

Rome Declaration on Responsible Research and Innovation in Europe

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is the on-going process of aligning research and innovation to the values, needs and expectations of society.

Decisions in research and innovation must consider the principles on which the European Union is founded, i.e. the respect of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

RRI requires that all stakeholders including civil society are responsive to each other and take shared responsibility for the processes and outcomes of research and innovation. This means working together in: science education; the definition of research agendas; the conduct of research; the access to research results; and the application of new knowledge in society- in full respect of gender equality, the gender dimension in research and ethics considerations¹.

More than a decade of research and pilot activities on the interplay between science and society points to three main findings. First, we cannot achieve technology acceptance by way of good marketing. Second, diversity in research and innovation as well as the gender perspective is vital for enhancing creativity and improving scientific quality. And third, early and continuous engagement of all stakeholders is essential for sustainable, desirable and acceptable innovation. Hence, excellence today is about more than ground-breaking discoveries – it includes openness, responsibility and the co-production of knowledge.

The benefits of Responsible Research and Innovation go beyond alignment with society: it ensures that research and innovation deliver on the promise of smart, inclusive and sustainable solutions to our societal challenges; it engages new perspectives, new innovators and new talent from across our diverse European society, allowing to identify solutions which would otherwise go unnoticed; it builds trust between citizens, and public and private institutions in supporting research and innovation; and it reassures society about embracing innovative products and services; it assesses the risks and the way these risks should be managed.

European regions and countries are already engaged in this approach. Societal demands for ambitious environmental policies led to creative social and technological innovations such as fuel efficient vehicles, solar devices or mobility and recycling solutions based on sharing.

Therefore, we, the participants and organisers of the conference "Science, Innovation and Society: achieving Responsible Research and Innovation" held in Rome on 19-21 November 2014 under the auspices of the Italian Presidency, consider it as our collective duty to further promote Responsible Research and Innovation in an integrated way.

We call on European Institutions, EU Member States and their R&I Funding and Performing Organisations, business and civil society to make Responsible Research and Innovation a central objective across all relevant policies and activities, including in shaping the European Research Area and the Innovation Union.

The present declaration builds on the 2009 Lund Declaration, which called for an emphasis on societal challenges, and on the 2013 Vilnius Declaration, which underlined that a resilient partnership with all relevant actors is required if research is to serve society.

We believe the conditions are now right for responsible research and innovation to underpin European research and innovation endeavour and therefore call on all stakeholders to work together for inclusive and sustainable solutions to our societal challenges.

¹ A description of the six dimensions of RRI can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/responsible-research-and-innovation-leaflet_en.pdf

Call for action:

We call on European Institutions, Member States, Regional Authorities and Research and Innovation Funding Organisations to:

- Build capacity for RRI by:
 - Promoting and securing resources for RRI activities at the national, regional and local level;
 - Integrating RRI in the design and implementation of research and innovation programmes;
 - Networking existing initiatives that support RRI knowhow, expertise and competence, within and between EU Member States and between sectors;
 - Supporting global RRI initiatives in view of the global nature of our grand challenges.
- Review and adapt metrics and narratives for research and innovation by:
 - Monitoring the performance of Research and Innovation Funding and Performing Organisations with respect to RRI as well as the socio-economic impacts of RRI;
 - Providing guidelines for the implementation and assessment of RRI;
 - Setting and communicating a forward looking vision of RRI.

We call on public and private Research and Innovation Performing Organisations to:

- Implement institutional changes that foster RRI by:
 - Reviewing their own procedures and practices in order to identify possible RRI barriers and opportunities at organisation level;
 - Creating experimental spaces to engage civil society actors in the research process as sources of knowledge and partners in innovation;
 - Developing and implementing strategies and guidelines for the acknowledgment and promotion of RRI;
 - Adapting curricula and developing trainings to foster awareness, know-how, expertise and competence of RRI;
 - Including RRI criteria in the evaluation and assessment of research staff.