Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany

Statement

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Statement on the 9th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon Europe (FP9)

The relationship between science and society is undergoing significant change. Increasingly, publicly funded researchers are expected to explain their results more clearly, to do more to highlight the societal relevance and impact of their research, to include citizens and social groups in their knowledge-building processes, and to make their publications freely accessible to all. The next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation aims to reflect this change by adopting Open Science as a universal principle. EU funding measures under the Missions and Innovation areas also aim to focus even more strongly on their immediate benefits.

In the Alliance's view, the criteria of an open science should be applied in a nuanced manner appropriate to the needs of science, and the new Framework Programme should take into account the various functions of research and the diversity of the European scientific and research institutions.

Framework conditions for a strong European Research Area

The EU's Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation play a key role in the success of scientific collaboration creating an added value in Europe. Effective progress in the areas of research consortia and researcher mobility are largely attributable to EU funding measures, which must continue to strengthen international cooperation between research systems in the future as they have done in the past. The funding of transnational collaborative research including both public and private sectors as well as stakeholders from third countries or weaker regions is a core instrument in European research and innovation policy.

The following fundamental principles must also be noted in the next Framework Programme:

Opportunities and challenges of Open Science

The EU Commission's 3O policy has been widely embraced in the research policies of member states. In order to implement the concept of Open Science in the future, a more specific definition of the term is needed in relation to scientific, communication and participatory processes. With regard to science, a differentiation must be made between areas in which this kind of opening up can occur, and those in which scientific research and technological development processes will continue to need their own space in the future. If Open Science criteria are to be applied – as assumed in the cross-cutting area of Responsible Research – to the funding of research projects, these criteria must be developed in close consultation with the scientific communities.

Within the broad concept of Open Science, a clear distinction must be made between science communication and participation.

Access to scientific publications and data (Open Access) is only one – undisputed – aspect of this concept. Open Science must not be equated with scientific excellence, however. For this reason, conceptually, the first pillar of Horizon Europe should continue to refer to excellence, and should not be renamed Open Science, as planned in the EU Commission's proposal. The principles of excellence have to be fulfilled in any case even in the notion of Open Science.

Plurality and added value

National science systems that are strong both financially and structurally form the basis of scientific performance in Europe, and hence the basis for the success of the EU Framework Programmes. National research systems must be adequately supported across the different research categories (knowledge-driven, programmatic and applied research). Funding from the EU Structural Funds aimed at strengthening research and innovation in the EU member states should be used in a targeted manner to support this process and to anchor the principle of excellence. The principle behind the successful division of tasks between the national and European level is that the subsidiary EU research funding measures create an added value and perform a complementary function for the member states. Special attention should be paid to this principle when designing future partnerships.

The strength of the European Research Area derives from the plurality of research approaches and methods that the various research institutions bring to it. These form the core of scientific innovation in Europe. The role of funding on the part of the EU Commission is to support cooperation between the various stakeholders by providing the appropriate offers. A further consolidation of the European Higher Education and Research Area must therefore provide po-

litical and financial support for bilateral and multilateral cooperation arrangements – both within and outside of the EU Framework Programme. The added value of EU funding consists of providing sufficient and attractive opportunities for partnerships which are focussed on the needs of science.

At the same time, the development of European Universities based on pre-existing, strategic university partnerships and networks within Europe can also help to strengthen the European Higher Education and Research Area.

The EU Commission has presented the draft for the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany takes this as an opportunity to make the following statement.

1. Structure and funding of the 9th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

The proposal for Horizon Europe once again envisages a three-pillar structure, albeit one that has been redesigned with a focus on innovation.

The results of the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 and the report presented by the High Level Group on maximising the impact of EU Research and Innovation programmes (Lamy Group) show that the three-pillar structure of the current Framework Programme has proven itself and that it should be continued with the goals of funding excellence, contributing to addressing societal challenges and promoting industrial leadership. Nevertheless, research consortia focussing on basic research must not be restricted by the planned integration of funding for industrial competitiveness into the Global Challenges area. The Alliance organisations welcome the EU Commission's proposal to significantly increase the Horizon Europe budget in the forthcoming negotiations. However, due to the enormous significance of research and innovation for Europe and its societies, the Alliance is calling for additional financial resources across the entire range of instruments, from knowledge-driven through to applied research, in all pillars of the Framework Programme. For this reason, the Alliance supports the position of the European Parliament in terms of **increasing the budget of Horizon Europe to €120 billion.**

Research projects should continue to be funded on the basis of grants. Loans or financial instruments are only useful for innovation projects that are very close to the market. Loans to public research stakeholders are not legally permitted in Germany or other member states – the expectation of profit associated with loans is also inconsistent with the openness of knowledge-driven research processes. Instruments such as the planned InvestEU Fund are not an option for many public research institutions, and hence should not be funded through budget reallocations at the expense of the EU research budget.

2. Fundamental science

The European Research Council (ERC) sets standards for excellent research around the world with its instruments for funding individuals and the unrestricted independence and competence of the ERC Scientific Council. With the strong reputation of its funding programmes, in particular due to its competitive selection processes, the ERC has established a hallmark of excellence. The proposed maintenance of the proportional share of the ERC budget as part of the total budget of Horizon Europe, and the use of scientific quality as the sole criterion for decision-making are indispensable in order to continue to enable excellent, future-oriented research for Europe that supports early career researchers. The same holds true for the Marie Skłodowska Curie actions. **Excellence as a selection criterion** and the funding of knowledge-driven research should not be restricted to the ERC alone, however, but rather should apply to the entire Framework Programme with its various funding functions.

Access to first-class research infrastructure is an indispensable cornerstone of scientific excellence. European cooperation in the area of research infrastructure should therefore be continued and further developed – to a greater extent than presently planned – in order to strengthen the productive capacity and efficiency of the European Research Area.

3. Global Challenges

The Commission's proposal on the 9th Framework Programme provides for the introduction of Missions as part of the Global Challenges pillar. **Missions** are also designed to help demonstrate even more clearly the benefits that research and innovation funding provide to society. Missions can function as intermediaries between Global Challenges and individual, specific research projects. However, the definition and delineation of the respective topics must be undertaken on the **basis of coherent categories** and, just like implementation, governance and appointments to bodies, must take place with the genuine participation of the respective research communities. The corresponding criteria must also make it clear what government expects of research or, given the openness of research processes and the un-predictability of scientific breakthroughs, what outcomes it assumes are possible. This includes, for example, making a distinction between areas in which direct societal impact may be realistically expected and those in which promised impacts that are not achievable would reduce society's confidence even further. The shared responsibility (including budgetary responsibility) of other policy areas and stakeholders for the achievement of goals will also be essential to the success of missions, as the missions are societal policy tasks that span a variety of policy areas.

The necessary foundations for a sustainable future for Europe, shaped by prosperity and freedom, are provided by well-functioning democracies, administrations governed by the rule of law, and social and cultural cohesion. For this reason, these aspects, which constitute a major dimension of the humanities' and social sciences' performances, also need to receive appropriate consideration in the Global Challenges pillar.

4. Open Innovation

The establishment of a **European Innovation Council (EIC)** is fundamentally welcomed. In view of the complex funding landscape in the area of technological innovation, which is therefore in need of reform, the EIC appears to be a very promising approach in order to review the functionality of the existing instruments and to establish or apply innovation funding as such in a more targeted manner. The EIC should **primarily fund research-driven collaborative innovation projects**, but not individual businesses. The focus should mainly be on cooperation between institutions, in order to guarantee the greatest possible benefit from the technology potential that exists in the market (especially in the case of young businesses) and intelligent connection with national initiatives. The established European organisations with a focus on applied research should be understood as intermediary institutions in this process, in order to transform European research into innovative products and solutions for Europe and to further develop Europe's industrial base in a profitable manner.

The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany is a union of the most important German research organisations. It regularly issues statements relating to research policy and funding and the structural development of the German research system. Members of the Alliance include the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service, the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the Leibniz Association, the Max Planck Society, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, and the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat). In 2018, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is chair of the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany.

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