

Norwegen: Verstärkter Fokus auf Norwegens Beteiligung an EU-Forschungsprogrammen

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Englischsprachiger Artikel des Norwegischen Forschungsrats über die geplante stärkere Beteiligung Norwegens an den EU- Forschungsrahmenprogrammen und die Rolle der Innovationsunion.

The national budget for 2011 signals a need for the Research Council to strengthen its efforts to include participation in the EU Framework Programmes in its activities across the board.

The Government has urged the Research Council to place greater focus on integrating participation in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development into the Research Council's own programmes and initiatives. At the same time there are indications that the EU is about to launch a campaign to bring more companies into an integrated research and innovation initiative.

"We are taking these signals very seriously," says Arvid Hallén, Director General of the Research Council.

More than financial gain

Norway's involvement in European research collaboration has been extremely successful in several fields, with participation particularly high in the fields of environmental and energy research. Overall Norway lies above the European average in terms of the number of projects involving Norwegian participation. However, some have questioned whether the return that Norway receives is sufficient in relation to its investment in the form of membership fees.

"Participation in European research activities is more about providing good networking opportunities, ensuring quality and promoting knowledge-sharing than about financial gain," says Mr Hallén. "The Research Council is already engaged in a broad-based effort to promote increased participation in EU research activities and to create better synergies between this and our other activities. Each field has its own national contact person (NCP), who acts as a liaison between the EU arena, the research programmes and our users. We see also that we can do more to promote regional-level applications and are now taking steps to increase competency among our regional representatives all over the country."

"In the future we must also give more thought to how tasks are divided between national initiatives and EU-led research," says Mr Hallén.

Enlisting companies

Ensuring the participation of trade and industry in European research cooperation has been an important aim. Efforts to achieve this are now being strengthened through a number of new initiatives.

"The most important new development is the introduction of the Innovation Union," says Simen Ensby, Director of the EU RTD Department at the Research Council. This initiative was recently launched by the leadership of the European Commission and encompasses a number of measures designed to promote alliances between public and private actors, both to enhance competitiveness and employment, and to solve key social challenges.

"The Innovation Union must be seen as part of the effort towards developing the next framework programme for research. The Commission's Directorate-General for Research has already been reorganised, with greater emphasis placed on innovation, and Máire Geoghegan-Quinn as Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science. The Innovation Union will open up a significant arena for trade and industry and we expect the results and new standards to benefit the participants. It is crucial that Norwegian companies are on the ball, ready to seize the opportunities on offer," says Mr Ensby.

"The new Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI) will also have a strong focus on innovation, with companies playing an active role in the programmes. The Joint Programming Initiative is a positive development, but should also be seen as a sign that a greater proportion of national research funding will be allocated through international competition in the future. This will enhance the quality of research, lead to better utilisation of resources and generate more knowledge in a European perspective, but it also presents a major challenge for national research communities," Mr Ensby concludes.

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