

Conclusions from the ISE event:

Is there a funding gap on collaborative research in Europe?

- as part of the research and innovation cycle addressing societal challenges
- input to the interim evaluation of H2020 from the scientific communities

On 7 April 2016, the Initiative for Science held a meeting in Brussels to identify funding gaps in the European research funding landscape and sketch options on how they can be addressed. About 50 participants from permanent representations of EU members states and beyond, funding agencies (including NSF), representatives from the European Commission and other stakeholders attended the meeting and exchanged views with the organisers and other representatives from scientific organisations. Three studies were presented to back up the discussion with evidence. The following observations can be drawn from the meeting:

1) **Work by ISE and other stakeholders (LERU, Science Europe,...) suggests that due to the focus on higher technology readiness levels, the societal challenges part of Horizon 2020 misses out the potential from projects that include or focus on basic research¹ and would likely lead to ground breaking solutions for today's and future challenges.** Compared with its FP6 and FP7, there is a steady increase of support for applied research and demonstration actions and a steep increase of support for innovation actions. However, support for basic research has dropped dramatically, especially between FP7 and Horizon 2020. This is in contrast to the legal text of Horizon 2020 which stresses that “*activities shall cover the full cycle from basic research to market*”

- **Recommendation: Future work programmes should give more equal consideration to basic research in relation to the other components of the innovation cycle.**

2) The evaluation study on EUROCORES, a funding scheme on collaborative research run by the European Science Foundation (ESF) until 2012 showed strong evidence of its added value, scientific and societal impact. A number of lessons can be learnt for the organisation of funding programmes (administrative/organisational deficiencies and strong points)

The discontinuation of the Eurocores scheme has undoubtedly left a gap. No other scheme addresses ‘bottom-up’ cross-border collaborative research in a similar comprehensive way.

- **Recommendation: It should be analysed whether/how the ERA-NET Scheme may be modified to address the gap.**

¹ “Basic research”, “applied research”, “innovation” etc. are understood as auxiliary terms to grasp rough tendencies. It is understood that these concepts cannot be separated and dependencies are non-linear

3) The Initiative for Science in Europe will continue working with Euroscience and other partners to represent “researcher’s view on the Horizon 2020 mid-term review”. The following is a collection of thoughts that were discussed at the meeting:

- **Societal Challenges:** A concern shared by many is the transparency with the establishment of the work programme and the involvement of the scientific community in the process. Also, there were debates on whether the increased complexity with FP7 and Horizon 2020 is still efficient. This refers both to the size of consortia, but also to the public-public and public-private partnerships.
- **Research Excellence:** The success of the ERC was highlighted at the meeting. Two recommendations found strong support at the meeting: (1) A task force should look into independence that, both as regards to scientific questions, but also as regards to administrative matters and should work out options for the future legal status of the ERC, (2) Additional responsibility for the ERC can only come with additional resources.
- **Innovation:** There is no “European disease” as such; Europe does not have a general overall problem to put ideas to the market. Some European countries do even better than the US. There are specific problems. The lack of venture capital is a key deficiency for example. Innovative companies grow faster in the US than in Europe. Generally, the only way forward is to improve the innovation framework rather than to work with subsidies. Also, most lies responsibility with fostering innovation lies at the national level.

As regards to the existing instruments, it whether the EIT has found its role following several strategy changes over the years. It was stressed that impact and performance of all innovation support instruments should be evaluated in a rigorous manner; An EIC, if it should be established, needs to have a clear added value.

A full document will be presented at the Euroscience Open Forum in July in Manchester.

Conference Programme:

09:30 – 10:00	Registration / Arrival
10:00 – 10:30	Welcome and Introduction - Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner, Executive Coordinator, ISE
10:30 – 11:30	Plenary Session 1: Studies and Evidence Chair: Marco Masia, Marie Curie Alumni Association. - Thom Duyvené de Wit, European Hematology Association, Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe: <i>findings from a survey on Horizon 2020 in the medical sciences.</i> - Jack Malan, Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services: <i>The evaluation of the EUROCORES scheme</i> - Karin Metzloff, Chair ISE WG on collaborative research, EPSO: <i>The shift to higher technology readiness levels in the Societal Challenges programme of Horizon 2020 – ISE findings.</i>
11:30 – 11:45	Break

- 11:45 – 12:15 **Plenary Session 2: Case Study**
- Ernst van den Ende, Wageningen University
- 12:15 – 13:00 **Lunch break**
- 13:00 – 14:30 **Session 3 - Panel: Societal Challenges and Collaborative Research in Europe.**
Chair: Michele Garfinkel, EMBO.
- Primož Pristovšek, Head of Science Operations, COST
- Jean-Claude Worms, CEO, ESF
- Karin Metzloff, Chair ISE WG on collaborative research, EPSO
- Malgorzata Misiewicz, European Commission DG Research.
- Amanda Crowfoot, Science Europe
- 14:30 – 14:45 **Break**
- 14:45 – 16:40 **Session 4 - The ISE / EuroScience agenda for the Horizon 2020 mid-term review**
Chair: David Lee, EPS
- *Research Excellence – focus on the ERC: Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner, ISE*
- *Societal Challenges – focus on collaborative basic research, aspects of transparency and complexity: Karin Metzloff, ISE*
- *Innovation – focus on the EU Innovation support: Are we taking the right approach? Can a European Innovation Council make a difference?*
- Peter Tindemans, EuroScience
- Helge Pfeiffer, European Aeronautics Science Network (EASN)
- 16:30 – 17:00 **Closing and follow-up**
- Dušan Sandor, Perman. Repr. Of Slovakia to the EU: *The priorities of the Slovak EU presidency (second half of 2016)*
- Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner, Executive Coordinator, ISE