

[Theme in Focus] In Focus: A new Horizon for Europe after 2020 to stay at the forefront of research and innovation worldwide, June 2018

Research & innovation is becoming a precondition to our economy and to our society. The present EU political and economic scenario has been deeply influenced by the recent economic crisis but also by the perception, especially among younger generations, that the European Union with its heavy bureaucracy and a complex decision making process is too far from the citizens' problems. During the economic and financial crisis of recent years, [the Countries which invested more in research & innovation have been the most resilient, and also those where the investments have been more efficient](#). Investing in new generations of high-value and high-quality goods and services is thus crucial to promote stable and sustainable growth, knowledge transfer and reduce unemployment while increasing the consciousness that the European Union is taking effective actions to tackle such fundamental issues for citizens.

Research and innovation must therefore, now more than ever, be considered essential drivers to re-launch Europe's competitiveness and growth and consequently require a substantial increase in the budget under the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2020. **This would** create long-term-highly skilled jobs and tackle societal challenges, while rethinking R&I policies and investments in Europe to put research and innovation at the forefront.

In the framework of the next [EU long-term budget](#) recently released as to the period 2021 - 2027, [resources for research activities are foreseen in many areas of EU policy](#). More in details, the European Commission has proposed to allocate **€ 100 billion for research and innovation**. The new EU's flagship research programme, [HORIZON EUROPE](#), shall consolidate the results and success of the previous one (Horizon 2020) and shall allow the EU to remain at the forefront of research and innovation worldwide. New technologies will largely and differently impacts on health, food & water transport, communication, security, environment, energy, data production and protection, requiring a transition phase where research in all these domains will play a fundamental role.

Horizon Europe is one of the few current EU budget lines of the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) to get increase in seven-year proposal. The [budget](#) foresees €97.6 billion for Horizon Europe and €2.4 billion for the Euratom nuclear research programme. For Horizon Europe, that's an increase of almost 30 per cent on the EU's existing research programme of €77 billion. Horizon Europe will represents therefore the most ambitious research and innovation program ever (click [here](#) for finding out how the framework programs for research and development have evolved from FP1).

[Horizon Europe budget](#) will be divided into three "pillars", on open science, open innovation, and global challenges and industrial competitiveness ("open to the world", or international cooperation, will be scattered throughout the programme). The plans for Horizon Europe contain a lot of continuity with Horizon 2020 such as the promotion of scientific excellence through the European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie scholarships and exchanges. But [Horizon Europe will introduce some key innovations](#) and some new elements such as the establishment of a European Innovation Council to promote innovation and the introduction of mission-oriented research. The Commission staff drafted a summary of what they consider the "[key improvements in the programme](#)".

For the first time, in preparing Horizon Europe, [the Commission engaged in extensive, systematic and multi-year foresight](#) to reflect on key societal challenges. The Commission has built on specific reports and strategic recommendations to maximise the impact of the future framework programme. We compiled a [brief summary of the public consultation documents and processes of the last few months](#): it helps understand the Commission's guidelines and the contributions of other stakeholders (Parliament, Council, Member States, R & I actors , etc.). Stakeholders' views on what the EU should do to foster international cooperation in research and innovation in Horizon Europe have been also investigated as reported in [this](#) article by ScienceIBusiness.

Within Horizon Europe, in order to identify the global challenges, a "[mission-oriented approach](#)" will be used to define ambitious objectives and thus ensure the effectiveness of research and innovation funding and maximising the impact of investments. The Commission has involved policy experts to develop studies, case studies and reports on how a mission-oriented policy approach will work (find here the [series of inputs](#)). Among these [Mission-Oriented Research & Innovation in the European Union](#) by Prof. Mazzucato underlines 5 criteria for selecting the missions in the next framework program. **Briefly said, these shall be ambitious and risky but also realistically feasible, they will need to foster cross-sectoral innovation, be inspirational with wide societal relevance. These shall be not individual projects, but rather portfolios of bold actions to meet big challenges and allow Europe to *take a bold and visionary step forward.***

“Building Horizon Europe” Timeline:

- **7 June 2018 the Commission adopted its proposal for Horizon Europe**
- **the Council and European Parliament shall now negotiate and subsequently adopt the programme**
- **Horizon Europe will be launched on 1 January 2021**

Quick links for more information:

[Horizon Europe leaflet](#)

[Horizon Europe - video](#)

[Horizon Europe Ec webpage](#)

When it comes to the Western Balkan countries, their integration into the European Union is still a major political and economic project aimed at guaranteeing stability and development in the region. **From the very beginning, cooperation on research and innovation has been stimulated as a tool to facilitate such integration.** The new enlargement [strategy](#) offers the **Western Balkan countries a perspective of EU membership while requiring reinforced actions to achieve significant progress in research and innovation through a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach.** Research and innovation offer indeed a positive political agenda and a path towards sustained economic growth and job creation and this is why Western Balkan countries are currently in the process to align their research priorities with their economic priorities and policies.

De facto there is a gap between developed and less developed research systems in Europe; the WB region is still behind and needs to change its economy towards a knowledge-based and innovation-dominated model. **Association to and successful participation in H2020 has given a confident message and currently helps keep WBCs stakeholders' motivation high.** Preliminary results

show some first success stories however overall participation rate, without considering Serbia, is still quite low ([find here some data on WBCs in H2020](#)). Balkan countries suffer from brain drain and are lacking R&I capacities: Serbia is the regional research power-house and it is doing reasonably well in Horizon 2020 (success-rate similar to the one of Hungary or Slovenia). Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina are performing close to the EU average (i.e. similar to Spain or to the Czech Republic) FYROM (or the newly-agreed "Republic of North Macedonia") and Albania have Horizon 2020 performances similar to those of Bulgaria and are following in the list.

Adequate attention by the next Framework Programme would be required: there would be the need for [further policies in FP9 to overcome the research and innovation gap](#) that focus on facilitating meaningful research collaborations, supporting mobility in all directions, creating new, durable and sustainable networks, and optimising the use of research infrastructures. Continuation of the “widening actions” in FP9 would further help transfer of knowledge from more developed institutions and training of our young researchers in new scientific areas.

To help transform WBCs economies following a knowledge-based and innovation-dominated model, capacity building, development of infrastructure and new skills would be furthermore required. The future widening instruments in FP9 would need to address this issue by further facilitating access to networks for researchers and innovators. Similarly research management skills would need to be strengthened via for instance peer-to-peer support and investing in young researchers’ career perspectives so as to bridge the innovation gap.

WBCs are currently discussing on a [common position on the Horizon Europe](#), primarily with a view to to make an influence on changes to the future framework programme in favor of the WB region. We will keep you duly informed; all novelties will be published within our [Horizon Europe dedicated section](#). Contact us at office@wbc-rti.info for submitting any related information item!

[Find here the information we gather with regard to Horizon Europe.](#)

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