



Norwegian contributions to the shaping of the Multiannual Framework programme 2002-2006 of the European Community for Research, Technological development and Demonstration activities aimed at contributing towards the creation of the European Research Area

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Dear Commissioner,

With reference to the EEA-agreement which regulates the participation of the EFTA-states in the Framework Programme, we would like to comment on the Commission proposal COM (2001) 94 Final. We trust that our comments may be of relevance to the current discussions in the Member states, as well as to the Commission's preparation of working documents on the specific programmes

Our comments are based on an extensive, nation-wide hearing, conducted in collaboration with the Research Council of Norway. Relevant research institutions, universities and industrial companies in Norway, as well as relevant Ministries have been consulted. The results of these consultations are reflected in the Annex to this letter.

Our views presented here are in accordance with the general views conveyed in our letters of 22 May and 18 December 2000, taking into account the Commission's Communication COM(2000)612 final and the Commission's first ERA Communication.

Main points

In our view, the new Framework Programme addresses central economic, cultural and societal challenges that Europe will be facing the coming years. We fully endorse the main objective of making a reality of the European Research Area (ERA) in order to give a substantial boost to research and innovation in Europe. The Framework Programme will be an important contribution to the development of scientific and technical excellence in Europe.

Norway agrees with the basic principles for realising the 6th Framework programme, namely

- concentrating on a limited number of priority thematic areas;