

Press release: Aurora supports call for a strong FP9

Aurora support the initiative of European University groups

Today, 13 groups of universities in Europe have published a statement on the design of the EU's next Framework Programme. The initiative for this joint statement was taken by the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and is supported by i.a. the European Universities Association. In the Declaration, the focus is on the need for Framework 9 to have a bigger budget than Horizon 2020.

Aurora adds its voice to that of this group of 13 university groups. Aurora fully subscribes to the need for adequate (European) funding for internationally competitive and collaborative research of world class level.

Aurora recommendations

In addition to this core message, Aurora adds some points focusing on the need to integrate research – at a regional, a national as well as a European level – with education and with the relevance and impact of academic research for the European economies and societies. Aurora believes in excellence in research and all other aspects of universities and would like to see that FP9 will underpin opportunities for excellent, world leading research. In addition, Aurora underlines the importance to connect the next generation of Framework Programmes with the strategic initiative launched by French president Macron in September 2017. This initiative aims to bring European university cooperation to a higher level by forming some 20 European Universities Networks.

Better integration of research and education – specifically also in international cooperation - is one of the core objectives of this new initiative, and Aurora feels it is important to design FP9 accordingly.

Aurora suggests that the European Commission takes heed of the following aspects:

- Adding an educational dimension to the system for competitive research grants (FP9) will probably have more impact on the behaviour of academics than adding a research dimension to the system for funding educational cooperation (Erasmus+). For this reason, **Aurora recommends** that FP9 will stimulate the integration of research and education – in particular in the context of the European Universities' Networks – in addition to similar activities in the successor programme to ERASMUS+.
- A European initiative to strengthen integration of education and research will need cater to the different ways in which research institutions are organised inside and outside universities in various countries in Europe.
Aurora recommends that FP9 will contain mechanisms and stimuli for the integration of research and education – also and particularly in countries where academic research is often undertaken in institutions outside the university structure.
- It is crucial for the social cohesion in Europe, that universities make an effort in their research activities to strengthen the appreciation of the general public for academic research and its benefit to our societies and economies. Transdisciplinary research, which involves stakeholders from start to finish, can play an important role in this.
Aurora recommends that FP9 will contain mechanisms and stimuli to promote transdisciplinary research and its impact in society and the economy.

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