

Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe

2021/0048(NLE) - 23/02/2021 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to set up nine Joint Undertakings, as EU bodies, under Horizon Europe, the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (the Single Basic Act).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Regulation.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the Council adopts the act after consulting the European Parliament but without being obliged to follow its opinion.

BACKGROUND: Horizon Europe, the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027), aims to increase the EU's research and innovation impact by combining European partnership co-investment with additional private and public sector funds in areas where the scope and scale of the research and innovation resources can help achieve the EU's Horizon Europe priorities.

Under Article 8(1)(c) of the Horizon Europe Regulation, institutionalised partnerships based on Articles 185 and 187 TFEU shall be implemented under several conditions.

Under these legal provisions, the Commission's proposal covers nine institutionalised European partnerships establishing individual joint undertakings for their implementation, which include industry, research organisations, civil society, and others. The new partnerships should also contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal and strengthen the European Research Area.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the following joint undertakings should be established as EU bodies for a period ending on 31 December 2031:

- the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking;
- the Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking;
- the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking;
- the Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking;
- the Global Health EDCTP3 Joint Undertaking;
- the Innovative Health Initiative Joint Undertaking;
- the Key Digital Technologies Joint Undertaking;
- the Single European Sky ATM Research 3 Joint Undertaking;
- the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking.

The proposed regulation also contains detailed provisions on the objectives, functioning, funding and structure of the joint undertakings.

Seat: it is proposed that the seat of the joint undertakings be in Brussels, Belgium.

The proposed regulation lays down the following:

- common objectives and principles for joint undertakings;
- operational objectives and tasks;
- a common process for selecting new members, thereby ensuring transparency and openness across the initiative, in line with the Horizon Europe Regulation;
- a framework to ensure partners' contributions throughout the initiative's lifetime and that the costs are shared between the EU and the partners other than the Union, which is a core condition of a partnership approach;
- phasing out provisions requiring the governing board to set out a realistic plan to continue the initiative outside the scope of an institutionalised partnership, by the end of 2022, in time to feed into the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe;
- governance provisions to harmonise the functioning of the different bodies across the joint undertakings;
- coherence and synergy measures.

Budgetary implications

The maximum EU financial contribution to the joint undertakings should be EUR 9 600 million. The administrative costs of the joint undertakings should not exceed EUR 501.174 million for the duration of the joint undertakings. These costs should be covered through financial contributions by the EU and the members other than the Union.