

Research and development programme aimed at supporting research performing small and medium-sized enterprises: participation of the Union

2013/0232(COD) - 15/05/2014 - Final act

PURPOSE: to support transnational research activities performed by research-intensive SMEs and to contribute to the integration, alignment and synchronisation of national research funding programmes.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision n° 553/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the participation of the Union in a Research and Development Programme jointly undertaken by several Member States aimed at supporting research and development performing small and medium-sized enterprises.

CONTENT: this Decision is **part of a package of four legal acts for a new generation of public-private partnerships** that will allow large-scale, long-term innovation projects to be carried out under the umbrella of [Horizon 2020](#), the EU's research and innovation framework programme.

Three other public-public partnerships will be further developed on research programmes jointly undertaken by Member States with the participation of the Union in the areas of:

- a programme on research and development on active and assisted living ([AAL programme](#));
- a European research and innovation programme on metrology ([EMPIR](#));
- a second partnership programme between European and developing countries on clinical trials ([EDCTP-II](#)).

Objective: this Decision lays down **rules on the participation of the Union** in the second Research and Development Programme jointly undertaken by several Member States aimed at supporting research and development performing small and medium-sized enterprises (**'Eurostars-2'**) and the conditions for its participation.

Eurostars-2 is jointly undertaken by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Any Eureka Member or country associated to Eureka that is not a Member State or a country associated to Horizon 2020 may become a Eurostars-2 partner country provided it fulfils the condition regarding financial contribution.

Programme objectives: Eurostars-2 will pursue the following objectives:

1) promote research activities that comply with the following conditions:

- the activities are carried out by transnational collaboration of research- and development performing SMEs among themselves or including other actors of the innovation chain (e.g. universities, research organisations);
- results of activities are expected to be introduced into the market within two years of the completion of an activity;

2) increase the accessibility, efficiency and efficacy of public funding for SMEs in Europe by aligning, harmonising and synchronising the national funding mechanisms of Participating States;

3) promote and increase the participation of SMEs without previous experience in transnational research.

Union financial contribution: the Union financial contribution, including EFTA appropriations, to Eurostars-2 shall be up to EUR 287 000 000. This contribution shall be paid from the appropriations allocated to the relevant parts of the [Specific Programme, implementing Horizon 2020](#), and in particular from appropriations under the heading "**Innovation in SMEs**" under Part II.

In general, the Union's contribution will be **at least one third of the contributions of the Participating States** and cover operational costs, including the costs of the evaluation of proposals, and administrative costs. Where during the lifetime of Eurostars-2 the rate of the Union's contribution needs to be adapted, the Union's contribution may go up to a **maximum of half of the contributions** of the Participating States.

An amount not exceeding **4 %** of the Union's financial contribution may be used to contribute to the administrative costs of Eurostars-2.

Implementation: the Participating States have agreed on designating the **Eureka Secretariat ('ESE')** as the implementation structure for Eurostars-2. ESE is an international non-profit association established under Belgian law in 1997 by the Eureka countries and, since 2008, is responsible for the implementation of Eurostars. ESE will be in charge of the organisation of the calls for proposals, the verification of the eligibility criteria, the peer-review evaluation and the selection and the monitoring of projects, as well as the allocation of the Union contribution.

Calls for proposals should be launched at the latest by 31 December 2020. In duly justified cases they may be launched by 31 December 2021. Calls for proposals should also be published on the single portal for participants as well as through other Horizon 2020 electronic means of dissemination managed by the Commission.

In order to **protect the Union's financial interests**, the Commission should have the right to reduce, suspend or terminate the Union's financial contribution if Eurostars-2 is implemented inadequately.

Evaluation: by 30 June 2017, the Commission shall carry out an interim evaluation of Eurostars-2. It shall send that report to the European Parliament and to the Council by 31 December 2017. The result of the interim evaluation of Eurostars-2 shall be taken into account in the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020.

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