

8 April 2025**German, Polish and French Rectors' Conferences call for a renewal of the European framework programme for research and innovation**

The three rectors' conferences from Germany (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz; HRK), France (France Universités), and Poland (Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich; KRASP), representing the university sector in their respective countries, urge adequate and future-proof EU research funding that is placed on an open and excellent footing. While they back current considerations within the European Commission to promote EU's competitiveness by strengthening research and innovation, the conferences call for a 10th edition of the tried and tested funding programme for research and innovation.

HRK, France Universités, and KRASP welcome the clear endorsement in the recent "Warsaw Declaration" by the EU Member States for a future research funding architecture that builds on the successful legacy of past "self-standing" framework programmes. The three rectors' conferences also support the call of the European Parliament for a dedicated funding structure that both efficiently and comprehensively facilitates research at universities.

European research is already world-class, and the EU should build on this strength to drive innovation rather than to jeopardize existing successes. The presidents of the German, Polish and French Rectors' Conferences agree that the research community needs both a reliable and supportive environment with optimal working conditions – including stable and predictable funding structures – to deliver the most effective research and innovation outcomes.

However, a fragmented landscape of short-term-focused funding instruments, that are scattered across different EU directorates would exclude research talent through excessive complexity and ultimately waste precious innovation potential.

HRK president Prof. Walter Rosenthal: "The European Commission states in the Competitiveness Compass that the European Research Council needs to better align with EU policy and political priorities. This particularly endangers the ERC's successful role in the European research landscape: Fundamental research funded by the ERC must remain thematically unrestricted, because only researchers can identify new knowledge potentials and anticipate future innovation trends. The success of this approach is also reflected in the large number of commercially viable patents emerging from ERC-funded projects."

France Universités president Prof. Lamri Adoui: "Collaborative research is one of the great assets of the framework programme – not only are research articles produced in European collaborative projects cited twice as much as any other research output, but

the consortia on which they rest pave the way for future communities that will be able to handle the technologies needed in order to achieve transition to climate neutrality. A well-functioning system requires support across the entire research pipeline. I therefore regret that collaborative research is almost completely absent from the Letta and Draghi reports, or has been much maligned in the Bocconi report, which goes so far as to call into question the positive impact of cross-country collaboration."

KRASP president Prof. Bogumiła Kaniewska: "Warsaw Declaration, formulated under the Polish presidency, underscores the critical importance of strengthening the European research dimension. To foster innovation and competitiveness, European research must actively facilitate the establishment of robust networks among all key stakeholders across ERA. Addressing disparities in research potential, particularly in countries such as Poland, requires the sustained implementation of carefully designed strategic support mechanisms. Without such targeted interventions, the risk of a fragmented, two-speed Europe will persist, hindering the collective progress of the European research community."