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## High calibre personalities assist European Commission in reform of its research advice

***Dr Claudie Haigneré, former French Research and Europe minister, Professor Vaira Vike-Freiberga, former Latvian President and Dr Andrew Dearing, Secretary-General of the European Industrial Research Management Association have undertaken to help the European Commission identify top experts from around Europe to form the advisory European Research Area Board (ERAB). This new body was announced in the Commission Green paper "The European Research Area: New Perspectives" and will replace the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB). ERAB should be an independent body of people from academia, industry, politics or other walks of life who can speak with authority on science, science policy and actions to bring about a knowledge society. The ERAB Identification Expert Group will identify 22 members with proven experience and excellence in research policy and management, based on suggestions from European organisations. The European Commission has asked the experts to submit their suggestions by January 2008.***

*"In April I announced the European Commission's intention to reform EURAB in order to enhance its role in realising the European Research Area," said European Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik. "If the new ERAB is to be able to fulfil the role we have conceived for it, it needs to be composed of people with high authority. Having an identification committee of this calibre will ensure that the exercise is taken seriously by all those involved."*

The principal task of the reformed ERAB will be an annual report on the state of the European Research Area. This report should be as qualitative as possible, reporting on the state of research in Europe for a given year and making policy suggestions in the light of that. ERAB could also undertake other tasks such as giving its opinion on elements of the European Research Area; making contact with and garnering the views of Member States' research and technology consultative bodies in order to discuss the state of implementation of the European Research Area; workshops and a bi-annual assembly to discuss the current state of the European Research Area and suggest policy options for the future.