

European Commissioner for research and innovation: Energy alliance marks a decisive break from the past

Speaking at the annual congress of the European Energy Research Alliance, EERA, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, European Commissioner for Research and Innovation pointed to EERA as an excellent example for how European Joint Programming initiatives in research can move from agenda setting to implementation.

Reflecting on the challenges Europe faces in energy related research and innovation, Mrs. Quinn stated that

“It is more important than ever to collaborate at European level to address these challenges. It is therefore very welcome that in just five years the [European Energy Research, ed.] Alliance has made a decisive break from the past in the way research resources are used in Europe”.

The EERA congress was a good opportunity to take stock of the alliance’s achievements over the last five years. One of the observations was the completely new way of coordinating research within the EU, which EERA represents. The previously fragmented research landscape in Europe is gradually being replaced by national energy research alliances to align national priorities and activities amongst EERA members and the individual EERA Joint programmes have strengthened project coordination across borders. Additionally, in 2014 five of the EERA joint programmes launched EU funded Integrated Research Programmes which will take coordination to a new level.

EERA represents the public research pillar of the EU Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-plan) that Commissioner Quinn’s General Directorate for Research and Innovation has been instrumental in implementing. In her video message to the 250 delegates at the EERA Annual congress in Brussels on April 9th, the Commissioner stressed the important role of EERA in helping to ensure an increased commitment from member state funds to achieve the SET-plan goal of accelerating the uptake of low carbon technologies in Europe. Representing the UK in the SET-plan Steering Committee, Paul Durrant from the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) commented that

“The SET Plan Steering Committee members see EERA as a key pillar of the SET Plan and value highly the work done to date. As the SET Plan moves to a new phase with the development of the Integrated Roadmap and Action Plan we must ensure that EERA also develops. EERA needs to shape its future and Member States and the Commission need to work together to ensure that EERA has the resources to deliver in support of the Roadmap”.

The EU SET-plan was launched in 2007 with the aim to accelerate the development and market uptake of low carbon technologies. Established in 2008, the EERA forms the public research pillar of the SET-plan. For more information about the SET-plan please visit http://ec.europa.eu/energy/technology/set_plan/set_plan_en.htm

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