

KEY MESSAGES ON

THE NEXT GENERATION OF EU FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

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The universities of Science and Technology (S&T) united within [CESAER](#) with this statement offer key messages on the next generation of EU funding instruments from 2021 to 2027. They complement our [statement on the EC proposal for the Multi-annual Financial Framework](#), our [statement on the EC proposal for Horizon Europe](#) and [statement on the EC proposal for Erasmus](#). We herewith contribute to the ongoing debates in the inter-institutional negotiations.

OVERALL MESSAGES

- 1. Align EU Funding Programmes with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs):** We urge the European institutions to take a global approach, to prioritise UN SDGs, to align EU funding to them and, as a mechanism to ensure that the most innovative solutions are funded, ensure that calls for proposals are bottom-up and open. Incorporation of high-quality Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects is key to support interdisciplinary cooperation. The goal must be focused on advancing state-of-the-art solutions to global societal challenges, irrespective of discipline or sector. The less thematic silos are created, the more successful the programme will be.
- 2. Promote and Safeguard Openness to Third Countries:** Cooperation with third countries in higher education, research and innovation, including capacity building, is key to establishing a leading role for Europe in the world and to addressing differences in needs across regions on a global scale. The EU must ensure that its funding programmes are open to third countries and that our long-standing partners such as Israel, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom can be fully associated to the key science and technology programmes (such as Horizon Europe, Erasmus, Digital Europe, and the Space Programme), including mono-beneficiary components of Horizon Europe, such as the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Innovation Council (EIC).
- 3. More Funding for Research, Innovation and Education:** The realisation of a knowledge society, increased competitiveness and European global leadership in addressing societal challenges is only possible if sufficient funds are made available. We would be pleased with increasing the budget for Horizon Europe increases to €160bn. Research and innovation will only maintain and achieve even higher standards through excellent education. We therefore also fully support the European Parliament's plea to triple the Erasmus programme budget to €46bn.
- 4. Ensure simplification, complementarity and synergies between instruments:** In particular, Horizon Europe complementarity and synergies with Structural Funds must be secured. To achieve this, Horizon Europe rules must be used across instruments, when it comes to research and innovation funding by structural funds. All approved projects, in this context, must be exempt from State Aid regulation.
- 5. Apply one set of rules for education and training:** There is a need to coordinate rules for all activities in education and training at Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels across the relevant EU programmes. This will assist the development of synergies and scaling-up across education, research and innovation. We call upon the EC to apply a coordinated set of rules within Erasmus, Horizon Europe and ESIF.

HORIZON EUROPE

6. **Excellence:** Horizon Europe is about excellence, and this should remain the guiding criterion for selection of projects. Cohesion-related objectives should be addressed through the development of appropriate synergies between European research funding and national and structural funds, and under the Sharing Excellence initiative. We highlight, in particular, the key role of Teaming, Twinning, ERA-Chairs and COST actions, as well the Policy Support Facility and National Contact Points.
7. **Ensure sufficient Budget for Priority 1 'Excellent and Open Science':** The budget increase for Horizon Europe should focus prominently on Priority 1. We urge the EU institutions to raise the budget for the European Research Council (ERC), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and Research Infrastructures.
8. **Implement Fast Track to Research and Innovation Actions (RIA):** We encourage the EC to include an instrument for smaller RIA consortia to accelerate the uptake of research results to the market in all parts of the framework programme.
9. **Adequate funding allocation within European Innovation Council (EIC):** Funding should prioritise the 'Pathfinder' initiative and support to innovation ecosystems.

ERASMUS

10. **Strengthen Centralised Actions in Key Action 2:** We urge the EU to implement a more centralised approach, in order to leverage European added value and excellence and to create a level playing field at European level and beyond.
11. **Increase Support for Open and Online Education without Replacing Physical Mobility:** We encourage the European institutions to further support open and online education. Initiatives should complement opportunities for physical mobility and cooperation provided under other actions of the programme, without replacing them.
12. **Strengthen the Ethical Dimension:** We call upon the member states and associated countries to develop the Erasmus programme as a strong vehicle for promoting sustainable peace and prosperity, respect for rule of law and human rights, democratic citizenship, evidence-based policy-making and free circulation of knowledge. We welcome the expansion of Jean Monnet programme outside of the higher education sector.

EUROPEAN DEFENCE PROGRAMME

13. **Open the European Defence Programme to Dual Use Research:** The programme should allow for early identification of dual-use possibilities. This would make the expertise and knowledge of a broader range of universities of S&T more readily available.
14. **Implement a Civil Expert Group:** The advisory expert group planned for the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) should be realised in the European Defence Programme and ensure adequate representation from universities of S&T.

For more information and enquiries, please contact our [Senior Advisor for Research and Innovation](#) and our [Communication & Education Officer](#).

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