

PRESS RELEASE: ISE welcomes Commissioner Iliana Ivanova

Strasbourg, October 12, 2023

ISE congratulates **Iliana Ivanova** on her appointment as Commissioner in charge of Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. Her European experience as MEP and in the European Court of Auditors but also at national level, renders her highly qualified for the position as she demonstrated during the hearing in the European Parliament through her capacity to master a vast number of very diverse subjects which are important for the scientific community but not only. ISE trusts she can give, even in the short term, a new political impulse to several crucial issues in her broad portfolio.

ISE urges Iliana Ivanova to guarantee continuity of R&I programmes and ambitions and budget and wishes her audacity and resolution to accelerate the construction of the European Research Area. ISE and its members are ready to work with her and her team and services on the priorities identified for the running and coming framework programmes, and towards further consolidating the European Research Area.

1° The **equitable and fair participation of all researchers across Europe** is a major issue for the EU and its neighbours. It is of course essential to stick to the **principle of excellence** that governs the framework programmes, but, at present, the existing pool of outstanding researchers who are present in less visible regions is not sufficiently considered. We advocate for a series of measures to transform the present “Widening participation” programmes into an inclusive and more visible set of actions, but most importantly broadening the access to all EU funding programmes.

2° **Basic research is essential for advancing knowledge, but it is also the foundation which allows innovation to thrive.** We feel that more should be done to support it, by giving more weight to MSCA and ERC, but also including **collaborative basic research** as a fundamental feature of disruptive advancements, in the present and in the future framework programme.

3° ISE considers EU’s push for a **reform of research assessment** in the context of the transition to Open Science, and the choice of a voluntary coalition (CoARA) are very encouraging. As we argued in our position paper on that topic, to have a positive impact, the **transition must be driven by the researchers themselves.**

4° ISE is **deeply worried about the present state of researchers’ careers.** There are many warning signs that talented young people are turning away from careers in research. This represents a major threat for European sovereignty: without them Europe will lose competitiveness on a global level in number of areas of research and innovation **essential for the economy of our continent, citizen’s well-being, democracy, and peace for all.**

Their decisions are understandable: in too many countries in Europe, and not only those which invest less in Science and Technology, the basic conditions to pursue a PhD and further engage in a research career are not met: poor intellectual environment or working conditions, inadequate facilities, low salaries, or more importantly long term precarity of career paths (which is particularly harmful for women, vulnerable groups and other minorities, as well as researchers from a lower socio-economic status). ISE has called for a decisive action at the EU level by publishing in September 2022 a [Manifesto to support early career researchers](#).

The European Commission can play a decisive role in addressing this challenge, and we would be very happy if Commissioner Ivanova would demonstrate her support to **put in place a dedicated programme** together with the European Parliament, the member countries and stakeholders (universities, national research performing organisations, and companies) in the next framework programme. This perspective would open a ray of hope for our young colleagues and the scientific community at large.

Last but not least, ISE considers **urgent to take measures to address threats against researchers and academic freedom**.

Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) is an independent platform bringing together learned societies and European scientific research organisations, operating throughout all disciplines and across all sectors, which played a decisive role in the creation of the European Research Council (ERC).

ISE has since then successfully advocated for a greater role for science in Europe, and effectively supports common causes essential for European scientific research communities, shaping European science policies and stimulating the involvement of European researchers in the design and implementation of European Research Area.

You can find more about ISE [here](#).

Contact: Monica Dietl, Research Director, Executive Coordinator
monica.dietl@initiative-se.eu
