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ALLEA STATEMENT ON THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 10

In this statement, the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA) reflects on the guiding principles for the upcoming 10th European Union (EU) Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10). ALLEA calls for an FP10 that:

- » Increases investment in Research and Innovation (R&I), thereby providing a vision for fostering excellent research and fruitful collaboration across Europe;
- » Achieves a truly inclusive and impactful European Research Area (ERA);
- » Is guided by the goals of stimulating R&I, cultivating research collaboration, nurturing talents, strengthening diversity and inclusion, and streamlining processes.

Stimulating research and innovation

Europe needs to invest in excellent R&I now more than ever, in order to address growing challenges and create a European community that pursues both global leadership as well as open collaboration. ALLEA echoes the call by Europe's research community for European and national R&I investments to be increased significantly, even beyond the current benchmark of 3% of GDP, with a minimum budget of €200bn reserved for FP10.

The repeated cuts to current and previous programmes to solve evolving crises have been detrimental to the advancement of many essential research endeavours. A clear, ring-fenced, and reliable budget is essential to stimulate innovation and achieve security for researchers. Furthermore, a supplemental contingency budget is needed to guarantee the necessary flexibility of the research system to adapt to newly emerging crises and opportunities.

ALLEA also firmly endorses the reinforcement of fundamental and basic research across the relevant parts of the programme. FP10 should continue substantial backing of the most successful components of Horizon Europe (HE), especially funding curiosity-driven and bottom-up research. The European Research Council (ERC) is highly regarded within the research community as the most prized aspect of HE, and ought to be further boosted as the leading funding source for cutting-edge international and competitive research in Europe. In addition, we call for a reorientation towards more basic research at lower Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) within collaborative research projects (i.e., so far mostly within Pillar II of HE), which ensure pre-competitive cooperation and provide the basis for transformative innovation at later stages.



FP10 should also strongly commit to stimulating good research by promoting and protecting academic freedom, research integrity, and Open Science. Academic freedom is an essential prerequisite for genuine scientific progress as it encourages the pursuit of innovative perspectives beyond the confines of mainstream or politically prioritised topics. In light of several alarming legal and political measures enacted in some institutions or countries that threaten academic freedom, it is imperative that funding schemes support the freedom of scientific research.

Open Science refers, not just to open access to traditional publications, but to the FAIR (**f**indable, **a**ccessible, **i**nteroperable, and **r**eusable) sharing, at all stages in the research process, of a wider range of outputs.¹ This should be reflected more in FP10 research calls to enable better exchange and reuse of EU-funded research by civic society, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the wider research community. On open access to publications, FP10 should support equitable publication models along the lines of Open Research Europe, which do not place unreasonable financial burdens on either readers or authors.

ALLEA is dedicated to fostering, preserving, and promoting research integrity, and has recently released a [Revised Edition of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) in 2023. This Code serves as the basis for grant agreements, and national and local policies, as well as training curricula. The Code of Conduct also includes guidance on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research. Striking a balance between leveraging AI for efficiency and ensuring robust ethical safeguards is crucial to harnessing its potentials while mitigating risks, specifically in the realm of research grant applications within FP10. We hope the European Commission (EC) will continue to recognise this document as a reference for future EU-funded research projects in FP10.

Cultivating European research collaboration

In alignment with ALLEA's mission and strategic priorities, we argue that FP10 should take a global perspective, as well as action, to cultivate meaningful international scientific cooperation. This includes a strong commitment to integrating partners from associated and neighbouring countries within the ERA, as well as continuously improving and promoting wider participation, and supporting excellence-driven international research projects to address ongoing disparities.

The decision to allocate 3.3% of HE's budget to specifically address networking disparities among ERA stakeholders was a much-needed step. These measures should be stepped up to support excellence-driven collaboration across borders, thus enhancing R&I performance in Widening countries.

Existing Widening instruments, such as COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) and Twinning that effectively catalyse micro-scale improvements through bottom-up approaches, and Teaming that provides investment into centres of excellence, should therefore be continued and expanded. This could further facilitate the convenient transfer of research expertise from EU and associated countries to Widening partners. However, it is crucial to strike the right balance in these instruments between networking activities, training, and capacity measures on the one hand, and providing direct research support to

¹ See, for instance, <https://allea.org/portfolio-item/alleas-response-to-council-conclusions-on-research-assessment-and-open-science/> (accessed on 04/12/2023)



involved partners on the other. Strengthening genuine research activities more within Widening instruments will reinforce the positive outcomes of networking and curb the outflow ('brain drain') of talent and ideas.

Nevertheless, most Widening countries still require additional capacity-building instruments that support significant enhancements in their research strategies, as well as strengthen the organisation and funding of their research institutions. While FP10 should focus primarily on enabling excellence through research-based collaborations and by attracting talent, initiatives operating at the institutional level should also be introduced and intensified, with a special emphasis on engaging early- to mid-career researchers. In addition, the existing European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds should be used more expansively to fund research capacities.

Nurturing talents

In order to attract and retain the best young talents in academia, measures have to be taken at the European level to decrease precarity and improve the attractiveness of academic research careers. Where the EU provides funding, we advocate for the implementation of long-term institutional funding models in place of project-based financing, which has a demonstrably pronounced and detrimental effect on the job security and mental health of, especially early- and mid-career, researchers. Salaries in academia should be competitive when compared with industry salaries and those available in other R&I-intensive regions or sectors.

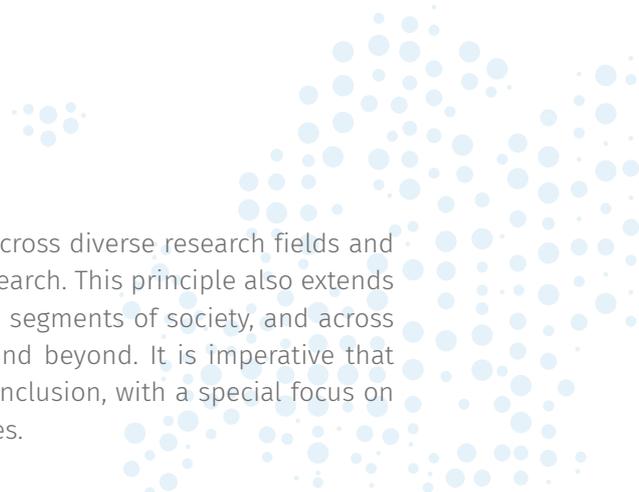
To better engage and empower under-represented and underprivileged stakeholders, such as early- to mid-career researchers, more workshops and webinars focused on the various EU-funding schemes, their administration, and evaluation should be provided. Useful training, support, and mentoring should be made available to researchers and research managers from less R&I-intensive regions and countries, who – in most cases – cannot rely on the support of experienced institutional administrative help. Such measures will enable them to participate more effectively and achieve success in their research pursuits.

Raising awareness about the European Competence Framework for Researchers, for example, may help to refine and redefine research assessment (at the institutional, individual, and project level), leading to the retention of more diverse talents across disciplines and countries.

Strengthening diversity and inclusion

Inclusivity is key to the future of European R&I. A stronger focus on inclusion, as opposed to excluding certain segments of society whether intentional or not, will also provide more legitimacy for research and the ERA. Focusing exclusively on narrow definitions of excellence and innovation can be problematic as they can create division, and run the risk of losing creative and original research that does not map neatly onto such indicators. Similarly, innovation should involve all forms of knowledge and not focus narrowly on technological innovation.

Ensuring gender balance in FP10 is crucial for creating a more equitable scientific landscape. Promoting gender diversity fosters a supportive working environment that encourages innovation. The next EU Framework Programme should therefore integrate policies that promote gender balance, foster an inclusive research community, and reflect talent diversity.



Genuine inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary collaboration across diverse research fields and domains remains a fundamental principle in EU-funded research. This principle also extends to fostering partnerships that involve stakeholders from all segments of society, and across various regions, within the EU and associated countries, and beyond. It is imperative that these partnerships emphasise equality, diversity, and true inclusion, with a special focus on institutions and individuals from less R&I-intensive countries.

Streamlining processes

It is necessary to enhance the grant proposal process by radically simplifying its format, submission, and evaluation procedures. When it comes to grant management, we welcome lump sum funding as an effective mechanism to support beneficiaries. However, as it shifts the burden from the post-award stage to proposal preparation, adequate mechanisms must be in place to provide researchers, particularly first-time applicants, with the necessary guidance and support.

We suggest having a range of grants sizes within the new Framework Programme, from small to medium to large, with those of shorter duration having quicker and leaner application processes. A range of smaller grant sizes will also help to support early-career researchers, reach a greater range of participants, and provide a broader scope for building excellence.

Improvements are needed for the Funding & Tenders Portal as its current functionality issues pose challenges for users, which include the inability to collaborate simultaneously on the same proposal, or incorrect or entirely missing historical and statistical data for beneficiaries.

It would be prudent to avoid setting deadlines for calls for proposals right after the summer and winter breaks. This period coincides with the most intense phase of proposal writing, making access to partners, their researchers, administrators, as well as EC and NCP (National Contact Points) consultations quite limited. This situation is further exacerbated by summer vacations and closures, launch of the school year for parents and of the academic year for university lecturers, along with field research activities in some cases.

Additionally, it is essential to offer a more comprehensive description of the overall context and the inter-relationship between various programmes. The new EU Framework Programme should strive for synergy both within and beyond FP10, thereby avoiding redundancies and fragmentation.

Conclusion

In envisioning a better future by elevating European R&I, ALLEA advocates for a transformative Framework Programme that propels Europe towards global competitiveness and leadership in R&I. This statement underscores the critical role of R&I in addressing pressing global challenges, and emphasises the need for increased investment. ALLEA's vision spans stimulating R&I, cultivating collaborations, nurturing talent, fostering diversity and inclusion, and streamlining processes, thereby endorsing fundamental research and supporting Open Science, research integrity, and academic freedom. The focus on widening participation, talent retention, and fostering excellence through diversity realises the commitment to inclusivity, thereby ensuring that the benefits of research extend across regions and disciplines. As we navigate the path to a sustainable future, we need to invest ambitiously, collaborate fervently, nurture talents diligently, embrace diversity wholeheartedly, and streamline processes effectively to pave the way for a future where European R&I can shine on the global stage. We need a robust, competitive, and world-leading ERA fuelled by a strong Framework Programme for R&I that is committed to delivering knowledge to elevate European societies for a better tomorrow.

About ALLEA

ALLEA is the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, representing more than 50 academies from about 40 EU and non-EU countries. Since its foundation in 1994, ALLEA speaks out on behalf of its members on European and international stages, promotes science as a global public good, and facilitates scientific collaboration across borders and disciplines. Learn more here: <http://www.allea.org>.

About this statement

This ALLEA Statement has been drafted by the ALLEA Working Group on the European Research Area (ERA), with input from the ALLEA Permanent Working Group on Science and Ethics (PWGSE) and the ALLEA Open Science Task Force. The ALLEA Working Group on the ERA provides input on behalf of the European academies and contributes to developing the EU's framework for research funding and the underlying legislation. The working group seeks to ensure that European research funding programmes are developed with the interests of the research community in mind and strives to provide for full representation of all academic disciplines and researchers. More information on the activities of the ALLEA Working Group on the ERA can be found here: <https://allea.org/european-research-area/>.

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