

STATEMENT ON PROPOSAL FOR HORIZON EUROPE

DATED 25TH JUNE 2018

The universities of Science and Technology (S&T) united within [CESAER](#) welcome the [proposal](#) of the European Commission (EC) for the 9th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon Europe). This is the biggest and most important European research and innovation investment programme and has the potential to boost Europe's capacity to respond to its challenges. A good and well-funded Horizon Europe will be crucial for Europe's positioning and influence in the world, as its proposed activities and underlying principles may be seen as instruments of integration, diplomacy, cohesion and competitiveness. We particularly welcome the continuation of support to excellent science, the reorientation on disruptive and market-creating innovation and the breakthrough opportunities for association by third countries.

With this statement, the universities of S&T recall and complement our [paper on FP9](#), our [Key Messages for FP9](#), our [joint statement on investments](#), our [joint statement on Horizon Europe](#), and our side [letter supporting Social Science and Humanities](#). We express some concerns and make corresponding recommendations with a view to improving the Commission's proposal and unlocking its full potential. Our major concern is the unbalanced allocation of the budget, according to which the more open and forward looking pillars 1 (Open Science) and 3 (Open Innovation) together are proposed to receive less than pillar 2 (Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness). Moreover, by maintaining a top-down approach and lack of clarity regarding the alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([UN SDGs](#)) in pillar 2, Europe falls short in addressing the paradigm step-change to position itself as a knowledge-based leader.

REINFORCE AND BETTER BALANCE BUDGET

The €94.1 billion budget falls significantly short of the €160 billion [called](#) for by the independent High Level Group chaired by Pascal Lamy and all major stakeholders, including CESAER. Moreover, the proposal for the allocation of budgets across the three pillars is unbalanced. We urge the EU institutions to raise the budget for the European Research Council (ERC) to at least €28 billion. Also, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) need a higher budget (at least €8 billion), as it is not only severely oversubscribed already in Horizon 2020, but it is a crucial component for producing the needed skills and knowledge circulation of an effective European Research Area (ERA). Research and Innovation Infrastructures (RII) are also crucial elements of a more cohesive and competitive European research and innovation system. With only 2,5% of the overall budget, the continuous promotion of transnational access, complementarity of research agendas and the design and implementation of particularly small and medium-scale RII are jeopardised. We call upon the EU institutions to raise the overall budget to at least €120 billion and to allocate significantly more funding to pillar 1.

MAXIMISE IMPACT THROUGH BOTTOM-UP AND OPEN CALLS ACROSS ALL PILLARS

While pillar 2 with the mission-driven clusters could be a promising step forward, the top-down work programme approach, the limited space for missions and the lack of alignment with the UN SDGs risk not mobilising the full research and innovative potential existing in Europe. Effective knowledge transfer and the development of innovative solutions require bottom-up and open calls across all pillars.

EMBRACE GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND DEMONSTRATE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

The correlation between missions, clusters and the UN SDGs is far from clear. The missions in Horizon Europe are proposed to be developed according to European challenges 'somehow' aligned with the UN SDGs. We feel Europe cannot keep looking inwards if it is to overcome its competitiveness hurdles. In our view, this is a lost opportunity to adopt a systemic and open approach and enact the paradigm shift from competitiveness-driven research and innovation policy towards embracing global challenges and demonstrating global leadership.

STRENGTHEN BREAKTHROUGH AND SYSTEMIC APPROACHES IN EIC

We welcome the proposal for the creation of a European Innovation Council (EIC), designed as a bottom-up open instrument to boost disruptive and market-creating innovation. However, we urge the EU institutions to redirect the EIC's resources to Pathfinder projects, to abandon the Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) divisive structure and to strengthen the systems approach through more support to innovation ecosystems and less to the Accelerator projects.

ENSURE SYNERGIES AND BOOST NATIONAL INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

We welcome the increased focus on synergies with other European instruments as a positive step towards a much-needed boost on regional and national investments in research and innovation and increased impact and innovative capacity across all areas of intervention - from agriculture to space and defence. We call upon the member states and associated countries to 1) assure effective complementarities and synergies by allocating sufficient national funds complying with the Lisbon target of 3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) investment in research and development, 2) prioritise research and innovation in the operational programmes of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and 3) adhere to simplified rules for participation and dissemination. Importantly, projects approved under Horizon Europe's rules must be exempted from State Aid Rules.

ASSURE FAST AND TIMELY APPROVAL OF MFF AND HORIZON EUROPE

A gap between the last calls of Horizon 2020 and the first calls of Horizon Europe will have researchers and innovators lacking new funding for their activities and may lead to them turning away from Horizon Europe. A belated agreement and adoption of Horizon Europe would be particularly complex for the association negotiations with third countries. Fast and timely approval of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and Horizon Europe thus are essential to allow for adequate preparations, the timely conclusion of association agreements and continuity from Horizon 2020. We call on all EU institutions for a swift agreement on the MFF and Horizon Europe before the Parliamentary elections in May 2019.

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

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