



EUROHORCs

EUROPEAN HEADS OF RESEARCH COUNCILS



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What is EUROHORCs?

- **European Heads Of Research Councils**
- The Heads of public Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) and Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) in Europe
- Established in 1992 as an informal discussion group
- Joint annual budget of over € 20 billion



Two questions:

What is wrong with the European Research System?

Do we need more funds, a more efficient organisation – or both?

Findings from the EU Green Paper (April 2007)

- Achievements on the route to a fully implemented ERA are still marginal
- The European Research System has essential weaknesses when compared to North America and emerging R&T nations in Asia
- Three main points are made responsible:
 - (1) insufficient funding,
 - (2) fragmentation**
 - (3) inappropriate research environment

Findings from the EU Green Paper (Cont.)

- Three main points are made responsible for the weaknesses:
 - insufficient funding
 - **fragmentation**
 - inappropriate research environment
- According to the Green Paper, the main recipes to overcome the problems are (among others):
 - more co-ordination
 - better networking
 - greater cohesion in European research

Is this analysis correct?

A first general remark

The Commission's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses deals too much with the perspective of the Commission's role and that of governments and intergovernmental structures. It ignores the potential role of other stakeholders such as **National Research Funding Organisations (RFOS)** and **Research Performing Organisations (RPOs)** as well as the private sector.

Insufficient Funding

- It is true: Funding is insufficient, although the deficiencies greatly vary among the European countries.
- In spite of the significant increase of the EU budget for research: More than 90% of public R&D funding occurs at the national level.

Fragmentation

- Fragmentation is not primarily an issue of too little co-ordination but mainly a consequence of restricted competition within ‘protected’ national research areas.
- The National Research Funding Organisations are essential to overcome the ‘competition fragmentation’.
- Research needs the uninhibited mobility of people.

The European Research Area needs more competition, not more co-ordination.

Inappropriate Research Environment

- There are still many national university systems which are unfavourable for the carriers of young researchers
- Compared to the US, hierarchies are less flat at most European universities.
- The large student-to-teacher ratio have negative consequences for both the formation of students and the development of young academics.

Solutions

There are basically three paths to overcome fragmentation:

- (1) The national (individual) path: Bilateral agreements of RFOs
- (2) The de-centralised (European) solution: RFOs create common-pot schemes for specific cooperation programmes
- (3) EU-centred solution: More money for basic research (e.g. ERC)

Aims and Objectives

- To represent the **interests of research** nationally and internationally
- To give recognition to **excellence** and to support **frontier research** of the highest quality
- To create a platform for **discussion, joint activities** and the promotion of international **research links** and **collaborations**
- To provide independent professional scientific expertise and **research policy advice** in Europe