

The Grand Challenges of our ERA

A Research and Innovation Ecosystem for Europe as a New Rationale for ERA

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Meaning of “fragmentation”

- Initial ERA Paper diagnosed gap with Europe’s rivals as coming from
 - Lower investment in R&D
 - Fragmentation
- Argument persists in Green Paper
- Fragmentation 2 elements
 - Research teams & institutions sub-critical
 - Problems of governance inhibiting desired level of coordination among research supporting institutions

Argument can be misleading or incomplete

- Comparisons with USA can miss key features of difference
- Desirable cooperation/coordination/ competition mix is highly field specific
- Large sections of research community not fully addressed
 - Business not excited or engaged
 - RTOs and public labs most obvious players in a European market for applied research but strong national lock-in
 - Regional equity is as much about access to knowledge as it is about artificial distribution of research activity
 - Need to exploit virtual proximities as well as geographical clusters with key input from Structural Funds

A new rationale for ERA

- Need to move away from concept of remedial measures for the public research system
- Shift the focus from deficit to opportunity
- Two key elements
 - Drive ERA through engagement in series of Grand Challenges for Europe
 - Support this approach by developing ERA as key component in European Research and Innovation Ecosystem

Grand Challenges

- Research must be linked to the major economic, social and environmental challenges facing Europe
 - Globalisation, migration, ageing, climate, resource, energy, security, ICT, converging technologies etc
- Research has major contribution to make but not the only contribution
 - Engagement needed across government, across DGs, from business, NGOs and the general public
 - To gain public and political support ERA must be closely linked with a vision that addresses these challenges
- Need major coordinated efforts with FP as a catalyst but going far beyond
 - Economic initiatives following Aho Group recommendations but also a social and environmental agenda

European Research and Innovation Ecosystem

- Vision is not enough – also need a means to achieve it
- To get beyond sub-criticality and lack of coordination need to look at ERA in new way
 - As key element of European Research and Innovation Ecosystem
- Get across boundaries and stress links to other spheres of policy activity, especially innovation and education
- Stress upon co-dependency of institutions and also of the framework conditions that constitute their environment