

Around Europe

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Horizon 2020: Where is the Money Going?

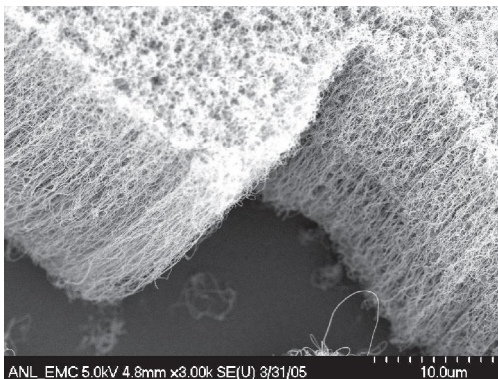
The European Union (EU) plans to spend around €80 billion on research over the seven years from 2014 to 2020. When the current European Research Framework Programme (FP7) – with a budget of €50.5 billion – comes to an end, it will be replaced by Horizon 2020. This new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation will run from the beginning of 2014. Horizon 2020 is part of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which is now the subject of negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, and the European Commission. Horizon 2020 is the third largest budget heading after the Common Agricultural Policy and the Structural Funds which promote regional development within the EU.

Horizon 2020 is part of Europe 2020, which is described by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, as “the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade”. He says: “In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.”¹ Europe 2020 has five main targets: employment, education, research and development (R&D), reducing factors contributing to climate change, and reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

So, Horizon 2020 is not just about research for its own sake. It is about developing Europe's competitiveness in the global market, stimulating economic growth, and creating jobs. But, whilst one of the goals is to improve Europe's competitiveness, increasing international cooperation is also a priority across the whole programme.

What sort of research will be funded?

Horizon 2020 will provide funds for research projects in a wide variety of disciplines. Eighteen per cent of the funding will go to the European Research Council (ERC), which funds high-quality research in fields such as archaeology, geosciences and human rights. Large chunks of the Horizon 2020 budget will be devoted to research in the following fields: new technologies, such as nanotechnologies and biotechnology (18 per cent); health, wellbeing, and demographic change (11 per cent); and efficient, environmentally sustainable transport (9 per cent). All research projects will have to meet ethical criteria, which mostly relate to bioethics but also include the stipulation that projects must comply with the laws of the country in which they are undertaken.



Nanotechnology is a fast growing area of research and will be supported by the Horizon 2020 research framework. Credit: Junbing Yang (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Five per cent of Horizon 2020 funds, approximately €4 billion, will be allocated to research on “inclusive, innovative and secure societies”. Some of this will be spent on security-related research under the priority “societal challenges”. A variety of possible strands fall under this heading. Current security research projects funded under FP7 cover themes such as effective and efficient management systems for security organisations in Europe, restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings in democratic societies, and neutralising improvised explosive devices in civil environments. Other topics of research which are likely to be funded under Horizon 2020 include security measures at airports and surveillance technology. There is considerable pressure for funding also to be made available for research on dual-use technologies – equipment that has both civilian and military application.

UPCOMING EU CONSULTATION: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The European Commission is asking for opinions on sustainable development and the EU follow-up to Rio+20. We encourage interested F/friends to respond - individual comments are welcome. The deadline is 15 January 2013, and you can see the consultation documents at <http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice>.

If you would like to receive in early January 2013 some of QCEA's ideas on which you could base your own submission, make sure you have signed up for environmental action alerts by emailing office@qcea.org.



Who will undertake the research?

Research projects under Horizon 2020, as in previous research programmes, will be carried out mostly by consortia involving governmental bodies, universities, and/or private companies. Many non-EU countries are listed as suitable partners: those belonging to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), countries that are in line to join the EU, those covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, industrialised countries, emerging economies, and developing countries. Military defence would be outside the scope of Horizon 2020, according to the Commission's proposals. But defence companies are not excluded from participation in security-related research.

The regulations governing participation in Horizon 2020 originally contained no provision for excluding bodies that are responsible for breaches of international law. The EU has a fundamental commitment to promoting peace, protecting human rights and respecting international law. Despite this, under the original draft rules of participation, it is possible that the EU would have risked condoning breaches of international law or even assisted in the maintenance of a continuing violation of international law. In order to ensure that this would not happen, a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) submitted the following amendment to the regulation establishing Horizon 2020:

Horizon 2020 shall exclude legal entities (including any affiliated entities) whose participation, by the objectives they pursue, their place of establishment, the nature or the location of their activities, would cause the European Union to recognize as lawful or render aid or assistance in maintaining a situation created by a serious breach of international law (including international

humanitarian law) where such breach has been established by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council or by a judgment or advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

This amendment was passed by the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) of the European Parliament and subsequently, on 28 November, agreed by the Industry, Research and Energy committee (ITRE), which is the leading committee on Horizon 2020. The regulation establishing Horizon 2020, including this and other amendments, is now the subject of negotiations between the Parliament, the Council of the European Union, and the Commission. MEPs anticipate tough negotiations because the Council wants to cut the €80 billion budget for Horizon 2020 proposed by the Commission, whereas the Parliament wants to increase the budget to €100 billion.

The passing of the amendment excluding entities that have breached international law from participation in Horizon 2020 is a significant victory, ensuring that the EU only funds projects in line with its fundamental values. This amendment should not be lost in the new round of negotiations. It will then be up to the EU and its 27 Member States to ensure that its fundamental values are also reflected in its choice of security-related research projects.

Gordon Matthews

1. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

For further background on EU security research, see the following QCEA briefing papers: 'EU Security Research and Peacebuilding - a case of institutional and political disconnect' and 'Horizon 2020 - Reflecting on changes proposed for the EU research agenda? These are available on the QCEA website - www.qcea.org

In Focus: The Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Every six months, a different European Union (EU) Member State takes over the helm of the Council of the European Union (henceforth, the Council). This periodic change in leadership is known informally as the 'rotating Presidency'. It is an important part of the EU institutional architecture and gives Member States an opportunity to shape the policy agenda and prove themselves as capable leaders.

The Presidency has the responsibility of ensuring the smooth running of the Council. It is responsible for its administration, but more importantly plays the role of mediator. The EU Member State holding the Presidency must be an 'honest broker', and work to create a coherent and common approach on policy within the Council between Member States.

The Council itself consists of ten 'configurations', each of which deals with specific policy areas and comprises the relevant ministers from the national governments of Member States. For example, the Environment Council discusses environmental issues and is comprised of the Environment Ministers (or equivalent) of Member States, whilst the Foreign Ministers meet to discuss foreign policy in the Foreign Affairs Council. The Presidency must organise and chair the majority of these meetings and their many subcommittees, and try to create consensus on policy between the 27 Member

The Ten Configurations of the Council

General Affairs	Competitiveness
Foreign Affairs	Agriculture and Fisheries
Economic and Financial Affairs	Environment
Justice and Home Affairs	
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	



States. Perhaps just as importantly, the Presidency must represent the views of the Council to the European Parliament. This latter role is vital because the Council and the Parliament must agree on legislation jointly – the ‘co-decision procedure’. If Council and Parliament do not agree, legislative proposals will not become law.

It is unclear whether the Presidency presents an opportunity or a burden to the Member State in office. On the one hand, the Presidency brings influence and an opportunity to pursue national interest. It sets the agenda of the Council, chairs many of its meetings, and has access to sensitive information in the form of the negotiating positions of the other Member States. On the other hand, it must be seen to be impartial by the other Member States in order to remain credible, and thus, in some sense, must suppress acting in its own national interest. Although the Presidency is supported by permanent staff in the General Secretariat of the Council, it relies mostly on resources from its embassies and its wider national civil service. Thus, for smaller Member States holding the Presidency could be a significant administrative burden.

The responsibilities of the rotating Presidency have changed considerably since the Lisbon Treaty came in to force in 2009. This is mostly due to the introduction of two new offices in the EU institutional architecture: the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (henceforth ‘the High Representative’), and the President of the European Council. These two new offices have assumed much of the responsibility that formerly belonged to the rotating Presidency, particularly with regards to the economy and to foreign affairs. For example, in the past, the Head of State or Government

of the rotating Presidency might have made statements on behalf of the EU on global issues. This task is now handled by the High Representative.

The Presidencies are grouped in to ‘trios’. This means that the six month periods during which Member States hold office are grouped into threes. This creates eighteen month phases during which the three Member States cooperate to follow a common work programme. Trios were created to promote continuity between Presidencies and to allow older Member States to support the newer EU members.

On 1st January 2013, Ireland will take over the rotating Presidency.

This will be the 7th Irish Presidency, and it marks the 40th anniversary of Ireland’s accession to the EU. The New Year also marks the beginning of a new trio: Ireland, Lithuania and Greece. Their eighteen month work programme reflects existing priorities within the EU: namely, the economy. The Irish Ambassador to the EU stated that “recovery, stability, jobs and growth” were the main concerns. The 100-page programme itself states that “the main objective for the next 18 months will be to strengthen the Union’s capacity to respond to the current economic, financial and social challenges”.

The programme of the next trio has been criticised for placing too much focus on economic development whilst leaving environmental issues to the side. Despite the ardent focus on growth, there is very little mention of sustainability or the green economy. The current financial crisis provides an opportunity for Europe to rethink its economic strategies. The new Presidency trio should not miss this chance to make changes for a more sustainable and fairer world.

Chris Venables

Presidents and Presidencies of the European Union

There is no single person who is the head of the European Union, but there are a number of offices bearing the name ‘president’. It’s easy to get confused, so here are the main four followed by their current office holders:

- The President of the European Commission - José Manuel Barroso
- The President of the European Council - Herman Van Rompuy
- The President of the European Parliament - Martin Schulz
- The Presidency of the Council of the European Union - Cyprus until end of 2012



Left to right: Van Rompuy, Barroso and Schulz
Credit: © Photo European Union

Is European Investment Creating the World we Envisage?

When we act in the world, we create something. We may fancy we have the dexterity of a talented artist creating a beautiful sculpture, but many of our actions are more like footprints left after walking through a peat bog: deep but undefined depressions that may

last much longer than we intended. Permanence and possible unintended consequences are both reasons why we need to plan our route carefully.

Money: money is an interesting element in our society.



Money is only a symbol of exchange, and yet very few can survive without it, especially in Europe. And money is used by the European Investment Bank (EIB) to fund projects supporting European Union (EU) policy objectives. This makes utter sense, since the EIB is owned by the 27 EU Member States and describes itself as representing their interests.

During the first week in December, one of the top news stories regarding the EIB was its loan of €155 million to the Irish Gas Board (Bord Gáis, pronounced with an 'sh' at the end) to support the extension of wind farms for power generation. This fits in well with the EU's Europe 2020 goal of having 20 per cent of energy come from renewable energy sources in eight years' time. But we also need to consider that the same strategy includes a goal of a 20 per cent reduction in CO₂ emissions. Ideally, new infrastructure, including that for renewable energy goals, should not be at odds with the CO₂ goal.

Life cycle assessment (LCA) exists to assess how much a new project, such as a wind farm, contributes to a reduction in CO₂ emissions. The most comprehensive assessment is called 'cradle to grave': from the mining of materials to the disposal of the de-commissioned machines and infrastructure. LCA includes processing the minerals, manufacturing the turbines, packaging, transport, preparation of the site, and infrastructure such as new roads, as well as the operation of the wind farm, maintenance and replacement parts, dismantling, and end-of-life disposal. It is also common to evaluate the possible impact on the carbon balance of the change in land use, especially where peat has been storing carbon for decennia.

A wind farm is more than some towers with rotating blades. There are access roads and connection to the

grid. Also, wind turbines in peaty soils are often designed with huge blocks of concrete to keep them stable and anchored. Concrete is a very carbon-intensive product. And the towers have to be able to withstand the pressure of the wind forcing the blades to turn. Some towers are made out of steel: in one example for an Irish turbine just shy of 100 m tall, 142,000 kg of steel was used in the tower – and it lasts only for two decades before it needs to be replaced.



A wind turbine built today can have a rotor diameter of over 80 metres and can be 138 metres high.
Credit: Alexi Kostibas (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Each of these components of the life of a wind farm has an impact on the real contribution of the wind farm to Europe's carbon emissions. LCA is not a banking consideration of the costs or consumer utility, but rather a calculation of carbon emissions at each stage of the

life of a wind turbine. Including this calculation in decisions to build or fund wind farms would help ensure that EU policies are being implemented coherently: ensuring that building to achieve renewable energy targets doesn't interfere with carbon emission reduction targets. There is no way around this: in order to be able to state whether a project contributes to reduction in CO₂, one must crunch the real numbers. Comprehensive evaluation must consider the carbon implications of a renewable energy project.

Now, don't get me wrong - I am not against wind energy. In fact, I grew up admiring a modern windmill along the side of a major road between The Hague and Amsterdam - not to mention the old brick mills which ground flour from wind power. But preference doesn't come into the equation: we need to apply adequate analysis to our decisions to invest.

Alexandra Bosbeer



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