



Press release

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Karliczek: European Research Area must guarantee the freedom of research

EU research ministers confirm freedom of science at Ministerial Conference on the ERA

This Tuesday, EU research ministers held a hybrid meeting in Bonn to discuss the European Research Area and the current state of the freedom of science and research. The "Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research" was presented and signed on site by several conference participants. Federal Research Minister Anja Karliczek explained:

“The German Council Presidency is dedicated to establishing a resilient, sovereign and sustainable Europe. We need a dynamic European Research Area to achieve this.

“In signing the "Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research" today, we have clearly signalled our support for the values that form the foundation of the European Research Area. The Bonn Declaration is an important political symbol.

“Defending and protecting the freedom of science and research lays the foundation for a bright European future. A strong research ecosystem will enable us to lay the groundwork for progress and the wellbeing of humankind in the decades to come. We condemn all attempts to limit this freedom, including the surge of attacks on scientists by certain groups of society that we have unfortunately observed since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

“But freedom of research comes with responsibility. It is important to ensure that research is transparent and adheres to clear ethical principles. Several of my colleagues signed the declaration today, others participated virtually or are still involved in national discussions. My aim is to ensure that all EU member states commit to better protecting the freedom of research by the end of the German Council Presidency.

“Today's Ministerial Conference also included discussions among the EU member states about the reorientation of the European Research Area. We wanted to find out how Europe can do even better in science, research and innovation. This mainly includes quicker translation of innovations and research results into commercial products as well as communication between science and society.

Hausanschrift

Kapelle-Ufer 1
10117 Berlin

Postanschrift

11055 Berlin

Tel. +49 30 1857-5050

Fax +49 30 1857-5551

presse@bmbf.bund.de

www.bmbf.de

www.twitter.com/bmbf_bund

www.facebook.com/bmbf.de

www.instagram.com/bmbf.bund



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“In its communication of 30 September on the future of the European Research Area, the European Commission presented a whole set of measures. We discussed the communication today and formulated our own ideas and priorities on the part of the member states as input for the debate. As member states, we want to adopt Council conclusions at the Competitiveness Council on 27 November.

“I am pleased that today also serves as an opportunity to launch a national campaign on the European Research Area. This is to help us ensure that the ERA will not remain an abstract concept exclusively for insiders. Exchange and cooperation in Europe are important for everyone. The motto of the campaign is therefore: *“The European Research Area: Together towards greater knowledge”*. In the coming months and years, we will campaign for a European Research Area which enables strong, dynamic and value-driven science and research. Please visit www.forschungsraum.eu for further details about the European Research Area and the campaign.”

Background:

Trio Presidency

On 1 July 2020, Germany took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In this role, the German delegation chairs the negotiations on EU legislative proposals and other initiatives and can set its own priority topics. The programme of the German Council Presidency is part of the expansive programme of the Trio Presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia.

In addition to numerous expert conferences, Germany’s Presidency programme features informal meetings of relevant ministers, including meetings of the ministers of research and of education. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Informal Meeting of Research Ministers was held on 21 July as a video conference with new interactive elements. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) hosted an Informal Meeting of Education Ministers in Osnabrück on 16-17 September.

The Bonn Declaration is available [here](#)

Further information

<https://www.bmbf.de/en/germany-s-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union-2020-11935.htm>



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https://www.bmbf.de/upload_filestore/pub/Programme_of_Germanys_Presidency_of_the_Council_of_the_European_Union_in_the_Fields_of_Education_Research_and_Innovation.pdf

<https://www.bmbf.de/de/forschen-in-europa-278.html>

<https://www.eu2020.de/eu2020-en>