



press release

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HCÉRES PUBLISHES THE CEA EVALUATION REPORT

On Friday 29 January, Hcéres published the evaluation report on the French Commission for Atomic and Alternative Energies (CEA). Produced by a panel of international experts, the analysis is accompanied by recommendations and focuses on the institutional positioning and strategy of the CEA, its governance and its various activities

A key player in higher education and research and in the European Research Area, the activities and operational organisation of the CEA are structured around four missions: national defence,¹ low-carbon energies, technologies for industry, and fundamental research.

Basing itself on a self-evaluation report "of a very high standard" and interviews with the partners and representatives of the management bodies of the CEA, the panel of experts chaired by Dominique Ristori, former Director General for Energy at the European Commission, underscored "the unique positioning of the CEA in France and in Europe, and the excellence of its fundamental and technological research, endowing it with the expertise required for its missions in nuclear power generation, in the management of very large infrastructures, and in supporting industry via technology transfer."

This excellence, the panel noted, "is demonstrated by the patents portfolio", the number of which filed in 2018 ranked the CEA in 4th position in France, and N°1 among the research bodies." The panel also observed that the CEA's civil activities, which are highly integrated into the European Research Area, have posted "an outstanding success rate in the Horizon 2020 programme, obtaining 8.9% of the funding allocated to France, while the CEA represents just 5.22% of French research spending.

In 2018, following the appointment of a new General Administrator, the CEA undertook a review of its strategy. "Thanks to its mastery of a very broad range of disciplines with many European and international connections, this review culminated, among other things, in a clear and legitimate positioning with a focus on the major societal transformations of our century: energy and climate, digital technologies, and the medicine of the future," found the panel. However, to take up these new challenges, the CEA is going to need to demonstrate "greater agility in its operations and more transversal scientific and technological approaches," it stated.

Although the excellence of its research contributes to making the CEA highly attractive to researchers, the panel considered that "it is of the utmost importance that the body should modernise its human resources and compensation policy, roll out targeted incentives for staff, and consolidate its core technical know-how."

Further to the evaluation, the panel made the following recommendations:

- Develop a more transversal, multidisciplinary approach within the organisation in order to succeed in addressing the energy and digital transitions and the challenge of the medicine of the future.
- Consolidate the medium-to-long-term plan and use it as the central tool for prioritising resources, steering activities, and for dialogue and management with the supervising ministries.

¹ Activity excluded from the scope of this evaluation.

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The French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres) is the independent administrative body responsible for evaluating all institutions of higher education and research, as well as approving the evaluation procedures implemented by other organisations. Through its analyses, evaluations and recommendations, it guides, advises and supports efforts to improve the quality of higher education and research in France.

- Regarding resource management, capitalise on a number of specific priority projects consolidating functional coordination within and between the operational directorates, and on information reporting in the functional directorates, for the purpose of facilitating centralised steering for the institution as a whole.
- Reinforce coordination with national, European and international partners around strategic trajectories.

“Just as the evaluation ends, the CEA is beginning the preparation of a new objectives contract for 2021-2025, which will be based on the scientific priorities set out in the report and the challenges highlighted in it, thus providing a sound foundation on which to move forward,” concluded François Jacq, General Administrator of the CEA, in his letter of comments.

FIND OUT MORE

📄 **Download the CEA evaluation report**

<http://hceres.fr/rapport-CEA-A2021>

📄 **The CEA in Brief**

- Status A French Public Commercial and Industrial Institution (EPIC) under the supervision of the Ministries for Energy, for Research, for Industry and for Defence.
- 2018 budget: €5.3 billion, of which €2.2 billion for civil applications;
- 2018 headcount and sites: 19,925 employees, of which 1,180 doctoral students and 170 post-docs, working in 9 centres of studies, of which 4 for civil applications (Paris-Saclay, Grenoble, Cadarache, Marcoule) and 6 regional technology transfer platforms.

The CEA is an integral part of the national research landscape with 42 mixed research units, an involvement in many large research infrastructures, and as a member of the 5 themed research alliances. It also takes part in several Carnot Institutes and Technological Research Institutes.