

## From Education and Research to Innovation: What future for the European Research Area (ERA)

Research Policy Group (RPG) meeting in Belgium: 12th and 13th of September

*The general theme of the meeting is "**the interplay between education, research and innovation**". The meeting takes place in Leuven where the presence of an 'old' innovative university (founded in 1425), big research institutes and companies constitute a vibrant local innovation environment. This case offers the possibility to study the three elements of the general theme: education, research and innovation, the way they interact and reinforce each other and the way they make up a component of the European Research Area.*

*The organizers would like to propose the following agenda, consisting of 5 sessions but mainly devoted to three broad topics:*

- *the ingredients that shape the success of the **local environment** in the ERA;*
- *the "completion" of **the European Research Area** as an objective of European science and innovation policies and its relevance for local knowledge based actors;*
- *finally, the '**openness of the ERA to the world**' in the light of the transformation of China into a superpower in the field of research and innovation and its consequence on the European research and innovation landscape and policies.*

*The first theme will be discussed during the three first sessions.*

*Starting from the perspective of a successful university and research institute (session 1), successful companies around the Leuven University (session 2) or from a broader societal perspective (session 3) we will investigate the knowledge exchanges and other interactions in the local environment. We will debate the key success factors. How important is the "**quadruple helix R&I-model**" where universities, industries, governments and citizens interact in a dynamic way?*

*But we will not stop there. We would also like to learn from these actors what their expectations are regarding the further development of the European Research Area, which is the second topic.*

*KULeuven has been voted Europe's most innovative university for the fourth time in a row (7th on the world ranking), while IMEC is a world leading international research institute in the field of microelectronics, nanotechnology and digital technologies.*

*Materialise is known worldwide as a very large 3D printing company grown out of the KULeuven. Umicore is a materials technology company that transformed itself drastically from a mining company into a company with a very large research base. Innoviris (the Brussels agency for research and innovation) will offer insights in other forms of innovation. Hence our choice for speakers coming from these institutions.*

*The debate about a new vision for the European Research Area has been launched. The concept of the European single economic market is well known to all companies. What is the European Research Area (ERA) lacking to be as successful in the field of research and innovation? Does it identify the right priorities, objectives, actions and instruments? Does it raise the right questions? The next incoming presidencies of the European Union will have to answer these questions. The opinions expressed by the different actors in the first three sessions will be highly relevant.*

*Secondly the question can be raised whether the European Research Area is a concept fit to contribute to the transformation of the European societies, like the new framework program aims at. Can societal development goals be part of the ERA objectives? Or should the ERA be restricted to general framework conditions for research and innovation? These and/or other additional questions will be raised by Luc Soete and Susanna Berger (from the incoming German presidency) on day two of our meeting.*

*In the last session we would like to open up to the world. China is the perfect case in the light of its very rapid development to probably tomorrow's dominant player in the field of science, technology and innovation.*

*In the Council conclusions adopted on 30/11/2018 the Council invited the Commission to publish by mid-2020 a new ERA Communication for the period beyond 2020, which may propose revised ERA policy priorities and ERA governance and monitoring mechanisms at national and EU level. By the same token, the Council should use the new ERA Communication as a basis for setting ERA priorities in 2020.*

*Our RPG meeting comes at the right time to reflect on the future of the ERA.*

## **Thursday 12th of September: 14h**

Welcome:

- **Johan HANSENS, Secretary General of the Department of Economy, Science & Innovation, Flemish Government**
- **Frank MONTENY, Director General Research & Space, Belgian Federal Science Policy Office**

### **Session 1: University perspective (14h - 15h15)**

Introduction:

- **Prof Dr. Koen DEBACKERE, General Manager, KULeuven**
- **Prof Dr. Luc VAN DEN HOVE, President & CEO, IMEC**

Theme:

1. Louvain is elected Europe's most innovative university. What factors made it possible for a traditional university to develop itself into a champion in the field of knowledge transfer with a large number of spin-offs? Is the quality of education decisive? Or is it the quality of research? Or is it rather the success of its technology transfer policy? What university policy is behind it all? What do universities expect from the government (local, regional, federal, European)? What kind of interaction is there with the industry sector? The same questions can be raised regarding a research institute like IMEC. How could an interuniversity research institute develop itself into a top world player in a particular technology?
2. What do local research actors need/expect from the European Research Area? In what direction should the European Research Area evolve? What message do they want to convey to the European Commission and Member states?

**Coffee break: visit to IMEC clean room (15h15 - 16h15)**

## **Session 2: Company perspective (16h15 - 17h30 if 2 speakers)**

Introduction:

- **Prof Dr. Egbert LOX, Senior Vice President, Umicore**
- **Dr. ir. Bart VAN DER SCHUEREN, Executive Vice President and CTO, Materialise NV**

Theme:

1. How can local firms develop into important world players? What is the role of the locally available knowledge? What is the importance of local knowledge exchanges? What is the role of the local/regional environment? What is the role of smart specialization? What is the role of the government (the role of research programs and/or fiscal support, facilitating role)? What is expected of the European public authorities?
2. What expectations do firms have of the European Research Area? What is missing? What messages do they want to convey to the European authorities and/or the the member States?

## **Session 3: Societal perspective (17h30 - 18h15)**

Introduction:

- **Mr. Xavier HULHOVEN, Scientific Advisor, Innoviris**
- **Mr. Etienne TOFFIN,**

Theme:

From the linearity of knowledge transfer to more openness in science and innovation with a particular focus on social innovation and participatory research.

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*20h: Dinner in Leuven (ZARZA)*

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## **Friday 13th of September: 9h**

### **Session 4: From education (training) and research to innovation - what role can ERA play? (9h - 10h30)**

#### Introduction

- **Ms. Susanne BURGER: Director-General European and International Cooperation in Education and Research, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung**
- **Prof. Dr. Luc SOETE: Maastricht University**

#### Theme:

From 2021 onwards, a new phase of the ERA policy framework will be implemented. The Council asked the COM to adopt a new communication on the ERA in 2020. The session should address some of the key issues on the future of the ERA, including the relationship between ERA and the SDGs, the relevance of quantitative R&I investment targets (3% objective) and a better interaction between regional, national and EU level ERA initiatives. More detailed background information will be provided before the meeting, notably the first deliverable of the ERAC ad hoc group on a new ERA narrative.

### **Session 5: ERA outward look: a multipolar world: Europe between China and the US (11h - 12h30)**

#### Introduction:

- **Prof Dr. Reinhilde VEUGELERS, KULeuven**
- **Prof Dr. Sylvia SCHWAAG, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Lund University**

#### Theme:

The international science and technology landscape has become increasingly global and multipolar. For decades Europe and the United States have led the scientific development. But now China and other Asian countries have emerged as new big players in the international arena. They are already challenging Europe and the rest of the world in many technological fields. According to the OECD *Measuring the digital transformation*, China, Korea, Chinese Taipei, Japan and the United States were responsible for developing between 70% and 100% of the top 25 cutting-edge digital technologies in the period 2014-2016.

How does Europe see its future in this increasingly multipolar world? How can it benefit from all the knowledge produced worldwide? What type of science and technology policies are needed? How is Europe going to organize its science and technology cooperation with the US, China and the other Asian countries? With the UK after Brexit?

An underlying question is: how can Europe be "smartly open to the world", meaning having relations based on reciprocity with respect for intellectual property rights (IPR), equivalent investments in human and other resources in collaborative projects, etc. when cooperating with the rest of the world?

## **Session 6: Conclusions (10min)**

- **Johan HANSSENS**, Secretary General of the Department of Economy, Science & Innovation, Flemish Government
- **Frank MONTENY**, Director General Research & Space, Belgian Federal Science Policy Office

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*12h45: Lunch in Faculty club*

*+/- 13h30: Guided tour of "Groot Begijnhof" (Unesco world heritage)*

*14h: Bus to Novotel or station Leuven*

*+/- 15h: Bus to Novotel or station Leuven (after the guided tour)*

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