



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research



German EU Council Presidency 2007

Education and Research Policy Priorities

GERMAN EU COUNCIL PRESIDENCY 2007

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH POLICY PRIORITIES

KEY AREAS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE LISBON STRATEGY

Education, research and technology are essential for Europe's future. They encourage innovation as a basis for sustainable growth and more jobs as well as cultural and social cohesion. Against the background of the question of Europe's future and the pending constitutional process in Europe, the German Council Presidency will operate within the following general framework in the fields of education and research:

- The Lisbon Strategy to strengthen Europe's competitiveness,
- The 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome on 25 March 2007,
- The launch of the Lifelong Learning Programme and greater synergy between national and European measures,
- The launch of the Seventh Research Framework Programme and the establishment of the European Research Council (ERC) and the Security Research Programme.

During its EU Council Presidency 2007, Germany aims to implement the new EU Framework Programmes in education and research in a transparent and user-friendly manner and to launch initiatives which will lead to the sustainable development of an internationally competitive European Area of Education and Research.

"BILDUNG VERBINDET" – EU – "EDUCATION UNITES"

Education is the key to individual life chances – to people's cultural, economic and social participation. Therefore, education policy plays a central role in the EU's Lisbon Strategy. The sum of the individual life chances of European citizens is crucial for the competitiveness of European industry, for social cohesion and, last but not least, for the integration of the member states on the basis of common values and a common understanding of democracy and the rule of law. With these education policy goals in mind, we will seek to make further progress in the central fields of action of European education cooperation:

- The German Council Presidency attaches great importance to the **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**. The recommendation by the Council and the European Parliament regarding a **European Qualifications Framework** aims to promote more than just transparency and transborder mobility. It offers a translation tool which assists the classification and comparison of learning outcomes at European, national and sectoral level. In particular, this enables a European comparison and an appropriate assessment of the skills acquired in the dual system of vocational education and training. It is our aim during the German Council Presidency to intensify the work on the European Qualifications Framework on the basis of the Commission proposal and in close cooperation with the European Parliament and, if possible, to conclude these activities.
- The SOCRATES and LEONARDO education programmes are excellent examples of a successful EU policy for the people. The launch of the **Lifelong Learning Programme** during the German EU Presidency will provide a basis for continuing and extending this success story. In this connection, the German Council Presidency will organize a big **European launch conference** in Berlin on 6 and 7 May 2007 in cooperation with the European Commission. The programme with its budget of approximately €7 billion will run from 2007 to 2013 and will support the transborder mobility of teachers and learners at all levels of education as well as cooperation between education institutions from various European countries.
- The **Bologna Process**, which already extends beyond the circle of EU member states and which has now been joined by a total of 45 European countries, has already led to forward-looking structural reforms of higher education institutions in Europe. The next step in this process will be to take stock of the recognition of degrees, study structures and quality assurance at the **Ministerial Conference in London** on 16 to 18 May 2007. The Ministerial Conference, which will be co-chaired by Great Britain and Germany, should on this basis agree the next steps to be taken within the framework of the Bologna Process to realize the European Higher Education Area by 2010.
- Within the framework of the **Copenhagen Process**, the participating European countries are increasingly intensifying their cooperation in the area of vocational training by agreeing on specific measures to improve the transparency, creditability and recognition of qualifications and degrees. The German Council Presidency will carry on from where the Finnish EU Presidency left off. At the European conference "**Realizing the European Learning Area**" (Munich, 4 to 5 June 2007) we will discuss concrete proposals for implementing the next political steps to be agreed at the Ministerial Conference in Helsinki in December 2006. The topics will be: The European Qualifications Framework, European Credits for Vocational Education and Training, opportunities for transfer between vocational training and higher education, the qualification of teachers as well as the promotion of mobility.

Current education policy priorities from the Education Ministers' "Education and Training 2010" work programme will be discussed at the **Informal Meeting of Education Ministers in Heidelberg** (1 to 2 March 2007). One of the objectives is to enable the Ministers to have an exchange of views on the importance of common values for the process of European integration under the heading "**Europe: its values, its future**" and to thus promote the debate on education's contribution to the development of common values in Europe.

The trend towards "evidence-based policies" is becoming an increasingly important feature of national and European developments. Well-founded, empirical education research is necessary for the effective realization of central aims in the area of education. This also applies to the central fields of action in EU education cooperation. The work programme of the EU Education Ministers also attaches considerable significance to control instruments based on empirical research. The conference entitled "**Knowledge for Action. Research Strategies for an Evidence-Based Education Policy**", which will be held in Frankfurt from 28 to 30 March 2007, is intended as a European platform for an exchange of information and experience in this area.

"MIT FORSCHUNG GEWINNEN" – "SUCCESS THROUGH RESEARCH"

The German Council Presidency will highlight the importance of research for Europe against the background of the Lisbon Strategy, the 3% target, the launch of the Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP 7), the European Research Council (ERC), which is funded under FP 7, and the necessity of developing the European Research Area further: Research improves competitiveness, secures prosperity, and facilitates social participation. The review of the EU budgets, which is due in 2008, offers an occasion for intensive consideration of the requirements and necessities of research in all the areas mentioned, the aim being to ensure not only that the 3% target is achieved – this is the task of the member states – but also that investments in research are increased at European level.

Preparations for adopting the Community acts concerning the Specific Programmes, the Rules for Participation and the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development must begin in 2006 in the run-up to the German Council Presidency.

The current situation shows us the opportunities and necessity for becoming active as a sustainable driver for Europe. Research and innovation are priority topics of the **Lisbon Strategy**. The **3% target** and **strengthening the European Research Area** are at the very top of the agenda. They provide an excellent, broad basis for positioning our initiatives. In addition, they give the **Presidency** a **special dimension**. The initiatives are **addressed** not only to the **European institutions** (Council, European Parliament, European Commission) but also directly to the **member states** with regard to the **design** of their **national research policies**.

FP 7 will be launched on 1 January 2007. With the launch of the European Research Council (ERC) and funds of more than one billion euro per annum, we will open a **new chapter in European research funding** by directly entering basic research, an area which until now was considered the task of the member states themselves. In addition, **Security Research** will be funded for the first time and the Research Framework Programme will be fully open to cooperation with **third countries** (e.g. USA, China, India, etc). The **review of the EU budgets** in 2008 will decide once again what amount of the overall budget is to be earmarked for research. The research perspective will enrich the discussion on **Europe's future** in the context of the revival of the debate on a European constitution and EU enlargement. In light of the situation and fields of action described above, the German Council Presidency aims to provide lasting impetus and obtain concrete results within the framework of legislative measures and initiatives by taking **decisions with a long-term impact**.

Legislative Measures

The launch of FP 7 is being accompanied by a number of **research policy and legal decisions of considerable importance**. These include up to four decisions on the promotion of joint programmes of member states in accordance with Article 169 EC Treaty as well as up to six decisions on Joint Technology Initiatives in accordance with Article 171 EC Treaty. Both packages contain important legislative measures with **regard to our national High-Tech Strategy** as well as to **strengthening the European Research Area**. The same applies to further deliberations on the proposal to establish a **European Institute of Technology (EIT)**. The EIT is to enable innovation partnerships, foster entrepreneurial initiatives and translate R&D results more quickly into commercial opportunities. The German Council Presidency will support a European competition for excellence to achieve these goals.

Development of EU Budgets from 2009

The German Council Presidency can make a significant contribution to the long-term development of the EU research budget. Important targets which should be met include the shaping of the European Research Area and support for the 3% target through the opening of national programmes in accordance with Article 169 EC Treaty and the associated provision of European co-funding, as well as the establishment of Joint Technology Initiatives (e.g. cross-border implementation of elements of the High-Tech Strategy) and the establishment of European Research Infrastructures. Against this background, it is our aim (key word "Lisbon priority") that the financing deficits in the Research Framework Programme identified during the mid-term evaluation should be adequately taken into account in the second half of the Financial Perspective.

European Research Area

Following the adoption of FP7, the European Commission plans to present a Communication during the German Council Presidency concerning the further development of the European Research Area. Furthermore, a **high-level event** on the subject of research entitled "**Today is the future**" is to take place on the eve of the summit of Heads of State and Government in Brussels. Within this framework, the Max Planck Society's Science Tunnel will be assembled and officially opened together with the exhibition "Kunstwerk Erde" (Earth - a work of art) of the Helmholtz-Association. The **2006 Descartes Prizes for Research Cooperation and Science Communication** will be presented in this connection.

Until FP7, basic research was reserved for national funding, whereas the focus of the Research Framework Programme was always on industrial research. The establishment of the European Research Council (ERC) therefore means that **European research funding is taking a new direction**. The generation of new knowledge provides a starting point for future innovations and for establishing and opening up markets. Innovations based on excellent frontier research will help to overcome barriers, create new jobs and secure existing jobs. The German Council Presidency will contribute towards identifying the changing needs of a modern European society and towards taking sufficient account of these needs with regard to innovation and competitiveness. The aim is to overcome supposed contradictions, to strengthen basic research as a link in the value-added chain, which is also in the interest of the long-term success of the High-Tech Strategy, and to involve it in processes of innovation.

Young Researchers

According to a European study (Gago Report), Europe has a shortage of 700,000 researchers. Capable young people opt only too rarely for a career in research, or abandon such careers due to unfavourable framework conditions – particularly inadequate investments in research. This issue is thus first and foremost a contribution towards achieving the 3% target of the Lisbon Strategy. However, it is also a matter of improving the current systems, particularly mobility and opportunities for transfer between universities, research institutions and industry. In times of increasing globalization and in the interest of Europe's ability to compete internationally, particular attention must be devoted to the question of **mobility** with a view to strengthening the international profile of our institutions of higher education and enhancing their attractiveness, especially for the best students and scientists from throughout the world. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary exchange is just as important as the exchange between **basic research and application-oriented research** and between **research and industry**. One great success is the establishment of a separate line of funding under FP7 within the framework of the mobility measures. At our initiative, the programme to promote "excellence teams", which used to come under the Marie Curie Actions and which gave

excellent scientific talent the opportunity to found their own working groups, has been relocated to the European Research Council (ERC) with greatly improved financial conditions.

European Research Infrastructures

In the field of infrastructures, the "**European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures**" (ESFRI) was established at European level, a body of high-ranking representatives of the European research ministers which performs an incubator function when new research infrastructures are set up. ESFRI drew up a European road map for research infrastructures in all disciplines in autumn 2006. At national level, **Germany** has decided to establish four large-scale facilities for basic research (XFEL, FAIR, HALO, High Magnetic Field Laboratory) and will in the medium term become the biggest operator of research infrastructures in Europe. Against this background, the **4th European Conference on Research Infrastructures**, which is being organized within the framework of the German EU Council Presidency in Hamburg on 5 and 6 June 2007 in conjunction with ESFRI and the European Commission, will take a closer look at science policy issues connected with the construction and operation of research infrastructures.

Structural Funds for Research and Development

Structural funds can make an important **contribution to solving high-calibre political problems**: the urgently needed improvement of **integration** of the **new member states** in the European Research Area, among other things within the context of the 3% target; the greatest possible **exemption**, as far as possible, of **FP7 from cohesion requirements**; and the significant **strengthening** of the **principle of excellence** as the sole criterion for project selection. One concrete aim of the German initiative during the Council Presidency is that the European Commission – in addition to the extensive, hardly practicable Structural Fund regulations – should also draft a concrete guide which will illustrate on the basis of scenarios how structural funds can cumulatively be used, for example as the basis for future participation in FP 7.

Intellectual Property Rights

The cooperation between universities/universities of applied sciences and industry ("responsible partnering") is a basic prerequisite for innovations and thus for competitiveness in Europe. An essential characteristic of this cooperation is the question of managing intellectual property. Improving the application of research results and preventing the uncontrolled outflow of know-how are becoming increasingly important issues in the context of global competition and higher

investments in research and innovation within the framework of the 3% target. It is therefore essential to improve the management of intellectual property rights, both in research and in the transfer of technology. We will therefore launch an initiative to draft a Charter dealing with intellectual property rights at public research institutions and institutions of higher education.

Seventh Research Framework Programme

The German conference to launch FP 7, which will take place in Bonn on 15 and 16 January 2007, will appeal to German and European applicants to continue to participate with great engagement in European projects. The European Research Council will begin its work under the German Council Presidency in the first half of 2007 as an important new element of the Framework Programme. The German Research Association (DFG), in conjunction with the science organizations and in coordination with the BMBF, is organizing the **event to launch the European Research Council (ERC)** in Berlin from 27 to 28 February 2007. For the first time, the new Research Framework Programme will be including the key global issue of **security** under the thematic priority **Security Research**. The thematic priority of Security Research will devote itself to **civilian research** which **clearly provides added value to the corresponding national programmes**. For the first time ever, all the Specific Programmes of the Research Framework Programme will be open to cooperation with third states. Germany will take up the topic of internationalization for the CREST in order to contribute towards actively shaping the European activities within the framework of the BMBF's internationalization strategy.

Responsible Science

The realization of the European Research Area and the development of coherent policies to defragmentize European research presuppose **agreement on joint criteria for responsible research**. Increasing transnationality, the growing influence of Europe on the general framework conditions for action by national stakeholders, right up to the Europeanization of decision-making processes in individual policy areas are being accompanied by increasing demands on the governance of science. Linking up with national funding activities, the German Council Presidency will close its research policy programme with a **European Conference on "Science and its publics"**. The **Team Presidency** with Portugal and Slovenia offers the right platform for addressing this issue at European level.

EUROPE'S FUTURE – CULTURAL IDENTITY

The BMBF intends to give fresh impetus to the dialogue on European identity and diversity within the framework of the celebrations to mark the establishment of the European Union on 25 March 2007 and the revival of the constitutional process in Europe. The EU's interdependencies and connecting elements will be analysed on the basis of the diversity and richness of national and regional cultures. This is to show how the knowledge shared by all European citizens emerges from different identities and a common understanding of values in Europe. In the Year of the Humanities 2007, we will be holding a conference on "**The Spirit of Europe**" in Leipzig on 6 June 2007 to take stock of current European studies conducted in various branches of the humanities.