

TOWARDS JOINT PROGRAMMING IN RESEARCH:
Working together to tackle common challenges more effectively
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CITIZENS' SUMMARY

National research on major societal challenges such as climate change or brain-diseases will have more impact if efforts are joined at the European level.

The European Commission proposes that the Member States of the European Union define common objectives and join forces for research and innovation to take place on major societal challenges such as food safety, human and environmental health, climate change or energy. If the EU Council of Ministers agrees with this proposal, Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) should be underway by 2010.

1. What is the issue ?

European national research programmes are among the world's first and most effective. Yet they are not able to tackle effectively some of the major societal challenges such as citizen's security, food safety, quality of human and environmental health, climate change or energy supply because they are developed and implemented on a national basis. 85% of European public research funding is spent nationally without any transnational collaboration between programmes or competition between researchers from different Member States. Only 15% is coordinated in intergovernmental organisations (such as CERN), programmes such as EUREKA, or spent jointly in the Community's Research Framework Programme. National programmes are very important, but they often unnecessarily duplicate each other, or lack the scope and depth required to make a significant impact in these major challenges.

2. What is the solution?

The European Commission proposes that Member States develop and implement common Strategic Research Agendas addressing major societal challenges. Joint Programming will be a voluntary process and need not involve all Member States in each specific initiative, but the partners involved in any given initiative must be able between them to provide the required critical mass of resources.

3. Who will benefit?

Citizens are the main end-beneficiaries of Joint Programming, since it aims to address major societal challenges. To give an example: all Member States have national research programmes addressing "rare diseases". Yet because of the small number of citizens affected in each country, it is difficult to achieve major breakthroughs. Combining the national

programmes into a joint research agenda however, could provide the critical mass needed to achieve just that.

The managers of public research programmes will be the direct beneficiaries as Joint Programming enables them to tackle some of our major challenges with their programmes.

Member States will also benefit from developing common solutions, from sharing the burden of high start up and operating costs, from eliminating unnecessary cross European duplication and from pooling data and expertise currently scattered across Europe.

Europe's scientists will benefit from greater mobility, from the potential to achieve higher scientific, technological and innovation impacts. Joint evaluations should also result in greater accountability and transparency.

Finally, Europe's enterprises will benefit from open innovation strategies, from a quicker and more effective dissemination of research results, from the development of common, standardised solutions and from better access to public research support.

4. How will it work?

When the EU Council of Ministers endorses the Communication, it will be invited to nominate High Level representatives, to identify together suitable Joint Programming areas. Following their work, the EU Council of Ministers, will identify a limited number of areas in which to launch the first Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI).

Once the specific areas are agreed, the JPIs should be implemented, using a methodology similar to that used in the European Technology Platforms, which have been successfully developing common research strategies for the main industrial sectors, going through three stages.

- Developing a common vision for the Joint Programming Initiative;
- Defining a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA), specific objectives and related deadlines;
- Implementing the SRA and monitoring results so as to ensure maximum impact.

In order to facilitate the process, the Commission is willing to provide the secretariat for each of the JPIs.

5. When will it happen?

In September 2008, the European Commission will invite the EU Council of Ministers to endorse this Communication.

In December 2008, the Council is expected to invite Member States to make nominations to the High Level Group.

By the end of 2009, the Council will decide on the specific areas identified for Joint Programming, by endorsing Commission recommendations.

Implementation of the Joint Programming Initiatives should be underway by early 2010 as was asked by the Spring 2008 European Summit.