Paris, 25 November 2016

**CPU RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FP9**

The major crises that the European Union faces today pose a threat to its future. The centrifugal forces of nationalism and Euroscepticism may lead to its very existence being called into question, possibly even in the near future.

The universities have a double responsibility within the European Research Area,

as within the field of higher education:

* the core values ​​they convey; universal knowledge, the humanities, an outlook open to the world
* and their role as an economic and social actor

need to be promoted in order to oppose the current trend towards isolationism and social withdrawal.

Their integrative values ​​should be more widely supported since they bring together the capacities for research, innovation and education that are intrinsically associated with socio-economic development.

H2020 is a programme created to serve the construction of the European Research Area, where all those involved in research, whether academic or not, cooperate in an ever-wider sphere. This requires an adherence to common principles (the free movement of knowledge and people - and particularly of young researchers) that, together with a composite shared vision based on excellence, should tend towards increased harmonisation between member states.

**To strengthen, in concrete terms, the links between research, innovation and training and thus create a shared and coherent strategy with an appropriate European governance**

Interactions between research and training already exist in certain H2020 actions, such as the Marie Sklodowska-Curie actions. Although they enable the universities' integrative strategies to be reinforced, for the benefit of socio-economic development, these interactions need to be bolstered even further through the introduction of new measures.

**PROPOSALS**

* For collaborative projects, it would be useful to reinforce the links between research, innovation and training by encouraging those responsible to do everything possible to ensure the transfer of knowledge, skills or technologies to students and young researchers with the aim of strengthening both training cycles and socio-economic impact.
* These links should also be reinforced within the context of life-long learning. This is a project that is vital for the future of individuals, companies and universities faced with the rapid evolution of those professions linked to new technologies and where the services offered have an ever-shorter "life expectancy".
* It should also be possible to integrate training into H2020-funded research projects by:
	+ providing funding for teaching, beginning at undergraduate level,
	+ taking into account, in the evaluation stage, educational activities linked to research results.

Such policies would be even more meaningful if a European Commission governance was to further strengthen the integrative strategy of European universities for the benefit of the EU 2020 strategy.

**PROPOSALS**

* The creation of a coordinating body for the various European Commission Directorates-General (DG) related to research (RTD, CONNECT, EAC, REGIO[[1]](#footnote-1), etc.) and the EU 2020 strategy. In concrete terms, this coordination could take the form of a joint platform or act through the intermediary of a vice-presidency.
* Such governance would enable greater synergy and efficiency as concerns the different European programmes. It would also enable the development of interactions between research, training and regional development, particularly as it would be accompanied by a harmonisation of the rules for participation in the H2020 and Erasmus programmes and those of the structural funds.

**Towards collaborative research and structural partnerships for an Integrative ERA that offers real added value for Europe**

Collaborative research is one of the foundations of the framework programme and of innovation; it gives structure to the ERA and reinforces harmonisation and co-constructions between European universities. It represents an essential added value for Europe in terms of European research policy. Collaborative projects enable work to be conducted through networking, the development of multidisciplinary approaches and the creation of innovative solutions as a result of the diversity of the actors involved.

**PROPOSALS**

* To improve the balance between research-oriented projects, including basic research, and those that are more market-oriented or that address the needs of society, and to recognise the long-term innovation potential of basic research.
* To move towards a balance between smaller, very efficient projects and larger structural projects and to encourage projects of more modest size (€ 1 M to € 5 M) to facilitate access for new teams.
* To finance multidisciplinary projects that respond to the major problems of society, that integrate the SSH right from the beginning of the project and that

demonstrate a strong chain of innovation by encouraging and favouring access to other disciplines.

A collaborative approach should be encouraged, thus leading to long-term relationships between European universities and their partners.Collaborative projects should contribute to the dissemination of knowledge and excellence throughout the whole of the European Union.

Stronger backing for structural cooperation between universities and their partners is even more necessary given that the H2020 programme supports individual researchers and projects but offers significantly less support to structural and integrative cooperation between the different actors involved in the programmes (universities-companies).

**PROPOSALS**

* To encourage medium and long-term structural partnerships that have the potential to create links not only between the European universities and between their lecturer-researchers but also with the actors in the socio-economic world. This requires programmes that are appropriately adapted to such medium and long-term objectives.
* In the context of projects that bring together research and training, the European Commission should launch pilot projects that encourage and accompany sustainable partnerships.
* In the context of its support for innovation, the European Commission should rely more on the universities, both in the field of research and that of training, to identify and support "tomorrow's innovators."

**A programme open to scientists in order to maximise the impact in Europe and on European society**

In order to confront the major crises mentioned in the introduction, H2020-funded projects should, when completed, be able to demonstrate a socio-economic impact and an added value for Europe.

**PROPOSALS**

* To set out topic objectives in a more prescriptive and specific manner, including the preferred benefits sought for Europe. This could: 1) improve European growth and employment, encourage re-industrialisation within Europe and 2) improve success rates. Better defining objectives should reduce both the numbers of applicants and of projects in order to avoid a discouragingly low success rate.
* Innovation should also take into account the notions of technical and social innovation. It is necessary, within the next three years, to insert a European preference clause for patents. It is also important to transfer and exploit the knowledge associated with these innovations.
* Beyond this three-year period, at the end of the project, the organisations funded in the context of European programmes should produce a report detailing their actions in terms of technology transfer. Combining this policy with an obligation for Open Innovation for those companies that set up on-campus (public/private) should create even more fruitful exchanges.
* The projects that result from coordination and support actions should be able to produce a greater number of solutions linked to impact and innovation, in addition to the analyses given.
* It would also be preferable to strengthen SC6 (Innovative, Inclusive and Reflective Societies) capacity in order to look ahead and provide long-term answers to the current European crises together with a new vision of the European project.

**Funding that is better adapted to scientific activity**

Grants remain the most appropriate means of funding, given the generally long time scale between upstream research and the commercial application of the outcomes. In addition, neither French nor German universities have a legal capacity to borrow, which therefore excludes all financial instruments such as loans, risk capital or risk-sharing finance facilities.

**PROPOSAL**

* To maintain grant funding as the primary financial instrument for European research.

**Amplified European cohesion through an H2020 programme that supports all member states, in order to improve Europe's attractiveness**

We consider that a common vision of the H2020 programme is required, one that is shared by all the member states. This logic can equally be applied to certain southern countries. Several proposals:

**PROPOSALS**

* H2020 is the ERA tool used to strengthen cooperation between the member states of the European Union. Without calling into question the participation of the associated countries, it is important to ensure that the framework programme is drawn up by the European Union member states and that all the member states participate.
* The European Commission should pay greater attention to the specificities and needs of those countries that benefit less from the programme in order for these to be encouraged at programming level. It should also be specified in the calls that their participation is encouraged as part of a commitment to excellence.
* Whenever a participant from an under-represented country is involved in an H2020 collaborative project, it would be interesting to link the funding for the core activities of that project to the funding intended to strengthen the structure, the environment and the excellence of the laboratory/institution where the participant(s) work(s). Funding could also be made available via the H2020 programme (notably via the funds provided for twinning[[2]](#footnote-2)).
1. Directorate-General for Research and Innovation

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Directorate-General for Education and Culture

Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. twinning between international recognised institutions and emerging institutions [↑](#footnote-ref-2)