



STATEMENT ON THE NEW EUROPEAN INNOVATION AGENDA

TOWARDS AN INNOVATION-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

The Dutch knowledge community, associated in Neth-ER, welcomes the initiative of the New European Innovation Agenda, and supports the Commission in its effort to increase the innovation capacity of the EU to achieve the twin transitions.

Financial commitment essential

Accelerating the development of the Innovation Agenda to build a pan-European knowledge and innovation infrastructure and kick-start private investment requires financial commitment at EU, national, regional and institutional level. So far the EU member states have failed to agree on a binding target for investments in RD&I, while the newest Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard again shows the need for the EU to anchor its position globally. In particular, we advise to increase late-stage investments in order to better support start-ups to scale up. Investing in a European innovation ecosystem starts with substantial investment in education, research and innovation. This means extra funding and no shifting of funding.

European innovation ecosystem

Creating an innovation-friendly environment requires commitment from the Commission and member states. The twin transitions offer great societal and economic opportunities to deploy and scale up innovative technologies across the EU if the right conditions are created. Current cross-border regulatory bottlenecks for innovation ecosystems can be identified and tackled in close cooperation with the knowledge, innovation and business sectors. An innovation-friendly environment also requires better checks on the impact of EU legislation on innovation, such as: digital legislation, ERA and the upcoming Valorization Strategy and Technology Infrastructures Strategy. Consistent application of the innovation principle will ensure that future legislation creates the conditions for innovation to flourish.

Work with a value chain approach

We underline the importance of a value chain approach and advise to include all innovation actors: vocational education, universities of applied sciences, universities and research & technology organizations. Cooperation by these actors in public-private partnerships builds regional ecosystems around all levels of education, research and innovation, penetrating the very fabric of the economy. A value chain approach also means creating TRL pathways, starting from fundamental to applied research and continuing to the market uptake of innovation. In line with this, towards widespread technology adoption, especially by SMEs, technology infrastructures play a central role. We urge the Commission to streamline and converge the current innovation landscape of the EU and national agendas by seeking synergies. Integrating regional ecosystems into a pan-EU knowledge ecosystem calls for further integration and strategic support for innovation at EU level. An integral value chain approach must be used in collaboration with society and include scouting and guidance.



Prominent place for skills

Green and digital innovation depends on the human capital and talents who develop innovations, bring new technology to the market and provide feedback on their application. Therefore, skills need to gain a prominent place in the Innovation Agenda. Neth-ER underlines the importance of including education and training, upskilling and reskilling in transition pathways and developing a strategy for vocational and higher education and business-education partnerships within regional industrial clusters to boost skills and enhance the uptake of ready-for-market innovations by SMEs. Centres of Vocational Excellence and European Universities can be innovation drivers when instrumented in a strategic long-term approach with sufficient financial means. In this context and with their specific role in bringing technology closer to the market, RTOs are also a strong vehicle for skills development across all TRLs, disciplines and competencies.

