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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 3 December 2009

on the enhanced governance of the European Research Area (ERA)

(2009/C 323/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLS its Resolution of 14 January 1974 on the coordination of national policies and the definition of projects of interest to the Union in the field of science and technology which established a Scientific and Technical Research Committee (CREST) ⁽¹⁾, replaced by Council Resolution of 28 September 1995 on CREST ⁽²⁾;

RECALLS its Resolution of 15 June 2000 establishing a European Research Area (ERA) ⁽³⁾ following the European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000 which agreed on the Lisbon Strategy;

RECALLS the conclusions of the European Council of 8 and 9 March 2007 which referred to the notion of well functioning Knowledge Triangle in the form of interaction between education, research and innovation, and of 19 and 20 March 2009 which called for urgent concrete measures to encourage partnership between business, research, education and training and to step up and improve the quality of investment in research, knowledge and education;

RECALLS the conclusions of the European Council of 13 and 14 March 2008 which called upon the Member States to remove barriers to the free movement of knowledge by creating a 'fifth freedom';

RECALLS its Conclusions of 30 May 2008 on the launch of the 'Ljubljana Process — Towards full realisation of ERA' aiming to establish an enhanced governance for the ERA based on a long-term vision on ERA developed in partnership by Member States and the Commission with broad support from stakeholders and citizens;

RECALLS its Conclusions of 2 December 2008 on the definition of a 2020 vision for the European Research Area ⁽⁴⁾ which invited future Presidencies to take this vision and its potential evolution into consideration in the development of their proposals for the future governance of the ERA and stressed the need to use the full potential of existing coordination structures such as CREST in dealing with ERA initiatives;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 7, 29.1.1974, p. 2.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 264, 11.10.1995, p. 4.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 205, 19.7.2000, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 25, 31.1.2009, p. 1.

RECALLS the conclusions of the European Council of 11 and 12 December 2008, which called for the launching of a European plan for innovation, together with the development of the ERA and with reflection on the future of the Lisbon Strategy beyond 2010;

RECALLS its conclusions of 29 May 2009, to establish and regularly update a Roadmap for the implementation of the ERA Vision 2020 and to further engage in ensuring enhanced complementarity and synergies between EU policies and instruments such as the RTD Framework Programmes, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, Structural Funds, the Ljubljana Process, the Common Framework on Education and Training and the Bologna Process.

1. ACKNOWLEDGES that research policies, programmes and activities at European level encompasses those at Union and inter-governmental levels as well as those at national/regional level which contribute to the overall development of ERA, and that third countries are also involved, when appropriate and subject to specific arrangements, in the development of ERA, while acknowledging the current status of cooperation with countries associated to the Framework Programme;
2. ACKNOWLEDGES that a large number of actors and stakeholders are already involved in the development of the ERA at national, regional, inter governmental and Union level and that various ERA-related mechanisms, processes and instruments are already in operation;
3. RECOGNISES the need for an efficient and enhanced governance for strategic policy development and decision-making in the ERA in which the Union and the Member States demonstrate more leadership and commitment for the achievement of the ERA Vision 2020 and the implementation of the post 2010 EU strategy for competitiveness and growth. Guiding principles should be simplicity, efficiency and transparency, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
4. UNDERLINES that this enhanced governance should aim at facilitating cooperation and coordination of ERA related activities, programmes and policies at all levels on the basis of objectives derived from the ERA Vision 2020, taking into account the positive aspects of diversity which exist in Member States;
5. RECOGNISES that the Knowledge Triangle of education, research and innovation relates to the need for improving the impact of investments in the three forms of activity by systemic and continuous interaction;
6. RECOGNISES that a crucial aspect of governance is the need to develop more coherent policy-making at European and Member State level by developing better and more efficient interaction between the three components of the Knowledge Triangle in the policy making process, to accelerate the transition to a true knowledge-based economy and society;
7. EMPHASISES the need for a more systematic, broader and structured consultation of relevant stakeholders in the ERA as well as the necessity to better communicate the aims, benefits and achievements of ERA and its Vision 2020 to the broader public and relevant categories of stakeholders;
8. Given the broad and inter-institutional nature of the ERA, EMPHASISES the need for regular exchange of views and interaction with the European Parliament;
9. ENCOURAGES Member States, where necessary, to strengthen their preparation of the meetings of relevant committees and groups (including through appropriate consultations with stakeholders) as well as to facilitate the necessary interaction between all areas of the Knowledge Triangle;

10. RECOGNISES the need to establish the means to provide fresh and innovative impetus on the political level in order to be able to achieve the goals of the ERA; and INVITES future Presidencies to consider convening well prepared and focused ERA Ministerial conferences when there is a clear added value providing orientations for a long-term strategic view on ERA; AGREES that such conferences could take the form of an broadened informal meeting of Ministers;
11. ACKNOWLEDGES the role that CREST has already played in providing advice to the Council and the Commission on ERA-related matters; RECOGNISES, however, that for the development of ERA and in order to respond to the need to better involve national policies, CREST should play a more proactive role as an ERA Policy Committee providing strategic timely advice to the Council, the Commission and Member States on its own initiative or on the request of the Council or the Commission;
12. On this basis, ENDORSES the following principles to strengthen the role of new CREST in the strategic development of ERA:
 - (a) CREST is a strategic advisory body whose function is to advise the Council, the Commission and the Member States on ERA related issues. CREST should also monitor the progress of ERA, including the EU Framework Programmes;
 - (b) CREST should provide strategic advice in particular on:
 - (i) broad orientations for possible future policies at international, European and national levels to contribute to the development of the ERA;
 - (ii) at an early stage, the strategic priorities, the design and implementation of policy initiatives to develop the ERA, including the EU Framework Programmes and other relevant EU initiatives, as well as relevant national and intergovernmental initiatives, including the overall coherence across the instruments and initiatives;
 - (iii) promoting, when relevant, the coordination of national policies relevant for the development of ERA;
 - (iv) at a later stage, the design and implementation of independent assessment and evaluation of all these policy initiatives.
 - (c) CREST should develop interactions and coherence with other policy areas, in particular those related to the Knowledge Triangle;
 - (d) CREST should cooperate and consult with ERA-related groups, as necessary to attain its objectives. It could also base its deliberations on input from these groups;
 - (e) Member States and the Commission should jointly contribute to the work of CREST for further development of ERA;
13. CONSIDERS that the working methods of CREST, taking into account the new legal and institutional framework with a view to replacing the Resolution of 28 September 1995 with a new Resolution providing a revised mandate for the CREST committee, should be further discussed. This revised mandate should be drawn up in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 12 and approved by the Council by mid-2010;

14. INVITES all relevant groups ⁽¹⁾, established with a view to helping deliver the ERA to develop systematic and transparent consultations with stakeholders, as appropriate;
 15. INVITES Member States and the Commission to initiate a review of the ERA related groups before the end of 2010.
 16. INVITES the Commission to:
 - continue and further develop systematic and structured consultations with Member States, and other relevant stakeholders in a transparent manner,
 - develop, jointly with the Member States, an effective ERA information system as a support tool for decision makers.
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⁽¹⁾ Currently comprising notably CREST, its dedicated configurations High Level Group on Joint Programming (GPC) and the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC), its Working Group on Knowledge Transfer, as well as the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and the Steering Group for Human Resources and Mobility (SGHRM).