

Feedback from: European Molecular Biology Laboratory

Feedback reference

F538793

Submitted on

21 July 2020

Submitted by

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User type

Academic/research Institution

Organisation

European Molecular Biology Laboratory

Organisation size

Large (250 or more)

Country of origin

Germany

Initiative

[Research & innovation – future of the European Research Area \(communication\) \(/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12495-Research-innovation-future-of-the-European-Research-Area-communication-\)](#)

Since its inception in 2000, the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) has been a strong supporter of the European Research Area (ERA) and the efforts put in place by the European Commission (EC) and the EU Member States to bring it to completion. EMBL took many steps to contribute to all previous priorities towards completion of the ERA. As the EC is moving towards revitalising the ERA, EMBL will aim to support it, as well as Member States in their work.

EMBL strongly believes that Research Infrastructures (RIs) should be the cornerstone of the new ERA paradigm proposed by the ERAC Working Group, and are also extremely well positioned to address both the digital and the green transitions, which will help the European Union recover from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Regarding the digital transition, the availability of high quality data is, more than ever before, central to all aspects of research and innovation. Only RIs can ensure that these data are expertly generated, curated, managed, integrated, visualised, and shared to enable science and benefit society. As shown by the use of EMBL's data and experimental services during the COVID-19 Pandemic, RIs will be crucial for research that lead to prevention and mitigation strategies. The COVID-19 Data Portal (www.covid19dataportal.org) hosted by EMBL-EBI in collaboration with the EC and partners has been key in accelerating SARS-CoV-2 research.

Acknowledging that the EU Green Deal has become a main feature in the pandemic recovery, EMBL recognises the necessity of an interdisciplinary and overarching approach to the recovery of the Union, which only RIs can facilitate across the EU. Moreover, bringing offsite scientific services and training to all Member States will also boost green transition. EMBL is developing its future scientific strategy considering the need for the life sciences to offer scientific discoveries and evidence that can help prevent, respond to, and recover from the current and potential future pandemics. EMBL's vision is to apply its molecular expertise and leverage its pan-European network to study 'life in context', at a molecular level. Future research areas will be highly collaborative and interdisciplinary, beneficial for Member States, and relevant to pressing environmental and societal challenges. In line with EMBL's open science and open data mandate, these research outputs will be available for use and further development by MS and beyond.

As recently highlighted by Commissioner Gabriel, there are discrepancies regarding a geographical concentration of R&I investments and funding, which might leave other regions behind, and lead to further brain drain. EMBL is in favour of new measures enhancing scientific cooperation, networking, and partnership building within Europe as well as between Europe and the rest of the world, as exhibited by EMBL's work on multiple Teaming & Twinning projects. Scientific excellence should remain front and centre when addressing this. In addition, in order to tackle this issue moving forward, increasing researchers' mobility is key. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions are one of the best tools to ensure brain circulation works for all Member States. A revitalised ERA should enhance support of these Actions.

In conclusion, EMBL is convinced that the availability of centralised RIs in different countries in Europe must remain a key basis to allow cutting-edge research to flourish under a revitalised ERA. To foster this, awareness of the available services of RIs needs to be raised, and financial and human capital needs to be invested. New technologies need to be made available to a wider and non-expert scientific community across all EU MS. The long-term sustainability of RIs, both in terms of running costs and talent acquisition, needs to be secured. It is EMBL's view that the upcoming communication on the ERA should support this, call on Member States to do so as well, and potentially suggest relevant policies.