

Science Europe Statement on the European Research Area

Science Europe

Science Europe is an independent association of European Research Funding Organisations (RFO) and Research Performing Organisations (RPO), established with the aim of increasing collaboration between, and promoting the collective interests of, its Members.

Together, the Members of Science Europe represent a substantial proportion of the European research resources, in terms of funding, performance capacity and experience.

Part of the rationale of Science Europe is to engage constructively with the European Commission and other EU Institutions, as well as with national governments, where we have common interests, whilst retaining our independence and our unique voice, which is informed by all scientific communities.

Vision for ERA

Science Europe is fully committed to the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA). Indeed, a key part of our mission is to strengthen the ERA through direct engagement with key partners as well as by facilitating co-operation and co-ordination amongst Members. We aim to work with other European organisations to create a coherent and inclusive ERA, where all stakeholders can and do play an appropriate role.

We believe that the philosophy of ERA is that it is evolving, dynamic, flexible and creative; it is by nature something that will not, and should not, be 'completed'. In a process that involves many actors, trust at all levels is a crucial element. Much of the progress in ERA to date has been based on developing relationships of trust, such as those built up between Science Europe Members. The process involves diverse groups, including the EU, universities, research organisations and the private sector. Developing and strengthening relationships between these groups is of utmost importance. In addition to efforts made at national level, Horizon 2020 will be an important instrument to contribute to ERA, and therefore engagement with, and dialogue on, this is crucial.

The creation of Science Europe itself should be considered a major achievement in the context of ERA, by bringing together research organisations, increasing collaboration between them, and representing their collective interests and a shared vision for a strong ERA.

Roadmap for Action

In 2008, EUROHORCs and ESF agreed a 'Vision on a Globally Competitive ERA and Roadmap for Actions'. Science Europe is now taking forward this Roadmap, the implementation of which is an essential contribution to building the ERA. Considerable progress has been made since the Roadmap was first agreed, but we recognise that much remains to be done. Consequently, all Science Europe Members are committed to the continuation of these efforts.

Our work to date and commitments in relation to the Roadmap include:

- **Open Access**
Science Europe Members pro-actively support and expect the transition to open access, and are prepared to develop and implement a common policy. Actions in this area include encouraging publishers to move to an open access business model. Further work will involve sharing of experiences and identification of best practices in relation to author- or institution-paid publication charges.
- **European Grant Union**
Science Europe members are engaged in a wide range of cross-border funding mechanisms, including, as an 'à la carte approach', Money Follows Researcher, Money Follows Co-operation Line, Lead Agency Procedures and numerous other bilateral and multilateral arrangements. Following on from an initial study, we are seeking to undertake detailed analysis of the Grant Union instruments, to facilitate further exchange and co-operation between Members in terms of cross-border research activity and multilateral networking, in Europe and with 'third countries' globally, and to provide useful examples of best practice.
- **Ex-Post Evaluation of Funding Schemes and Research Programmes**
On this topic, Science Europe will continue to facilitate networking and exchange of information, as well as mapping and analysing impact evaluation practices and methodologies. The aim of work in this area is the development of common statements and standards. Good progress has been made, and there are already moves to adopt common practices. A report on activities to date, and identification of next steps, will take this work forward.
- **Peer Review**
A survey of peer review practices and subsequent European Peer Review Guide form an excellent basis for further efforts in this area and have helped to identify key principles for peer review, which is the basis of selection of the most excellent research. This has also fed in to international discussions on peer review as part of the initial work of the 'Global Research Council' initiative. The Guide will be put on-line and can be used as a resource, and dialogue on this issue will continue.
- **Research Infrastructures**
Work of Member organisations in this area has included identification of basic requirements for research infrastructures and involvement in the mapping of

European research infrastructures, including e-infrastructures; it will be continued through further workshops and analysis, as well as through dialogue with stakeholders, Member and Associated States and the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), in order to discuss and share best practice in funding and operating transnational research infrastructures.

- **European Research Careers**

Again, Members are fully committed to action in this area, which underlines many of the other priority topics. Achievements to date include recommendations on a number of areas, such as a joint taxonomy for research careers, improving attractiveness of research careers, research skills, and the development of a European Alliance for Research Career Development. Current activities include a report on career tracking methods, work on a pan-European professional development framework, guidelines on mobility policies, and a joint European Framework for Careers with the European Commission. Science Europe will be looking at ways to take forward work this work.

Collaboration and Continuation

The actions outlined in the Roadmap encompass many of the areas that the European Commission has identified in the context of the ERA Framework. This suggests that there are topics on which Science Europe, the Commission and other relevant stakeholders can work together, and we will be pleased to collaborate in these endeavours wherever it might be useful, appropriate and mutually-beneficial. We are keen to ensure continuing dialogue and co-operation, whilst maintaining our independence and taking full responsibility for our Roadmap actions and our contribution to ERA.

As a next step in the process, Science Europe will seek to have dialogue with the Commission in order to identify areas where collaboration would be beneficial, and to define concrete actions that could potentially be carried out.

Science Europe will share the results of its working groups and projects, including survey results, analyses, examples of best practice, and common strategies and approaches. We intend to organise an annual high-level workshop on ERA, the next of which will take place in early 2013; these will be an opportunity for key stakeholders to further discuss the issues.

We also intend to review and revise the Roadmap, to take account of developments and new policy initiatives. We will prioritise our tasks, identify where changes or new activities are needed, and implement these accordingly. This review will be done carefully and collaboratively, and the resulting Roadmap revision will be shared. Regularly monitoring progress and taking stock of remaining challenges is a key task of Science Europe.

Science Europe welcomes discussions with all relevant parties, and will seek to ensure that the Roadmap provides a template for real and ongoing progress.