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EUA Response to the EC Communication “Science and technology, the key to Europe’s future –Guidelines for future EU policy to support research.”

The European University Association underlines its growing involvement in the field of research by the adoption of a key policy position on the forthcoming 7th Framework Programme, in response to the European Commission’s recent Communication.

‘Pivotal research and research training role’

The document, which marks the first occasion EUA has commented on the framework programmes in their entirety, builds on the Association’s commitment to the ‘pivotal research and research training role of European universities’ and to the promotion of the university as a key actor ‘strategically placed at the interplay of RTD, educational and regional development policies at both national and European level’.

EUA concentrates its comments around 5 areas:

- support for basic research that targets researchers principally;
- research training and career development issues (engaging both individuals and institutions);
- developing university infrastructure;
- strengthening university cooperation at European level;
- the role of universities in contributing to regional development.

European Research Council

EUA has long advocated a new funding mechanism to support basic research and supports the proposal to establish a European Research Council. The Association stresses the importance of the independence of a future body, the need to secure additional funding and to include all fields of research in

its remit, while warning against ‘privileging strong universities in some countries and regions to the detriment of others where capacity needs to be further developed’.

Creating European Centres of Excellence

EUA supports the recommendations of the ‘Marimon Report’, especially regarding the enhancement of the participation of universities in FP7 and the development of transnational collaboration between research centres, universities and companies. Furthermore, the Association believes that the current instruments are ‘not necessarily suited’ to the needs of all sciences, especially social sciences and humanities.

ERA-NET

EUA calls for the participation of university networks in the ERA-NET scheme which, with the EC’s proposal to extend its coordination activities to include financial support, would help address the governance and management issues that currently inhibit university involvement. This new initiative would, by facilitating the sharing of knowledge, policy management experience and good practice, ‘serve to strengthen ‘trust’ and cooperation between universities at European and national level’.

The [full response](http://www.eua.be) is available at www.eua.be

The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both European universities and the national rectors’ conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. With over 750 members in 45 countries, EUA promotes through its policy and project work the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

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