



Horizon 2020 Q&A

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Background

MEPs are set to give their final approval to the EU's framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020, for 2014-2020, on Thursday 21 November, Parliament's priorities in negotiating this programme included stepping up support to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), including measures to attract new participants and enhancing transparency.

The text to be approved is the result of an informal deal reached with member states in June this year. Five MEPs led Parliament's negotiations on with the package:

- Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D, ES), Establishment of Horizon 2020
- Maria Da Graça Carvalho (EPP, PT), Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020
- Christian Ehler (EPP, DE), Rules for participation
- Philippe Lamberts (Greens/EFA, BE), European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT), and
- Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL, PT), Strategic Innovation Agenda of the EIT

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Background

What does Horizon 2020 aim to achieve?

Horizon 2020 will bring together all existing EU research and innovation funding currently provided through the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

There are three general objectives:

Excellent science aims at strengthening the EU's position as a world leader in science, through grants to top-level individual researchers, investments in future and emerging technologies, training for researchers as well as support to research infrastructures,

Industrial leadership aims at making the EU more attractive for investments in research and innovation through investments in key industrial technologies (like ICT, nanotechnology, biotechnology and space), access to risk finance and through support to innovative SMEs, and

Societal challenges focuses on major issues affecting the lives of EU citizens, in areas like health, food security, energy, transport, climate action, inclusive societies and freedom and security.

Background

What were Parliament's priorities in the negotiations?

Parliament's negotiators ensured that around €750 million from the Horizon 2020 budget will go to "Spreading excellence and widening participation" measures to widen the group of researchers participating in the programme, e.g. by attracting new applicants or promoting networking of research institutions. Public-private partnerships should also be opened up to new members, so as to avoid building "closed clubs". Parliament's negotiators also ensured that over €400 million will go to "Science with and for society" measures strengthening science's role in society.

MEPs made it a target that at least 11% of the Horizon 2020 budget should go to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Moreover, there will be a specialised SMEs department, with its own budget, to ensure that the programme's calls for tenders are SMEs-friendly. To further EU climate goals, MEPs earmarked 85% of the Horizon 2020 energy budget (around €5.4 billion) for non-fossil fuel energy research.

MEPs stepped up controls on EU funding for public-private-partnerships (PPPs) and made sure that all EU-funded scientific publications will be accessible to the public. Finally, they ensured that the European Institute of Technology (EIT) will have a budget of its own (€2.47bn).

In the 2014 budget negotiations, MEPs managed to increase the allocation for Horizon 2020 to €9 billion, €212 million more than the Commission proposal (which itself was €43.8 billion more than the Council's initial figure).

Furthermore, MEPs reduced the deadline for the Commission to reply to applications from 9 months to 8 and introduced a pilot programme, the "Fast Track to Innovation" to try out new ways to make the processing of applications faster and less bureaucratic.

Background

What is the budget breakdown?

The budget framework for the whole period (2014 - 2020) is €70.2 bn (at 2011 prices). Securing enough funds for Horizon 2020 was one of Parliament's key priorities in the negotiations for the EU's long-run budget (Multiannual Financial Framework) for 2014-2020) and the annual budget for 2014.

The total budget will be divided as follows:

- "Societal challenges" 39%
- "Excellent science" 32%
- "Industrial leadership" 22%
- European Institute of Technology, EIT 3.5%
- Non-nuclear direct actions of the Joint Research Centre 2.5%
- "Spreading excellence and widening participation" 1.1% and
- "Science with and for society" 0.6%