



## 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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### Stop press

- ITEA's 6th Call for Projects is now open – if you are seeking partners for a project or would like to join one, visit the programme's new, free online partner search service at [www.itea-office.org](http://www.itea-office.org) (click on 'Partner search' on the home page).

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## Topical RISURSIM at CeBIT



↘ With flood prevention high on the agenda for many European cities, EUREKA project E! 2255 RISURSIM is certain to attract particular attention at CeBIT 2003

(12-19 March), the world's biggest IT and communications fair, where EUREKA will be sharing the stand of the German Ministry for Education and Research in Hall 11. This timely flood management project has developed computer models to help local authorities and environment agencies plan water management and drainage strategies in a bid to reduce city flooding, costly clean-up bills and perhaps even insurance premiums. Additional information about RISURSIM can be found at [www.eureka.be/success-stories](http://www.eureka.be/success-stories).

Some of EUREKA's clusters (e.g. EURIMUS and CARE) and umbrellas (e.g. EULASNET and EUROLEARN) will be presented at CeBIT on 13 March at a separate stand B14/1, Hall 11.

## A benchmark for R&D trends

↘ Members of the EU Competitiveness Council met in Brussels in November where they agreed to 'listen more' to each other when implementing national research policies in order to reduce fragmentation and aid the establishment of the European Research Area. The Danish Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Helge Sander (right), also proposed the introduction of more concrete mechanisms to provide more systematic co-ordination of Europe's research and innovation efforts, "So that we know who is doing what. We now have a commitment on the side of the Member States to go further with this."



Effective co-ordination is paramount if Europe's research communities are to keep up with the latest scientific and technological developments. The Competitiveness Council's intention is to take stock of the total research effort once a year and it presented the first result of a comparison of national research policies in June 2001. Benchmarking tools were used to grade the countries' research; while, for example, the level of Danish research proved to be high, Danish research investments were proportionally lower compared to investments in the other member states.