Term (3-5 years)

6. **Implement pre-commercial procurement** of Research and Development (R&D) around a few commonly agreed big projects, for example to:

- procure 50 quantum computers of a certain specification;
- develop an accelerator driven nuclear plant to eradicate long term radioactive waste;
- produce equipment for large scale artificial photo-synthesis.

7. When FP8 starts, all funding is **concentrated and streamlined** by:

- minimising management obligations for all funding schemes to the strict minimum by making the funding output based on research and innovation deliverables mainly;
- earmarking 30% of the Structural Funds and 10% of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for dedicated Research and Innovation (R&I) projects;
- creating a commonly accepted set of research output metrics based on research impact and innovation delivery.

8. **Foster an acceptable degree of risk taking and excellence** throughout **all** Research and Innovation (R&I) programmes by accepting that research and innovation will take unexpected paths as new ideas are explored. Minimise application paperwork by setting limits for each call and create independent but accountable bodies that can best foster this environment for all areas of Research and Innovation (R&I).

9. Create a **European Venture Capital fund** capable of investing in early stage "proof of concept" and business development prior to commercial investment.

3. Long-Term (5+ years)

10. Make **result and risk-oriented funding** of research and innovation projects the dominant criterion for R&I funding of the EC by **reducing** the fiscal burden on Research Technology and Development (RTD) labour throughout Europe to a level comparable or better than our main competitors.

To get started ERAB proposes that **Europe should take the lead** in inviting all global stakeholders to participate on an annual basis to make top-level decisions and monitor progress on common Research and Innovation (R&I) actions for tackling the Global Challenges.

This "**Davos for Research and Innovation**" will allow Europe to take a leading role in the world of Research and Innovation.