

**Contribution of the Leibniz Association
to the 'Public consultation on EU funds in the area of research & innovation'**

Research and innovation are among the most important European policy areas as they contribute to the development of our societies and provide solutions to global challenges faced by the EU and its citizens. The EU Framework Programmes (FP) for research and innovation – the core instrument for the implementation of these policy areas – not only support excellent research and scientific cooperation within the EU and beyond, they are also important drivers for competitiveness and growth. Consequently, the **budget allocated to the successor of Horizon 2020** within the Multiannual Financial Framework **must be substantially increased** if it is to fulfill the European Union’s societal, economic, and political ambitions.

The Leibniz Association believes that the **European Research Area (ERA) and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) should be the frame of reference of the next EU FP**. The future FP should reflect continuity with the previous programme as regards its design and in particular its three-pillar-structure, but must also take into consideration social, economic, and technological change at European and global level. This requires a stronger convergence of the knowledge triangle of research, education and innovation. However, while it is important to enhance and strengthen education and skills, in particular with regard to the digital transformation process, it will be paramount to avoid the dilution of the EU FP through excessive integration of additional horizontal aspects, which only peripherally relate to R&I activities.

The **“Excellence” pillar**, with its bottom-up approach of funding excellent science and training, **needs to be reinforced and receive corresponding financial provisions**. The European Research Council (ERC) represents one of the beacons of European research funding and has become a benchmark for high-quality science in Europe. Excellence must therefore remain the sole selection criterion. The Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) are equally important and central to the development and consolidation of the ERA through their promotion of transnational mobility. The MSCA should integrate further funding instruments to support specific geographical locations such as the widening panel. Supporting the provision of access and the development of research infrastructures across Europe is a great success of the EU FP. However, there is a continuing need to further develop a long-term strategy in close cooperation with Member States and to provide substantial financial support (incl. for networking and access).

The resources allocated to the new programme’s policy-driven part (pillar 2 “Global Challenges”) should be steered towards a limited number of priorities and **the strategic and thematic focus of H2020 should be refined**. With a systematic focus on the SDG, the new intervention logic concerning the setting up of priorities and their implementation should be further specified in close cooperation with the scientific communities and policy makers of the Member States and Associated Countries. It is in the interest of both researchers and funding organisations on national and EU level to operate within **a framework that offers excellent conditions for knowledge-oriented research** in all disciplines

and especially on TRL levels below 4. Collaborative research, which has a long tradition of fostering transnational cooperation and creating networks throughout Europe and beyond, should be strengthened. However, to tackle societal challenges or future missions, collaborative research needs to bring together the best competences in Europe regardless of their provenance. To maximize impact and unfold the new FP's full potential, "key enabling knowledge and methods" from the social sciences and humanities, by analogy with "key enabling technologies", have to be equally supported. Also, the transfer of knowledge into society at large is crucial. Therefore, future places of knowledge transfer (e.g. museums) should be further promoted.

The Leibniz Association recognizes the need for **a comprehensive European innovation strategy** and considers the creation of a European Innovation Council (EIC) an opportunity to review the existing instruments and pool funding within the EU FP to close the innovation gap. However, the Leibniz Association firmly opposes the expansion of loan-based financing as it would prevent the participation of numerous universities and research organisations which rely on grant-based R&I funding and cannot accept loans. Furthermore, following a bottom-up approach, researchers and innovators should be trusted to identify appropriate innovative solutions for the future of Europe. Overlaps and duplication between activities in the future pillars 2 and 3 are to be avoided, as their objectives differ fundamentally. Instead of systematically prioritizing close-to-market research and short-term economic stimulus, the focus must be put on the entire research and innovation process. In line with this, **platforms should be supported and promoted, where academia and industry can come together to define reciprocal needs at an early stage of research conception.**

The next EU FP must also take into consideration the necessary foundations for a sustainable and prosperous European future, such as good governance, functioning democracies, and social cohesion. Particularly with regard to the policy-driven pillar and the focus on SDG, the Leibniz Association encourages the Member States as well as the EU to **provide considerable funding for research to develop a comprehensive understanding of the past, current and future challenges** of the 21st century; from the technological and digital revolution to climate change or migration.

The Leibniz Association

The Leibniz Association connects 93 independent research institutions that range in focus from the natural, engineering and environmental sciences via economics, spatial and social sciences to the humanities. Leibniz institutes address issues of social, economic and ecological relevance. They conduct knowledge-driven and applied basic research, maintain scientific infrastructure and provide research-based services.

The Leibniz Association identifies focus areas for knowledge transfer to policy-makers, academia, business and the public. Due to the importance of the institutions for the country as a whole, they are funded jointly by the Federation and the Länder, employing some 18,700 individuals, including 9,500 researchers. The entire budget of all the institutes is approximately 1.8 billion Euro.

Contact Leibniz Europe Office:

Claudia Labisch, Head of Office
labisch@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de