



Heitor report

Report of Commission Expert Group on the interim evaluation
of Horizon Europe

*Euragri Members Hybrid Workshop
6 December 2024*

On Wednesday 16 October 2024, after 9 months of deliberations, the [Report](#) of the expert group on the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe, chaired by Prof. Heitor, was released at an event where Commissioner Ivanova gave a keynote speech and the Hungarian Presidency provided closing remarks. Around 100 stakeholders were invited to attend, with 1228 participations online.

Policy reports 2024

FOOD
2030

NUTRITION

COMMUNITIES

CIRCULARITY

CLIMATE



[The "Letta Report"](#)



[The "Heitor Report"](#)

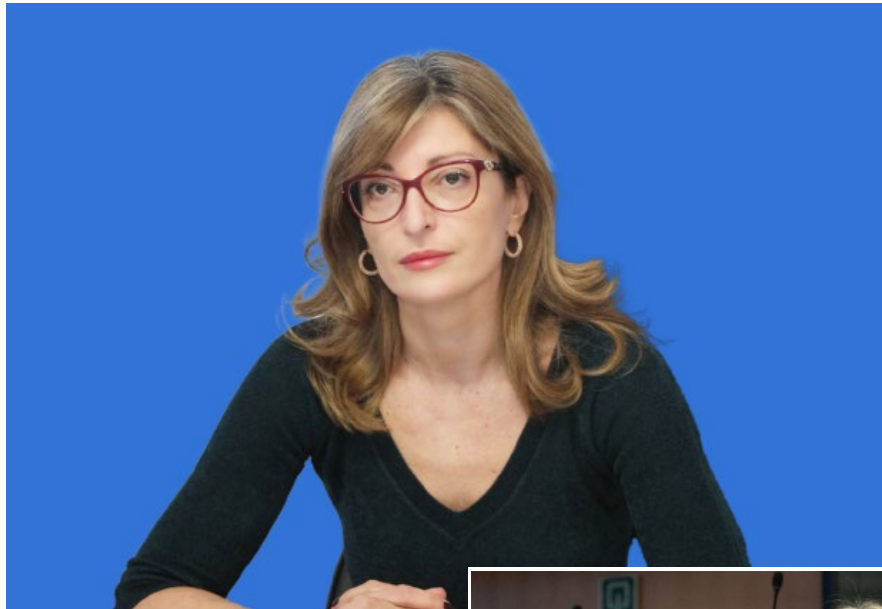


[The "Draghi Report"](#)



[The "Strohschneider Report"](#)

Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation – Ekaterina Zaharieva



- ✓ For a **simpler and more ambitious FP10**
- ✓ **3% target in national spending**
- ✓ **tailored support to SMEs** to increase their participation in EU programmes



[Mission letters](#)

New Commissioner for Agriculture and Food



Christophe Hansen



https://commission.europa.eu/document/2c64e540-c07a-4376-a1da-368d289f4afe_en
European Board on Agriculture and Food

Research and innovation for Agriculture and Food

- R&I crucial to address several recommendations of the Strategic Dialogue, especially for **bioeconomy and sustainable food systems**.
- R&I funding programmes under Horizon Europe Cluster 6 are dedicating a significant amount of funding for R&I on agriculture and food systems, through R&I projects, partnerships and Missions. The **Food 2030 research policy framework** and the **EU Bioeconomy Strategy 2018** under the lead of DG RTD were instrumental in showing evidence that a holistic, cross-sectoral and systems approach is required to address the challenges of the agri-food system
- The bioeconomy is an engine for innovation in agriculture, food and rural areas with opportunities to diversify farm income and strengthen rural economies.

Research and innovation for Agriculture and Food

- The **update of the Bioeconomy Strategy**, will contribute to achieve the objectives of the EU Vision for agriculture and food, especially when it comes to the recommendations associated to “Leveraging the opportunities offered by bioeconomy” and “invigorating rural communities”.
- R&I funding and policy under the Food 2030 initiative has brought tangible impact along several pathways of change to develop sustainable EU food environments, promote sustainable food systems governance while maintaining the EU’s competitive leadership for safe and quality food. The upcoming **Life Sciences Strategy** and the **EU Start-up and Scale-up Strategy** are some of the initiatives that will also contribute to and complement the **EU Vision for Agriculture and Food**.



EU BIOECONOMY

European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy

EMPLOYMENT
(MILLION JOBS)
17.19

VALUE ADDED
(BILLION EUR)
728

EMPLOYMENT (MILLION JOBS) VALUE ADDED (BILLION EUR) VALUE ADDED (SHARE TOT)

	EMPLOYMENT (MILLION JOBS)	VALUE ADDED (BILLION EUR)	VALUE ADDED (SHARE TOT)
AGRICULTURE	8.6	204	28 %
FORESTRY	0.5	25	3.4 %
FISHING AND AQUACULTURE	0.2	6	0.8 %
FOOD, BEVERAGES AND OTHER AGRO-MANUFACTURING	4.7	262	36 %
BIO-BASED TEXTILES	0.7	25	3.5 %
WOOD PRODUCTS AND FURNITURE	1.4	66	9.1 %
PAPER	0.5	49	6.7 %
BIO-BASED CHEMICALS AND PHARMACEUTICALS, PLASTICS AND RUBBER	0.5	78	11 %
LIQUID BIOFUELS	0.03	8	0.8 %
BIOELECTRICITY	0.04	6	1.0 %

DATA 2021 EU-27
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JRC
Research
Centre

Source: based on Lasarte-López et al. (2024)
<http://data.europa.eu/od4/7d7d5481-2432-4b36-0e79-697b04fa4278>

Key sectors can benefit from bioeconomy solutions

- **Biomass producing and converting sectors in the EU: 8.2% of the EU's workforce and 5% of GDP**
- Including **bioeconomy services** (Ronzon WUR 2023) **increases** share in GDP to **10.4% for EU-28** in 2020
- **High innovation potential** for sustainable / new biobased products through **biomanufacturing** (e.g. bio-based textiles, packaging, cosmetics, construction material, platform chemicals and services / nature-based solutions e.g. carbon farming, payments for biodiversity)
- **High income diversification and job creation potential for farmers and foresters**, in rural and coastal areas

Policy reports 2024



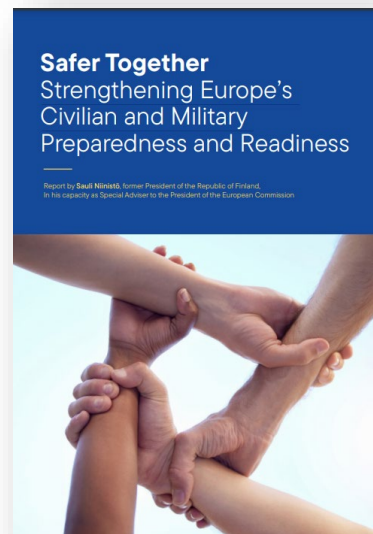
The “Letta Report”



The “Heitor Report”



The “Draghi Report”



The “Niinistö Report”

Main ideas of the Heitor report

- the unity of the programme, a game changer for EU's declining competitiveness;
- a sufficient (220 billion, increasing especially for ERC, MSCA, EIC) and ring-fenced budget;
- **four interrelated spheres** within the programme (competitive excellence, industrial competitiveness, societal challenges, and a strong research and innovation ecosystem);
- call on Member States to be more ambitious in R&I in their European Semester plans, mainly boosting research infrastructures and Seals of excellence;

Main ideas of the Heitor reportmm

- the need for **radical simplification**; reduce costs for applicants; incl. trust first, evaluate later;
- create an Industrial Competitiveness Council, to engage practitioners and industry;
- create a Societal Challenges Council, to engage practitioners, philanthropy, and civil society;

Main ideas

- introduce a new scheme to foster careers of young researchers (“Choose Europe”);
- Missions: elevate their governance and non-R&I elements outside of the FP;
- Revisit partnerships;
- More open, less prescriptive calls for proposals;
- Widening: praise for Teaming, MSCA; but too many instruments, need for rationalisation; link EU widening actions to increased national investments
- Establish an experimental unit with fast time to funding (ARPA type, prizes, AI tools, new methods to evaluate proposals, etc)

Main ideas on architecture

The report:

- proposes to look at the two-excellence driven current pillars (Pillar 1 Excellent Science – ERC; and Pillar 3 Innovation -EIC) together as a sphere of competitive excellence.
- proposes to separate the current Pillar II under Horizon Europe into its two components: into a sphere of Industrial competitiveness (ii) as a sphere Societal Challenges (as was the case under Horizon 2020 when they were in separate pillars). The experts further propose to institute two new Councils to oversee these parts of the programme.
- proposes to elevate the current cross-cutting sub-objective under Horizon Europe – the European Research Area, into a fourth central sphere to create a strong research and innovation ecosystem (iv).

Policy recommendations

The formal reaction of the Commission to the report will come only as part of the interim evaluation, which is due in April 2025

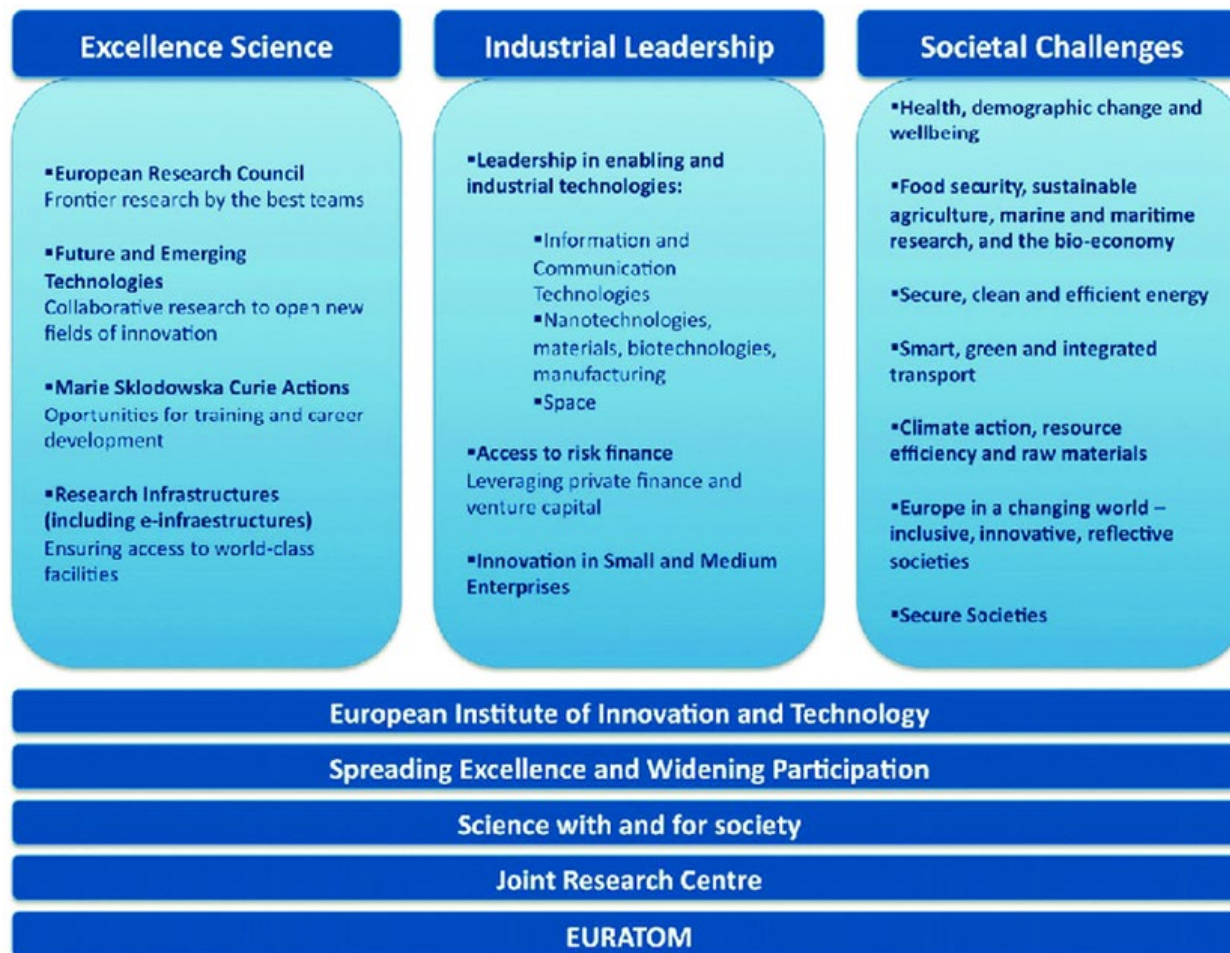
4 “spheres” of action

- **COMPETITIVE EXCELLENCE**, defined as optimal harnessing from a large pool of applications submitted to open calls, to competitively select the most excellent proposals for funding by using appropriate criteria (i.e., ERC, MSCA, EIC);
- **INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS**, defined as the ability to provide state-of-the-art products, services and technology-based solutions which contribute positively to overall sustainability (economic, environmental and social) for which there is a market demand or that create new markets;
- **SOCIETAL CHALLENGES** defined as complex and interrelated issues that significantly impact the well-being and development of societies. They consider issues that significantly impact fundamental human rights and affect individuals' personal or social lives, underlying well-being of communities, countries and the European Union. These challenges are typically multi-level and multi-dimensional, often coexisting and requiring innovative solutions, transdisciplinary approaches and coordinated efforts from various actors including government, industry, research, and civil society to be effectively addressed. There is usually disagreement about their nature, causes or solutions;
- **A STRONG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM**, defined as a supportive, productive and interconnected interplay between institutions both public and private, infrastructure, researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, companies and their surrounding communities to foster the creation of breakthrough discoveries and innovations and their rapid translation and scaling to global markets and applications

Policy recommendations

- 1. Create momentum through a whole-of-government approach**, aligning a transformative research and innovation policy with the EU strategic agenda and recent high-level policy recommendations.
- 2. Make Europe globally competitive, secure, sustainable and resilient** by delivering more excellent research, impactful innovation and technology scale-ups through a stronger framework programme.
- 3. Deliver European added value** through a portfolio of four interrelated and interdependent “spheres” of action.
- 4. Establish an experimental unit** to test new programmes, evaluation procedures and instruments.
- 5. Strengthen competitive excellence** in research and innovation.
- 6. Stimulate industrial RD&I investment** in Europe *by creating an Industrial Competitiveness and Technology Council* to effectively engage eminent practitioners and experts.
- 7. Address societal challenges** more effectively *by creating a Societal Challenges Council*.
- 8. Foster an attractive and inclusive RD&I ecosystem** in the EU.
- 9. Drive radical simplification, user orientation and efficiency.**
- 10. Unleash the power of demand** by developing an innovation procurement programme.
- 11. Adopt a nuanced, granular and purpose-driven approach** to international cooperation.
- 12. Embrace dual use as inevitable** by exploiting dual use both ways

Horizon 2020 structure



Horizon Europe structure



* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

Thank you



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