

Research, Development and Innovation : Europe 2015

By D. Michel Judkiewicz, Secretary General EIRMA

Horizon 2020, the largest European R&D framework program since the early days of the European community, started this year and a huge program it is.

It is structured along three pillars : excellent research, industrial leadership and grand societal challenges.

The total original budget was 78 billion € split as follows :

Excellent Science (32%) that encompasses the European Research Council ERC, the Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) , the Marie S. Curie Action (MSCA) and the EU Research Infrastructure (RI).

ERC is a very high level research where grants are allocated to top confirmed researchers in some specific fields. There are starting grants, consolidator grants and advanced grants.

The starting grant can be obtained after 2-7 years after PhD and may reach 1.5 million € whereas the consolidator grant may reach 2 million € about 7-12 years after PhD. The advanced grant is for leading scientists and is up to 2,5 million €. The grant is awarded to the host institution that must be in a member or associate state and the criterion is excellence in research.

Cooperation Projects concern industrial leadership and societal challenges, as described below.

Those projects, top-down predefined research subjects call for minimum 3 partners from 3 different EU Member States/Associated States and 3rd country partners.

Industrial Leadership (22%) cares for leadership in enabling and industrial technologies (LEIT) ICT, nanotechnologies, advanced materials, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and processing and space as well as access to risk finance and innovation in SME.

Societal challenges (39%) are made up of health, demographic change and wellbeing, food, agriculture, forestry, marine and maritime water, bioeconomy, secure, clean and efficient energy , smart, green and integrated transport , climate, environment, resources, raw materials, inclusive and innovative societies and secure societies.

Besides, we have some transversal schemes like the European Institute of Technology (EIT) and Joint Research Centers (JRC) spreading excellence for Society.

Evaluation as organized by the European Commission is based on the fact that Europe wants the most excellent proposals to be funded . That means practically research to solve problems and the best consortia in terms of competences, management and composition balance.

Excellence, implementation and impact are the main criteria.

Evaluation is done by peers against transparent criteria defined by the European Commission

One will find work programmes, call schedule, proposal template, evaluation criteria, etc... on the European Participant Portal for Horizon 2020

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>

Europe will fund different expenses like salaries, travels, validation of technologies, dissemination activities, scientific publications, workshop, seminars, meetings, IP management market studies, general management, ...

Of course, given the number of projects and of participating parties and also considering that all those projects are funded by public money, there is a tight control from the European Commission.

The Commission claims that a significant simplification is a characteristic of Horizon 2020, as compared to the previous framework programmes, yet there is substantial administration remaining.

That can be a deterrent to the participation of SME's and that is precisely why the European Commission has developed some specific tools in order to facilitate the SME's participation in European R&D consortia programs.

As one can see, the R&D and Innovation policy of Europe is very ambitious but at the same time, there has been a renewal of the managing bodies of the European Community and namely a new President of the EU Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker (Luxembourg) as well as a set of new commissioners for the various activities of the Commission.

The general European Commission programme is based on the following priorities :

- A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment
- A Connected Digital Single Market
- A Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy
- A Deeper and Fairer Internal Market with a Strengthened Industrial Base
- A Deeper and Fairer Economic and Monetary Union
- A Reasonable and Balanced Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.
- An Area of Justice and Fundamental Rights Based on Mutual Trust
- A New Policy on Migration
- A Stronger Global Actor
- A Union of Democratic Change

Carlos Moedas is the new Portuguese commissioner for research, science and innovation and part of the 27 commissioners who, with the president Juncker represent the 28 countries of the European Union.

At present the top team of his Directorate is still under elaboration and it is only in several weeks / months that the new commission staffs will be totally defined.

Horizon 2020 has been a brainchild of the former Commission and it is going to be implemented by a new team.

Do we have to expect some changes or discrepancies between yesterday and tomorrow because of that team change ? That is currently difficult to assess but there are some rumors that the initial budget might be slightly decreased and that some new priorities could supersede the former ones.

As such, possibly DG CONNECT, TRANSPORT and ENERGY might retain the upper hand when it comes to resources.

Nevertheless, even if the balance of topics may somewhat change, this H2020 programme is definitely a major European undertaking to meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond.

More detailed news will be available, for sure in several months

In the meantime, EIRMA has set up with a Finnish organization and the support of Europe, a European CTO award that was granted for the first time in October this year, with one prize for a large company and another one for an SME. The second European CTO award will happen in October 2015 during EIRMA CTO's meeting.

At it is customary at this time of the year, EIRMA wants to present its best wishes for happiness, peace and creativity to colleagues, partners and friends worldwide.

May we meet, exchange and have fun in the new year !

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