



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

AND

THE LEAGUE OF EUROPEAN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

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The European Commission, hereinafter referred to as 'the Commission', and the League of European Research Universities, the headquarters of which are at Leuven, Belgium, hereinafter referred to as 'LERU' (jointly hereafter referred to as 'the Partners'),

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT

- The March 2000 Lisbon European Council agreed that to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion an overall strategy should be applied that aimed, *inter alia*, at preparing the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society by better policies for research and development.
- The Council adopted on 15 June 2000 a Resolution establishing a European Research Area (ERA)¹ that sought to implement the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council.
- The May 2008 'Ljubljana Process — Towards realisation of ERA' Council Conclusions called for enhanced ERA governance, based on a long-term ERA vision developed in partnership by Member States and the Commission with support from all stakeholders and citizens. It underlined the importance of the ERA as a primary pillar for the Lisbon objectives and as an engine for driving the competitiveness of Europe.
- The Lisbon Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states that the European Union has the objective of promoting scientific and technological progress and calls in particular for the achievement of the European Research Area to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of the Union and of its industry and to make them more competitive. The Treaty refers to the ERA as an area of free circulation of researchers and scientific knowledge.
- Completion of the ERA is an explicit part of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth² endorsed by the June 2010 European Council. Developing the European Research Area reinforces the Union's modernisation

¹ OJ C 205, 17.7.2000, p. 1.

² Commission Communication COM(2010) 2020 of 3 March 2010 and European Council Conclusions of 17 June 2010 (<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/115346.pdf>).

agenda for higher education³. Moreover, the February 2011 European Council stated that Europe needs a unified research area to attract talent and investment and called for the completion of the ERA by 2014, addressing any remaining gaps in order to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation.

- At the January 2012 ERA Conference, the Commission announced its intention to both deepen and broaden the ERA partnership with research stakeholders, so as to make rapid and far-reaching progress on the key ‘big-ticket’ measures announced in the ERA Communication adopted by the Commission on 17 July 2012.
- The LERU Rectors’ Assembly, meeting in Barcelona on 11 May 2012, authorised the LERU Chair, Professor Bernd Huber, and the LERU Secretary General, Professor Kurt Deketelaere, to sign this MoU on behalf of the membership.
- For LERU as a membership-based organisation, with the statutory aims of (i) advocating education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding, the creation of new knowledge through basic research and the promotion of research across a broad front, (ii) influencing policy in Europe, and (iii) developing best practice through mutual exchange of experience, this Memorandum of Understanding constitutes a voluntary, non-binding informal agreement, without legal status under Belgian law. The Commission acknowledges that LERU’s members operate within national and administrative frameworks that may limit their autonomy and freedom of action.

HAVE DECIDED THE FOLLOWING:

LERU WILL encourage its members to carry out, by the end of 2013, the actions that are set out below, as far as allowed by national legislation, and respecting their institutional autonomy.

Open recruitment

- Start or continue to fill vacancies for recognised, established, and leading researchers (as defined by the EU Framework for Research Careers) according to open, transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures, in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Position Paper ‘Harvesting talent: strengthening research careers in Europe’ (January 2010).
- Start or continue to advertise vacancies for first-stage, recognised, established and leading researchers (as defined by the EU Framework for Research Careers) on the EURAXESS Jobs portal.

³ Council conclusions on the modernisation of higher education of 28-29 November 2011 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/126424.pdf

Research Careers

- Develop and start, or continue to implement human resources strategies for their researchers in line with the basic principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and the EU Code of conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Position Paper 'Harvesting talent: strengthening research careers in Europe' (January 2010).

HR Logo

- Seek to obtain and use, or continue to use, the EU Human Resources Excellence in Research logo.

Gender

- Develop and start, or continue to implement a gender strategy, addressing such issues as the commitment from the university's leadership, the right mix of gender-specific career development measures and gender-blind work-life-balance measures, the successful implementation of gender measures through transparency, accountability and monitoring of gender equality, and the promotion and support of gender-sensitive science. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Advice Paper 11 'Women, Research and Universities: Towards excellence without gender bias' (June 2012).

Pensions and social security

- Explore the possibility and feasibility of joining an EU-wide Supplementary Pension Fund, and support the ongoing discussions on the portability of social security rights. This support will be underpinned by the LERU Advice Paper 1, 'Improving the social security of internationally mobile researchers' (May 2010).

Doctoral training

- Develop and start, or continue to provide structured programmes for doctoral training in line with the basic EU Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Position Paper 'Doctoral degrees beyond 2010: Training talented researchers for society' (March 2010).

Academia-industry mobility

- Explore, develop and start, or continue to implement academia-industry mobility programmes for the training of excellent researchers for academia and business, aiming at increasing their mobility between industry and academia. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Position Paper 'Doctoral degrees beyond 2010: Training talented researchers for society' (March 2010).

Twinning/Teaming

- Explore the possibility of developing, in a cost-efficient way, research cooperation with universities ('twinning') and/or regions ('teaming') in other EU Member States, building on existing experience and taking advantage of research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation.

Open Access to publications and to data

- Explore, develop and start, or continue to implement efficient policies, accepted by the research community, for open access to the publications resulting from publicly-funded research. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Advice Paper 8 'The LERU Roadmap Towards Open Access (June 2011)'.
- Explore, develop and start, or continue to implement comprehensive principles, standards and procedures for open access to research data emanating from publicly-funded research. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Advice Paper 8 'The LERU Roadmap Towards Open Access (June 2011)'.

Knowledge transfer

- Further cooperation between academia and industry/business, and help to improve the recognition of the knowledge-transfer profession.
- Explore, develop and start, or continue to implement knowledge-transfer structures, for instance a TTO or other knowledge-exchange and transfer services, to valorise scientific output. These actions will be underpinned by the LERU Advice Paper 10 'The TTO, a university engine transforming science into innovation' (January 2012).

E-Science

- Further training and awareness of researchers of digital services for connectivity, computing, software and data for effectively and efficiently carrying out their research, so they can benefit from these services.

Reporting

- Produce a concise progress report on the implementation of the actions listed above by December 2013.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WILL

Stakeholder Platform

- Establish a dedicated ERA Stakeholder Platform, which LERU agrees to join, for the purpose of consulting with stakeholders on progress towards the completion of the ERA.

Monitoring

- Organise in June 2013 a meeting to review progress on the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding.

BOTH PARTNERS WILL

- In a proportionate way, share with each other the already available, relevant, and necessary information to monitor the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Done in duplicate at Brussels on 17 July 2012

FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Máire GEOGHEGAN-QUINN

Commissioner for Research, Innovation
and Science

FOR LERU

Prof Bernd HUBER

Chair of LERU

Prof Kurt DEKETELAERE

Secretary-General of LERU