

Norwegian Positions on Horizon 2020

The Commission has presented an ambitious proposal on the next framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020. By demonstrating the crucial role in which research and innovation can create economic growth in Europe, by addressing key societal challenges where European cooperation in research and innovation is essential, and by highlighting the importance of excellence both for scientific breakthroughs and for reaching other policy goals, Horizon 2020 is a solid basis for placing research and innovation high on the European agenda in the coming years.

We appreciate the measures that have been introduced to adapt Horizon 2020 to the needs of European researchers and European society, including radical simplification, the emphasis on European added value i.e. through the strengthening of the ERC, as well as the prominence of challenges and opportunities shared by all or most European countries. Still, we find that there is a potential for clarifying and developing parts of the proposal further.

Societal Challenges

Norway supports the overall outline of the Societal Challenges part of Horizon 2020. However, we would like to draw your attention to three cross-cutting issues which in our opinion need to be addressed more strongly both to solve common challenges and to increase Europe's competitiveness. These are marine and maritime research, interdisciplinarity and the social context of the grand challenges, and the synergies between Union and Member States'/Associated Countries' Initiatives.

Marine and Maritime Research

Europe's seas and oceans have the potential to be both a source of answers to the grand challenges which Europe faces today as well as the potential to be a source of sustainable growth in Europe. Therefore, we welcome the recognition of marine and maritime research as part of the challenge "Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy".

However, marine and maritime perspectives are essential in a number of other policy areas, including climate and climate change, energy, and transportation. Furthermore, a common knowledge base is essential in our management of Europe's seas and oceans. Marine and maritime research has the potential to find the causes and solutions not only to the challenge of "Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy", but to other challenges outlined in the Commission's proposal on Horizon 2020, in particular the challenges on "Secure, clean and efficient energy", "Smart, green and integrated transport", and "Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials". At the same time, seas and oceans represent an untapped potential for sustainable growth for Europe in various areas, including food, health, and tourism.

Therefore, marine and maritime research should be addressed as a cross-cutting challenge, and should be integrated as part of other challenges.

Concrete proposals for amendments of the legislative text on the framework programme, COM (2011) 809 final, prepared at administrative level, are included in the annex.

Interdisciplinarity and the Social Context of the Grand Challenges

Few and broad societal challenges allow for more interdisciplinarity. We support the integration of social sciences and the humanities in all challenges. Both the challenges themselves and the possible solutions need to be understood and addressed within a broad social and cultural context. Social sciences and the humanities therefore play an important role in developing, legitimating and implementing new solutions and policy in society.

From our perspective security issues should not only be seen in a technological perspective, but need to be tackled within a broader societal context. We would therefore like to express our support to the outline of the challenge on “Inclusive, innovative and secure societies”. However, a good integration of security and societal issues necessitates an appropriate balance between the different parts of the programme.

Synergies between Union and Member States’/Associated Countries’ Initiatives

We are pleased that the societal challenges have a prominent place in the Commission’s proposal on Horizon 2020. Member States and Associated Countries have expressed their commitment to better coordination of their research on the societal challenges through the establishment of 10 Joint Programming Initiatives. There are clear interlinkages between the societal challenges addressed in Horizon 2020 and those addressed in the JPIs. These interlinkages indicate that support from Horizon 2020 for the JPIs may further promote synergies between research and innovation on the societal challenges. However, there should be equal opportunities for support from Horizon 2020 for all JPIs.

Excellent Science

Infrastructure

Research infrastructure constitutes an important pillar of European cooperation in research and innovation, and is an instrument with clear European added value. We therefore appreciate the contribution by Horizon 2020 to developing world-class European infrastructure.

However, we would like to express our concerns about the wording of point 4.1.1. in Part I of COM (2011) 811, stating that the objective of developing world-class infrastructure “will address specifically those infrastructures that are setting up or that

have set up their governance, e.g. on the basis of the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) or any equivalent structure at European or international level”. For some international infrastructures, including research infrastructures on the ESFRI Roadmap, the use of national legal entities in addition to agreements securing international co-operation (governance) has proven necessary. Such research infrastructures should not be excluded from funding. This is important in order to secure progress in the process of realizing pan-European research infrastructures. We therefore propose that the legal text is clarified in regard to the governance structures necessary to obtain funding from Horizon 2020.

Cross-cutting issues

Simplification

Simplification is crucial in securing continued participation by those entities already involved in the current framework programme, as well as ensuring the inclusion of new participants in the upcoming Horizon 2020. We therefore appreciate the strong emphasis on simplification measures in Horizon 2020, both regarding the programme architecture, a more trust-based system, and enhanced user-friendliness.

However, we believe that simplification should be seen from the participants’ perspective. Simplification should aim at both keeping participants already involved in the framework programme, as well as widening participation, both in general, and to SMEs and smaller academic entities specifically. By aiming for wider participation, simplification could also have a positive effect on European research seen from a regional perspective.

The overall objective of simplification of the financial framework should be to ensure a cost-model in EU research finance schemes that covers the *real costs* of research activities, regardless of scientific discipline, type of research organisation or the country where the research activity takes place. The agenda for the modernisation of Europe’s higher education systems points to full costing as an important instrument in securing long-term sustainable funding of European universities. The EUA, in dialogue with the Commission, has actively promoted the introduction of full costing by European universities. In Norway, a full costing funding scheme has recently been introduced for research institutes.

The use of flat rates in some cases goes against the principle of full costing. Key participants from Norway, as well as important umbrella organizations such as EUA, EARTO, and BUSINESSEUROPE, have expressed concern regarding the Commission’s proposal of a flat reimbursement rate of 20 % for indirect costs. For many participants, a flat reimbursement rate of 20 % will lead to reduced funding. The proposed rate of 20 % is expected to have negative effects especially in countries and scientific fields where the real indirect costs tend to be high.

Considering the long-term sustainability of research and research funding it is therefore important to retain the option of full-costing as the basis for reimbursement,

i.e. reimbursement of costs for participants on the basis of indirect costs actually incurred. Many key participants in FP7 would welcome this in order to be able to participate fully also in Horizon 2020.

Proposals:

- *There should be an option of reimbursement of costs on the basis of real indirect costs, i.e. indirect costs actually incurred, or*
- *The reimbursement rate for indirect costs should be increased.*

Gender balance

We are pleased to see that Horizon 2020 supports gender balance as an important factor in fostering excellent and innovative research, for tackling societal challenges, and increasing competitiveness. However, we consider it to be of great importance that these good intentions are turned into concrete measures in the further development of Horizon 2020.

Proposals:

- *An incentive system in support of projects with an integrated gender and gender equality perspective should be established.*
- *Gender balance (40/60) should be a goal in all decision-making bodies, i.e. not only in advisory boards, but also in programme boards and other decision-making bodies.*
- *Both the Commission and participating countries should develop target figures for the share of female researchers to be reached by 2020. Such target figures will ease the measuring of progress and achievement of objectives regarding gender balance.*

The Knowledge Triangle

We support the integration of research and innovation into one framework programme. However, we also find that Horizon 2020 should be a step in realizing a more coordinated policy for higher education, research and innovation, and the interaction between these three components. There is still a need to develop the concept of the knowledge triangle further, and in particular the role of higher education.

We agree that the EIT should be an important instrument in realizing the knowledge triangle. Still, the EIT is not sufficient for realizing a coordinated policy for research, innovation and higher education. Therefore, it is necessary to supplement the EIT with other instruments.

Proposal:

- *Knowledge triangle policy should be better integrated into all parts of Horizon 2020.*

Participation by EEA EFTA States in Horizon 2020

Article 7 in the proposed Regulation establishing Horizon 2020 regulates the association of third countries to Horizon 2020. This article includes no explicit reference to the EEA Agreement. The terms and conditions regarding the participation of the EEA EFTA

States, including the financial contribution, are regulated by the EEA Agreement and thus already clarified to a larger extent than the proposed legislative text on Horizon 2020 would indicate. Therefore, we would like to see a more explicit reference to the EEA Agreement in Article 7 of the regulation establishing Horizon 2020. Such references are found both in existing programmes, as well as in new programme proposals including in the proposal on Erasmus for all (COM(2011) 788 final). The wording of Article 18, point 1.c of the proposed Regulation establishing Erasmus for all, stating that the programme is open to “the EFTA States that are party to the EEA Agreement, in accordance with the provisions of that Agreement”, might serve as an example of how a reference to the EEA Agreement could be included in the Regulation establishing Horizon 2020.