

Brussels, 12/05/2021

EERA's feedback on the European Commission's Roadmap for the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe

The European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) strongly supports the European Commission's renewed commitment to building a stronger European Research Area (ERA) that is fit for current and upcoming challenges, both at European and global level. The twin green and digital transition calls for a stronger and more resilient European Research and Innovation (R&I) landscape, as well as for deeper integration between national R&I policies. Within this framework, EERA welcomes the European Commission's open consultation on the EC Roadmap for the Pact for R&I in Europe and would like to put forward in this respect the following comments and considerations.

First of all, EERA believes that it is of utmost importance to guarantee an enhanced alignment of R&I investments and reforms at national and EU level. To do so, a more solid collaboration between the European Institutions and the research community is needed and should, therefore, be taken into account within the Pact. Researchers can contribute to national plans bringing forward the scientific community's perspective, ensuring that funds will be allocated to those fields where technological breakthroughs are crucial to reach some of the most pressing objectives of the EU.

Furthermore, Member States with lower R&I spending and lower performance in training their researchers should be supported through robust, targeted pan-European initiatives striving to develop excellence in research. In this regard, a collaborative process to spread good practices on the efficient use of resources across European countries should be established. Building on existing capacities, the goal can be achieved by developing an extensive and efficient networking framework engaging a multitude of organisations and research centres across Europe, at different dimensions and levels.

New opportunities for talent growing in the EU must be created, and existing ones reinforced. To reach this goal, stronger collaboration between different EU-level instruments and funding is needed. Alongside targeted research opportunities in key areas of development, the Pact should highlight the importance of bottom-up curiosity-driven research. This approach allows researchers to identify new opportunities and directions in many fields, thus ensuring that funds are channelled into research areas with a greater degree of flexibility.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that more robust links between research and industry are needed. Scientific investigation at low TRLs level needs to be continuously supported, but it is also necessary to create ecosystems supporting European innovation. The collaboration between research and industrial alliances, or other similar initiatives closer to the market, should be increased to facilitate the development of common technology roadmaps for critical sectors.

In connection with the previous point, the importance of value-creation from knowledge should also be highlighted. This development requires strengthening the lab-to-fab process, speeding up the transition of ideas from research to market, thus accelerating groundbreaking innovations in critical areas.



To support such developments, the effective creation of world-class research infrastructures with updated mapping and governance frameworks is crucial. The renewed ERA puts forward new guiding principles for creating value from knowledge, a good step in the direction of standardising processes. However, it is essential that these principles, which are also recognised in the codes mentioned within the Pact's Roadmap, align with existing national frameworks, ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights, safeguarding researchers' autonomy, and supporting their careers across Europe.

For more information, please contact Ms. Rosita Zilli – Senior Policy Officer – r.zilli@eera-set.eu

