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Agreement on "HORIZON 2020": the EU's research and innovation programme for the years 2014 to 2020

The Committee of Permanent Representatives¹ today endorsed the agreement reached last June between the Presidency of the Council and the European Parliament representatives on the "Horizon 2020" programme for research and innovation for the years 2014 to 2020. The agreement paves the way for the formal adoption of the "Horizon 2020" legislative package by the European Parliament and the Council through a vote in the coming months.

Horizon 2020 will replace the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7), which runs until the end of 2013. Compared with FP7, the new programme is expected to further eliminate fragmentation in the fields of scientific research and innovation.

Horizon 2020, which has a budget of around 70 billion euros, will underpin the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, as well as the goal of strengthening the scientific and technological bases by contributing to achieving a European Research Area in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely.

Horizon 2020 focuses on three priorities, namely generating excellent science in order to strengthen the Union's world-class scientific excellence and make the Union research and innovation system more competitive, fostering industrial leadership to speed up the development of technologies that will support businesses and innovation, including for small companies, and tackling societal challenges in order to respond to the priorities identified in the Europe 2020 strategy by supporting activities covering the entire chain from research to market.

¹ The Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) of the governments of the EU member states is responsible for preparing the work of the Council.

P R E S S

Some of the main features of the Horizon 2020 programme include:

Simplification

Simplification is a central aim of Horizon 2020. It is to be reflected in its design, rules, financial management and implementation in order to attract a strong participation of universities, research centres, industry and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Simpler funding rules will reduce administrative costs for participants and decrease financial errors.

A simplified funding model will be used for the reimbursement of activities. It will be based on a single reimbursement rate for eligible costs that will be applied to all activities within an action. The reimbursement would reach a maximum of 100 % of the total eligible costs of an action, with a ceiling of 70 % for those innovation actions closer to the market and for programme co-funded actions. Non-profit organisations will benefit a reimbursement of maximum 100% also in innovation actions. A flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs will be reimbursed to cover indirect costs.

Furthermore, the period between the deadline for the submission of project proposals and the conclusion of a grant agreement will be significantly shortened.

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

The EIT will be integrated into Horizon 2020 in order to continue to reinforce the innovation capacity of the EU and its member states and contribute to the objectives of Horizon 2020, mainly by integrating the "knowledge triangle" of higher education, research and innovation. This integration takes place primarily via the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which bring together organisations on a long-term basis in order to respond to major societal challenges.

Five new KICs will be launched over the programme period in three waves. The themes for the first two KICs to be launched in 2014 will be 'Healthy living and active ageing' and 'Raw materials'. The themes for the second two KICs in 2016 will be 'Food4future' and 'Added value manufacturing' and the final theme for 2018 will be 'Urban mobility'. The priority fields and the long-term strategy for the EIT are detailed in the EIT's strategic innovation agenda.

Small and medium-sized enterprises

Horizon 2020 will provide a range of means to support the research and innovation activities and capacities of SMEs along the different stages of the innovation cycle. The creation of a dedicated SME instrument will help to increase the participation of SMEs under Horizon 2020 funded projects.

In addition, a "Fast Track to Innovation" pilot scheme will be implemented in order to speed up the time from idea to market, and to increase the participation of industry, SMEs and first time applicants in Horizon 2020. It will seek to stimulate private sector investment, promote research and innovation with a focus on value creation and accelerate the development of technologies into innovative products, processes and services.

Science with and for society

Building on the efforts already in place under the FP7, a separate structure and budget line will contribute to the harmonious integration of scientific and technological endeavour into European society. In addition, it will be used to increase the attractiveness of scientific and technological careers, in particular for young people, as well as to address the existing gender imbalance in these fields.

Spreading excellence and widening participation

Those regions with weaker structural research conditions will benefit from targeted measures under Horizon 2020, in addition to the support provided by other EU regional instruments, in order to promote a high quality research capacity across Europe.

Teaming of institutions and twinning of research staff as well as exchange of best practices will be at the heart of widening excellence and participation. Moreover, Horizon 2020 will promote synergies with the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Ethical principles

The ethical principles applying to FP7 will be maintained. Therefore, research activities carried out under Horizon 2020 shall comply with ethical principles and relevant national, Union and international legislation.

All research activities will have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

Research on human stem cells, both adult and embryonic, may be financed, depending both on the contents of the scientific proposal and the legal framework of the member states involved. However, no funding shall be granted for research activities that are prohibited in all the member states and no activity shall be funded in a member state where such activity is forbidden.

Partnerships for research and innovation

Horizon 2020 will support the development and implementation of public-private and public-public partnerships, including the European Technology Platforms, the Joint Programming Initiatives and the European Innovation Partnerships.

Similarly to the FP7, the new framework programme will also promote, and will be opened to, cooperation with third countries and international organisations.

Open access to results

To increase the circulation and exploitation of knowledge, open access to scientific publications will be ensured. Furthermore, open access to research data resulting from publicly funded research under Horizon 2020 will be promoted.

Mid-term evaluation

The Commission will carry out, with the assistance of independent experts, a review of the Horizon 2020 programme not later than end 2017.

Budget

The new funding programme will have a budget of around 70 billion euros for the seven-year period, thus making Horizon 2020 the world's largest research programme. The previous multi-annual programme FP7 had a financial allocation of 53 billion euros.

The budget distribution (in percentage) for Horizon 2020 is foreseen as follows:

I. Excellent Science:	31.73 %
1. European Research Council	17.00
2. Future and Emerging Technologies	3.50
3. Marie Curie actions	8.00
4. Research infrastructures	3.23
II. Industrial Leadership:	22.09 %
1. Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies	17.60
2. Access to risk finance	3.69
3. Innovative small and medium-size enterprises	0.80
III. Societal Challenges:	38.53 %
1. Health, demographic change and wellbeing	9.70
2. Food quality and marine research	5.00
3. Energy	7.70
4. Transport	8.23
5. Climate action, resources and raw materials	4.00
6. Inclusive societies	1.70
7. Secure societies	2.20
Spreading excellence and widening participation	1.06 %
Science with and for society	0.60 %
European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)	3.52 %
Joint Research Centre: non-nuclear direct actions	2.47 %
Total	100 %

Background

The Horizon 2020 legislative package is made up of:

- a regulation establishing the Horizon 2020 framework programme,
- a decision establishing the specific programme laying down the implementation modalities of Horizon 2020,
- a regulation laying down the rules for participation and the dissemination of results, and
- two proposals on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): an amending regulation and a decision setting out its strategic innovation agenda, which includes the priority fields for the new Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC's).

Moreover, it includes a separate regulation on the Euratom (European Atomic Energy Community) programme (2014-2018), which supplements Horizon 2020 for research activities in the fields of nuclear energy and radiation protection. This draft regulation is currently under examination.

The Commission presented the several components of Horizon 2020 in November 2011: http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm
