

## Key Issues for Austria for the Negotiations on the 9<sup>th</sup> EU Research Framework Programme

Version agreed at inter-ministerial officials level

submitted to the RTI Strategy Task Force

at its meeting of 11 September 2017

1. The Framework Programme has to be part of an overall strategy for the future of the EU after 2020, and has to be at the centre of a policy striving for joint solutions to the challenges for Europe. This strategy has to include as its objectives to develop the EU further towards a knowledge society, and to increase the EU's competitiveness. In addition, the Framework Programme should contribute to achieving other EU objectives in terms of mission-oriented research. Performing these functions credibly requires a programme with ambitious content.
2. In order to reach these targets, much more strongly strategic action is needed. FP9 should increasingly follow an impact-oriented approach. This requires targeted and comprehensive programme management, as well as the establishment of an evaluation culture that gives high priority to the emergence of learning effects.
3. 'Open Innovation' approaches such as co-creative and inclusive reflection and project formats, as well as trans-disciplinary and innovation-oriented consideration of project outputs should be tried out. The

measures will have to be coordinated with the respective political strategies and objectives of the Union. This absolutely requires close collaboration with the sectoral policies and the bodies responsible for them (Directorates-General, ministries).

4. The Framework Programme has to act more strongly as the core instrument of the European Research Area. In doing so, the Framework Programme must not operate as a detached programme, but has to include national, transnational and international initiatives by means of effective interfaces. It also has to contribute increasingly, across all ERA priorities, to the further advancement of ERA, by means of support measures and incentives, having regard to the objectives of the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development which are relevant to research. Programming has to be more transparent, and the possibilities of involving the Member States have to be improved. Thus FP9 should contribute to more alignment of RTI policies and programmes of the Member States. In addition, the so-called three "O's" (Open Science, Open Innovation and Open to the World) should be integrated into the European ERA Roadmap, and should be supported by incentives under the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.
5. The three-pillar model of Horizon 2020 has proved successful and should be continued. The strength of this model is that it clearly represents the three essential – and partly conflicting - intervention logics: (1) funding of excellent basic research; (2) increasing the competitiveness of the EU and its economy, and (3) contributing to meeting the grand societal challenges. These three issues should continue to define the central elements of the Framework Programme. In this context, the pillars should not be developed as silos, but as complementary parts of the programme that communicate with each other. Effective funding instruments require clear intervention logic. They also need to be prevented from being overloaded with objectives.

6. The four elements of the first pillar should be maintained. The ERC has proved to be a simple and effective funding instrument and should be continued with a funding volume that does justice to the requirement for a strong European bottom-up instrument in basic research. The same essentially also applies to MSC actions, funding for joint research infrastructure projects, and FET Flagships.
7. Strengthening European competitiveness has to continue to be a central focus of European RTI measures. Funding measures have to be coordinated more strongly than has hitherto been the case with the economic policy strategies and objectives of the Union. The specific role of SMEs in the European research and innovation system as drivers for innovation and employment has to be taken into account in this context. Throughout the programme, the principle of subsidiarity should be considered. Austria sees the use of PPP models as instruments of research funding as generally positive. However, Austria stresses the need to increase transparency, both in the selection and in the implementation of the PPPs. Furthermore in this field in particular, flexible and open models of RTI funding have to be provided, in order to meet the challenge of ever shorter life cycles of innovations. Funding along the entire innovation chain is of great interest to Austria.
8. Austria supports the European Innovation Council (EIC) as an advisory body. As regards instruments, the EIC should subsume those that are “bottom-up” and close to application, or innovation-oriented. However, Austria is against creating a separate structure/agency for this purpose, the existing spectrum of organisational possibilities (including P2P variants) is sufficient. The EIC should focus in particular on enabling disruptive and transformative innovations, and on “scaling-up” European enterprises<sup>1</sup>. In general, the Framework Programme should use a broad definition of innovation, including societal and social innovations.

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<sup>1</sup> Distinct growth stimuli by small and medium RDI-driven enterprises (‘scale-ups’) contribute to a very large extent to overall European competitiveness.

9. Measures in the context of the grand societal challenges should be a centrepiece of the Framework Programme. In this context, programming and implementation have to be further developed comprehensively regarding the following aspects: (1) clear prioritisation and creation of critical mass, with the courage to leave gaps; (2) specific strategic programme control for selected priority areas; (3) instruments for the implementation/use of results have to be available at programme level; (4) effective interfaces to the Member States and to national, transnational and multilateral initiatives<sup>2</sup>; (5) involvement of societal stakeholders; (6) consistent monitoring and further development of the programme. In this connection, priority should be given to the Member States and the European Commission jointly programming, funding and implementing missions in the context of the grand societal challenges.
10. Cooperation with third countries should be a priority that is consistently implemented in FP9, and it should also be an essential element of the EU's overall strategy. It has to be oriented towards reliable long-term cooperative relations, and it has to strengthen coordination and cooperation of the Member States. For this purpose, bilateral co-funding mechanisms with international partners will have to be negotiated at an early stage for participation in FP9. Roadmaps for important partner countries will also have to be developed in cooperation with the Member States. Both the co-funding mechanisms and the roadmaps will have to be more strategic and more strongly target-oriented than up to now. In order to achieve this, the EC will have to responsibly assume a coordinating role across all parts of FP9, and will have to invest in strategic intelligence and the best possible complementarity within the Commission offices ("observatory" for international research, technology and innovation policy and cooperation). Furthermore, science diplomacy should be intensified, and application-oriented R&D cooperation with Third Coun-

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<sup>2</sup> A further developed joint programming approach should enable joint programming and implementation by the EC and the MS regarding the grand societal challenges.

tries (including P2P activities) should be developed further, taking European interests into consideration.

11. In the European Research Area, successful participation in the Framework Programme is linked to successful structural reforms at national/regional level. These reforms are often the prerequisites for being recognised as an attractive partner in the European internal market of research. The Framework Programme has to adhere to the principle of excellence, and to promote competition for the best RTI ideas and projects. All Member States should create the optimum preconditions for this purpose, by means of reforms in the European Research Area. Thus the gap between countries with strong RTI systems and countries with weak RTI systems will be reduced step by step. In particular, preconditions will have to be created for stronger synergies between the Framework Programme and other EU instruments (ESIF, EFSI, etc.). In doing so, in addition to constructing R&I infrastructure, the R&I infrastructure should be renewed, its value retained, and complementary funding of research projects and programmes pursued, with a differentiated approach respectively depending on the importance of the funding instruments in the Member State.
12. The path of simplification which has been pursued successfully in HORIZON 2020 should be continued. It is absolutely necessary in this context to extend the principle of simplification to the partnership instruments (PPPs, P2Ps), and to increase the coherence of all activities funded under H2020 overall. In addition, measures will have to be taken to increase success rates significantly<sup>3</sup>. In this context, much more attention will also have to be paid to “economies of scale” to take effect in the research programmes. Focusing on a reduced number of issues and aiming for critical mass in the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme should counteract thematic fragmentation, and should give more weight to the efficiency and effectiveness of the different research programmes and concepts.

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<sup>3</sup> Share of funded projects in total number of submitted proposals

13. European nuclear research (Euratom research) has to focus on nuclear safety – including dismantling and disposal, radiation protection, medical applications, risk research and security control (non-proliferation of nuclear weapons). The development in this direction which was initiated by Horizon 2020 is to be continued. The development of new reactors (GEN IV) as well as of new technologies for generating electricity and heat on the basis of nuclear fission must be ruled out; the same applies to the representation of nuclear fission as a sustainable form of energy. Cost transparency has to be improved with regard to nuclear fusion research.