



European Rail Research Advisory Council

To: European Commission
Sent to: rtd-era@ec.europa.eu
isi.saragossi@ec.europa.eu
James.GAVIGAN@ec.europa.eu

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Concern: Answer to the European Commission Consultation on the Green Paper on the European Research Area (ERA)

Dear Mr. Saragossi,

You will find herewith the ERRAC contribution to the European Commission Consultation on the Green Paper on the European Research Area (ERA) COM (2007) 161 final April 4, 2007.

This position paper integrates the answers that ERRAC provided filling in the online questionnaire.

The European Rail Research Advisory Council (ERRAC) was set up in 2001 with the ambitious goal of creating a single European body with both the competence and capability to help revitalise the European rail sector and make it more competitive, by fostering increased innovation and guiding research efforts at European level.

On December 18th 2002, the European Rail Research Advisory Council (ERRAC) unveiled its Strategic Rail Research Agenda (SRRA) to the railway community and on June 27th 2007 ERRAC presented its updated SRRA 2020. This European rail initiative paves the way for new innovative forms of collaboration, and has been one of the pioneers for the “technology platforms”, which may lead to major joint technology initiatives during the European Commission’s Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013).

ERRAC is chaired by Åke Wennberg (Bombardier Transportation). The Vice-Chairmen are Philippe Renard (SNCF, Past Chairman of ERRAC) and Prof. Manuel Pereira (Technical University of Lisbon). ERRAC comprises of 45 representatives from each of the major European rail research stakeholders: manufacturers, operators, infrastructure managers, the European Commission, EU Member States, academics and users’ groups. ERRAC covers all forms of rail transport: from conventional, high speed and freight applications to urban and regional services.

For more information, we invite you to visit our Website: www.errac.org

We hope this contribution will be of interest and help to the European Commission.

ERRAC remains at your disposal for any further information you may need.

Yours sincerely,

Åke Wennberg
ERRAC Chairman



GREEN PAPER. The European Research Area: New Perspectives ERRAC POSITION PAPER

ERA objectives and mandate « to overcome the fragmentation of research activities, programmes and policies across Europe » are fully in line with what the European Rail Research Advisory Council (ERRAC) has carried out in defining the Strategic Rail Research Agenda 2020 for the research rail transport sector.

ERRAC represents all stakeholders in the rail sector ranging from operators and infrastructure managers to manufacturers, freight customers, passenger organisations and academics as well as Member States. ERRAC is an advisory body to the EU Commission with both the competence and capability to help revitalise the European rail sector and make it more competitive, by fostering increased innovation and guiding research efforts at European level.

- ERRAC supports ERA priorities and particularly welcomes the Green Paper initiative to “improve the coordination of research activities and programmes”. European Technology Platforms (ETPs), composed by industry and other stakeholders that share a long term vision and make a strategic use of the European research programmes through pre-competitive research projects, will have to coordinate more and more their activities with the national and regional programmes through the “ERA-Net” scheme. ERRAC also sees itself and the other technology platforms as a large part of the solution to the issues that the EU describes in its Green paper. In fact for the last 5 years ERRAC has been working to define its common vision of the railways research needs via the SRRA and then to coordinate the achievement of this at both a member state level and across other transport modes, because of the importance of research across different transport modes, especially in the field of materials and manufacturing. [p.5]
- ERRAC emphasises the importance to increase the number of quality of researchers in Europe and it can contribute to the ERA objective to make this a reality by coordinating its activities within the different ETPs and making them more visible, communicating the results achieved and building initiatives impacting the European citizen. [question n.8]
- ERRAC recognises the important role of Universities and public research organisations in “both fundamental research and research on issues of public interest” but would like to stress the fact that these important organisations are lagging behind - compared to industries and their needs - on providing “applied research that helps to underpin business research and innovation”. [p.14]
- ERRAC supports alternative financing modes and believes that “a European regulatory initiative to facilitate the creation of public-private partnership” could help the implementation of their research efforts; the EIB should also be involved. [question n.18]
- ERRAC maintains that the EU needs to “improve the knowledge transfer between public research and industry”; this knowledge transfer should aim to allowing a better market uptake for the research programmes. [p.16]



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- ERRAC believes that “there is a need for EU-level policies and practices to improve and ensure open access to and dissemination of raw data and peer-reviewed publications from publicly funded research results” and this could be done through a powerful and open standard EU online database that take also into account the intellectual property rights. *[question n. 21]*
- ERRAC could help to “communicate, teach, discuss and value” science and technology and believes that within the ERA framework the European Commission should put in place the appropriate instruments in order to promote the ETPs through seminars, science cafés, conferences, publications, etc that could enhance their visibility to the EU decision makers and the citizens. *[question n.24]*
- ERRAC welcomes the “Joint Technologies Initiatives based on Article 171 of the EC Treaty” that would help to implement common ETP Strategic Research Agendas and it would like to point out that such initiatives should result in a real market uptake, considering that research is becoming increasingly global, and increasingly competitive. *[p.19]*
- ERRAC confirms that “common principles need to be developed and used for peer review, quality assurance and joint evaluation of European, national and regional programmes” and suggests exploiting ERRAC’s advisory body experience in evaluating research programmes. *[question n.25]*
- ERRAC agrees on the need of “shared principles for the accountability of public research funding, which would enhance simplification of rules and procedures and increase its effectiveness and efficiency” and in particular calls for a drastic simplification of the reporting and administrative follow-up of EU projects, whilst at the same time increasing the administrative capacity of the European Commission in following research projects. *[question n.26]*
- ERRAC believes that an enhanced role of the various ETPs that have already been able to build consensus among stakeholders could help “public authorities to jointly identify and decide upon major societal issues requiring a pooling of resources and capacities”. *[question n.27]*
- ERRAC cautiously welcomes “international cooperation in S&T” but warns in opening too much the European Research Area to the rest of the world because research within the EU ultimately aims at improving competition. The right balance should therefore be found between competition and cooperation, following “the rules” of the global and competitive market. International cooperation in research must also bring a benefit to the EU.*[p.20]*
- ERRAC fully shares the view that pre-competitive research will help to achieve the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and that the correct implementation of the Strategic Research Agenda at EU level is the right instrument to be used. In this regard, ERRAC considers it important for the Green Paper to take into account the endorsement role that different ETPs may provide for all future EU projects.