



Position of the Four Motors for Europe on Horizon 2020 the Framework Program for Research and Innovation

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The Four Motors for Europe, an inter-regional cooperation between Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia, Lombardy and Rhone-Alpes, have been expanding the European and global outreach of their socio-economic, scientific, university and cultural stakeholders and citizens for over 20 years. From the outset, they have promoted the role of Regions in the European construct. The four regions represent over 33 million citizens (6.6% of the European population), 7.8% of European GDP and are leaders in the fields of the Economy, Higher Education and Research.

With the publication of the propositions on Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation - , the members of the Four Motors for Europe jointly confirm the priorities they share with a view to equipping the European Union with an effective and ambitious research and innovation policy able to address the challenges which are facing our Regions. This policy must pave the way for a balanced economic development, based on the cornerstone of innovation and Europe's consolidated potential to rival international competition.

The Four Motors for Europe acknowledge the budget allocation of 80 billion euros and approve the emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and societal challenges as the key priorities of Horizon 2020. Given the European target to reach a 3% share of the GDP for a private and public R&D expenditure till 2020, a further increase of the budget for Horizon 2020 is supported, up to 100 billion euros as demanded by the Parliament without increasing the total EU-budget.

For these reasons, the Four Motors for Europe:

- State that Regions are the decision-making level to establish innovation strategies and provide governance driving forward research excellence and industrial activity; insist that the programme should have a clear focus on the regional dimension of research and innovation; strongly regret the disappearance of concrete instruments for Regions like those present in FP7.
- Will be attentive to the future complementarities, interactions and synergies between Horizon 2020 and the Cohesion policy to contribute to a balanced economic and social development of their territories; welcome the possibility of funding through Horizon 2020 and structural funds in the same project, but ask for more clarification about the frontier between these two significant policies.
- Welcome the global scope of Horizon 2020 to face societal challenges using R&I and technologies with a business point of view and acknowledges the need for European Regions to implement smart specialisation strategies. However, recall the limitations of hyper-specialisation and the risk of weakening industrial and innovative sectors which might result in territorial imbalance and decrease competitiveness in diversified Regions such as the 4 Motors.
- Insist on the importance of the "knowledge triangle" and on the interactions between academics and industries to cover the whole innovation chain, from research to market but ask for a clearer



definition in Horizon 2020 of the links between SMEs and Research, but also on the participation of higher education and long-life learning stakeholders to provide the highly qualified human resources required by the economic mutations and attract talents.

- Appreciate the effort of simplification, although supplementary simplification and rationalisation should be put further, especially towards SMEs.

Excellent Science:

- Welcome the way towards the completion of the European research Area. Welcome the funding of collaborative research through support for Future Emerging Technologies focusing on 6 new emerging technologies, as a way to foster scientific collaboration across disciplines. This will allow to recognise technological breakthroughs at an early stage and to promote their development. Ask for clarification of the arrangements for funding and governance for Future Emerging Technologies.
- Appreciate the idea of ensuring Europe with world-class research infrastructures, but suggest to develop conditions for the accessibility of such infrastructures to all researchers in Europe and beyond as well as inter-connexions at European level.
- Support the idea of building on the successes of the European research Council and welcome the increase of funding of the ERC (+77%). Ask to develop a strategy to better attract top level researchers from all over the world with this instrument. Welcome the idea of "Proof of Concept" concerning future outcome of ERC projects towards market application but ask for more clarification on the specific instruments proposed to support the launch of new products on the market.
- Insist on the importance of the "Industry-Academia Strategic Partnership Scheme" of the Marie Curie Actions and worry about the relative small budget dedicated to Marie Curie Actions.
- Support the simplification of the ERA-NET scheme although it should maintain favourable conditions to regional participation, to allow Regions to focus on specific fields.
- Propose to associate Regions to the governance of joint Programming initiatives. This is essential to maintain a healthy level of competition in the Regions. Ultimately, it is the competition between regions within Europe which makes the European Community strong in terms of research and innovation.

Industrial leadership:

- Agree with the place allocated to SMEs in the news program, especially the proposed target of 15% of the total combined budget for all societal challenges and technologies and the support to trans-national and international projects for SMEs, even if participation of SMEs should be encouraged in all priorities of Horizon 2020.



- Are worried about the disappearance of “Research for the Benefit of SMEs” that allowed participation of SMEs without important research capacity. Is also worried about the access of SMEs to Horizon 2020 and therefore underline the integrated support services provided by the Enterprise Europe Network.
- Acknowledge the use of public-private partnerships to meet unmet societal needs and strongly support voluntary public procurement for the stimulation and support to research and innovation activities: European Commission should be commended for its intention to further develop them. The EU competition rules for state aid are to be adapted accordingly to the Innovation Union.
- Ask to consider an increase of the budget for “industrial leadership”, as the participation of industry and enterprises is declining since FP4.

Societal challenges:

- Agree with the strong emphasis on societal challenges, and propose to add “cultural heritage” as a transversal dimension of societal challenges, where appropriate. Stress that economic, arts and social sciences should be funded in a coherent manner
- Affirm that Regions can contribute to societal challenges by supporting research projects and through innovative public procurement.

Regional component:

- Think that clusters are key actors of the innovation chain and should therefore be considered as potential beneficiaries of Horizon 2020 programmes, considering their contribution to the participation of SMEs in R&D projects; ask to maintain “Regions of Knowledge” to support clusters structuring and internationalising as a stairway to excellence.
- Think that the strong role Regions play in the research and innovation process finds additional value in trans-national cooperation. Therefore welcome the broad funding of cross-border cooperation in pre-competitive and application-oriented research based on the excellence principle.

Rules of participation and simplification:

- Strongly support the objective of simplifying and rationalising the participation and management rules but consider that simplification should be put further with concrete measures like the following proposals: breakdown of project proposals in two stages for bigger projects; flexibility in the consortium to allow the participation of SMEs in a second stage of project; definition of clear rules on VAT reducing the time to contract. Furthermore, a greater frequency in the publication of calls should be provided.



- Are concerned about the implementation of a single funding rate depending on each type of action (research or innovation) funded under Horizon 2020 with no differentiation among participants and ask for clarification on that point in order to avoid problems for universities, research institutes and SMEs participating in projects close to the market.
- Welcome a flat rate for indirect costs, but is concerned about under-financing research institutions with large-scale infrastructure and/or sophisticated equipment; claim the possibility for reimbursement of real indirect costs for those institutions.
- Ask for more specific details on the evaluation criteria. A clear but different set of criteria should be foreseen for research projects and industrial competitiveness projects. Moreover, the share of expert evaluators coming from the industrial sector should be increased for market-oriented projects.
- Claim that an easy and coherent access to results, statistics, evaluation and analysis of Horizon 2020 at regional level would help to understand strengths and weaknesses and contribute to a better orientation of European funds in Regions.