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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	12007/25; 12005/25
No. Cion doc.:	11765/1/25 REV 1; 11749/25
Subject:	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing Horizon Europe, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, for the period 2028-2034 laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/695 Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2028-2034, laying down the rules for participation and dissemination under that Programme, and repealing Decision (EU) 2021/764 - Third Presidency compromise text on ERA Pillar

Delegations will find attached a third Presidency compromise text on Block V (ERA pillar): Framework Programme (Art. 18 to 19) and Specific Programme (Art. 14 to 17).

Changes in comparison to the Commission proposals (document 12007/25 and 12005/25) are marked in ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions and in **bold underline** for additions. Text in ***bold italics*** corresponds to topics that require further discussion

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PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ESTABLISHING HORIZON EUROPE, THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, FOR THE PERIOD 2028-2034 LAYING DOWN ITS RULES FOR PARTICIPATION AND DISSEMINATION, AND REPEALING REGULATION (EU) 2021/695

PUBLIC

Chapter V

European Research Area

Article 18

European Research Area ~~and infrastructures~~

~~1.~~ The objective of the European Research Area ('ERA') is to create a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the Union, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely. The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion and protection of **the complete set of all** values and principles of the ERA and the Pact for ~~r~~**R**esearch and ~~i~~**I**nnovation **in Europe. It shall foster further articulation between Union, national and regional research and innovation policies.**~~, notably ethics and integrity in research and innovation, freedom of scientific research and gender equality and equal opportunities, and the promotion of attractive research careers and mobility~~.

Article 18a

Research and Technology Infrastructures

~~2.~~ The funding of the ~~R~~**r**research and ~~T~~**t**echnology ~~I~~**i**nfrastructures shall contribute to equip the Union with a strong**,** ~~and~~ coherent **and connected** ecosystem of world-class sustainable facilities and services, building on prioritised pan-European infrastructures and complementary state-of-the-art national capacities and using **Union** funding instruments, including **in synergy with the other components of this Programme and with other Union programmes** ~~European partnerships~~. The Programme ~~shall~~ **may** contribute up to 20% of the ~~building~~ **construction or major upgrade** costs of critical ~~new~~ world-class capacities of European research and technology infrastructures. **These infrastructures shall be jointly identified and agreed by the Union and Member States in an open, transparent and competitive process, based on clear criteria.**

Article 18b

Policy Support Facility

~~3.~~ The Policy Support Facility shall provide Member States and Associated Countries with practical expert support to design, implement and evaluate reforms that enhance the quality of their research and innovation investments, policies and systems. It shall contribute to building stronger and more effective national research and innovation systems and a more robust European Research Area.

Recital

(19) The Programme should support European research **and technology** infrastructures**,** ~~and technology infrastructures~~ **contributing to the strategic needs of the Union and providing European added value through coherent long-term planning and coordinated investments, duly taking into account the work of European Strategic Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)** ***and any further strategic forum for technology infrastructures.*** ~~in driving~~ **This should drive** scientific and technological excellence and ~~industrial~~ competitiveness, by supporting the continuum of the research and innovation cycle from basic **and curiosity driven** to applied research towards societal and market deployment.

[*Article 19*

Widening

1. ‘Widening countries’ are Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia for the purposes of funding the actions under paragraph 5, points a) and b).

2. ‘Transition countries’ are Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia, for the purposes of funding the actions under paragraph 5, point b).

3. Only legal entities established in widening countries or transition countries shall be eligible as coordinators under the ‘widening participation and spreading excellence’ component of the ‘Strengthening the ERA’ part of the Programme.

4. For associated countries, legal entities from the list of eligible countries as defined based on an indicator and published in the work programme shall be fully eligible as coordinators under this component. Legal entities from outermost regions as defined in Article 349 TFEU shall be also eligible as coordinators under this component and shall be subject to the same rules applying to widening countries under this Article, with the exception of paragraph 7.

5. ‘Widening’ includes the following:

   (a) capacity building measures;

   (b) measures supporting networking, knowledge valorisation, countering brain drain and dedicated National Contact Points (NCP) support.

6. The Programme shall assist widening and transition countries to increase their participation and to promote a broad geographical coverage in excellent collaborative projects. Those efforts shall be mirrored by proportional measures by Member States.

7. From 2030 onwards access to capacity building measures is restricted to those widening countries that have increased their real expenditure of public investment in research and development in the latest known year compared to the year prior to it.]

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Recital

(20) [The Programme should implement concrete measures in support of capacity building in widening countries and strengthening collaborative links across the Union enhancing the research and innovation capacity in widening and transition countries, leading to a more cohesive and integrated European R&I system and contributing to the target to invest at least 3% of GDP in research and development. The eligible Member States from the 2021-2027 period should be divided into two groups for the whole duration of the Programme , on the basis of the Innovation Scoreboard Index and the relative financial return per Gross National Income (GNI), based on the following criteria: i) 'Transition countries', with both an Innovation Scoreboard Index (2023-2025) above 75% of the Union average and positive relative financial return per GNI (2021-2025) under Horizon Europe; ii) 'Widening countries', all other Member States eligible under the 2021-2027 period.]

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PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DECISION ON ESTABLISHING THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE - THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR THE PERIOD 2028-2034, LAYING DOWN THE RULES FOR PARTICIPATION AND DISSEMINATION UNDER THAT PROGRAMME, AND REPEALING DECISION (EU) 2021/764

PUBLIC

Chapter V

European Research Area

Article 14

Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system

~~To support t~~**T**he realisation of the European Research Area (ERA) **shall be a shared effort between the Union and its Member States.**~~,~~ **T**~~t~~he Specific Programme shall assist Member States in achieving the objectives **and priorities of** the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe [1], by supporting **jointly agreed** actions aligned with ERA objectives and priority areas ~~for joint action~~, and by promoting **and** upholding ERA values and principles, as established in the Pact.

[*Article 15*

Widening participation and spreading excellence

The Specific Programme shall support a truly integrated and cohesive R&I ecosystem in the Union, addressing especially the third and fourth priority areas of the Pact for R&I, amplifying access to research and innovation excellence across the Union and prioritising investments and reforms. Disparities between leading and less advanced countries in terms of R&I performance shall be tackled through activities building a solid science base and connecting actors and ecosystems, and that encourage structural policy reforms at national and regional level aimed at, such as, improving the attractiveness of research careers, internationalisation, effectiveness of management and governance of R&I institutions or matching activities with Union initiatives. **]**

[1] Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe, OJ L 431, 2.12.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2021/2122/oj.

Article 16

Research infrastructures

1. The Specific Programme shall support the **development,** construction, **major upgrade** ~~development~~ and integration of research infrastructures of ~~European~~ Union interest. **It shall ensure pan-European user access.**

2. Research infrastructures activities shall focus on:

   (a) developing, consolidating and streamlining the Union landscape of research infrastructures, including coordination between the Union and national capacities and contributing up to 20% of the ~~building~~ **construction or major upgrade** costs of critical ~~new~~ world-class capacities;

   (b) reinforcing transnational access to research infrastructures across domains and sectors**, including for SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups,** and adapting to new emerging user communities;

   (c) making research infrastructures more resilient and sustainable while keeping pace with rapid **scientific and** technological advancements;

   (d) **promoting data sovereignty and further** developing a web of findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable (FAIR) and machine-actionable research data, including through expanding and consolidating the European Open Science Cloud as Europe's research data space**, as well as fostering synergies with the European sector-specific data spaces**;

   (da) collaboration and networking among the research infrastructures, training and upskilling of their staff, jointly with technology infrastructures whenever applicable;

   (e) reinforcing European research infrastructure policy and international cooperation.

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Article 17

Technology infrastructures

1. The Specific Programme shall **support the development, construction, major upgrade, and integration** ~~improve~~ **of** technology infrastructure**s of** ~~capacities in the~~ Union **interest** ~~and facilitate access to the integrated services of such infrastructures for innovative companies, including start-ups and scale-ups~~. **It shall ensure pan-European user access**.

2. Activities shall focus on:

~~Development of new technology infrastructure capacities~~

(-a) developing, consolidating and streamlining the Union landscape of technology infrastructures, including coordination between the Union and national capacities and contributing up to 20% of the construction or major upgrade costs of critical world-class capacities;

(a) **I**improving the visibility and ~~uptake~~ **use** of technology infrastructure services **across the Union**;

(b) ~~A~~**a**ccess ~~programme~~ for **innovators,** SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups to technology infrastructures across the Union **and support for valorisation activities to accelerate market uptake**;

(c) ~~C~~**c**ollaboration and networking among the **technology** infrastructures, training and upskilling of their staff**, jointly with research infrastructures whenever applicable;**

(d) ~~Reinforcing~~ **supporting the development of** the European technology infrastructure policy.

Article 17a

Selection process for supporting the construction or major upgrade of world-class research and technology infrastructures

1. The Specific Programme shall support the construction or major upgrade costs for pan-European world-class infrastructures in key strategic areas. These infrastructures shall be jointly identified and agreed by the Union and Member States to support the alignment of EU and national priorities in an open, transparent and competitive process.

2. The criteria referred to in Article 18a of the [Horizon Europe] Regulation shall be defined in accordance with the following:

(a) evidence of the proposed new capacities being critical and world-class, based on:

(i) EU added value: aligned with the Union's strategic priorities, and providing effective access for the Union's research and innovation community;

(ii) scientific, technological and /or industrial needs: significant improvement in the relevant fields at European and international level;

(iii) addressing capacities gaps: aligning available facilities and services with user needs and ensuring research and innovation ecosystem coherence and consolidation;

(b) effective implementation of the new capacities with regard to:

(i) governance and management;

(ii) financial feasibility and commitment;

(iii) technical feasibility [to realise concept/design], sustainability and resource efficiency, as well as a data strategy.

The criteria shall be further specified in the work programme.

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