Joint Position on the Proposed Horizon Europe Regulation 2028–2034 (FP10)

Keeping agriculture, food systems and the bioeconomy central to Europe's future competitiveness

Supported by EBU (European Bioeconomy University), ICA (Association for European Life Science Universities), ELLS (EuroLeague of Life Sciences Universities) and BIOEAST UniNet.

Europe's future competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy depend on its capacity to generate scientific knowledge and accordingly sustainably manage biological resources and develop innovative solutions across agriculture, food systems and the wider bioeconomy. The proposed FP10 Regulation must adequately reflect the strategic importance of these interconnected fields.

Agriculture, food systems and the bioeconomy: strategic foundations for Europe's competitiveness

Concerns regarding the proposed FP10 architecture

The proposed division of FP10 pillar II raises some concerns in terms of interconnectivity and coherence of the different windows. Most notably, gathering in the same window subjects as different as health, biotechnologies, mobility, agriculture, food, bioeconomy and creative industries risk diluting their visibility and impact. Broad thematic groupings should preserve identifiable research priorities, appropriate scientific expertise and transparent funding arrangements for these fields, while enabling collaboration across domains. Furthermore, positioning the bioeconomy as one topic among several, without explicit strategic recognition and adequate funding provisions, risks diminishing its visibility and making its funding dependent on competing priorities.

Europe's medium-to-long-term competitiveness cannot be built exclusively on the improved deployment of existing innovative technologies. It requires sustained investment in the scientific foundations and technological capabilities that will secure its position in the coming decades, particularly in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

This means supporting the entire research and innovation continuum, from fundamental scientific discovery to applied research, technological development, transfer and scale-up. Fundamental research, scientific talent, research infrastructures and universities are essential to maintaining Europe's capacity to innovate and anticipate future challenges.

Joint recommendations

We call for the following principles to be reflected in FP10:

1. **Explicit strategic recognition:** Agriculture, food systems and the bioeconomy must remain clearly visible as strategic research and innovation priorities, reflecting their contribution to Europe's competitiveness, food security, resilience and strategic autonomy, as well as to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, soil health and the sustainable management of water and other natural resources.
2. **Adequate and predictable funding:** Provide identifiable, multiannual funding allocations for these fields, supported by transparent reporting on planned and actual expenditure. Any budgetary flexibility should be accompanied by safeguards against the erosion of their research capacity and by a transparent explanation of significant reallocations. Practical measures should support partnership-building and participation in collaborative research, infrastructures, demonstrations and scale-up, and monitoring should track regional participation and funding.
3. **Coherence across windows:** Recognise the cross-cutting nature of the bioeconomy and enable integrated research across related domains, supporting entire value chains and interdisciplinary collaboration.
4. **Long-term scientific capacity:** Maintain support for fundamental and collaborative research, infrastructures, talent and skills. Recognise life science universities as key partners, fostering co-creation and knowledge exchange across sectors and with CAP-supported innovation systems.
5. **Sustainability and societal benefits:** R&I should advance competitiveness within ecological limits, supporting climate mitigation and adaptation, and promoting fair and resilient rural and regional development.

Investing in agricultural, food systems and bioeconomy research strengthens Europe's competitiveness, sovereignty food security, sustainability and resilience. The next European research and innovation framework programme FP10 must reflect this commitment in its priorities, funding, governance and implementation.

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