

European research area: activities within the scope of the EC framework programme 2002-2006

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PURPOSE: presentation of the five-year assessment of Community research activities (1999-2003) carried out by high-level independent experts.

CONTENT: In the second half of 2004, a strategic Panel of thirteen high level experts¹ carried out the Five-Year Assessment covering Community research activities 1999-2003 and as foreseen in the Decisions concerning the 6th Framework Programme. In response, the Panel provided a clear and authoritative overview and assessment, at a horizontal level, of Community research activities, through a thorough evidence-based analysis of the implementation and achievements of past and current activities.

The Commission warmly welcomes the Five-Year Assessment report and its analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

First, the Commission agrees with the Panel on the four main challenges identified: attract and reward the best talent; create a high-potential environment for business and industrial RTD; mobilise resources for innovation and sustainable growth; build trust in science and technology.

Second, it notes the positive assessment of the implementation, results and added value of the Framework Programmes, notably in terms of contribution to the European knowledge base, networking among researchers and structuring of the research system in Europe.

Lastly, it broadly agrees with the recommendations put forward in order to improve the relevance and quality of research initiatives and programmes at present and in the future. The Commission's proposals for the 7th Framework Programme, adopted on 6 April 2005, take full account of these recommendations. They also will be kept in mind in the preparation of the entire legal framework for Community research, notably the specific programmes and the rules for participation and dissemination of results.

The evaluation report has been disseminated widely, including through Europa and presented to and welcomed by the main stakeholders, notably the relevant committee and Working party of the European Parliament and Council, CREST and programme committees.

A more detailed analysis and comments for each specific recommendation are provided in the Commission staff Working Paper SEC(2005) 1054.