

Press Release: for immediate release

Science Europe Invites New Thinking on the Future of Joint Programming

(Brussels, 25 August 2015) Six years after the Lund Declaration on grand challenges and five years after the launch of the first Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs), it is time for European policy makers and society at large to take stock of the past and chart the future of public policies addressing the grand challenges of our time.

During this period, publicly-funded research has markedly increased its focus on grand challenges such as global warming, ageing societies, public health, access to food and water and security among others, and EU Member States have delivered on the Lund Declaration by forging both European and national strategies in relation to grand challenges. The European Union is now supporting this stock-taking process by conducting an evaluation of JPIs and stimulating debate around them.

Science Europe's members, Europe's major public Research Funding and Performing Organisations, today contribute to this debate by releasing a Position Statement 'On the Role and Future of Joint Programming'.

Science Europe's Member Organisations consider JPIs to be valuable instruments to address major societal challenges by linking up the whole research and innovation chain and leveraging available resources. At the same time, members find that the current narrative used to describe the added value of JPIs largely falls short of the role that JPIs actually play.

Now, during the period that will see the evaluation of the JPIs, and ahead of key meetings of the High Level Group for Joint Programming and of a planned conference to revisit the grand challenges approach launched in Lund in 2009, Science Europe urges policy makers to avoid allowing simplistic 'fragmentation' narratives to guide future decisions on JPIs.

Policy makers should instead fully exploit the upcoming evaluation of JPIs to identify the strengths and weaknesses of joint programmes and to chart their future course. The evaluation of JPIs should not avoid the hard questions, such as whether JPIs allow for the competition, reproducibility and duplication required by science to make meaningful advancements. Moreover, Science Europe invites the European Commission and national policy makers to mirror successful national governance models at the European level and involve relevant stakeholders in the governance of JPIs.

Amanda Crowfoot, Director of Science Europe, said: *"After several years of experience, JPIs are now maturing and need to be consolidated in order to fully deliver on their potential. As a result, it is important for all JPI stakeholders to reflect on their own roles with regards to JPIs, as well as on the wider role of JPIs within the European Research Area. A shared understanding of the role and impact of JPIs is essential, and will help to ensure appropriate criteria for assessment and fruitful future policy directions."*

The aim of the Statement is to stimulate other stakeholders – including the EU Member States and the Commission – to join in this discussion.

The Position Statement can be downloaded at <http://www.scienceeurope.org/downloads>

About Science Europe:

Science Europe is an association of major European research funding and research performing organisations in 27 countries, established in 2011 to promote the collective interest of its members and to foster collaboration between them. For more information, see www.scienceeurope.org.

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