



Press release

New European plans to boost the impact of research and innovation

Meeting today in Amsterdam, EU ministers with research in their portfolio discussed a number of key issues, including the 'innovation principle', European innovation deals, a start-up visa and open access. All participating ministers agree that investing in knowledge, research and innovation is about investing in the future of Europe. Innovation can generate economic growth, create jobs and respond to social challenges. Rules must therefore be amended to facilitate investment, and Europe must become more attractive for start-ups. To increase the impact of research, results must be universally accessible. 'It's good to note that all ministers recognise the importance of investing in research and innovation,' said State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science Sander Dekker. 'To maximise the impact of research, scientific knowledge must be shared. This way, the results of publicly funded research can be used by anyone, from scientists to school teachers, and from doctors to businesspeople. I want to use the Dutch Presidency to take major steps to increase the impact of research and innovation. One of these steps is encouraging open access.'

Innovation principle en innovation deals


Better, smarter European legislation must lead to a favourable investment and business climate. EU ministers responsible for research agree that rules should never get in the way of innovation. To this end they discussed the 'innovation principle', whereby all new European legislation is evaluated in terms of its effect on innovation. What's more, taking their cue from Dutch 'green deals', European innovation deals must ensure that all parties involved look at ways of eliminating problematic aspects of existing legislation.

Startup visa

Start-ups generate jobs and economic growth. Today, Neelie Kroes, the special envoy for Start-Up Delta, presented the idea of a European start-up visa, which is designed to make it easier for start-ups to begin operations in different member states without having to go through entry procedures again. The idea was enthusiastically welcomed by the EU ministers.

Open Access

To boost the impact of research and innovation, the results of scientific research must be widely available.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page consisting of a series of horizontal bars. The top 10 bars are red, and the bottom 18 bars are orange. The bars vary in length and are arranged in a staggered, overlapping fashion.

On Tuesday evening Bill Gates gave a speech to the assembled ministers on the importance of open access. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation invests a great deal of money in research and science, on the condition that the results of the research it supports be available to all. The State Secretary would like the same policy to apply to all scientific research supported with public funds. Today, the League of European Research Universities (LERU) presented a petition signed by almost 10,000 people to the assembled European ministers and European Commissioner Carlos Moedas. The petition calls for the expedited implementation of open access. With that in mind, Mr Dekker is organising a major European conference on this theme, to be held on 4 and 5 April.

Eurocommissioner Carlos Moedas is satisfied with the agenda of the Dutch presidency: "It's clear that we need to invest more and in research, but we also need to tear down the regulatory barriers that hamper innovation. We need a better regulatory environment that creates an appetite among private investors to investment in Europe. That's no easy feat – legislative processes can take several years to adapt to new technologies that are evolving every month. That's why I have made smart regulation part of my priority Open Innovation, and why I appreciate that the Dutch Presidency has put this high on the list of its own priorities for research and innovation."

Today's informal meeting is the first meeting of ministers responsible for research to be held under Mr Dekker's chairmanship. During the formal Council meeting in Brussels in May, Mr Dekker hopes he and his colleagues can adopt solid conclusions on the importance of investment to research and innovation, on better legislation for a better business climate in Europe and on the accessibility of research outcomes with a view to bringing open access one step closer.

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