

# “Horizon Europe” – German Positions on the Proposal of the European Commission

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Federal Government Position Paper

Berlin, July 2018

## Key demands for the negotiations on Horizon Europe

- Germany calls for a key role of the Member States in the **Strategic Planning Process and the implementation** of Horizon Europe. The outcome of the Strategic Planning Process should be submitted to the Council of the European Union for approval.
- Germany calls for the Cluster **“Inclusive and Secure Society”** to be divided into two separate Clusters. There is a fundamental difference between the Social Sciences and Humanities, on the one hand, and Security Research, on the other, in terms of their target audiences, research goals and funding mechanisms.
- Germany calls for removing the research priority Mobility from **“Climate, Energy and Mobility”** and creating an own dedicated Cluster. Only in this way, there will be the chance to develop new solutions in important fields of technology, application and impact of Mobility Research. A dedicated Cluster for Mobility Research will properly reflect its scientific, innovative and societal importance.
- Germany calls for separate, application-independent technology push funding of the **key enabling technologies** as an additional Area of Intervention with its own budget to properly take into account their pioneering role for the competitiveness of European industry.
- Germany calls for the setting of **minimum budgets** for the Areas of Intervention within the Clusters under Pillar 2. Minimum budgets offer the opportunity to consider current developments according to a predetermined extent and they provide planning security and orientation for stakeholders.
- Germany calls for the **European Innovation Council (EIC)** to be developed in a way which is complementary to Member State-driven initiatives. Germany welcomes the introduction of the “EIC Accelerator” because it aims at ensuring better access to capital to fund the growth of companies.

The European Commission published the **legislative proposal for the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation ‘Horizon Europe’ (2021-2027)** on 7 June 2018. The Federal Government is submitting this paper as its **initial reaction to the Commission’s proposal** for the purpose of outlining the principal points of negotiation from Germany’s perspective. Overall, we perceive the proposal of the European Commission as balanced.

According to the Commission’s proposal, Horizon Europe will have a budget of EUR 94.1 billion. Germany advocates for an EU Financial Framework that has a task structure with **even greater orientation to current priorities, future-relevant fields such as education, research and innovation, and to providing European added value.**

The **principle of excellence**, the focus on **transnationality** and a clear orientation to providing **European added value** must be retained as the core guiding principles in all the parts of the programme. Only in this way, the ambitious research and innovation goals can be achieved and the programme’s high reputation be maintained.

Horizon Europe can provide important contributions for **strengthening the scientific and technological basis, increasing the competitiveness, tackling the most important global challenges** as well as **for ensuring the sustainable development** of the European Union. Germany welcomes the

proposed orientation of Horizon Europe to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Reflecting and communicating with the scientific community and the public on the **ethical dimensions and societal impacts** of the research and innovation funded under Horizon Europe is an important issue for us.

## **A. Governance and general orientation of the programme**

### **I. Strategic Planning Process**

- The European Commission has announced that it will initiate a Strategic Planning Process involving the Member States, the European Parliament and research and innovation stakeholders to run parallel to the Council negotiations. Germany demands that the **Member States are the key players** in this process. We call on the European Commission to draw up a proposal for the procedure as soon and as precisely as possible. The procedure should be established in the legal acts. The decision-making powers of the Member States must be clearly distinguished from advisory functions of various stakeholders and expert groups.
  - The Strategic Planning Process should be implemented by a **high-level shadow committee of the strategic configuration of the programme committee**. Non-EU members should only be involved in this process following a successful association to Horizon Europe. The outcome of the Strategic Planning Process, including consideration of the missions, should be submitted to the Council of the European Union for approval.
  - The further process should be conducted **within the parameters of comitology**; **shadow committees of the various configurations of the programme committee** should be created. The **discussion and decision about the work programmes** should not be pre-empted by the Strategic Planning Process. The Member States will continue to discuss and take decisions on the work programmes in the thematic configurations and coordinate in the strategic configuration of the programme committee.
  - **Member States must have a say** in the **definition of missions** and the **nature and scope of the use of partnership instruments** which reflects their role as key players in the process. For this purpose, the existing decision-making procedures within the parameters of comitology and the programme committee configurations in particular must be used.
  - The **missions** are suitable for providing substantive contributions for solutions to societally relevant issues of our time and for achieving greater identification with Europe and European funding for research and innovation. This is a new type of strategic approach. Horizon Europe should therefore start with a **limited number of missions**. The impact of these missions must be the subject of **continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation**.

### **II. Implementation / comitology**

- Germany calls for a **sufficient number of programme committee configurations** with a pragmatic thematic structure. In the case of very broad thematic Clusters, appropriate thematic sub-configurations should be established in addition to an overarching configuration for the sake of efficiency. The role of the strategic committee configuration should have greater focus on

overarching strategic aspects of implementing the programme and ensuring the necessary transfer. This role should not be watered down by dealing with details of certain programme areas. We call for a dedicated configuration to be established also for the Part “Strengthening the European Research Area”.

- The adoption of the **work programmes** should only be possible with the **approval of the relevant programme committee configuration** (“non-opinion clause”). We also call for the programme committee to continue to decide on all projects with a budget of more than EUR 2.5 million (with the exception of the ERC) in the examination procedure.
- The Framework Programmes are the most important component for implementing the priorities of the **European Research Area**. We therefore welcome the introduction of the separate programme part “Strengthening the European Research Area”. A good governance structure is a basic prerequisite for this programme part for ensuring impact at all levels of the European system. Correspondingly, the Member States and regions must be involved far more and at a higher level than in other areas of the framework programme.

### III. Budget adjustments during the duration of Horizon Europe

- **Minimum budgets must be established** for individual Areas of Intervention within the Clusters in order to provide greater planning security and orientation.
- Any **transfer of funds within the programme areas** of Horizon Europe **requires the prior approval of the Member States in the relevant programme committee configuration**. **Margins** within which such transfers may be pursued **must be established**.
- In order to leverage synergy effects we welcome the **combination of funds from different EU funding programmes** such as the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and the European Structural and Investment Funds (e.g. in the area of European research infrastructures). It may only be done on a voluntary basis, i.e. with the agreement of the programme administrators. The details require the further agreement of the Member States.

### IV. Cross-cutting issues

- Horizon Europe must live up to the **European Union’s responsibility for the well-being of the people of Europe** and guarantee high ethical standards. This includes **ethical reflection in science** as well as **communication with politics and society**. The setting of research topics must also reflect ethical considerations. The recommendations of the “European Group on Ethics” should be included in these considerations.
- We support the **continuity of the existing ethical rules for research**. The existing regulatory framework in Horizon 2020 in the area of research with human embryonic stem cells and embryos must be continued for the new EU Research Framework Programme, complementing statement to the Council minutes (“ergänzende Protokollerklärung”).
- We support strong funding lines in the programme area **Sharing Excellence** which have huge potential to narrow the innovation gap between the Member States. Other parts of Horizon Europe must remain without any quotas or special evaluations for individual countries or groups of countries.
- We support the Commission’s intention to make the Framework Programme more open to the **participation of third countries**. However, at the same time we must safeguard European

interests. In particular, it should be possible in individual cases to exclude third country applicants from funding in order to prevent knowledge drain. An association to the individual funding programmes EIC, ERC and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) should not be possible for states which were not associated to Horizon 2020 (new countries' group (d)).

- The Federal Government continues to see the need for discussion of the positioning of **defence research** in Horizon Europe in the coming negotiating process. The Federal Government seeks to ensure that Horizon Europe retains an exclusively civilian character beyond the measures funded through the Defence Fund.
- We seek a broad **concept of innovation** for Horizon Europe: This should cover technological as well as non-technological social innovations; it should also cover knowledge gain and transfer to create increased added value and should extend to the tackling of challenges for our society<sup>1</sup>.
- Germany supports the **target of 35%** for activities in the context of **climate objectives** for the whole Framework Programme as a contribution to the overall target of 25% of EU expenditure. In this context, it is important to ensure a more transparent and **more result-oriented implementation** of this earmarked funding.
- Gender **equitable participation** of male and female researchers and the requirement to give due consideration to the **gender dimension** in research must remain firmly anchored in the Framework Programme, as there is still a gap to be closed. These aspects should be taken into account right across the programme in calls for proposals, applications, and evaluations. The programme should also continue to have room for suitable calls for proposals on gender issues.

## B. Programme lines and structure

- Germany welcomes the modified **three-pillar structure** of Horizon Europe and the funding of research and innovation along the value chain. We maintain our call for a strong role for European collaborative research.
- The names of the **Pillars Open Science and Open Innovation** should be explained as these are already used as established methodical concepts. Without explanation, the names convey a false impression to potential applicants concerning the funding content of these Pillars. There needs to be more detailed elaboration of the thematic connections between the Pillars.
- Horizon Europe also has the task of supporting Member States' **coordination and networking activities**. Embedding the instrument of "Coordination and Support Actions" (CSA) in Horizon Europe is therefore fundamental. In particular, supporting Member States' bilateral and multilateral initiatives by opening up their programmes offers largely untapped potential.
- Also in Horizon Europe, it must still be possible to generate the **topics for Cofund activities** in a bottom-up manner. Furthermore, Member States' early and privileged involvement in the selection of partnerships must be ensured.
- The **Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs)** are a tried and tested instrument for cooperation between the Member States at European level which should also be supported by the toolbox of the European Partnerships and by CSA.

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<sup>1</sup> Such a concept of innovation upholds the principle of precaution and existing standards of protection and stands for innovations which also contribute to reducing human and environmental risks. The precautionary principle and the standards of protection which are based on it must not be questioned by innovation.

- We welcome the continuation of **COST and EUREKA** as complementary initiatives to Horizon Europe. These have proven to be important Member State initiatives for the networking of research and for the support of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the past years.

## I. Pillar: Open Science

- We support a strengthening of the ERC, MSCA and the research infrastructures.
- The **ERC** as a globally recognised beacon of European excellence must also in Horizon Europe be funded and constituted in such a way that it can retain its autonomy. We reject an intergovernmental structure. The ERC must remain an EU initiative.

## II. Pillar: Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness

- The division of the thematic Clusters in the **Pillar Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness** requires further fine tuning. Given that the former Pillars 2 and 3 of Horizon 2020 are to be merged together in Horizon Europe, it must be ensured that the individual funding areas will be adequately financed in the new structure.
  - The **target of at least 35 %** for activities which contributes to **climate objectives** for the whole Framework Programme can only be achieved if greater consideration is also accorded to climate research in the Climate and Energy Cluster<sup>2</sup>.
  - Germany calls for the **individual goals of the SDGs to be taken as guidance** for setting the topics and formulating the calls for proposals in the Clusters.
  - In spite of the focus on societal challenges and industrial competitiveness, all the Clusters should offer **sufficient possibilities for generating new knowledge and new technologies**. This includes **research at low and medium technology readiness levels**, because such research often provides the most important basis for subsequent innovations. This applies to the area of research infrastructures (in the “Open Science” Pillar) as well as to collaborative bottom-up technology research (as previously represented in Horizon 2020 in the programme area Future and Emerging Technologies).
  - Germany welcomes the recommendations from the “Rüttgers Report”<sup>3</sup> which underlines the **importance of key enabling technologies for Europe’s future and identifies new core fields of action** including “Artificial Intelligence”, “Digital Security and Connectivity” and “Life Sciences Technologies”. These should be anchored sufficiently in the Framework Programme.
  - There is strong **heterogeneity** between the Clusters regarding the scope and the **granularity of the Areas of Intervention**. Efforts should be made towards greater uniformity and streamlining.
  - **Trans- and interdisciplinary approaches** must be ensured within and across the Clusters.
- Regarding Cluster “**Health**”: Germany welcomes the separate Cluster for health topics. European health research must continue to orient itself towards increasing globalisation and assume greater

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. the further positions below regarding the division of the “Climate, Energy and Mobility” Cluster into a “Mobility” Cluster and a “Climate and Energy” Cluster.

<sup>3</sup> See also final report “Re-finding Industry – Defining Innovation”, report of the independent High Level Group on industrial technologies, 2018.

responsibility for improving global health crisis management and in the fight against antibiotic resistance.

- Regarding Cluster “**Inclusive and Secure Society**”: Social Sciences and Humanities and Security Research are hardly compatible in terms of their target audiences, research goals and funding mechanisms. With regard also to dual-use relevance, the independence of the two fields should be retained in separate Clusters as in Horizon 2020. Furthermore, we advocate that Education Research be firmly established as an Area of Intervention.
- Regarding Cluster “**Digital and Industry**”: Key enabling technologies play a pioneering role for the competitiveness of European industry. The Commission’s Proposal does not reflect this important task sufficiently. We therefore call for separate, application-independent technology push funding of key enabling technologies as an additional Area of Intervention with its own budget in the “Digital and Industry” Cluster<sup>4</sup>.
- Regarding Cluster “**Climate, Energy and Mobility**”: Mobility Research must be retained as a research priority with its own dedicated programme area in Horizon Europe in order to properly reflect its scientific, innovative and societal importance for the European Union. Integrating Mobility Research into a combined “Climate, Energy and Mobility” Cluster will lead to a too narrow approach; it holds the danger that opportunities for new solutions in important fields of technology, fields of action and applications of Mobility Research will go unused.
- Regarding Cluster “**Food and Natural Resources**”: Natural resources in all their forms (e.g. genetic resources; ecosystems; biodiversity; materials; substances; functionalities) must be researched, protected and used sustainably. They are the basis of future economic activity and of satisfying the needs of a growing population with changing patterns of consumption. The Cluster should therefore be re-named “Natural Resources and Biodiversity, Food and Bioeconomy”.

### III. Pillar: Open Innovation

- The introduction of an **EIC** is an important component of Horizon Europe. The EIC should take into account the existing innovation instruments. Care should be taken to ensure coherence and complementarity between Member State policy and European measures. We are in favour of funding innovation and growth at EU level as envisaged with the **EIC Accelerator** complementing national measures. On the other hand, individual funding with a low technology readiness level – as envisaged by **EIC Pathfinder** – can be undertaken just as well or better at national level. A substitution effect must be avoided here. Collaborative projects ensure the greatest European added value also in the EIC. **Eurostars** should continue under the Open Innovation Pillar as a successful measure in accordance with Article 185 TFEU.
- Appropriate participation of the Member States is also required for the **implementation of the EIC**: The approval of the Member States is essential for the appointment of the members of the EIC board. The Member States should also have at least an advisory role in the appointment of members of other bodies and key positions. The EIC programme managers must be carefully selected by the Commission to ensure no possibility for conflicts of interest.
- Germany welcomes the **continuation of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)** in its current form and its positioning in the third Pillar. There must be no overlapping or

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<sup>4</sup> See also the final report: “Re-finding Industry – Defining Innovation”, report of the independent High Level Group on industrial technologies”, 2018.

duplication in the activities of the EIT and EIC. We call on the Commission to highlight synergies between the EIT and EIC and to take these into account in its further programme design.

- Horizon Europe and the EIC in particular serve to strengthen European competitiveness. Therefore it should be worked towards an **exploitation of research and development results taking place in Europe**. This must be ensured in the design of funding measures and the innovation policy framework.

#### IV. Part: Strengthening the European Research Area

- An intensive exchange with society is needed in order to align research to citizens' interests and to increase the effectiveness of and openness to research. We therefore advocate that the topics of the area **Science with and for Society** (SwafS) are visibly anchored in Horizon Europe.
- The link between the **European Research Area** (ERA) and the **European Higher Education Area** (EHEA) should be strengthened. European university networks can provide a contribution to this.
- **Higher education institutions** play an important role at national and European level. Greater coherence between the ERA and the EHEA is important, in particular for topics such as the promotion of young scientists, mobility and scientific career paths.
- **Collaborations with science and technology networks** (European Technology Platforms, ETPs/ETIPs) can accelerate the innovation process.

#### C. Rules of participation and funding instruments

- We welcome a **broad continuation of the rules of participation and funding instruments** from Horizon 2020 and the efforts for further simplification. This is important for ensuring continuity and the programme's attractiveness.
- **Collaborative projects** should remain the main instrument under Horizon Europe. A high number of small and medium-sized collaborative projects must also continue to be ensured. The scale of the funding of small and medium-sized collaborative projects under Horizon Europe should be monitored regularly so that deficiencies in calls for proposals can be quickly adjusted.
- We call on the Commission to reduce the **high oversubscription rates** in individual areas. Consideration should be given to appropriate measures on a case-by-case basis, e.g. **a two-phase application procedure or a narrower and clearer focus of the calls for proposals**.
- In Horizon Europe, the **budget of certain calls for proposals should allow up to 25 % flexibility**. This will ensure the efficient use of funds according to the quality of the applications submitted.
- We welcome the proposed modifications in the area of **state aid** which have been published at the same time as the proposal for Horizon Europe. A simplification of the pre-approval of Member State funding shares in the case of combined funding is essential in order to leverage further synergies between Horizon Europe and the cohesion policy funds in the next EU funding period.
- In general, we welcome the rules on **open access to publications and research data**. Simplified access to scientific findings must be ensured, particularly for SMEs. We also welcome the opt-out option for the rules on **open access to research data**.