

KEY MESSAGES ON FP9

STATEMENT DATED 7TH DECEMBER 2017

The EU Framework Programme for Research & Innovation (FP) from 2014 to 2020 ([Horizon 2020](#)) integrated the FP, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and due to cuts is to obtain about €74 billion instead of the budgeted €80 billion in current prices.

The establishment of the FP, the European Research Council ([ERC](#)) and the inclusion of the European Research Area ([ERA](#)) and related 5th Freedom in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ([TFEU](#)) concern the most important and tangible achievements of European integration in Research & Innovation (R&I). The FPs are powerful tools to create jobs and boost smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. Although limited in size, they are crucial for us universities of Science & Technology (S&T) as they stimulate us to deliver highest scientific excellence, boost our attractiveness worldwide, promote collaboration with all sorts of partners and allow our scientists and innovators to contribute to tackling societal challenges across borders. We welcomed the clear structure divided into three priorities. Complementing our [statement](#) `More knowledge for a better world` and our [technical paper](#) `How you can boost worldwide Research and Innovation`, the [universities of S&T](#) united within [CESAER](#) with this paper offer their key messages for the design of 9th FP (FP9) to the European institutions. Overall, a balance should be sought between conserving what goes well and introducing necessary novelties demonstrating Europe's highest ambitions.

KEEP ENTIRE PROGRAMME ATTRACTIVE

It is important to keep the entire programme attractive and make FP9 simpler and more transparent bringing more opportunities for newcomers, less serving vested interests and allowing for more bottom-up research. Therefore, the ERC should get substantially more funding (€4 billion *per annum* at the least), excellence should be applied as the key criterion and geographical distribution of budgets should be avoided. Missions could be introduced to increase the visibility of R&I and to unlock the disruptive innovation potential of research results and transformative effects on science, business & industry, systems, citizens and societies. The 17 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) could enable consortia consisting of partners from the quadruple helix (academia, business & industry, states & public services and citizens & society) through open calls across the entire FP9 to co-create bottom up more impact and wider benefits (i.e. scientific, economic, social & societal). The importance of Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) should be reduced and the purpose of such consortia put first and instruments from funders second. Importantly, we point out to the European added value through open and European-wide competition for mono-beneficiary grants next to transnational cooperation in multi-beneficiary grants. Ensuring one single set of simplified EU rules for participation to safeguard a level playing field and increase acceptance of usual accounting principles and institutional practices are needed. In our [key messages on the successor of Erasmus+](#), we make concrete proposals for better linking of R&I to learning & teaching, including making education & training eligible costs in R&I projects under FP9.

SIMPLIFY INNOVATION FUNDING & BOOST DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

While Europe is doing great in research, it is doing far less so in innovation. The European Innovation Council (EIC) therefore should boost disruptive & market-creating innovation by providing support along three flexible funding instruments. First, bottom-up Innovator Grants should target innovators & their ideas (8% of total EU FP9 budget). Like is the case with the ERC, these grants should fund persons and not organisations. However, the EU support should allow for the (co-) funding of institutional & inter-institutional grant & fellowship schemes and pre-pre-seed funding, including via cascade funding. Second, an action should be dedicated to support open innovation ecosystems without replacing existing (regional, national and private) funding (7% of total EU FP9 budget), including involvement in mid-size (around €50 million) and large-scale institutional (up to €200 million) and large-scale inter-institutional (above €½ billion) risk & venture capital funds under specific conditions taking State Aid & Competition rules into account. Third, the Proof of Concept scheme should be extended as a crosscutting Part IV under the entire FP9 (5% of total EU FP9 budget) and provide flexible funding adapting to differential development paths & regulatory contexts to bridge between research, application and commercialisation. The distribution of decision-making as close as possible to execution & avoidance of complex & long decision-making are key to success. That is why we advise to (co-) fund also institutional & inter-institutional schemes.

COMBAT OVERSUBSCRIPTION WITH MORE AND SMARTER FUNDING

Oversubscription and low success chances as a consequence of lack of investments have become the biggest threat to the FPs and we strongly support the [call](#) from the independent High Level Group on maximising the impact of FPs to substantially raise the budget for FP9: allocating €160 billion to FP9 is not only the single most important mean to combat them, but also matches the ambitious agenda for Europe we set out in our [statement on 'More Knowledge for a better World'](#). The introduction of an ERA TOP-UP intervention scheme (whereby the EU funds additional activities of excellent research and innovation projects selected and funded at national level) and merging all current (innovation) co-funding actions into one effective and coherent COFUND intervention scheme will ensure that EU funding leverages more public and private investments under the EU rules for participation instead of covering R&D activities substituting own investments. Finally, there is a need for more 'flexibility' in the funding instruments and the Member States should better and more apply the Seal of Excellence. Therefore, also the state aid and competition rules need to be adjusted.

For more information, please contact our [Secretary General](#).

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