

25 June 2019



APRE ROUNDTABLE EXECUTIVE REPORT

RATIONALE

Three of the most-debated issues among the EU Research & Innovation community will become a reality as Horizon Europe is launched: cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral Clusters, resulting from the integration of societal challenges and industrial technologies; the R&I Missions, that will define ambitious and R&I-relevant targets to finally stimulate the interest of European citizens around research and innovation; and the European Innovation Council, the expected "one stop shop" for supporting all forms of innovation under the Framework Programme.

On the 13th June 2019, APRE – Italian Agency for the Promotion of European Research organised – in the context of initiatives “Towards Horizon Europe” – the RoundTable *EIC, Clusters and Missions: A Threefold Perspective to Empower Innovation*. The aim of the roundtable was to raise awareness and facilitate an exchange of views about those three key novelties in Horizon Europe, while highlighting possible suggestions for their definition, governance and implementation. The event gathered more than 40 participants among European institutions representatives and stakeholders from academia, research and industrial organisations.

SPEAKERS

- **Renzo TOMELLINI**, Head of Unit ‘Horizon Strategic Planning & Programming’ at DG Research & Innovation, European Commission

- **Viorel PECA**, Head of Unit ‘Future & Emerging Technologies (FET)’ at DG Connect, European Commission
- **Giacomo MATTINÒ**, Head of Unit ‘Enterprise Europe Network and Internationalisation of SMEs’ at DG GROW, European Commission

TAKEAWAYS

The following takeaways emerged from the roundtable.

- **Horizon Europe Pillar II *Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness* and the six cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral clusters will strengthen the impact-driven approach of the Programme**, and will specifically support *applied research*, i.e. «research with a purpose». In view of the Work Programme and calls preparation, the European Commission could explore the possibility to set the targeted impact and then come to the definitions of activities, resources and conditions that are needed to achieve it (this may be a significant difference from Horizon 2020, where the expected impact usually follows the description of activities and the expected EU contribution).
- **United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals are expected to provide an overall policy framework for Horizon Europe**. The strategic plan – the outcome of a priority-setting co-designed process focusing on Pillar II, i.e. the strategic planning - will *inter alia* draw up R&I key orientations for the first four years of the Programme (2021-24) and will be finalised only when the priorities of the next European Commission are established (i.e. not earlier than the end of 2019). The consultation document to prepare the strategic plan, to be published soon, will be mainly centred on the impact that stakeholders and general public expect from R&I investments, with first phase of consultation lasting from 8 to 10 weeks and be opened till the beginning of September.
- **R&I Missions, drawing from the experience of Horizon 2020 focus areas, aim at increasing the impact of the EU invested money in Research and Innovation**, with the purpose of maximising the relevance of R&I public funding and finally better liaising R&I with citizens’ expectations and concerns. The alignment of Missions’ activities with e.g. activities carried out under the European Innovation Council or at Member States level – i.e. Missions as an instrument to drive MS R&I policies and focus national investments in R&D – can only be self-assembling: it is not something that can be planned by the European Commission with a top-down approach.
- **Mission boards selection is underway and will be completed within next July, with boards’ Presidents expected to be announced on July 4** at the next Informal Competitiveness Council in Helsinki. The boards will likely have the preliminary meeting in the beginning of September and

then will meet again during the R&I Days (24-26 September). The 5 mission boards are expected to deliver the titles for possible missions by the end of the year, so as specific missions can be included in the strategic plan.

- **A stronger industrial participation in the Framework Programme, both from SMEs and large industry, is key to achieve more economic impact of EU funding** (growth and jobs). In this context, some participants highlighted the role of the EIC Accelerator as a single entry point for breakthrough innovative SMEs looking for EU funding support, while others expressed the need for the EIC to be part of a wider innovation ecosystem established to support European innovations to scale-up and become world leading companies.
- **The EIC Programme managers will be professionals with visionary thinking, hired as a temporary Commission staff.** The aim is to reach a more flexible and pro-active management while steering tech or challenge-based portfolios of projects. There will be from 3 to 5 programme managers to monitor projects in EIC Pathfinder Pilot.
- **The EIC Pilot Advisory Board will advise the Commission on the design of European Innovation Council (EIC)** and will be composed of about 20 individuals among entrepreneurs, investors, start-up communities builders, innovative researchers and academics working on innovation policy. The board will support the Commission in developing the EIC pilot in 2019 and 2020, enhancing innovation ecosystems and impact, defining the EIC overall strategy under Horizon Europe.
- **The importance of a bold reflection on policy perspectives and a better internal coordination within the Commission emerged from the discussion,** with participants highlighting the need of the future EU industrial strategy and digital policy to be strictly linked with Horizon Europe overall policy framework.