



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

Research & innovation: Commission calls for partnerships to tackle societal challenges

Brussels, 21 September 2011 – An invitation to public and private actors to join forces at European level to apply research and innovation solutions to major challenges facing society has been issued by the European Commission today. The [Commission Communication](#) draws on first experience from pilot projects and outlines steps that will lead to more, and more effective, public-private and public-public partnerships.

The Commission Communication suggests that when EU-level Partnerships are identified as necessary and useful, there is a need to make administrative arrangements simpler and more flexible. Bottlenecks and barriers to cross-border research need to be removed, and all partners, including EU Member States and the private sector, need to make long-term financial commitments to the projects.

Research and innovation offer solutions to major societal challenges such as an ageing population, the effects of climate change, and reduced availability of resources, and major new growth opportunities. However, the issues are often too big for one Member State or one company to solve on their own, particularly given the current squeeze on public sector budgets.

Proposals building on the approach outlined in the Communication will form part of the Commission's Horizon 2020 package later this year.

European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, said: *"Europe must make best use of its resources in order to tackle challenges like improving health, greening transport and modernising our industrial base. Member States and industry need to make strong, long-term commitments to engage in strategic partnerships. Shortening the time to market for innovative new products and services will cement European leadership and boost our economic recovery."*

Background

A number of initiatives are already underway at the European level. For example, EU research funding is being better coordinated in order to tackle the 6000 known rare diseases that affect more than 20 million European citizens. The Clean Sky Joint Technology Initiative (JTI) supported by the EU and aeronautic industry is developing new, environmental friendly airplane technology. The European Commission has also launched a pilot European Innovation Partnership (EIP) under its Innovation Union strategy, focusing on Active and Healthy Ageing. The target of this pilot partnership will be to increase the average healthy lifespan in the European Union by two years by 2020. In this respect, the partnership seeks three complementary objectives: improving the health and quality of life of Europeans; supporting the long-term sustainability and efficiency of health and social care systems and enhancing the competitiveness of EU industry.

The Commission's Communication on creating an "Innovation Union" (see [IP/10/1288](#)) and [MEMO/10/473](#)) already highlighted the importance of European partnering in research and innovation. Some research and innovation activities are of such a scale and complexity that they require EU level coordination to avoid duplication and inefficient use of public and private budgets. Partnering can also speed up the research and innovation cycle, meaning ideas are turned into useful products and services quickly and efficiently.

Partnering brings together public players at European and national levels in Public-Public Partnerships (P2Ps), as well as public and private players in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) with a number of aims:

- to achieve critical mass to ensure the scale and scope required to achieve and maintain competitiveness, and address major societal challenges;
- to move from a short-term to a long-term approach;
- to facilitate joint vision development and strategic agenda setting;
- to contribute to the evolution from a project-based to a programming approach in European research and innovation. This will ensure a broad approach that brings in all potential partners;
- to provide for tailor-made structures and arrangements for a partnership, depending on its nature and goals.

Under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7), valuable experience has been gained from different forms of partnering. These include Public-Public Partnerships in research through Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) and Article 185 Initiatives; PPPs arising from the Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs); the Recovery Plan PPPs; and, the European Industrial Initiatives under the SET Plan.

[MEMO/11/623](#)

For more information on the Pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing go to:

<http://ec.europa.eu/active-healthy-ageing>

For more information on Joint Programming Initiatives go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/areas/programming/joint_programming_en.htm

For more information on ERA-NET/Article 185 Initiatives go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=coordination

For more information on Joint Technology Initiatives go to:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/jtis/>

For more information on Recovery Plan PPPs go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/industrial_technologies/ppp-in-research_en.html

Fore more information on Innovation Union, please go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm

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