

Mr Thomas Oberreiter
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Representation of Austria
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1040 – Brussels
BELGIUM

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Dear Ambassador,

Business is committed to invest in research and innovation and is therefore supportive of an ambitious Horizon Europe programme which makes the EU a pole of attraction. We have high expectations on this EU's Framework Programme and wish Member States will increase its overall budget to at least €120 billion, of which 60% shall be allocated to the 'Global challenges and industrial competitiveness' pillar. These figures will be decisive to further leverage private investments to ultimately reduce the EU's innovation deficit.

In view of your debate on the Horizon Europe programme at the Coreper next week, I would like to express our deep concerns regarding a possible agreement on capping the budget allocated to European partnerships and on narrowing the scope of the missions.

European Partnerships

Public-Private Partnerships are key for innovation, as they allow business to work together with the public sector and scientific partners to tackle societal challenges. Thanks to their leverage effect on private investments, partnerships achieve policy objectives that the Framework Programme alone cannot attain, including supporting competitiveness and jobs, developing closer synergies with national and regional programmes and opening transnational cooperation in RD&I.

Businesses agree that there is a need for rationalisation and enhanced transparency of the existing landscape. However, we consider that these points shall be an impulse to secure an effective new landscape and not a justification to cap or reduce the resources for European partnerships. Therefore, together with a new approach to partnerships, we urge you to promote an increase of the funding for partnerships. On the contrary, capping their budget would be a backward step for EU RD&I and shall therefore be avoided.

Furthermore, Public-Private Partnerships' success is mainly due to the good participation and economic efforts of private companies of all sizes. To maintain and develop these achievements, business considers that the private sector's participation in partnerships shall be further encouraged. We call for partnerships to be open to financial and/or in-kind contributions to RD&I programmes in order to best accommodate the different ways companies bring values to research and innovation projects.



Missions

The Commission's proposal on the missions aims to improve the flow of knowledge across disciplinary and sectoral 'silos', stimulating system-wide transformation across many different sectors and involving end-users and citizens closer in EU RD&I activities. Businesses welcome the missions' cross-cutting character and wish that congruence and consistency with the current programme elements and structure is maintained. At the same time, it is of paramount importance that missions aim to strengthen industrial competitiveness and thereby prosperity and employment.

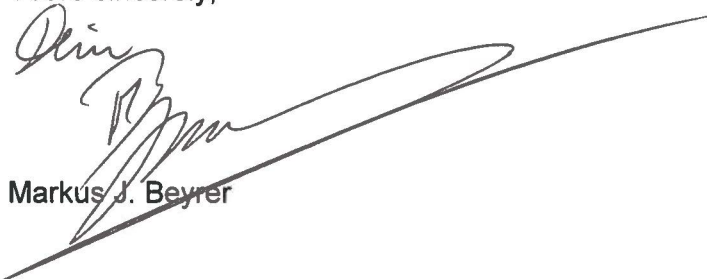
Missions are expected to be relevant for businesses as they will state the ultimate objectives of RD&I activities until 2027. For these reasons, we see any effort to further define the level of granularity of the mission areas as a way to reduce the range of scopes for cross-disciplinary actors to act together and hamper the links with the whole Framework Programme. Therefore, we call for a set of technology-neutral and overarching mission areas which will be able to address today's and tomorrow's challenges. Any attempt to strictly define the mission areas would be detrimental for innovation.

Furthermore, missions shall be addressed by and financed from all three pillars of the Framework Programme and their envisaged boards shall follow clear appointment criteria. In light of its central role in RD&I activities, business shall be fully involved in co-designing the process and in implementing the missions. We therefore call for an adequate industry representation within the mission boards.

To conclude, business very much welcomes the Member States' efforts to ensure a fair participation of third countries as well as to speed up the negotiations on the Horizon Europe as a whole. The participation of third countries with a strong track record on science and innovation is key for strengthening European competitiveness. Similarly, concluding the negotiations by the end of this European Parliament's term is decisive for companies for future investment decisions, in terms of when to invest, where to invest, how much to invest and on what to invest.

I remain at your disposal for further discussions on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



Markus J. Beyrer