

4.25. Chapter 25: Science and research

In the area of **research policy**, the Business Innovation and Technology Transfer Strategy for the period 2011-16 was approved with the aim of increasing the capacities of Albanian SMEs to develop, use, adapt and commercialise technology which contributes to the Innovation Union. The Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation (ARTI), established in 2010, is now operational. The level of investment in research is still very low (estimated at 0.2% of GDP in 2010).

With regard to Albania's participation in the 7th EU **research framework programme** (FP7), ARTI has increased its capacities and also raised awareness and shared information on participation in research programmes with the EU and other international partners. ARTI has organized training sessions, workshops and FP7 information days, and e-communication channels have also been used for dissemination purposes.

Administrative capacity has been improved by the appointment of National Contact Points (NCPs) and representatives in most FP7 management committees. The NCPs have taken part in several network events and training sessions organized by the European Commission.

The number of submissions has increased, but the number of successful FP7 projects funded is still low. Albania should continue its efforts in implementing the Memorandum on Association to the FP7 and in closely monitoring its participation. Further efforts are required in particular with respect to human capital building (Marie Curie Actions), involvement of SMEs in research and innovation, and scientific excellence in general.

ARTI became a member of the Central and South-Eastern Europe Network for Research Innovation and Business that aims to encourage and facilitate cooperation among private and public institutions focusing on research and development within and outside the EU. ARTI also became a member of the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMT). As part of the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), Albania is establishing the LIFE-WATCH national centre.

As regards integration into the **European Research Area** (ERA), the implementation of the National Strategy on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) 2009–2015 slow. The establishment of centres of excellence is still under consideration and only very limited action has been taken to improve mobility of scientists. The database of scientists working in the country has been updated, but the database of Albanian scientists working abroad still needs to be set up. Albania has nominated its observer delegates to all the ERA governance bodies, but is not attending on a regular basis due to lack of administrative capacity. The amount of investment in research is difficult to monitor due to the lack of reliable statistics on science and technology.

Conclusion

Overall, Albania has done a great deal to increase research cooperation with the EU and other stakeholders, but has not taken sufficient measures to strengthen the research capacity at national level. With the establishment of ARTI, the necessary administrative capacity to participate in FP7 has been improved. Concerted efforts are required in order to facilitate Albania's integration into the European Research Area by, amongst others, increasing public and private sector investment in research and strengthening human capital. A start should be made on preparations to contribute to the Innovation Union.