

## EREA Key Recommendations on the European Commission's proposal of Horizon Europe

### Motivation

Investments in Research and Innovation are key drivers of EU-Priorities. The pursuit of industrial leadership to maintain and extend prosperity and growth in Europe depends heavily on a committed pan-European research and innovation strategy. Its impactful outcome boosts jobs throughout the Union and strengthens European competitiveness on the global market.

The pressing societal challenges demand new sustainable solutions. Climate change as well as safe and secure energy for all Europeans are just two examples of the need for European solutions that only a comprehensive European Research and Innovation Programme focussing on excellent cross-border collaboration in multi-disciplinary approaches can address.

The crucial role of Research and Innovation activities in supporting and strengthening industrial leadership is now at the heart of European research and innovation policy, the ultimate goal being to benefit society. It is therefore crucial to implement an effective, efficient and impactful strategy to succeed Horizon 2020.

EREA welcomes the effort and commitment that is expressed in the European Commission's proposal for the future framework programme Horizon Europe. As much as we appreciate the evolutionary development succeeding the current framework programme, we see some aspects that need to be considered to extent and maximise Horizon Europe's success.

### EREA's recommendations on the European Commission's proposal of Horizon Europe

#### Budget

The current proposal assumes a budget of around 100 billion € for the next period. **This budget is not sufficient.** The target of 3% of the EU's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is clearly missing. The significance of funding and its correlation with impact and relation to its effectiveness have been clearly described, e.g. in the LAB-FAB-APP-report. This aspect is particularly critical as Horizon Europe faces more issues (e.g. defence and security, migration), the new additional mission-oriented approach and the European Innovation Council. In this light **EREA calls for a significantly increased budget of Horizon Europe to at least €120 billion**, in line with the LAB-FAB-APP report to shape a better European future. This increase should in particular benefit the second pillar, addressing the full spectrum of the global challenges and being the heart of industrial innovation. EREA believes **a budget of € 72 billion for Pillar II** would be most appropriate.

It is difficult to understand why the current proposal omits the possibility of defining the specific budget breakdown within the clusters. The political emphasis on specific topics should be expressed in corresponding budget lines within the clusters. The **vagueness on exactly which topics and technologies will be supported, and with how much of the budget makes the proposal difficult to assess and shifts the responsibility to the strategic programming.** This structural shift of responsibility away from the EU Parliament and EU Council is hard to justify with regard to long term commitment of partners and private investment into a long term program for research and innovation. The proposal would **benefit from a clear budget breakdown defining priorities** within the clusters even at a high level. Given the large number of European Technology and Innovation Platforms as well as established advisory councils, and their members' wish to implement Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas at European Level via the framework program, **calls for proposals should continue to be prescriptive, reflecting the level of details provided by stakeholders.**

This will ensure the proper implementation of European R&I strategies and limit oversubscription. Lump sums should only be applied when pilot schemes have proven their feasibility.



### **Institutional PPPs**

EREA understands the brevity and limited degree of details of this legislation. However, the above mentioned vagueness, combined with the lack of references to well-established and widely accepted EU strategies, hampers the efficient continuation of long-term commitments and partnerships. These partnerships effectively structure sectors around strong ecosystems that deliver impactful programmes and innovations leading to European market growth, job creation, enhanced international competitiveness and benefits to society. In this context **EREA explicitly calls for the continuation of institutional PPPs as they implement long-term strategies whose undeniable socio-economic impact allows global competitiveness.**

### **Missions**

With respect to both the mission-oriented approach and the European Innovation Council **it is important to maintain a proper balance within the *Research and Innovation Chain* (TRL levels).** It is crucial to strengthen the entire *Research and Innovation Chain* from basic research, technology development, and verification up to innovation covering all TRLs, rather than on focusing only on the highest technology readiness level to push for an instant success in innovation. Neglecting the lower levels of research will dry up the innovation landscape in mid- and long term.

EREA welcomes the concept of missions in research and innovation. After multi-year discussions, high-level advisory and endorsement by the European Commission addressing mission in research and innovation **it is disappointing to notice the absence of a stringent concept for missions in the Horizon Europe proposal.** There are still many questions unanswered regarding missions. This vagueness makes the legislative proposal difficult to assess. EREA agrees that substantial funding for missions is needed to achieve a measurable impact that is easily understandable by the society as a whole. However, **EREA calls for a significant budget for collaborative research in Pillar II** which might be endangered by the mission-oriented approach.

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