

EURAB, the European Research Advisory Board, has launched strong appeal to the research community and all other relevant actors in support of the increased funding for research and the FP. Please find attached a letter drafted by Helga Nowotny, chair of EURAB, on the subject.

Further information on EURAB activities can be found at the following website:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/eurab/index_en.html

Dear Colleagues,

I write in my capacity as Chair of EURAB, the European Research Advisory Board, an independent body advising the Commissioner for Research. Its 45 members coming from academia and industry consider it of utmost importance at this crucial moment in time to raise public and political awareness in member states to actively support the proposal of the European Commission for a significant increase in budget for the 7th Framework Programme. In a recent recommendation (see attachment) EURAB has articulated the arguments that underpin the necessity for a substantial budgetary increase for research, if Europe seeks to be an effective player in world class science and seeks to realize the benefits of new discoveries for innovation and the well-being of European societies. We are convinced that national governments need to maintain their commitment to research and innovation and that public policies must continue to create a favourable environment for private research investment. In addition however, it is vitally important that sufficient financial resources are made available at EU level to meet the ambitious goals of the 7th Framework. The contradiction between what governments say publicly in favour of research and how they act must be confronted. Research and innovation in Europe will only be able to meet the global challenges ahead, if investment in research and innovation is seen as investment into Europe's future. Towards this end, we need strong national systems and a strong EU-level system, which reinforce each other in the creation of synergies.

The current process of negotiations between member states on the new Financial Perspective for the European Union 2007-2013, for which a drastic cut in the research budget has been proposed, gives all reason for concern that adequate financial support for the 7th framework programme may fail to appear. This would be a severe blow to the goal of knowledge-based growth and hamper employment which is desperately needed. The consequences for research and innovation in Europe would be dismal.

EURAB therefore urges you to take immediate action. The research community in Europe, whether working in academia or industry, need to join forces with national and European research organisations, academies of sciences, associations of universities and national and European industrial organisations. We urge all of you to take appropriate action – by writing and approaching the Prime Minister, Ministers responsible for science, research, trade and industry and Ministers of Finance – with the strongest possible plea that, whatever the outcome of the discussions on the total budget for the Union may be, the budget for research and innovation as proposed in the 7th framework programme should be maintained as being of vital importance for the future of Europe.

The media need to be fully informed and to become engaged in helping to secure the future of Europe through research and innovation.

The Council of Ministers will meet in Brussels on 16-17 June. It is time to act together and to take a firm stand in public on the tremendous potential of science in Europe and the importance we see for the Commissions 7th Framework proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Helga Nowotny
Chair of EURAB

Enclosure: EURAB 05.015; April 2005

**Recommendation on
The Financial Perspective for Framework Programme 7
and Criteria for the Selection of Topics for the Work Programmes**

EURAB sees a doubling of the research budget for Framework Programme 7 (FP7) as an absolute minimum target to accomplish the challenges for European Research.

The arguments for this are:

* The redefined Lisbon vision to transform the European Union into “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world” with the focus on growth and employment cannot be realised without a massive investment in European Research, Technology and Development (RTD).

* Research money spent on the European level by the EU has a proven leverage effect on national and private R&D investment. It stimulates both collaboration and competition and has a positive effect on the overall quality of nationally funded research. In particular it can help create a research-friendly environment, allowing achieving a critical mass in many research fields, causing the attraction of top researchers of the world and reversing the brain-drain.

* Due to a mere lack of funds the success rate of present European research programmes are so low that many high quality proposals cannot be funded. These missed opportunities for Europe need to be decreased.

* All regions of the European Union, now enlarged with new member states, must have access to and benefit from the results of research. Research and education are important parts of a European cohesion strategy, and without further investment the differences in socio-economic conditions within the European Union will only increase.

* In many research fields inherent scientific developments have led to an increased need of medium- and large-scale facilities and equipment, exceeding what can be financed on a national level and thus requiring European co-funding and international access.

* Research is key to a number of new tasks and challenges of the European Union as mentioned in the proposed Constitutional Treaty. New initiatives such as a European Research Council, Joint Technology Initiatives and an increase of research efforts in fields such as environmental protection, healthcare, security, space and social sciences and humanities are important parts of the European vision and supported by EU policies. They are highly dependent on investment and co-ordination on a European level.

* Globalisation and increasing competition on knowledge creation from countries with a much more favourable demographic development than many European countries with their ageing populations increase the need for more investment of strategic nature in RTD on the European level. Attractive conditions for mobility and a competitive research environment on a European level are needed for attracting the world’s best researchers to Europe.

* An increased FP7 research budget has an added value on European scale, which makes it much more urgent compared to the general need for increased national investment in Research and Development (R&D). An increased investment in European RTD should however not be negatively compensated by a reduction of national research budgets, but rather be seen as an incitement for concomitant increase in national and private R&D investment.