

Universities and research institutes call on Council to build on Parliament's momentum on FP10 and the ECF

Joint statement ahead of Competitiveness Council and General Affairs Council meetings dated 27 May 2026

The undersigned organisations representing key universities and research institutes in Europe welcome the momentum created by the European Parliament's work on Horizon Europe 2028–2034 (FP10) and the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), which has helped clarify the debate on the future funding for Research & Innovation (R&I) and competitiveness.

Ahead of the Competitiveness Council meeting on 28-29 May 2026 and the General Affairs Council meeting on 16 June, we encourage the Council to carefully consider the European Parliament's proposals and move towards coherent, ambitious and operational positions on FP10 and the ECF.

Europe cannot afford prolonged divergence of positions between EU institutions. At a time when Europe's competitiveness, resilience and industrial renewal require decisive EU action, delayed progress would create uncertainty for researchers, institutions, companies and innovation ecosystems. Speed and quality must go hand in hand: the objective should be timely convergence towards a coherent, operational and future-oriented framework.

The Commission also has an important role to play in supporting this convergence. Having presented its proposal, it should now help build constructive compromises between the EU institutions, taking account of the advances made in the European Parliament which address many of the concerns raised by the research and innovation community.

Council should match Parliament's momentum

The European Parliament has advanced the debate on FP10 and the ECF and is finalising proposals that provide a constructive basis for the next phase of co-creation. We welcome

the proposed definition and intervention logic that points towards a more comprehensive innovation-based competitiveness model: one that builds on Europe's capacity to generate knowledge, identify and support promising ideas and results, and translate them into innovation, uptake and impact.

This approach deserves serious consideration by the Council. Given the pace of technological, societal and geopolitical change, Europe cannot rely on static or overly rigid programming models. FP10 and the ECF need governance and implementation mechanisms that are agile, expert-informed and capable of supporting excellent projects, effective collaborations and tangible outcomes.

Likewise, Members of the European Parliament have put forward welcome amendments that would facilitate the swift association of close partners, including Switzerland and the United Kingdom, to FP10. It is imperative for Europe's competitiveness and resilience to ensure that scientific ties are strengthened, not weakened or severed by delays in association. The ECF must similarly be designed to support international collaboration with a granular and proportionate approach to economic security.

The Council now has a constructive role to play, by engaging actively and substantively with the European Parliament's proposals, opening up to more innovative approaches, narrowing existing divergences, and working towards positions that maximise the impact, coherence and added value of FP10 and the ECF.

FP10 and the ECF must work together through a strong interface

FP10 and the ECF should be designed as autonomous but connected programmes. They should not be developed through parallel or disconnected processes.

A [strong interface \(see joint statement\)](#) between the two programmes will be essential to support the journey from knowledge creation to innovation, uptake and impact, while avoiding duplication, fragmentation and unnecessary complexity for beneficiaries.

In this context, we welcome proposals such as Horizon Europe Pathway Actions, currently being discussed within the European Parliament, as a useful example of how promising research and innovation results originating from Horizon Europe could

progress more predictably towards uptake and impact. Similar pathway approaches could also be explored at national and regional level, where appropriate, to strengthen continuity between research, innovation and deployment. They should remain simple, transparent and open, and should respect the distinct purposes, governance and intervention logics of FP10 and the ECF.

Reducing burden for beneficiaries should be a guiding objective. Europe's competitiveness depends not only on funding excellent projects, but also on enabling coherent, predictable and accessible pathways from research and innovation, to uptake, translation and socio-economic impact. Talent and skills must also remain central to the competitiveness agenda. Europe's ability to generate, absorb, combine and use new knowledge depends on people, institutions and ecosystems that connect education, research and innovation.

Expert-driven implementation will be essential for success

As discussions move from political orientations towards implementation design, governance will become increasingly important. The impact of FP10 and the ECF will depend not only on the priorities selected, but also on whether implementation mechanisms can nimbly recognise, support and accelerate the most promising research, innovation and uptake pathways.

Member States and the Commission have a legitimate role in framing strategic orientations. However, translating these priorities into relevant and high-quality work programmes, calls and evaluation processes requires strong involvement of independent experts operating at the forefront of research and innovation, supported by mechanisms grounded in excellence, evidence and ethics. Multi-disciplinary expert engagement should be designed with clear safeguards for independence, transparency and conflicts of interest, and our organisations stand ready to work with the EU institutions to help shape robust and trusted mechanisms.

Expert-driven implementation should therefore be a core principle across FP10 and the ECF, especially in a rapidly evolving landscape where Europe must be able to recognise emerging opportunities with speed, agility and long-term perspective; moving from being reactive to proactive.

From momentum to delivery

The coming months will be decisive. Europe's research and innovation community is ready to contribute to the objectives of both FP10 and the ECF, but timely convergence is needed to turn political ambition into effective implementation.

We commend the European Parliament for engaging with the concerns and proposals of the research and innovation community. We urge the Council to build on this momentum and work towards positions that maximise the impact, coherence and added value of FP10 and the ECF.

We call on the Commission to help build compromises between the EU institutions, taking account of the advances made in the European Parliament, which address many of the concerns raised in the sector's [joint amendments](#).

Europe needs an ambitious, coherent and predictable investment framework that supports excellent research and innovation, develops talent and skills, enables uptake and impact, and contributes to sustainable and socially inclusive competitiveness and resilience.

We stand ready to work with the Council, Parliament and Commission to strengthen the proposals and ensure that FP10 and the ECF deliver for Europe.

Signatories

CESAER - <https://www.cesaer.org/>

Coimbra Group - <https://www.coimbra-group.eu/>

EUA - <https://www.eua.eu/>

EU-LIFE - <https://eu-life.eu/>

The Guild - <https://www.the-guild.eu/>

LERU - <https://www.leru.org/>

YERUN - <https://yerun.eu/>