

## ***Press release of advisory report 50*** **TOWARDS A NEW CONTRACT BETWEEN RESEARCH AND SOCIETY**

**The Dutch economy and society urgently need a powerful impulse for research. That calls for additional investment, but more importantly, for an increase in political and social commitment to science and technology, the Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT) writes in its advisory report "Towards a new social contract".**

Public research institutions, such as universities and the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), are under enormous pressure. They are increasingly expected to provide solutions to economic and social problems. To this end, they are urged to focus more sharply on the outside world. In addition, public research institutes have been given the specific task of disseminating new insights and techniques to interest parties and the wider public.

The AWT agrees with this policy towards research institutes, but feels it is lopsided. A tighter focus by research institutes on economic and social problems will have little effect as long as other groups in society do too little themselves. Research institutes cannot integrate research into the social fabric alone. Other actors in society must seek interaction with them. They must make it clear what research they need and be open to new possibilities and answers.

Based on this premise the AWT presents four recommendations addressed to the same number of parties:

- Political leaders must place science and innovation high on the political agenda. Political commitment and a mandate are essential for a top-class knowledge-based society. The government must emphasise the importance of science and innovation and act accordingly.
- Social partners must make firm agreements to stimulate science and innovation. This must be a topic during socio-economic consultations.
- A greater degree of concerted action for science and innovation in the public sector is needed. Where measures conflict with each other, the government must bring cohesion to the policy. The government must also provide a powerful impulse for research on social issues on the basis of an interdepartmental approach.
- Public research institutes must modernise further. They must focus their research more sharply, try to be more flexible in their programmes and allow more room for excellence. This calls for an effective science and innovation policy.

Many parties need to make a contribution if the Netherlands is to be built into a knowledge-based society to rank with the best in the world. The government must stimulate and coordinate these different contributions. The AWT therefore calls on the government to draft a master plan for the knowledge-based society and to provide supra-departmental direction in implementing it.

The AWT concludes its advice with an urgent plea for more investment in science and innovation. Today we are reaping the benefits of the investments and efforts made by previous generations. If we and the generations to come are also to reap the benefits, extra investment

is needed, not cutbacks. *Put your money where your mouth is.*

