Horizon Europe framework programme for research and innovation 2028–2034

2025/0543(COD) - 16/07/2025 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish Horizon Europe, the framework programme for research and innovation, for the period 2028-2034, and to set its rules for participation and dissemination.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: on 16 July 2025, the Commission unveiled its proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034, a budget of nearly EUR 2 trillion between 2028 and 2034 designed to strengthen Europe's sovereignty, competitiveness and resilience.

This new MFF will significantly improve the EU's ability to implement fundamental policies while tackling new and emerging issues.

To remain competitive, resilient, and united, **Europe must prioritise research and innovation**. This imperative is underlined in the Draghi report on the future of the EU's competitiveness, which places innovation at the heart of Europe's ability to return to productivity growth. Europe must increase its investment in innovation and address its weaknesses, starting with the barriers that stand in the way of bringing innovation to market.

In response to these challenges, the Commission is presenting a **simplified and refocused** Horizon Europe programme aimed at strengthening the EU's scientific and technological bases, boost the circulation and uptake of knowledge, technologies and innovation, and leveraging EU funding instruments to achieve maximum added value, in order to have a catalytic effect on new public and private investments in Member States.

CONTENT: this proposal establishes the **tenth Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe**, a key instrument to deliver the policy ambitions set out in the Commission's proposal for the next long-term EU budget (2028-2034) and the policy priorities for 2024-2029.

The Commission proposes to **double the budget** of the Horizon Europe research and innovation framework programme to **EUR 175 billion**.

Programme objectives

The new programme aims to promote science, protect the fundamental values of independence and openness, enhance Europe's excellent knowledge base, and boost the EU's competitiveness. It will support cutting-edge research and innovation, attract and encourage research talent, foster international collaboration, and build links between science and society. Its architecture is designed to improve coherence and performance.

The proposed programme is based on four pillars:

- **Pillar I, Excellent Science (EUR 44 billion)** aims to strengthen the EU's scientific base, attract top talent, promote research excellence in Europe and provide the best scientific evidence for EU policies. In this context, i) the European Research Council (ERC) will be expanded to increase its capacity to support frontier research, with a focus on funding excellent researchers and their teams; ii) the Marie Skodowska-Curie Actions will continue to support research training and career development.

- **Pillar II, Competitiveness and Society (EUR 75.8 billion)** aims to support collaborative research and innovation in areas with high societal impact. It targets EU competitiveness in areas such as the clean transition, digital leadership, defence, industry and space, in close cooperation with the European Competitiveness Fund. It will also address global societal challenges and introduce EU missions, as well as the new European Bauhaus mechanism. Partnerships will remain a key instrument of the programme. They will be simplified and streamlined in their operation and organisation and can take different forms: public-public-private to public-public or public-private.

- **Pillar III, Innovation (EUR 38.7 billion)** aims to support innovation in Europe, with a focus on promoting the development of new products, services and business models. The European Innovation Council (EIC) will be expanded and will support innovative start-ups and SMEs, with a focus on promoting disruptive innovation and entrepreneurship. It will provide an unprecedented opportunity to support high-tech, dual-use and defence start-ups, including those deemed strategic and essential to the interests of the Union and its Member States, which are unable to access sufficient capital on the market.

- **Pillar IV, European Research Area (EUR 16.2 billion)** aims to support the development of a unified European Research Area (ERA), with a focus on promoting excellence and impact, including a reformed enlargement component. This component will support the development and operation of research and technology infrastructure, including, for the first time, support for capital expenditure.

The programme's implementation will be **streamlined**. This includes providing simplified support, reducing the number of topics, and shortening the time between call closing and grant signing.

Moonshot projects

Horizon Europe, closely linked to the European Competitiveness Fund, would have the capacity to develop **ambitious projects with a strong science component**, stimulating value creation and strategic autonomy at EU level. These projects would move from research to demonstration and deployment in the real world. They would be supported by joint funding from the EU (Horizon Europe and the European Competitiveness Fund), national, public and private sources.

These 'moonshot' projects would boost progress in areas such as: i) the European Organisation for Nuclear Research's (CERN) future circular collider; ii) clean aviation; iii) quantum computing; iv) next-generation AI; v) critical data sovereignty; vi) automated transport and mobility; vii) regenerative therapies; viii) fusion energy; ix) space economy; x) zero water pollution; and xi) ocean observation.