

#### 4.25. Chapter 25: Science and research

There has been limited progress in **research and innovation policy**. The Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation (ARTI) has strengthened its administrative capacity and continued its efforts to promote cooperation on research and innovation under the Seventh EU Framework Programme through its website and awareness-raising activities. No progress was made towards integration into the European Research Area and contribution to the Innovation Union was limited. The national level of investment in research and technological development is still very low and has not increased since 2010, despite the targets set in the national strategy for science, technology and innovation for 2009-2015.

With respect to Albania's participation in the EU's Seventh **Framework Programme** (FP7), the number of submissions increased, but the number of successful FP7 projects funded is still very low. ARTI stepped up its promotion efforts and training sessions, attended several EU networking events and actively followed the work on the WBC.INCO.NET project under FP7. ARTI has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with Italy, Greece, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia and Turkey.

As regards integration into the **European Research Area** (ERA), there has been little progress on implementation of the national strategy on science, technology and innovation.

Some measures have been taken to strengthen human capital-building, such as increasing the Fund for Excellence stimulating external mobility, establishing the national Euraxess Portal (ARTI) and starting to set up a network. No progress was made on establishing centres of excellence. There was no increase in the level of investment in research and no action to stimulate investment in research and innovation by the private sector or to support private public partnerships.

In addition, the level of investment in research as a share of GDP is difficult to establish due to the lack of reliable statistics. The national funding for research has not increased but the system has improved thanks to a new selection process for projects to be funded directly by the departments. However, no international peer review is being applied so far. The Albanian Business Research and Innovation Centre (AIDA) started to stimulate innovation by entrepreneurs by granting technology audits to SMEs with innovative ideas. This action is in line with the EU Innovation Union flagship.

#### *Conclusion*

There was little progress in the area of science and research. Further efforts are required at national level to strengthen the research and innovation capacity and increase the country's competitiveness. The level of investment in research remains very low and the human capital building requires strengthening. Overall, preparations are not very advanced.