



EuroScience welcomes the partial political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on Horizon Europe

On Wednesday 20 March, the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of the European Union reached a partial political agreement on the new European Framework Programme on Research and Innovation, called Horizon Europe, for the period 2021-2027. This is an important step for allowing and enabling the European Commission (EC) to continue with the preparations of the legal documents and the specific programmes without further delay. EuroScience recognises this is a major move, underlining the key importance of research and innovation for the future of Europe.

As a first step, in November 2018, the Council adopted a partial approach by outlining the position the Council would take for the co-decision procedure with the EP. The next step was that, on January 2019, the EP stated its own position. On Wednesday, the Council and EP reached an agreement on some important compromises.

Some of these were substantial. One was that 70% of the budget of the European Innovation Council should go to SMEs. Another that up to 3.3% of the overall budget should be spent on “Widening” for promoting the participation from countries that, so far, were less successful. Moreover, there should be a top-up for researchers in countries with lower salaries. Another significant measure is the inclusion of clusters in the five missions that had been mentioned already by the Council in November, one of which will be devoted to social sciences and humanities (SSH) and the creative industries. EuroScience supports the attention for SSH and creative industries but adds that it is not yet clear how clusters relate to missions (there are now 7 clusters in, or and, 5 missions. And EuroScience reiterates the concerns it has expressed jointly with ISE and ESF in May 2018 about a too rapid and not well thought-through implementation of missions.

Other compromises have to do with the influence of the EP on the detailed elaboration of the next Framework Programme.

Certainly, the overall budget for Horizon Europe is not part of this partial political agreement. That will only be decided as part of an agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the total EU budget for 2021-2027. The EC has proposed €100 billion; the EP €120 billion. The EC has not yet taken a position on the budget, and this will not be decided by the Competitiveness Council but by the Finance ministers and eventually the European Council.

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