Co-operation and funding critical for ERA

The EU’s Lisbon strategy aims to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. To achieve this, though, there must be better co-operation across the European Research Area (ERA) and a higher level of R&D funding for Information and Communications Technology (ICT), says Paul Mehring, chairman of the ITEA board and former head of research for DaimlerChrysler.

“Critical issue number one,” says Paul Mehring, “is a need for better co-operation between the Commission’s Framework Programme, inter-governmental initiatives such as EUREKA and the national programmes. As a practical first step forward, EUREKA clusters ITEA and MEDEA+ have jointly proposed a ‘Strategic Domains Concept’, which focuses on providing pragmatic mechanisms for co-operation across key areas for European competitiveness – the digital home, mobile and automotive sectors, for example.

“Critical issue number two is the significant gap in ICT R&D investment levels relative to the US and Japan. To overcome this the EU and all member states must increase public and private R&D investment in ICT and play a more active role in, and on behalf of, ERA as providers of most of the public investment.”

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