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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 - Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions
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Delegations will find attached a copy of the above-mentioned opinion.

This opinion is available in all language versions on the following website: [Horizon Europe - the 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation | European Committee of the Regions](#)



**Reference document(s):**

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  
COM (2025) 543 –

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  
COM (2025) 544 -

**Draft opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – Horizon Europe – The 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation**

**I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS**

**Amendment 1**

Recital (11)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
EU Missions as set up in the Regulation 2021/695 should enable a transformative and systemic impact for society, by fostering cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-policy and cross-border collaboration. They should rely on research and innovation to develop the breakthrough technologies, services, products, and social innovations needed to achieve their ambitious objectives. In turn, EU Missions should accelerate the development, scaling, and deployment of innovative solutions and help create lead markets for new products and services. The Framework Programme should finance the research and innovation activities of the Missions, while the deployment and scaling up should be delivered through other EU programmes and national funding.	EU Missions as set up in the Regulation 2021/695 should enable a transformative and systemic impact for society, by fostering cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-policy, cross-border <b>and cross-regional</b> collaboration. They should rely on research and innovation to develop the breakthrough technologies, services, products, and social innovations needed to achieve their ambitious objectives. In turn, EU Missions should accelerate the development, scaling, and deployment of innovative solutions and help create lead markets for new products and services. The Framework Programme should finance the research and innovation activities of the Missions, while the deployment and scaling up should be delivered through other EU programmes and national funding.

<i>Reason</i>
All specific regional situations must be taken into account, not only cross-border regions but also other regions, including maritime and mountain areas.

**Amendment 2**

Recital (14)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
The Programme should reinforce links between universities and innovation ecosystems, including the private sector.	The <b>Framework</b> Programme should <b>strengthen</b> the links between universities and innovation ecosystems, including the private sector, <b>and connecting local and regional ecosystems</b> .

<i>Reason</i>
Linking up regional ecosystems will promote the rapid development of innovation, and the Framework Programme should facilitate these connections.

### Amendment 3

#### Recital (15)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>The European Innovation Council (EIC) should stimulate deep tech market-creating innovation. It should identify, develop and deploy these deep tech innovations through its instruments. Through coherent and streamlined support, the EIC should fill the vacuum in public support and private investment for breakthrough technologies and deep tech innovation. The EIC should aim to bridge, integrate and accelerate through its instruments the innovator's journey from research to market and enable the Union to have leading companies in emerging areas of technology to meet its social and economic objectives and avoid dependencies on other regions. The EIC should support high risk, high-potential innovations and companies presenting such technological, scientific, financial, management or market risks that they are not yet considered to be fully bankable and therefore cannot raise the necessary level of investments to be globally competitive from the market.</p>	<p>The European Innovation Council (EIC) should stimulate deep tech market-creating innovation. It should identify, develop and deploy these deep tech innovations through its instruments. Through coherent and streamlined support, the EIC should fill the vacuum in public support and private investment for breakthrough technologies and deep tech innovation. The EIC should aim to bridge, integrate and accelerate through its instruments the innovator's journey from research to market, <b><i>by strengthening the links between the ERC and the EIC</i></b>, and enable the Union to have leading companies in emerging areas of technology to meet its social and economic objectives and avoid dependencies on other regions. The EIC should support high risk, high-potential innovations and companies presenting such technological, scientific, financial, management or market risks that they are not yet considered to be fully bankable and therefore cannot raise the necessary level of investments to be globally competitive from the market.</p>

#### *Reason*

The research excellence developed through the ERC must lead to innovation. Before the ERC research programme comes to an end, it must be linked up with the opportunities offered by the EIC.

### Amendment 4

#### Recital (16)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>Deep-tech scale-up financing under the Scaleup Europe Fund announced in the Startup Scaleup Strategy, existing at the time of the entry into force of the present Regulation, should be carried out under the terms agreed in the MFF 2021-2027. All scaleup financing under the MFF 2028-2034 should take place under the ECF.</p>	<p>Deep-tech scale-up financing under the Scaleup Europe Fund announced in the Startup Scaleup Strategy, existing at the time of the entry into force of the present Regulation, should be carried out under the terms agreed in the MFF 2021-2027. All scaleup financing under the MFF 2028-2034 should take place under the ECF. <b><i>In this context, the CoR and local and regional authorities should equally and duly be associated in the governance of the ECF,</i></b></p>

	<i>including being informed in advance of programming decisions and forthcoming new initiatives.</i>
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<b>Reason</b>	
The links between Horizon Europe and the ECF need to be clearly defined. This should be monitored by a committee. The CoR must be kept informed about the decisions taken on this matter and the follow-up of links between Horizon Europe and the ECF.	

**Amendment 5**  
Recital (17)

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
The Joint Research Centre ('JRC') should continue to provide independent scientific evidence and technical support for Union policies throughout the whole policy cycle. The direct actions of the JRC should be implemented in a flexible, efficient, and transparent manner, taking into account the needs of Union policies and the relevant needs of the users of the JRC and ensuring the protection of the Union's financial interests. The JRC should continue to generate additional resources, which it may use to support its scientific and technical activities.	The Joint Research Centre ('JRC') should continue to provide independent scientific evidence and technical support for Union policies throughout the whole policy cycle. The direct actions of the JRC should be implemented in a flexible, efficient, and transparent manner, taking into account the needs of Union policies and the relevant needs of the users, <b><i>among which should be Member States, regions and cities,</i></b> of the JRC and ensuring the protection of the Union's financial interests. The JRC should continue to generate additional resources, which it may use to support its scientific and technical activities.

<b>Reason</b>	
The work of the Joint Research Centre is very important for the regions. A common work, via the CoR, must continue.	

**Amendment 6**  
Recital (19)

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
The Programme should support European research infrastructures and technology infrastructures in driving scientific and technological excellence and industrial competitiveness, by supporting the continuum of the research and innovation cycle from basic to applied research towards societal and market deployment.	The Programme should support European research infrastructures and technology infrastructures in driving scientific and technological excellence and industrial competitiveness, by supporting the continuum of the research and innovation cycle from basic to applied research towards societal and market deployment <b><i>across regional and national borders and the whole European Research Area (ERA).</i></b>

<b>Reason</b>	
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In order to prevent an imbalanced concentration of research and technology infrastructures, the Framework Programme must ensure that they are spread out across regions.

**Amendment 7**

Recital (20)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>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&amp;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.</p>	<p>The Programme should implement concrete measures in support of capacity building in widening countries and strengthening collaborative links across the Union <b>and including regions while</b> enhancing the research and innovation capacity in widening and transition countries, leading to a more cohesive and integrated European R&amp;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.</p>

***Reason***

At the risk of widening the gap between regions, closing the innovation gap in the EU cannot be tackled at national level alone.

**Amendment 8**

Recital (29)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
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<p>Support measures are needed to strengthen and better connect innovation ecosystems. Such measures should support organisations and innovators to create competitive, robust and connected innovation ecosystems and improve framework conditions through cooperation and knowledge exchange. They should help connect national, regional, and local ecosystems by removing barriers in the single market such as market fragmentation, limited capital access and segmented national capital markets, slow innovation uptake and the underutilisation of innovation procurement.</p>	<p>Support measures are needed to strengthen and better connect innovation ecosystems. Such measures should support organisations and innovators to create competitive, robust and connected innovation ecosystems and improve framework conditions through cooperation and knowledge exchange. They should help connect national, regional, and local ecosystems by removing barriers in the single market such as market fragmentation, limited capital access and segmented national capital markets, slow innovation uptake and the underutilisation of innovation procurement. <i>The existing tools such as Regional Innovation Valleys (RIVs), the Seal of Excellence, Interreg and renewed Smart Specialisation (S3/S4) should be maintained within the next Programme, together with relevant European Mission initiatives and Digital Innovation Hubs (DiHs/EDiHs), as they all promote networking among innovation ecosystems.</i></p>
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<i>Reason</i>
<p>The tools that promote links between regional innovation ecosystems are effective at boosting research and innovation across Europe. These tools must continue to exist. In particular, regions need to better define their smart specialisations (S3/S4) so that interregional links are established quickly through these areas of specialisation.</p>

**Amendment 9**  
Article 2, Definitions

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definitions apply: ... (23) ‘innovation ecosystem’ means an ecosystem which brings together at Union level organisations whose functional goal is to enable technology development and innovation and which encompasses relations between material resources (such as funds, equipment, and facilities, including research and technology infrastructures), institutional entities (such as higher education institutions and support services, research and technology organisations, companies, investors - including venture capitalists - and financial intermediaries) and national, regional and local policy-making and funding entities.</p>	<p>For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definitions apply: ... (23) ‘innovation ecosystem’ means an ecosystem which brings together at <b>local, regional, national and</b> Union level organisations whose functional goal is to enable technology development and innovation and which encompasses relations between material resources (such as funds, equipment, and facilities, including research and technology infrastructures), institutional entities (such as higher education institutions and support services, research and technology organisations, companies, investors - including venture capitalists - and financial intermediaries) and national,</p>

<p>(24) ‘knowledge triangle’ means the creation of networks between education institutions, research organisations and business with the aim to create innovation ecosystems that cater for the creation of an innovation pipeline from the inception of innovation through entrepreneurial education to the creation of startups and the growth of scale-ups.</p>	<p>regional and local policy-making and funding entities.</p> <p>(24) ‘knowledge triangle’ means the creation of networks between education institutions, research organisations and business with the aim to create innovation ecosystems that cater for the creation of an innovation pipeline from the inception of innovation through entrepreneurial education to the creation of startups and the growth of scale-ups.</p> <p><b><i>(25) ‘quadruple helix’ means a series of interactions of four major actors in the innovation system: science, public authorities, industry and society.</i></b></p>
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<b><i>Reason</i></b>
<p>Innovation ecosystems complement each other, so they must all be taken into account in Horizon Europe.</p> <p>While the knowledge triangle is important, we should not overlook the quadruple helix which enables society to be included in science.</p>

**Amendment 10**  
Article 3, Programme objectives

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
<p>The specific objectives of the Programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Create high-quality knowledge, skills and attractive careers for researchers and support the realization of the European Research Area (ERA)</li> <li>– Increase EU-wide and international collaborative research, knowledge sharing and valorisation.</li> <li>– Align EU, national and regional priorities to create a pan-European research and innovation ecosystem.</li> <li>– Reduce national and regional disparities in research and innovation capacity, skills, and talent to strengthen innovation ecosystems.</li> <li>– De-risk and mobilise more private research and innovation financing, particularly for supporting deep tech and the scaling up of innovative startups and SMEs.</li> </ul>	<p>The specific objectives of the Programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Create high-quality knowledge, skills and attractive careers for researchers and support the realization of the European Research Area (ERA)</li> <li>– Increase EU-wide and international collaborative research, knowledge sharing and valorisation.</li> <li>– Align EU, national and regional priorities to create a pan-European research and innovation ecosystem.</li> <li>– <b><i>Help grow regional and local innovation ecosystems bottom-up by also strengthening the connections between them.</i></b></li> <li>– Reduce national and regional disparities in research and innovation capacity, skills, and talent to strengthen innovation ecosystems <b><i>and effectively support ‘pockets of excellence’.</i></b></li> <li>– De-risk and mobilise more private research and innovation financing,</li> </ul>

	particularly for supporting deep tech and the scaling up of innovative startups and SMEs.
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<i>Reason</i>
Research and innovation are rooted in their regional ecosystems. Supporting the development of these ecosystems and encouraging links between them will enable the most competitive innovation to develop rapidly.

**Amendment 11**  
Article 4, Programme structure

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
(c) Part III ‘Innovation’, with the following components, in particular: (i) the European Innovation Council (EIC); (ii) Innovation ecosystems including activities to foster the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union. (d) Part IV ‘European Research Area’, with the following components, in particular: (i) reforming and enhancing the European R&I system; (ii) research and technology infrastructures; (iii) widening participation and spreading excellence.	(c) Part III ‘Innovation’, with the following components, in particular: (i) the European Innovation Council (EIC); (ii) Innovation ecosystems including activities to foster the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union, <b><i>regions and localities</i></b> . (d) Part IV ‘European Research Area’, with the following components, in particular: (i) reforming and enhancing the European R&I system <b><i>with the involvement of local and regional authorities (LRAs) and the application of a Multilevel Governance (MLG) approach</i></b> ; (ii) research and technology infrastructures; (iii) widening participation and spreading excellence <b><i>at all levels of governance</i></b> .

<i>Reason</i>
Research and innovation are rooted in regional ecosystems. Supporting the development of these ecosystems and encouraging links between them will enable the most competitive innovation to develop rapidly.

**Amendment 12**  
Article 8, Alternative, combined and cumulative funding

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
The Programme shall be implemented in synergy with other Union programmes. An action that has received a Union contribution from another programme may also receive a contribution under this Programme.	The Programme shall be implemented in synergy with other Union programmes, <b><i>especially with the ECF fund and the NRPP</i></b> . An action that has received a Union contribution from another programme may also receive a contribution under this Programme.

***Reason***

The Framework Programme should be carried out in synergy with the ECF and the NRP plans.

**Amendment 13**

Article 12, European Research Council

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
The ERC shall attract the most talented researchers from all over the world and establish the Union as a world-leading centre for research and innovation.	The ERC shall attract the most talented researchers from all over the world and establish the Union as a world-leading centre for research and innovation. <b><i>A European Researcher Status will be created to support excellent researchers by facilitating their activities throughout the European Union.</i></b>

***Reason***

Research excellence must be developed across Europe. A European Researcher Status, guaranteeing the path of excellence and fostering ties between researchers, will allow research results to be scaled up and will help prevent brain drain.

**Amendment 14**

Article 14, Joint Research Centre

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
The Joint Research Centre shall provide independent, evidence-based knowledge and science, supporting EU policies to positively impact society.	The Joint Research Centre shall provide independent, evidence-based knowledge and science, supporting EU policies, <b><i>as well as national and regional ones</i></b> , to positively impact society.

***Reason***

The work of the Joint Research Centre is very important for the regions. A common work, via the CoR, must continue.

**Amendment 15**

Article 15, Collaborative research

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
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<p>4. The Programme shall support activities to tackle global societal challenges in the areas of strengthening democratic values and tackling disinformation, including rule of law and fundamental rights; promoting socio-economic transformations that contribute to inclusion and growth, addressing demographic and intergenerational challenges, including from a youth perspective and including migration management and integration of migrants.</p> <p>5. The Programme shall contribute to EU Missions notably through the identification of priority actions for R&amp;I funding for the development of new knowledge, technologies, services, and products in view of their goals. Funding for the EU Missions established under Article 8 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/695 shall be awarded on the basis of work programmes covering up to the budgetary year 2030.</p>	<p>4. The Programme shall support activities to tackle global societal challenges in the areas of strengthening democratic values and tackling disinformation, including rule of law and fundamental rights; promoting socio-economic transformations that contribute to inclusion and growth, addressing demographic and intergenerational challenges, including from a youth perspective and including migration management and integration of migrants. <b><i>To this end, Social and Human Sciences (SHS), including cultural and creative sectors, shall be explicitly and adequately supported throughout the Programme, including in the design, implementation and deployment of research and innovation actions addressing major societal challenges.</i></b></p> <p>5. The Programme shall contribute to EU Missions notably through the identification of priority actions for R&amp;I funding for the development of new knowledge, technologies, services, and products in view of their goals. Funding for the EU Missions established under Article 8 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/695 shall be awarded on the basis of work programmes covering up to the budgetary year 2030, <b><i>with strengthened involvement of local and regional authorities in the governance of EU Missions.</i></b></p>
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<b><i>Reason</i></b>	
The social and human sciences should not only be a vehicle for public approval of the research results of the ‘hard sciences’. They bring a lot to society and should receive greater funding in Horizon Europe through specific programmes.	

**Amendment 16**  
Article 17, Innovation Ecosystems

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
1. The Programme shall support organisations to create competitive, robust and connected innovation ecosystems and framework conditions. Synergies with Union, national and regional programmes shall be pursued to this end.	1. The Programme shall support organisations to create competitive, robust and connected innovation ecosystems and framework conditions, <b><i>such as Regional Innovation Valleys (RIVs)</i></b> . Synergies with Union, national and regional programmes shall be pursued to this end. <b><i>Moreover,</i></b>

<p>2. The Programme shall support activities to foster the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union.</p>	<p><b><i>place-based innovation aims to drive economic growth, improve quality of life, and contribute to sustainable development at regional and local level, and therefore must also be supported. The Programme shall also support social innovation as an essential driver of inclusive growth, territorial cohesion and societal resilience.</i></b></p> <p>2. The Programme shall support activities to foster the integration of the knowledge triangle <b><i>and the quadruple helix</i></b> – higher education, research and innovation, business <b><i>and society</i></b> – across the Union.</p> <p><b><i>3. This Programme shall be carried out in a balance policy and financial manner across priority areas and relevant activity streams.</i></b></p>
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<b><i>Reason</i></b>
<p>Regional innovation ecosystems represent, at their level, what innovation should look like at European level. These ecosystems must be able to count on Europe’s support in order to grow, form connections and create European ecosystems.</p>

### Amendment 17

#### Article 18, European Research Area and infrastructures

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
<p>2. The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion and protection of values and principles of the ERA and the Pact for research and innovation, 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. The funding of the Research and Technology Infrastructures shall contribute to equip the Union with a strong and coherent ecosystem of world-class sustainable facilities and services, building on prioritised pan-European infrastructures and complementary state-of-the-art national capacities and using funding instruments, including European partnerships. The Programme shall contribute up to 20% of the building costs of critical new world-class capacities of European research and technology infrastructures.</p>	<p>2. The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion and protection of values and principles of the ERA and the Pact for research and innovation, 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. The funding of the Research and Technology Infrastructures shall contribute to equip the Union <b><i>and its Member States</i></b> with a strong and coherent ecosystem of world-class sustainable facilities and services, building on prioritised pan-European infrastructures <b><i>across the Union and accessible to all stakeholders, including SMEs and startups. This infrastructure will be</i></b> complementary to state-of-the-art national <b><i>and regional</i></b> capacities and using funding instruments, including European partnerships. The Programme shall contribute up to 20% of the building costs of critical new world-class</p>

	capacities of European research and technology infrastructures.
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<i>Reason</i>
Cities and regions fund research infrastructure and encourage researchers to develop useful infrastructure at national and European level. The European infrastructure to be created must build on this existing infrastructure. Moreover, this infrastructure must remain accessible to SMEs and start-ups in which disruptive innovations are developed.

**Amendment 18**  
Article 19, Widening

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>6. The Programme shall assist widening and transition countries to increase their participation and to promote a broad geographical coverage in excellent</p>	<p>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).</p> <p>3. Only legal entities, <b><i>including local and regional authorities</i></b>, 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>6. The Programme shall assist widening and transition countries to increase their participation and to promote a broad</p>

<p>collaborative projects. Those efforts shall be mirrored by proportional measures by Member States.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>geographical coverage in excellent collaborative projects. Those efforts shall be mirrored by proportional measures by Member States <b>and regions and shall also contribute to countering brain drain and supporting talent retention and circulation, especially in less-developed, rural, remote and outermost regions.</b></p> <p>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.</p>
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<b>Reason</b>
<p>While the national programme allows research to be carried out in all European countries, we should not overlook the fact that there are differences between regions within the same country. Moreover, enabling this programme to be carried out at that level (e.g. using the Regional Innovation Scoreboard as a benchmark) would be a useful contribution to its success.</p>

**Amendment 19**  
Article 2, Operational objectives

<b>Text proposed by the Commission</b>	<b>CoR amendment</b>
<p>2. The Specific Programme has the following operational objectives: (f) connect and develop research and technology infrastructures across the European Research Area (ERA) to provide transnational access; (g) support the creation and scale-up of deep tech and innovative start-ups; (i) increasing the participation of research organisation from the widening countries and transition countries referred to in Article 19 of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation] ; (j) foster open science and ensure visibility to the public and open access to results where possible.</p>	<p>2. The Specific Programme has the following operational objectives: (f) connect and develop research and technology infrastructures across the European Research Area (ERA) to provide transnational, <b>inter-regional and cross-border</b> access; (g) support the creation and scale-up of deep tech and innovative start-ups; (i) increasing the participation of research organisation from the widening countries and transition countries referred to in Article 19 of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation] ; (j) foster open science and ensure visibility to the public and open access to results where possible, <b>including through media promotion actions as part of Science with and for Society at the local and regional level.</b></p>

<b>Reason</b>
<p>The development of a world-class research and innovation system cannot be achieved without the local and regional level, and this must be taken into account when meeting these objectives.</p>

**Amendment 20**  
Article 4, Work programmes

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
<p>2. The Commission shall adopt separate work programmes, by means of implementing acts, for the implementation of actions under the following components, as set out in Article 1(3): (a) the European Research Council (ERC), for which the draft work programme shall be established by the ERC Scientific Council under Article 7(9)(a)(ii), in accordance with Article 18(3). The Commission shall depart from the draft work programme established by the ERC Scientific Council only in accordance with Article 7(4), second subparagraph; in that case, the Commission shall adopt the work programme by means of an implementing act in accordance with Article 18(4); the Commission shall duly motivate that; (b) the European Innovation Council (EIC), for which the work programme shall be prepared following the advice of the EIC Board under Article 12(1)(b), in accordance with Article 18(4); (c) Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), global societal challenges, EU Missions, New European Bauhaus Facility, innovation ecosystems, reforming and enhancing the European R&amp;I system, research and technology infrastructures, widening participation and spreading excellence, in accordance with Article 18(4); (d) the JRC, for which the multi-annual work programme shall take into account the opinion provided by the Board of Governors of the JRC referred to in Commission Decision 96/282/Euratom.</p>	<p>2. The Commission shall adopt separate work programmes, by means of implementing acts, for the implementation of actions under the following components, as set out in Article 1(3), <b><i>and the CoR should be informed of these work programmes:</i></b> (a) the European Research Council (ERC), for which the draft work programme shall be established by the ERC Scientific Council under Article 7(9)(a)(ii), in accordance with Article 18(3). The Commission shall depart from the draft work programme established by the ERC Scientific Council only in accordance with Article 7(4), second subparagraph; in that case, the Commission shall adopt the work programme by means of an implementing act in accordance with Article 18(4); the Commission shall duly motivate that; (b) the European Innovation Council (EIC), for which the work programme shall be prepared following the advice of the EIC Board under Article 12(1)(b), in accordance with Article 18(4); (c) Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), global societal challenges, EU Missions, New European Bauhaus Facility, innovation ecosystems, reforming and enhancing the European R&amp;I system, research and technology infrastructures, widening participation and spreading excellence, in accordance with Article 18(4). <b><i>For these components, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions shall be included in the relevant programming committees and Boards;</i></b> (d) the JRC, for which the multi-annual work programme shall take into account the opinion provided by the Board of Governors of the JRC referred to in Commission Decision 96/282/Euratom.</p>

<b><i>Reason</i></b>
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Research and innovation are carried out at local and regional level. Thanks to its close ties and knowledge of innovation ecosystems, the European Committee of the Regions, through its members, is well qualified to give its opinion on the Framework Programme plan.

### Amendment 21

#### Article 5, *European Partnerships*

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>1. (a)</p> <p>iii. partners' composition: unless duly justified, the participation of public entities from at least five Member States and private entities representing substantial segments of their respective ecosystems is required, <b>ensuring</b> a broad and balanced involvement of key stakeholders;</p> <p>xiii: continuous monitoring shall include tracking progress towards a set of partnership-specific common indicators including partner contributions, cost efficiency, and openness to new partners. Partnership-specific common indicators shall build on the common indicators as defined under Regulation XXX [<i>reference to Performance Regulation</i>] and set out in the biennial monitoring reports on the performance of European partnerships under Horizon Europe 2021-2027;</p>	<p>1. (a)</p> <p>iii. partners' composition: unless duly justified <b>and irrespective of their size</b>, the participation of public entities from at least five Member States and private entities representing substantial segments of their respective ecosystems is required, <b>guaranteeing</b> a broad and balanced involvement of key stakeholders;</p> <p>xiii: continuous monitoring shall include tracking progress towards a set of partnership-specific common indicators including partner contributions, cost efficiency, and openness to new partners. Partnership-specific common indicators shall build on the common indicators as defined under Regulation XXX [<i>reference to Performance Regulation</i>] and set out in the biennial monitoring reports on the performance of European partnerships under Horizon Europe 2021-2027; <b>an annual presentation on the state of play and follow-up of partnerships must be provided to the EU institutions, including the CoR.</b></p>

#### *Reason*

The members of these partnerships form part of the regions' economic and innovation ecosystems. The Committee must therefore be kept informed of these partnerships, how they develop and results they achieve.

### Amendment 22

#### Article 6, *European Research Council*

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>4. The ERC President shall be appointed by the Commission following a transparent recruitment process involving an independent dedicated search committee. The recruitment process and the candidate selected shall have the approval of the ERC</p>	<p>4. The ERC President shall be appointed by the Commission, <b>together with the European Parliament, the Council and other relevant institutions</b>, following a transparent recruitment process involving an independent dedicated search committee.</p>

Scientific Council. The term of office of the ERC President shall be limited to two years, extendable once for up to two years.	The recruitment process and the candidate selected shall have the approval of the ERC Scientific Council. The term of office of the ERC President shall be limited to two years, extendable once for up to two years.
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<b>Reason</b>
Research and innovation are carried out at local and regional level. Thanks to its close ties and knowledge of innovation ecosystems, the European Committee of the Regions, through its members, is well qualified to give its opinion on this governance.

**Amendment 23**  
Article 7, ERC Scientific Council

<b>Text proposed by the Commission</b>	<b>CoR amendment</b>
9. c iii. regularly report to the Commission on its own activities	9. c iii. regularly report to the Commission <b>and the European Parliament, as well as to the EESC and the CoR</b> , on its own activities

<b>Reason</b>
For these reasons, the Committee needs to be kept informed about the development of the ERC Scientific Council and the outcome of its work.

**Amendment 24**  
Article 9, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

<b>Text proposed by the Commission</b>	<b>CoR amendment</b>
3. The implementation of the MSCA shall:  (b) ensure strategic synergies with the European Research Council (ERC) but also with Union instruments that foster innovation, such as the European Innovation Council (EIC) and the activities to foster the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union as well as other Union programmes such as Erasmus+; (c) promote work-life balance, diversity, and inclusion, setting high standards for working conditions across the European Research Area.	3. The implementation of the MSCA shall:  (b) ensure strategic synergies with the European Research Council (ERC) but also with Union instruments that foster innovation, such as the European Innovation Council (EIC) and the activities to foster the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union, <b>with the involvement of local and regional authorities</b> , as well as other Union programmes such as Erasmus+; (c) promote work-life balance, gender equality, diversity, inclusion, <b>and adequate social protection</b> , setting high standards for working conditions across the European Research Area.

<b>Reason</b>
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Cities and regions regularly develop programmes to support laureates of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and seals of excellence. They support what the EU can put in place to support these researchers.

### Amendment 25

#### Article 10, Joint Research Centre

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>1. The activities of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) shall be complementary to indirect actions supporting longer-term policy objectives. To achieve this, the JRC works with international, national, regional, and local stakeholders, including through scientific collaboration agreements.</p> <p>The JRC activities shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– be flexible and responsive to evolving policy needs.</li> <li>– ensure synergy with other EU investments.</li> <li>– focus on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. scientific and technical support to Union policy priorities, in particular (but not limited to) those defined within the framework of the European Competitiveness Fund and those defined for parts I, II, III and IV of the Horizon Europe Programme;</li> <li>ii. knowledge integration and policy impact;</li> <li>iii. territorial development and Member State support;</li> <li>iv. scientific excellence and international collaboration;</li> <li>v. open science, knowledge sharing and capacity building.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>1. The activities of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) shall be complementary to indirect actions supporting longer-term policy objectives. To achieve this, the JRC works with international, national, regional, and local stakeholders, including through scientific collaboration agreements.</p> <p>The JRC activities shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– be flexible and responsive to evolving policy needs.</li> <li>– ensure synergy with other EU investments.</li> <li>– focus on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. scientific and technical support to Union policy priorities, in particular (but not limited to) those defined within the framework of the European Competitiveness Fund and those defined for parts I, II, III and IV of the Horizon Europe Programme;</li> <li>ii. knowledge integration and policy impact;</li> <li>iii. <b><i>territorial development place-based innovation, including renewed Smart Specialisation (S3/S4)</i></b> and Member State support;</li> <li>iv. scientific excellence and international collaboration;</li> <li>v. open science, knowledge sharing and capacity building <b><i>at all levels of governance and across borders.</i></b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### *Reason*

Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3/S4) are a key tool for excellence in local and regional innovation. The joint work between the Committee and the JRC should continue and allow the regions to further refine their area of specialisation.

### Amendment 26

#### Article 11, Collaborative research

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>(b) (i) promoting social inclusion, social and economic transformations, inclusive societies and social cohesion and tackling</p>	<p>(b) (i) promoting social inclusion, social and economic transformations, inclusive societies and social cohesion <b><i>and gender</i></b></p>

inequalities to create opportunities for all, taking into consideration rural areas' specificities, addressing demographic change and intergenerational fairness, including well-managed migration and mobility, supporting mental health and societal well-being, including for young people;	<b>equality</b> , and tackling inequalities to create opportunities for all, taking into consideration rural areas' specificities, addressing demographic change and intergenerational fairness, including well-managed migration and mobility, supporting mental health and societal well-being, including for young people;
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<b>Reason</b>
Gender equality must be a priority in Horizon Europe, both in terms of supporting leading researchers and in research topics.

### Amendment 27

#### Article 12, The European Innovation Council Board

<b>Text proposed by the Commission</b>	<b>CoR amendment</b>
2. The EIC Board may upon request from the Commission address recommendations to the Commission on: (a) any matter which, from an innovation perspective, may enhance and foster innovation eco-systems across the Union, the achievements and impact of the objectives of the EIC, and the capacity of innovative firms to roll out their solutions; (b) identifying in cooperation with relevant Commission services, national and regional authorities and other relevant entities, possible regulatory barriers faced by entrepreneurs, in particular those awarded support under the EIC; (c) programming in other parts of the Specific Programme.	2. The EIC Board may upon request from the Commission address recommendations to the Commission on: (a) any matter which, from an innovation perspective, may enhance and foster innovation eco-systems across the Union, <b>in line with renewed Smart Specialisation (S3/S4) and the objectives of the European Research Area (ERA)</b> , the achievements and impact of the objectives of the EIC, and the capacity of innovative firms to roll out their solutions; (b) identifying in cooperation with relevant Commission services, national and regional authorities and other relevant entities, <b>including the CoR</b> , possible regulatory barriers faced by entrepreneurs, in particular those awarded support under the EIC; (c) programming in other parts of the Specific Programme.

<b>Reason</b>
Owing to its close ties and knowledge of innovation ecosystems, the European Committee of the Regions, through its members, is well qualified to give useful opinions on the EIC Board's recommendations.

### Amendment 28

#### Article 13, Innovation Ecosystems

<b>Text proposed by the Commission</b>	<b>CoR amendment</b>
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<p>The Specific Programme shall support:</p> <p>(a) the establishment and support of connected hubs across the Union, providing innovators, start-ups and scale-ups access to resources, services and partners, including investment opportunities, first buyers of R&amp;I and innovative solutions, corporates, experimentation facilities, research and technology infrastructures, entrepreneurial talent, coaching and mentoring; (b) activities to develop pan-European innovation ecosystems in key thematic areas, support the development of innovation skills and early-stage venture building, fostering the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union;</p> <p>(c) programmes to support innovative SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups to expand and access international markets through market viability studies, place-based innovation tools, collaborative research and innovation, exchange of talents, tailored mentorship, access to global investor networks, regulatory guidance, localized marketing support, and soft-landing services in target countries;</p> <p>(d) other actions to support the development of innovation ecosystems and connectivity including studies, benchmarking, mutual learning between innovation actors and coordination of innovation policies.</p>	<p>The Specific Programme shall support:</p> <p>(a) the establishment and support of connected hubs across the Union, providing innovators, start-ups and scale-ups access to resources, services and partners, including investment opportunities, first buyers of R&amp;I and innovative solutions, corporates, experimentation facilities, research and technology infrastructures, entrepreneurial talent, coaching and mentoring; (b) activities to develop pan-European innovation ecosystems in key thematic areas, support the development of innovation skills and early-stage venture building, fostering the integration of the knowledge triangle <b>and quadruple helix</b> – higher education, research and innovation, <b>and business and society</b> – across the Union, <b>as well as local and regional authorities</b>;</p> <p>(c) programmes to support innovative SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups to expand and access international markets through market viability studies, place-based innovation tools, collaborative research and innovation, exchange of talents, tailored mentorship, access to global investor networks, regulatory guidance, localized marketing support, and soft-landing services in target countries;</p> <p>(d) other actions to support the development of innovation ecosystems <b>by fostering the creation of local and regional ecosystems of excellence in key thematic areas</b> and connectivity including studies, benchmarking, mutual learning between innovation actors and coordination of innovation policies.</p>
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<b><i>Reason</i></b>
For the reasons above, the ecosystem approach based on the quadruple helix should be included. This approach enables society to be included in science, and the regional and local level to be taken into account in how the programme is implemented.

### Amendment 29

Article 15, Widening participation and spreading excellence

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
The Specific Programme shall support a truly integrated and cohesive R&I ecosystem in the Union, addressing	The Specific Programme shall support a truly integrated and cohesive R&I ecosystem in the Union, addressing

<p>especially the third and fourth priority areas of the Pact for R&amp;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&amp;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&amp;I institutions or matching activities with Union initiatives.</p>	<p>especially the third and fourth priority areas of the Pact for R&amp;I, amplifying access to research and innovation excellence across the Union and prioritising investments and reforms. Disparities between leading and less advanced countries <b>and regions</b> in terms of R&amp;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&amp;I institutions or matching activities with Union initiatives. uch actions shall also contribute to countering brain drain and supporting talent retention and circulation, especially in less-developed, rural, remote and outermost regions.</p>
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<i>Reason</i>
<p>While the national programme allows research to be carried out in all European countries, we should not overlook the fact that there are differences between regions within the same country. Moreover, enabling this programme to be carried out at that level (e.g. using the Regional Innovation Scoreboard as a benchmark) would be a useful contribution to its success.</p>

### **Amendment 30**

#### Article 16, Research infrastructures

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>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 costs of critical new world-class capacities; (b) reinforcing transnational access to research infrastructures across domains and sectors, and adapting to new emerging user communities; (c) making research infrastructures more resilient and sustainable while keeping pace with rapid technological advancements; (d) developing a web of findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable (FAIR) and machine-actionable research</p>	<p>2. Research infrastructures activities shall focus on: (a) developing, consolidating and streamlining the Union landscape of research infrastructures, including coordination between the Union, <b>national and regional capacities</b> and contributing up to 20% of the building costs of critical new world-class capacities; (b) reinforcing transnational access to research infrastructures across domains and sectors, and adapting to new emerging user communities; (c) making research infrastructures more resilient and sustainable while keeping pace with rapid technological advancements; (d) developing a web of findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable (FAIR) and machine-actionable research</p>

data, including through expanding and consolidating the European Open Science Cloud as Europe’s research data space; (e) reinforcing European research infrastructure policy and international cooperation.	data, including through expanding and consolidating the European Open Science Cloud as Europe’s research data space, <b><i>in order to ensure the use and valorisation of public data, including from local and regional authorities and cities and ensuring fair territorial access to the benefits of this infrastructure across the Union</i></b> ; (e) reinforcing European research infrastructure policy and international cooperation.
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<b><i>Reason</i></b>
Society must not only be the beneficiary of scientific discoveries, it must also be involved in research that has an impact on people living in Europe.

**Amendment 31**  
Article 18, Committee procedure

<b><i>Text proposed by the Commission</i></b>	<b><i>CoR amendment</i></b>
2. The committee may convene in the following configurations, having regard to the subject matter to be discussed: • General configuration: overview of the implementation of the Specific Programme; • ERC; • MSCA; • Global societal challenges, EU Missions, New European Bauhaus Facility; • EIC and innovation ecosystems; • Research and technology infrastructures; • Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system and widening participation and spreading excellence.	2. The committee, <b><i>also involving the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions</i></b> , may convene in the following configurations, having regard to the subject matter to be discussed: • General configuration: overview of the implementation of the Specific Programme; • ERC; • MSCA; • Global societal challenges, EU Missions, New European Bauhaus Facility; • EIC and innovation ecosystems; • Research and technology infrastructures; • Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system and widening participation and spreading excellence.

<b><i>Reason</i></b>
The CoR, which is very well informed about the research carried out at local and regional level, must be involved in this committee so that it can contribute its knowledge of the field.

## II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR)

#### **Ensuring a stable and ambitious budget for leading and competitive R&I**

1. calls for the proposed Framework Programme’s budget to be the minimum allocation that would allow it to live up to the EU’s ambitions through its new innovation agenda and its strategy for research and technology infrastructures in particular; underlines that the

Framework Programme must remain a tool for a competitive, sustainable, just and socially inclusive Europe;

2. requests that the budget be designed in such a way that it is rooted in crisis-proof stability, meaning that it is protected from being adjusted to benefit other strategic European programmes and initiatives;
3. points out that research and innovation are not an end in themselves, but must help specifically improve people's quality of life, strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion, support good-quality public services and respond to the major green, digital and demographic transitions in a just manner;

### **Towards a more inclusive Framework Programme structure**

4. welcomes the proposed structure of the Framework Programme. However, the Committee finds it regrettable that social sciences and humanities are poorly integrated and that insufficient account is taken of citizen science through its various pillars and programmes. After all, these are key drivers for innovation, for its potential to transform society and for strengthening democracy, critical thinking, the fight against disinformation and the resilience of European societies;
5. calls for gender equality to be embedded across the Framework Programme, in terms of both governance, priority-setting and research content, and in conditions for participation and scientific careers. The Committee supports stronger measures to tackle persistent inequalities in the research and innovation sectors;
6. finds it regrettable that the Framework Programme favours a national approach to carry out the Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence programme, whereas closing the innovation gap in the EU needs to be addressed within innovation ecosystems, which mostly emanate from regional and local ecosystems;
7. in light of the above, suggests considering the Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) to carry out measures to widen participation at local and regional level, while taking better account of the specific needs and innovation capacities of different regions;

### **Implementing the Framework Programme with strong support from its local and regional innovation ecosystems**

8. points out that regional and local innovation ecosystems, which are at the heart of innovation in the EU, are creating future participants in the Framework Programme, and calls for efforts building on their excellence to form an integral part of implementing strategic objectives;
9. reiterates, therefore, the pivotal role played by cities and regions in building the EU's scientific and technological excellence, through both cohesion policy and their participation in projects under different framework programmes. They do so by creating fertile ground to elaborate, research, develop, produce and disseminate knowledge, to

build on that knowledge and to develop future innovations that can benefit society and the environment;

10. calls, therefore, for cities, regions and their ecosystems to be actively involved and participate in the governance and implementation structures of the Framework Programme, as well as in all the support schemes for innovation ecosystems to be rolled out under this framework, such as the European Startup and Scaleup Hubs;
11. calls for the Framework Programme to be streamlined to properly benefit universities, local and regional authorities, public research organisations, SMEs, start-ups, social economy operators and non-profit organisations, especially in geographical areas with more limited administrative capacity, in order to ensure fairer access to European funding;
12. calls for the participation of cities, regions and their ecosystems to be fully embedded in the Innovation Ecosystems programme and the initiatives with which they are closely associated, such as the regional innovation valleys, in order to be able to jointly develop leading projects to benefit innovation ecosystems across Europe;
13. requests that social innovation be more explicitly recognised as a strategic element of the Framework Programme, alongside technological innovation, especially when it provides fresh responses to challenges relating to poverty, ageing, access to care, housing, inclusion, education and citizen participation;
14. underlines that the success of the EU Missions depends on their local ownership, the active involvement of cities and regions in their governance, and their ability to rally the public, public services, universities, businesses and civil society around specific, measurable objectives;

### **Linking the implementation of the Framework Programme with smart specialisation strategies**

15. calls for the enabling and multiplying role of smart specialisation strategies (S3/S4) to be recognised. These strategies can form links with the Framework Programme by fostering partnerships between stakeholders in the same innovation ecosystem, while also concentrating investments in these local and regional ecosystems to generate top-class innovation;
16. considers that, in order to be fully effective, the regions need to adopt this approach as far as possible by increasing their strategies' degree of specialisation;
17. proposes, in light of the above, that technical support be offered to the regions in order to achieve this;
18. suggests, in order to mutually broaden the impact of the S3 and the Framework Programme, that the latter should link its programming and implementation more closely with that of the S3, which is to be rolled out with the future national and regional partnership plans in mind. This could be achieved, for example, by linking the planning of project calls more closely with that of the NRP plans, by creating joint partnership platforms or by creating 'hop-on' participation facilities;

## **Bringing about ongoing practical synergies between the pillars of the Framework Programme and other funds**

*For better links between pillars, favouring a 'place-based' approach*

19. welcomes efforts to link the various pillars of the programme, such as EIC Transition and the Horizon Results Booster, and calls for a more comprehensive mechanism to be set up (such as a 'promotion pathway') to which cities and regions, as managing authorities of the NRP plans, can contribute to help funded projects mature, enabling them to pass from Pillar 1 to Pillar 3;
20. proposes that the desired 'investment journey' through the various EU programmes fully factor in cities' and regions' contribution to how the NRP plans are carried out. The idea is that projects funded through these plans or the Framework Programme receive joint support to build on their results aimed at achieving higher levels of societal or technological maturity, and to contribute to the shared objectives of these programmes;

*Cities, regions and their innovation ecosystems as key connectors for successful synergies with the Framework Programme*

21. calls for the Framework Programme to put in place an active combination of EU funds supporting research and innovation, in order to enhance scientific excellence and European competitiveness and to achieve the Framework Programme's strategic objectives;
22. supports the creation of the European Competitiveness Fund, but considers that its implementation depends on close and strong links with the Framework Programme, particularly in the definition of its mechanisms for connecting them;
23. believes that the objective of European competitiveness must go hand in hand with the objectives of territorial and social cohesion, and that any excessive concentration of funding, infrastructure and innovation capacity in a limited number of already high-performing geographical areas should be avoided;
24. supports, in this regard, the need for the Framework Programme to build more practical synergies with the European Competitiveness Fund, involving cities and regions as key players in restoring the EU's competitiveness. The Committee calls, in this regard, for them to be closely involved in the shared governance of the Framework Programme and the Competitiveness Fund in all the forms these synergies take;
25. stresses that EU investments in research and innovation must contribute to a just transition, by supporting the creation of quality jobs, skills development, anticipation of labour market changes and fair access to the opportunities created by the green and digital transitions in all geographical areas;
26. welcomes the streamlined coordination between the implementation of the NRP plans to enable cities and regions to jointly invest in projects co-financed by the Framework Programme, and calls for them to be closely involved in stakeholder consultation structures, such as an Industrial and Technological Competitiveness Council or a Societal Challenges Council;

## **In favour of a European Research Area Framework Programme and a European Researcher Status**

27. reiterates that Europe must be able to offer its best researchers a safe and attractive working environment and that the Framework Programme should serve this purpose;
28. calls for a European Researcher Status to be set up that would allow, through peer-to-peer recognition, smoother exchanges with their counterparts, and certainty of treatment and social support, regardless of the country in which they work;
29. believes that such recognition, based on this status, would help stem the brain drain and increase the appeal for international researchers by complementing the *Choose Europe* programme;
30. underlines the need to tackle brain drain and foster the genuine movement of talent within the EU, including by providing further support to regions facing sustained losses in research, innovation and skills capacities. The aim is to prevent excellence from being concentrated in a limited number of clusters.

Brussels, .

### III. PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	Horizon Europe - The 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation
<b>Reference(s)</b>	COM(2025)544; COM(2025)543
<b>Legal basis</b>	Optional, Article 307, first paragraph
<b>Procedural basis</b>	Rule 43, RP
<b>Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter</b>	COM (2025) 544: Council (25/09/25), EC (16/07/25) COM (2025) 543: Council (25/09/25), EP (12/11/25), EC (16/07/25)
<b>Date of Bureau/President's decision</b>	23/09/2025
<b>Commission responsible</b>	SEDEC-VIII - 8th Mandate - Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC)
<b>Rapporteur-general</b>	Anne Besnier (FR/PSE)
<b>Discussed in commission</b>	N/A
<b>Date adopted by commission</b>	N/A
<b>Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity)</b>	N/A
<b>Date adopted in plenary</b>	6-7 May 2026
<b>Previous Committee opinions</b>	<a href="#">The EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy</a> <a href="#">Recommendations for the next Framework Programme (FP10) for Research and Innovation</a> <a href="#">A New Innovation Agenda for Europe</a> <a href="#">A new ERA for Research and Innovation</a> <a href="#">A renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation</a> <a href="#">Horizon Europe: the Framework Programme 9 for Research and Innovation</a>
<b>Subsidiarity reference</b>	N/A