

European Research and Innovation Days annual event: participation report

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Event aims and objectives

European Research and Innovation Days held on days 22-24th September 2020 is the European Commission's annual flagship event, bringing together policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and citizens to debate and shape the future of research and innovation in Europe and beyond. This year according to the world situation, it was an entirely virtual event with the Policy conference and online science exhibition. The world gathering cautions is visibly transforming the universe of scientists and investigators, business and financial matters, and general well-being, and a lot more by giving subtleties of occasions and conferences essentially dependent on information trade and exploration sharing ideas. Although networking options are naturally limited, a broader spectrum of participants is drawn by these simulated events.

Three days of the intensive event have served as a unique opportunity to discuss how research and innovation will benefit Europe's future and a collective push for science to spark new ideas and all sectors in Europe and beyond. At the heart of the European Research and Innovation Days were the policy conference. Wide-reaching plenary sessions have situated key issues on the international stage and explore the vital links between them. The rest of the meeting was divided into ten central hubs (i.g. Policy, Green Deal, a Europe fit for the Digital Age, Horizon Europe, EU missions, Smart Implementation and Synergy, International Cooperation, European Innovation Council, European Institute of Innovation and Technology, European Research Council), each covering a central theme in EU research and innovation policy, from the European Green Deal to digitalization and smart implementation.

Keynote presentations

An introductory word has had the General Director of Research and Innovation (R&I) at the European Commission Jean-Eric Paquet, saying that without R&I, it isn't possible to make Green Deal, post-COVID recovery, carbon neutrality, or any global changes. The next representative word had the Commissioner for Innovation, research, culture, and education Maria Gabriel, which pointed out that EU Missions will be proposed within the five essential areas: fighting cancer, adapting to climate change, living in greener cities, ensuring soil health, and protecting our oceans.

One of the opening speeches of the R&I days had the German Federal Minister of Education and Research Anja Karliczek, which talked about the importance of the R&I days to demonstrate the cooperation of researchers and European citizens worldwide. Pandemic time showed that the condition of our society is vulnerable. The climate conditions which are changing every year are proof of that as well. Research and innovation are the key challenges of our time that allows us to hold our ground.

The European Green Deal commits the EU to become climate-neutral by 2050 while promising to help companies become world leaders in clean products and green technologies. The ambitious and wide-ranging measures set out in the plan aim to achieve significant reductions in carbon emissions, and a net-zero target will be given legislative force in a new Climate Law.

Some of the key measures in the Green Deal include:

- Energy – promotion and integration of renewable energy sources, decarbonization of energy-intensive industries, and a sustainable products policy targeting resource-intensive sectors such as textiles;
- Buildings - a focus on renovating existing buildings to improve energy efficiency;
- Transport – measures to support cleaner, greener, and alternative transport methods, to achieve a 90% reduction of emissions from the sector;
- Agriculture/fisheries – measures to support biodiversity, reduce the use of harmful chemicals, improve food processing, packaging and waste;
- Pollution – planned launch of a new zero pollution plan in 2021 covering air, water, and soil, to better monitor, report, prevent, and remedy pollution.

For our research group, the most important was participating and collecting information about the Farm to Fork strategy, biodiversity, and Soil health mission areas.

The Commission notes that the new Biodiversity Strategy will also include a new forest strategy with the aim of preserving and restoring existing forests and creating new ones, with a focus on the impact of wood and timber products placed on the EU market. The Commission's aim is for European food to become "the global standard for sustainability." The "Farm to Fork" communication was published in May 2020. The Green Deal approach addresses all stages of the food chain, from primary production of animal and plant foods, through consumer food choices and food waste. Member States' national strategic plans for agriculture should focus on and reward performance rather than compliance.

Summary

In light of on-going developments with COVID-19, this event took place in a fully online mode. However, the conference offered an excellent opportunity to interact and make essential contacts for further cooperation for many researchers worldwide. This event provided an opportunity to learn about new strategies in a more sustainable food policy, protecting biodiversity and tackling climate changes.

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