

Excellence, synergies and alignment: Lamy Group sketches out future EU research and innovation programme

The European University Association (EUA) welcomes the report released earlier this week by the High Level Group on maximising the impact of EU research and innovation programmes. The report puts forward a number of new ideas and guiding principles for the 9th Framework Programme (FP9), providing a good basis for the debate on future EU investment in research & innovation.

EUA has actively supported the work of the Group and is pleased to see many of its recommendations reflected in the report. EUA particularly welcomes the Group's conclusion on the importance of doubling EU research and innovation funding, which should be matched by an increase in national investments. Both are necessary to close the gap between the EU research and innovation priorities and available resources.

Ambitious funding, as stated in [EUA position paper](#) on 5 May, is essential to achieve the impact Europe needs. This broad political consensus should now pave the way to a discussion on the specific sources for additional funding and further routes to enhancing synergies between the future Framework Programme and the European Structural and Investment Funds, as well as the Common Agricultural Policy, as recommended in the report.

The Group makes an important link between the much-needed increased commitment to research and innovation and a more efficient use of resources through a simplified programme, with fewer funding schemes and provisions flexible enough to accommodate the diversity of beneficiaries' interests and backgrounds. In this regard, EUA recalls that the acceptance of national and institutional accounting practices would be the single most effective step towards radical simplification, and welcomes the Group's proposals in that direction.

Crucially, beyond what its succinct title suggests, the report puts forward ways to address key issues that go far beyond a reductionist technological approach to societal challenges. Some of the Group's recommendations on the scope and structure of the future Framework Programme resonate strongly with EUA member universities' views, particularly the added value for Europe through collaborative partnerships across all countries and sectors, and the need to broaden the concept of impact, as advocated in the [EUA vision paper on FP9](#).

EUA reiterates its encouragement for European institutions to work together and take forward the discussion on the next Framework Programme in the context of well-defined shared objectives for European society. Specifically, EUA views very positively the intended stronger links between EU research, innovation and higher education policies. The Association considers that the alignment of research and innovation policies and instruments with the [EU renewed agenda](#) for higher education, the Erasmus+ programme as well as the [New Skills agenda](#) should be strategically explored, using the adequate vehicles for incentives to universities.

Furthermore, a clearly defined purpose is essential when addressing the goals of the future Research Framework Programme. In this regard, EUA underlines that excellent science must be the foundation of the entire programme, regardless of the scope and purpose of each pillar. Links and distinctions between the proposed pillars and instruments, such as the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) and the European Innovation Council (EIC), must be further discussed. Supporting excellent collaborative research at early stages of technological development is of outmost importance. An excessive concentration of investment in the European Research Council and the EIC exclusively is to be avoided. It is also necessary to determine how expected impact and research missions of the future Framework Programme would contribute to the advancement of European society.

