



L2L

**Sustainable Neighbourhood –
from Lisbon to Leipzig through Research**

8 - 10 May 2007, Leipzig

4th BMBF Forum for Sustainability

German EU Council Presidency



The Lisbon to Leipzig Declaration: Promoting a sustainable and competitive Europe through Research

Vision

To position research in support of sustainability as an engine for European competitiveness within the Lisbon Agenda.

Preamble

1. Lisbon Agenda. The Lisbon Agenda was launched at the European Council in March 2000 with the aim of making the EU a leading knowledge-based economy in the world. To achieve this, research will have to play a central role in developing the European society and economy (“knowledge society”).

2. Role of Research. Europe will need to put economic development on a sustainable footing. Research is indispensable for reconciling development with the preservation of our natural environment: it has to analyse the basic conditions of our life, to contribute to the development of innovation and new technologies and to their diffusion, and to develop tools and instruments for enhancing the quality of life as an integral part of development. Research contributes to an open and democratic society and thus acts in favour of sustainable development. To achieve this, the research process must itself be transparent and pluralistic.

3. Research for Sustainability. Research has to address key challenges that sustainable development poses: high degrees of uncertainty and complexity, intra- and intergenerational equity, functional and spatial interdependencies, long time horizons, decoupling of the use of resources and economic growth, and the large-scale and potentially irreversible harm caused by environmental threats such as global climate change and biodiversity loss.

4. New forms of research and involvement. Mobilising research for sustainability also requires new and additional efforts to promote integration of research and involvement of research in complex decision-making. We call upon the European research community and policy-makers to take up the challenge of sustainability research.



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Commitments of the European Research Community

5. Focus on complex problems and integrated approaches. European research commits itself to focusing on the challenges of securing our common future; it will tackle the complex problems of global change in environment, society, and economy. Addressing complexity requires researchers to take the ecological, economic, and social side-effects of societal and economic developments into account in a life-cycle perspective, and to develop systematic answers to humanity's global challenges. Ultimately, research should contribute to changes in our patterns of consumption and production in such a way that we use energy and natural resources more efficiently and sustainably.

6. Disciplinary excellence and interdisciplinarity. Research of this nature requires disciplinary excellence and interdisciplinary orientation. Science relevant to sustainability requires an explicit orientation towards societal needs. European researchers commit themselves to further developing basic research as well as knowledge that is of relevance to solving problems in society and economy. Interdisciplinarity is required not only within but also between the natural sciences, the social sciences and engineering.

7. Cooperation within research. European researchers commit themselves to fostering cooperation between different research organisations (e.g. universities, research institutes, industry) across Europe and third countries. The aim is to effectively bring together research expertise and to bundle resources.

8. Dialogue between science and society. European researchers commit themselves to a dialogue with society – companies, authorities, non-governmental organisations, citizens groups etc. involved in sustainable development, at all levels. Taking the science-policy interface seriously means realising that research is one contributor to societal decisions, and developing research agendas in cooperation with stakeholders, as well as ensuring that societal knowledge is taken into account in the research process.

9. Training young researchers. The European scientific community encourages fresh ideas and the production of new knowledge, especially with a view of training, motivating and encouraging young researchers to take on greater role in research for sustainability.



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Expectations from European research policy

10. Encourage independent research. In order to remain innovative and competitive worldwide, the European scientific community requires support for independent and critical research. Independent research that explores completely new issues and solutions provides a basis for addressing the needs of future generations and Europe's global responsibility.

11. Supporting research excellence. European research policy has to provide continuous and long-term support for excellence in basic and applied research. In order to promote science for sustainability, policy-makers should focus on setting medium to long-term priorities and ensuring the necessary research infrastructure. Within this framework, the scientific community should set its research agenda and respond to research demands at different timescales. Creating a competitive and sustainable future for Europe requires long-term policy frameworks combined with academic autonomy.

12. Interdisciplinary projects. European research policy should set the right incentives for problem-oriented inter- and transdisciplinary research. At the European level, collaborative research projects and networks as funded by the Framework Programmes have opened a new level of cooperation across scientific communities and disciplinary boundaries. Support for such problem-oriented, inter- and transdisciplinary projects should continue on a long-term basis within the European Research Area.

13. Foster science-policy interfaces. European research policy should foster dialogues between science and society. This does not only imply the transfer and application of scientific results in society, but also the strengthening of societal actors in discussing research priorities and including stakeholder knowledge in interpreting research outcomes. Future policy needs to integrate different forms of knowledge across different policy fields. The special role of science identified in the Lisbon Agenda should be reflected in more extensive science-policy dialogues.