

4.25. Chapter 25: Science and research

As regards **research and innovation policy**, some actions to stimulate innovation and to strengthen human capital building have been taken. The Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation (ARTI) has stepped up the actions to promote participation in EU research programmes but overall the success rate is still very low. The national budget for research slightly increased but the level of investment in research and technological development is still very low. Increased financial resources are required in particular to strengthen the capacities and modernise infrastructure.

With respect to Albania's participation in the EU Seventh research **Framework Programme** (FP7), ARTI has increased the promotion efforts and support for the scientific community but the overall level of participation and success rate (13%) is still very low. Due to budgetary constraints, ARTI's participation in EU networking events has decreased. ARTI engaged in bilateral cooperation with Italy, Greece, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia and Turkey. For the first time information day on the Joint Research Centre took place in Tirana. ARTI started preparations for participation in the EU's next research framework programme Horizon 2020. As regards integration into the **European Research Area** (ERA), some steps have been taken to build up human capital, mainly through increasing the resources of the Fund for Excellence and extending the Brain Gain programme in cooperation with the UNDP. ARTI is successfully implementing the Euraxess portal. Funding research on Albanian language and history has been recognised as a priority theme. Due to the lack of reliable statistics it remains difficult to establish the level of investment in research as a share of GDP which is around 0.35% of GDP. The contribution of the private sector and SMEs in research and technological development in particular is very limited. With respect to the Innovation Union, the Business Relay and Innovation Centre within the Albanian Investment and Development Agency (BRIC/AIDA) continued to stimulate innovation by entrepreneurs with an increasing number of technology audits and measures targeting SMEs.

Conclusion

There has been very little progress in the area of science and research. Further capacity building and investment in research are required to ensure integration into the European Research Area and contributing to the Innovation Union. Increased efforts for successful participation in the EU's next research framework programme Horizon 2020 will also be necessary. Overall, preparations are not sufficiently advanced.