



## ENRF Briefing Note

### International R&D: Horizon Europe and the world



We continued our [dialogue](#) with the Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, as the lobby on the design of the next Horizon Europe continues, and importantly, opens up to the world. So, building strong consortiums is key to get a piece of the cake, and we have time to prepare ourselves for that in a strategic way.

Around the world, cross-border research and development (R&D) deals are on the rise, both in public and private systems. International co-publications, industry/university/public partnerships – all have soared in the past decade.

Europe, with its Horizon [Research and Innovation](#) (R&I) programmes, is a leader in this trend, but the US, Canada, China, Japan and other big spenders are also on the hunt for ambitious ideas and partners. Important questions are being raised about the future role of R&D in the [UN SDGs](#) and other international development ambitions, in an emerging landscape of cross-border collaboration in science, technology, innovation and policy.

Good collaboration is a question of shared interests and success, but more needs to be done in the Framework Programmes to support research & researchers. Networks and researchers want to go where they can make the difference. However, in the context of [Horizon Europe](#), still under negotiations, the main change in comparison to the previous Framework Programme will be the cooperation with third countries to create a more agile, sustainable and robust framework to contribute (also in euro's) to the programme. The associations' section will be broader and more interesting for more countries to come in. Paquet says he expects 20-30 countries will seek association and negotiations are already taking place with Canada, alongside Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa and the US.



The international section of EU science innovation is deeply changed. It is now at the centre of DG RTD discussions on how to shape it, so it makes it more agile, more cross-cutting, cross-sectors, and how to have a set-up that gives key directions on what research policy is about. Horizon Europe should bring an added value of EU research and revised themes include: Climate & Environment; people & prosperity (social science); and R&I outreach (research policy).

It also creates a European Innovation Council (that should be seen as a message that more can be done: Better connecting on innovation community and many innovations developed), with a task force that will be working on this and that will be then the Executive Agency. R&D touches upon politics, culture & nature, this is why it is hard to work across borders. Global issues are so complex that the way to deal with and to solve it has to be simplified.

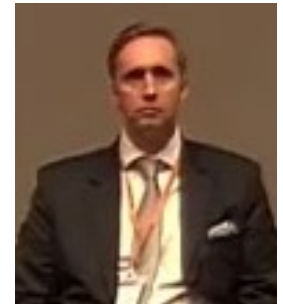
The EU can do a lot more innovation, but for that cooperation and end-user engagement is key, leading to research excellence. But what does this mean knowing that the relevance of excellence-based research is not immediate and that there are no quick wins? In this debate, it is key to make sure that excellence contributes to a large extent to the future wellbeing of the next generations. Excellence will face more and more challenges, as multidisciplinary competences, education, etc.



For Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, President of the [European Research Council](#), funding distribution needs to be more uniformly distributed in the EU, and that the investments of the different countries in the EU are different with a 3% of the country GDP (average) in 2020. For EU excellence, the key element is the people. Excellent people around EU being provided access to these EU programmes. The infrastructures provided are key to be successful, and the time invested in research. Young people have the initiative to undertake research. They should conduct more research, and more their own research, close to innovation. We need to have high quality people

to make first class research and invest in create proper conditions to have people doing it. This should be done through cooperation, structural measures in supporting excellent people, and not reducing quality criteria of excellence, next to facilitating the vast amount of excellent research results to be used in real life.

For Ronald de Bruin, Director of [COST Association](#), excellence has no borders. Taking the example of COST, he explained that COST has made its core business to bring people together, not only in Europe but also from the near neighbour countries (northern African countries, eastern side of Mediterranean, Ukraine, and Russia). Although COST does not fund research or innovation itself, it brings together people and finances the expenditures that people need for travel, etc. COST will now also put in place in the next framework programme - COST innovators' grant, with the idea to enable the COST network to have an add on grant after the period of 4 years in which they normally are active, with the aim to bridge the gap to more innovation schemes and investments. The is something the ENRF can push for together with EFN. It is key to strengthen the nursing research voice and support Ronald in this endeavour.



The meeting continued building the argument that many EU efforts have been made on flagships and topics for international cooperation, but it is recognised a lot still needs to be done. Therefore, it is important to try to identify areas of common interest to take further. But it is key to be more pro-active on the UN SDGs. The process of creating partnerships are not an easy process. In some countries (like Canada for example), task forces are put together to define priorities and how to work together. In some others, there is a common decision to have a join cooperative call for projects – this is not always the easiest process, but it is one that brings in the most integrated projects. Finally, the cooperation through Twining sides is an easy way for international cooperation, but it does not bring too much added-value, unless it ends up in something bigger.



In this context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) will provide many opportunities for people to make their lives better and happier if we are able to develop them. For Signe Ratso, Deputy Director-General of the European Commission [DG Research and Innovation](#), there are opportunities for EU researchers & collaborators from other countries than the EU. On AI there is a race globally to see who will be able to invest more and come up with better options, taking into account excellence and as such engaging the best researchers around the world. The EIC will be able to contribute to the development of AI as Europe's strength lies in innovation.

Now we are talking about research in the frame of H2020 and Horizon Europe, but we cannot forget that the ultimate goal is a policy goal, the better functioning of the european research area. Free flow of ideas. And these two framework programmes are the financial implementation instruments.

Looking into the future, how can we build a more sustainable european research and innovation area? All the universities around the world should focus on basic research, and that open innovation is essential for involving countries and getting results. But we need to take into account few points: agree on missions on key topics; state of the art of big research infrastructures; focus on basic research; proof of concept for collaboration; high quality trained people. The full association of all the countries in Horizon Europe will lead to advanced knowledgeable economy.

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**European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF)**  
**Registration Number: 0533.978.961**  
**Clos du Parnasse 11B, 1050 Brussels, Belgium**  
**Tel: +32 2 511 34 84 - Fax: +32 2 512 35 50**  
**Email: [enrf@enrf.eu](mailto:enrf@enrf.eu) – Web: [www.enrf.eu](http://www.enrf.eu)**