

KEY MESSAGES ON POST 2027 EU BUDGET

The following key messages reflect the points of views collected from the research-performing member organisations of Greater Copenhagen EU Office. Our organisations actively contribute to transnational research collaboration through almost all parts of Horizon Europe. With regards to the future EU long-term budget, our organisations strongly support a continuation of EU financing for excellent and impact-driven research. It should be based on open competition and cover the whole value chain from basic research to innovation and knowledge valorisation in society. The following points should be considered when developing the EU framework programme for research and innovation within the future MFF:

- 1. Ring-fenced EU investment in research to maintain strategy autonomy:** To strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy and close the innovation gap, a significant and ring-fenced EU budget for excellent research and innovation is essential as a stand-alone programme or as a strong and independent component within a potential new Competitiveness Fund. The research programme must include a continuation and strengthening of the highly successful and politically independent science-driven European Research Council, Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions and multidisciplinary collaborative research. These instruments deliver on critical technologies, competitiveness, research on societal transformations and resilience. EU investment in bottom-up driven independent research must be maintained and protected against shifting short-term political priorities to ensure EU's long-term innovation capacity.
- 2. Balanced funding and instruments across the research and innovation value chain:** To build Europe's innovation capacity and economic resilience, the future EU budget should contain balanced funding and instruments covering the whole research and innovation value chain: Long-term basic research; translational research and collaboration; testing, validation and innovative use of well-known technologies. Sustainable and stable public investment including at EU level is needed to nurture and grow the knowledge base and translate it for commercial and societal value. This is a prerequisite for ground-breaking innovation, competitiveness and Europe's preparedness for expected and unforeseen shocks. The knowledge base anchored in public research institutions is the foundation for addressing the skills gap and developing talents needed for current and future critical technologies in Europe. The current Horizon Europe funding rate at 100% should be maintained for long-term basic and collaborative research along with at least 25% overhead. It should as well be applied for public research institutions engaging in closer-to-market actions and across relevant funding programmes.
- 3. Accelerating innovation and valorisation:** To close Europe's innovation gap, the EU funding landscape should enhance its focus on translating research and accelerating the implementation of innovation, including through public sector uptake of innovation. To boost Europe's scale-up capacity, we suggest that promising research outcomes – independent of the instrument – should receive smooth and quick access to follow-up funding and regulatory guidance in relevant industries for exploring commercialisation, scale-up or implementation. It would create a more agile innovation ecosystem and replace the current cumbersome and slow process of identifying and applying for follow-up opportunities enabling faster deployment of novel technologies and solutions in Europe.



4. **Preferential access to investment for deployment and uptake:** The future MFF could include preferential fast-track access to products and services offered by the European Investment Bank to de-risk investment and scale-up. For public sector or other non-commercial innovation with high societal value co-financed grants could be made available to support uptake of novel solutions. Such actions should be complemented by regulatory guidance, especially in highly regulated sectors. In terms of budget such deployment instruments should be separated from knowledge-generating research and research-based innovation.
5. **Maintain EU focus on multidisciplinary research collaboration open to all scientific disciplines:** Multidisciplinary collaborative research must remain at the core of future EU research funding to address societal issues and critical technologies. Research collaboration remains key to developing the future generations of critical technologies for strategic autonomy. Multidisciplinary research is also essential to address issues such as climate change adaptation and decarbonization, biodiversity, adoption and diffusion of digital and other technologies, health and medicine, food systems and consumption, civil security, migration and preserving democracy, European welfare models, European values, innovative regulatory models, competitiveness and innovation systems.
6. **User-friendly implementation and low complexity to maximise impact:** An accessible and more user-friendly research programme with low complexity for beneficiaries is crucial. The structure of Horizon Europe with three pillars and sub-programmes is simple and meaningful. However, aligned with the points outlined in Mario Draghi's report on The Future of European Competitiveness, the *implementation* of its second pillar on Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness is considered excessively complex and bureaucratic as well as insufficiently focused on stimulating disruptive innovation. The future MFF should aim for a smoother implementation that favour a impact-driven approach with politically defined societal objectives addressed through bottom-up calls for proposals. This approach should require multidisciplinary research-driven consortia including social sciences and humanities to propose novel and highly innovative research projects that deliver on competitiveness, critical technologies and resilience. More bottom-up calls align with the Commission's simplification agenda and replace the current time-consuming and slow process of developing work programmes and thereby speed up implementation. We support the continuation of open competition and a peer review-based evaluation of proposals using excellence, impact and implementation as selection criteria to avoid compromising scientific quality.
7. **Aligning lump sum funding with simplification for beneficiaries:** To achieve the Commission's simplification objectives and maximise research impact, further roll-out of performance-based lump sum funding should be aligned with a comprehensive simplification for applicants of calls, the proposal phase and grant agreement. The current lump-sum model applied in Horizon Europe is associated with transfer of a significant administrative burden from grant-agreement and post-award phases towards pre-award which is a significant burden for applicants. In addition, the absence of post-award financial reporting to the European Commission implies few benefits for public research organisations that still need to adhere to national rules which in practice oblige institutions to continue actual cost reporting practices.