

Preliminary Lithuanian position on the 10th European R&I framework Programme 2028-2034

The EU Framework programme for research and innovation (FP) over forty years has become a backbone instrument for the European Union (EU) competitiveness. It also serves as the main tool fostering the European Research Area (ERA). Aiming for science-based and evidence-based policy and decision-making and successful valorisation of research into sustainable products and solutions for public good, the next EU Framework programme for research and innovation (FP10) should be well synchronised with other EU, national and regional instruments. Deliberately designed synergies will bring tangible benefits for the society. Therefore, **Lithuania calls for an integrated approach, which would involve the consideration of various policies, funding streams, and stakeholder needs holistically, while negotiating the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).**

Main messages

FP10 for knowledge creation and EU's technological advancement

Frontier research, including Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts, is the main prerequisite for long term EU technological leadership, competitiveness and growth. It is important that **FP10 provides more funding for knowledge creation, e.g. through promotion of fundamental, curiosity driven low TRL collaborative research (blue sky research)**. This type of research often explores new ideas, theories, and hypotheses that may not have immediate tangible benefits but has the potential to lead to breakthroughs and innovations in the future. Therefore, Lithuania suggests **introducing Research Actions in the FP10**. It is also important, that FP10 continues instruments like European Research Council and Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions while promoting research careers, enabling balanced brain circulation and ensuring access to research infrastructures.

Considering the current geopolitical situation and aiming for the EU open strategic autonomy and resilience, **enhancing support for research and development involving technologies with dual-use potential is vital**. Nevertheless, the support for dual-use (as well as its definition) must be thoroughly discussed and highly coordinated across the MFF.

FP10 should establish **framework conditions to foster the emergence and incubation of critical technologies**. This should be done in a complimentary way with other EU programmes oriented towards development and innovation that could further scale-up and deploy the outcomes of FP10.

International cooperation

Lithuania endorses the idea of fostering international R&I collaboration and uphold the principle of 'as open as possible and as closed as necessary', in alignment with the European Commission's Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation. Therefore, FP10 shall be instrumental in delivering EU-led research-based innovative products and solutions to address the most pressing global challenges. **Association agreements shall facilitate close cooperation with EU partners that adhere to the EU's fundamental values and principles, including level playing field.**

To ensure European research security, FP10 shall be responsive to societal and geopolitical developments and challenges. To this end, **the scope of the open science policy should be revisited.**

EU enlargement

In the light of the upcoming EU enlargement, **it is necessary that FP10 develops tailor-made integration measures for new candidate countries – Ukraine and Moldova**. Lithuania also believes that a consistent plan of activities for rebuilding of Ukraine's R&I ecosystem and its integration into the ERA should be addressed by FP10.

Future of the EU Missions

While the mission approach holds significant potential, there is a perception that the current implementation of the missions may not be effectively achieving its goals. The acceptance of the EU missions across EU member states has been uneven, struggling to be incorporated into national policies and accepted by the public. To ensure transformative science, technology, and innovation policy approach, the current EU Missions set-up, governance, and funding mechanism requires reconsideration. Possibly **the EU Missions should be lifted out of the FP and relaunched at MFF level**. Lithuania believes that this approach will facilitate pooling necessary resources from all sectoral EU, national, and regional programmes, enabling the EU Missions to achieve their goals and deliver promised results for society.

European partnerships, including EIT

Lithuania believes that European partnerships, including Knowledge and Innovation Communities of the European Innovation and Technology institute (EIT KICs), should be clearly oriented towards creating European added value, leveraging the full R&I potential across all EU Member States and promoting ERA integration. Therefore, **Lithuania advocates for a limited number of partnerships** and supports the introduction of new partnerships only when other instruments are insufficient. Clear strategies for phasing-out underperforming partnerships, including EIT KICs, should be defined.

Broadening participation

The ex-post evaluation of Horizon 2020 revealed that further efforts should be taken to broadening participation in FP and exploiting the whole EU R&I potential. Lithuania strongly believes that **closing the existing R&I gaps is a prerequisite for EU's resilience, security and open strategic autonomy**.

To improve **accessibility of FP10 for the representatives of academia, industry and other sectors Lithuania suggests:**

- To promote diversity by funding more small or medium-sized projects at lower TRLs. This approach would also increase the tolerance for failure and foster a culture of risk-taking within the EU.
- To restructure the widening package, based on thorough analysis of the current impact of widening measures, **considering its mainstreaming across all FP10 pillars and enhancing R&I content**.
- **To leverage COST's potential to enhance networking opportunities across FP10**, with a particular focus on young generation of researchers and newcomers in general.
- Optimise the range of **instruments that promote science-business cooperation** at higher TRLs.
- To continue ongoing efforts to further streamline administrative procedures and mitigate potential evaluation biases. **Lithuania welcomes introduction of lump-sums and blind evaluation**.
- Strengthen support for **EEN and NCP networks** and their services.

Budget

In recent years, FP has been hit by cuts and reallocations of the budget due to new priorities. This has made the programme overly complex and underfunded.

To meet all pressing needs and ensure the transformative nature of FP10, **it requires increased and stable budget**.

To ensure anticipatory approach, a part of the FP budget with clearly defined rules could be dedicated for emerging and unforeseen needs or challenges.