

STATEMENT ON HORIZON EUROPE

EFEE, the European Federation of Education Employers, represents the interests of employers in the strategic and highly diverse European education sector. EFEE is recognised as an official European Commission social partner and represents education employers in all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education institutions. This includes different national organisations, such as education councils and ministries of education, associations of VET colleges and universities and local and regional authority employers' organisations. In total EFEE currently has 45 members representing 23 European countries.

As a social partner representing European education employers, and in light of the ongoing triologue negotiations, EFEE invites the negotiators to consider the following points in order to further improve the Horizon Europe framework programme.

1. We welcome the political agreement on Horizon Europe reached by the European Parliament and the Council in April 2019, including the introduction of new features in particular the European Innovation Council (EIC), as well as the subsequent invitations made to stakeholders to contribute to the co-designing of the Implementation Strategy of the future research and innovation programme.
2. We support the EP's call for the increase of the budget of Horizon Europe to EUR 120 billion. Regrettably, a final decision of the Multiannual Financial Framework is likely to be adopted only in the beginning of 2020, in view of Brexit and the delay in commencement of the Von der Leyen Commission. In conjunction to this, we call for the preservation of the EUR 120 billion budget proposed by the EP. We regard this as the minimum to ensure that the ambitious goals set out in Horizon Europe can be delivered, as this framework programme (FP) could have the potential to deliver more. For example, while Horizon 2020 is the largest research and innovation programme to date, in some parts of this programme the current budget supports less than 1 out of 5 high quality proposals.
3. We are enthused about the broadening of Commissioner Gabriel's portfolio to include not only education but also research and innovation. This addition to her portfolio highlights the importance of enhancing synergies between different EU funding programmes.
4. We are pleased to note that researchers' calls for simplification measures have been noted by all the Institutions. We nevertheless would like to remind the negotiators on the importance of this issue: for example, simplifying accounting practices as well as application and implementation phases can help increase participation rates in the FP.
5. We would furthermore like to raise the issue of budget allocation. Both the *European Research Council (ERC)* and *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)*, which are currently allocated under the Excellent Science Pillar in the preliminary structure of Horizon Europe, are strong and successful programmes that bring added EU value. Programmes with such proven track record resulting in top-quality science and stronger knowledge transfer and research careers,

should be allocated a bigger share of the total budget. Regrettably, only one fourth of the proposed EUR 120 billion budget is currently assigned to this entire pillar. It is furthermore important to ensure the continuation of the MSCA actions.

6. With regards to the aforementioned, we welcome the EP amendment on integrating social sciences, humanities and sustainable ecological action into each of the priorities of Horizon Europe. These topics are key to understanding current and future challenges, and Horizon Europe must fully exploit these. Equally, security is also about social, cultural, and economic rights. In an era of increasing political populism, changing job markets and changes in global economic balance of power, the FP cannot afford to miss out on advancing themes such as better education, ensuring inclusion and learning from the past. If the intention of the FP is to truly produce societal benefits and wellbeing in addition to economic benefits, as well as support multidisciplinary approaches to various problems, this should also manifest itself in terms of funding allocations in the FP.
7. We cautiously support the EP's call to give emphasis to projects that increase the participation of underrepresented groups and countries when deciding on two or more equally strong applications. While addressing the participation gap in the FP is important, we would also like to emphasise the crucial role of national systems investing in their research and education infrastructures.
8. While we encourage in many cases the co-operation between the education and research sector and businesses in order to foster employment and growth, we remind the negotiators of the importance of securing enough funding for fundamental research, applied research and the bottom-up approach. While pressing labour market needs must be answered, high quality and question-driven research must equally be sufficiently supported. Having this in mind, we highlight that many important discoveries with long-term benefits did not arise from short-term objectives but open-ended, collaborative research.
9. We promote the key novelty of the Horizon Europe proposal to mainstream open science principles in the FP. The open science practices should be exploited to a greater extent. At the same time, it is integral to solve directly related judicial, ethical, business, funding, technical and educational issues.
10. We emphasise that fostering excellence, quality education and research must be at the core of all EU policies. Excellence needs to remain the cornerstone of Horizon Europe, in order to advance science as well as its impact on society and economy.



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