



## Europe Note

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25 March 2010	European research policy, Framework Programme, research excellence	Please forward the position paper to colleagues with an interest in European research policy

## UK HE sector position on the future of European research

### Introduction

1. The UK HE Europe Unit and Universities UK have developed a UK HE sector position paper on the future of European research policy (see attached). The paper sets out the UK sector position on European research policy at a time when the European strategy for enhancing research efforts is seeking to shape national research and development policies, and develop major new initiatives and processes. It is intended to enable sector representatives to engage confidently in shaping the mid-term review of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7) at a time when EU member states have begun submitting their positions on EU research policy for inclusion in the review. The position paper will also enable sector representatives to think strategically about the successor to FP7, and engage proactively in other opportunities to influence EU research structures and funding tools.

## **Background**

2. On 18 November 2009 the Europe Unit and Universities UK convened a roundtable meeting to consolidate a UK HE sector position on the future development of EU research policy. The meeting was attended by senior representatives from HE Funding Councils, Research Councils, Vice-Chancellors, Directors of Research, and other UK research stakeholders.
3. The UK HE sector position on the future of European research is based on the results of the roundtable discussion on 18 November and on comments submitted subsequently by participants. The paper has also received detailed comment from and been approved by the Europe Unit's High Level Policy Forum.

## **UK sector position paper on the future of European research**

4. The paper concentrates on issues identified by the UK HE sector as important for European research policy, culminating in a series of key policy points. These include:
  - The UK HE sector supports the use of excellence as the prime criterion for determining receipt of research funding in Europe.
  - The UK recommends that better use should be made of Structural Funds to support the development of a broad-based research capacity in Europe.
  - The UK continues to be a strong supporter of the ERC; a supranational mechanism demonstrating that real added value can come from EU funded activities.
  - The UK urges the European Commission to highlight the importance of sustainable funding for European research ahead of other more traditional budget concerns, such as the Common Agricultural Policy.
  - The UK recognises the accumulated expertise built up in HEIs through participation in the Framework Programmes, and recommends an element of continuity in EU research programmes after 2013.
  - The UK will work with other countries and HE sector organisations to ensure improved recovery and sustainability of funding from the Framework Programme and other research activities.
  - It will be important that the EIT's activities are in line with the EU's overarching strategic objectives for research and innovation, and do not duplicate the work of other instruments and initiatives.
  - Efforts to promote researcher mobility as a top priority for European research should be more closely tied to the need to support excellence in research.
  - There is a need for a broader range of evidence to underpin the development of European policy with regard to researcher mobility.

- There is a need to extend support for doctoral researchers in the ERA. The UK would be willing to share experience and practice of providing diverse doctoral programmes with a view to supporting researcher mobility.
  - The UK calls on the European Commission to continue to consult member states and provide timely information on the Joint Programming process as it develops.
  - While fully acknowledging the value of the Joint Programming process and its willingness to participate proactively, the UK is keen to retain its own broad-based approach to research.
5. Copies of the paper have been sent to key contacts at the European Commission and Parliament. It has also been distributed to rectors' conferences across Europe and widely throughout the UK sector. It has been translated into four languages – French, German, Spanish and Polish – which are available on the Europe Unit website at [www.europeunit.ac.uk](http://www.europeunit.ac.uk). The paper will be used by the Europe Unit and UUK to facilitate lobbying of the European institutions on key issues for the UK HE sector.

#### **Action**

6. Please bring the position paper to the attention of colleagues with an interest in European research.

#### **Links to UK HE sector position on the future of European research:**

[UK HE sector position on the future of European research](#) (English)

[UK HE sector position on the future of European research](#) (German)

[UK HE sector position on the future of European research](#) (French)

[UK HE sector position on the future of European research](#) (Spanish)

[UK HE sector position on the future of European research](#) (Polish)

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