



Europe needs further investment in research and innovation, say MEPs

Committees: Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Six draft laws on the EU's framework research programme, Horizon 2020, to be financed under the new long-term budget for 2014 to 2020, won broad support in the industry committee on Wednesday. Investment in research and innovation should reflect the EU's future challenges, MEPs stressed.

"This programme is an opportunity for Europe to invest in its future and to help us get out of the crisis ", said the industry committee chair, Amalia Sartori (EPP, IT), warning against possible budget cuts in research and innovation.

"Horizon 2020 aims to make the EU a world-leading economy and a society based on knowledge and innovation. The Union budget should mirror this ambitious goal and this should be clearly visible in a considerable increase in research and innovation funding compared to the funding level of 2013", says the committee in the resolution drawn up by Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D, ES).

Simplified rules

The new laws also seek to simplify procedures. Common rules should apply to all components of the programme and a simplified cost reimbursement system should be adopted (making greater use of lump sums and flat rates), to make it easier to take part in the programme, states the resolution by Christian Ehler (EPP, DE).

A larger role for SMEs

Horizon 2020 focuses on three priorities, namely generating excellent science, fostering industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges, highlights the resolution by Maria Da Graça Carvahlo (EPP, PT).

To make Europe competitive, Horizon 2020 will encourage broader participation by private companies. At least 20% of the total combined budget for the priorities "fostering industrial leadership" and "societal challenges" will go to SMEs. Furthermore, a dedicated instrument targeted at all types of SME will be set up to ensure that SMEs are integrated in the programme and get access to all the opportunities offered in Horizon 2020.

Promoting excellence in research in less-developed regions

There are significant disparities across Europe in research and innovation performance which need to be addressed through twinning and networking initiatives and by linking the policies of the Horizon 2020 programmes with those of the cohesion funds, MEPs say.

Stem cells

The resolution drafted by Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D, ES) maintains the rules concerning stem cell research that applied under the 7th EU framework programme. It states that no projects using human embryonic stem cells are to be funded unless they are approved

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under the law of the member state concerned, no activity can be funded that is forbidden in all member states and no activity can be funded in a member state where such activity is forbidden.

Open Access

To increase scientific excellence and economic competitiveness, MEPs also adopted amendments to promote open access to scientific data resulting from publicly funded research under Horizon 2020, taking account of restrictions for reasons of privacy, national security or intellectual property rights.

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

The EIT aims to pool excellent research, education and innovation through Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICS), that is consortia of European universities, research institutes, companies and other parties working on specific themes.

New KICs are to be established under the new EU framework research programme in 2014 and 2018, underlines the report by Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL, PT).

The resolution by Philippe Lamberts (Greens/EFA, BE) aims at improving the governance of the EIT, for example with an annual activity report to be presented to the European Parliament.

ITER projects

The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project should have its own funding secured under the EU long-term budget for 2014 to 2020, without undermining other Horizon 2020 projects or established Union programmes, states the resolution by Peter Skinner (S&D, UK).

The texts will be discussed and voted in plenary next year.

In the Chair: Amalia Sartori (EPP, IT)

Procedures: legislative procedures - The resolution on Euratom is non-legislative.

Voting results:

- Report by Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D, ES) on the Establishment of Horizon 2020: 55 votes in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention
- Report by Maria Da Graça Carvahlo (EPP, PT) on the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon 2020: 53 in favour, 1 against, 0 abstention
- Report by Christian Ehler (EPP, DE) on the Rules for the participation and dissemination in Horizon 2020: 52 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention
- Report by Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL, PT) on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): 45 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention
- Report by Philippe Lamberts (Greens/EFA, BE) on the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the EIT: unanimity (44 votes in favour)
- Report by Peter Skinner (S&D, UK) on the Research and Training Programme of the Euratom (2014-2018): 36 votes in favour, 5 against and 4 abstentions

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