

## Proposed recommendations for FP10

### *A program serving European policies and issues*

31 January 2024

As the current framework programme, Horizon Europe, enters its 4th year and reaches its midterm, several working groups have been launched by Member States and the European Commission in order to prepare the 10th Framework programme (FP). The French Ministry of Higher education and research plans to propose a contribution in April, and expects French stakeholders to provide it with proposals.

France Universités advocates more integrated funding and greater fluidity between the pillars of the FP, so as to better support the strategic objectives of the European Union in terms of green and digital transitions, and to consolidate a socially responsible model of research and of innovation

#### **1. Strengthening European competitiveness and sovereignty through the research-innovation-training continuum**

High-risk research funded by the European Union to solve scientific and technological challenges responds to cross-cutting strategic issues.

Today it is a program serving climate and environmental objectives and the reindustrialization of territories, the results of which should make it possible to create, upskill or retrain European skills.

In order to enable Europe to respect the roadmap it has given itself in terms of transitions, the political objectives included in other EC programs can enrich the FP. France universités therefore requests:

**Recommendation 1:** strengthened interactions with other European programs, in particular with those directly linked to training or employment (notably Erasmus+ and the European Social Fund) and to companies that need research infrastructures, innovation, skills;

**Recommendation 1 (Bis):** these reinforced interactions must also mobilize thematic General Directorates which use new developments linked to innovation (DG GROW).

#### **2. New skills intrinsically linked to research and innovation to promote employment in Europe**

By emphasizing strategic technologies for the Europe of tomorrow, the ecological and digital transitions, and by proposing the regulation for a “net zero” industry, the Commission and then the Council have recognized the urgency of new research and training to develop skills.

Faced with this situation, universities are able to occupy a leading position. Thanks to their privileged relationships with stakeholders in the socio-economic world, they can fully exploit the research-innovation-training continuum to promote the emergence of new and sustainable skills. The professional integration of students must be based on advances in research and innovation.

This is why France Universités considers that the current compartmentalization within European programs between research and innovation on the one hand, and teaching and training on the other, creates a loss. In order to strengthen European competitiveness, France Universités:

**Recommendation 3:** recommends integrating skills transfer into the impact component of proposals. Beyond publications, it is necessary to take into account the transfer of skills linked to transitions and innovations and to set up training for future scientists and students, including in the frame of lifelong training;

**Recommendation 3 (bis):** proposes a holistic approach which will apprehend the innovation chains, able to guarantee strategic sovereignty, to ensure the continuum in terms of research, innovation and skills in the FP10 to respond to the challenges of innovation and creation and adaptation of skills due to the green and digital transitions.

### 3. The budget increased to meet European policies and challenges.

In a context of international tensions which requires strengthening its scientific ambitions and its independence, the 2028 – 2034 programming will be decisive for the very future of Europe. In this context, France Universités requests:

**Recommendation 4:** compared to Horizon Europe, a doubling of the budget of the next framework program (2028-2034) in constant Euro;

**Recommendation 5:** that in addition to DG RTD, other Directorates-General provide financial support to the PCRI according to the following distribution:

- Pillar 1: DG RTD + DG EAC
- Pillar 2: DG RTD + DG EMPL and DG EAC
- Pillar 3: DG RTD + DG GROW, DG CNECT, DG EMPL
- Enlargement: DG RTD + DG REGIO and DG EMPL

**Recommendation 6:** safeguarding this budget once negotiated. Research programs need long-term funding to deploy all their benefits, and cannot be a budgetary adjustment variable.

### 4. Strengthening the coherence and impact of the different parts of the framework program

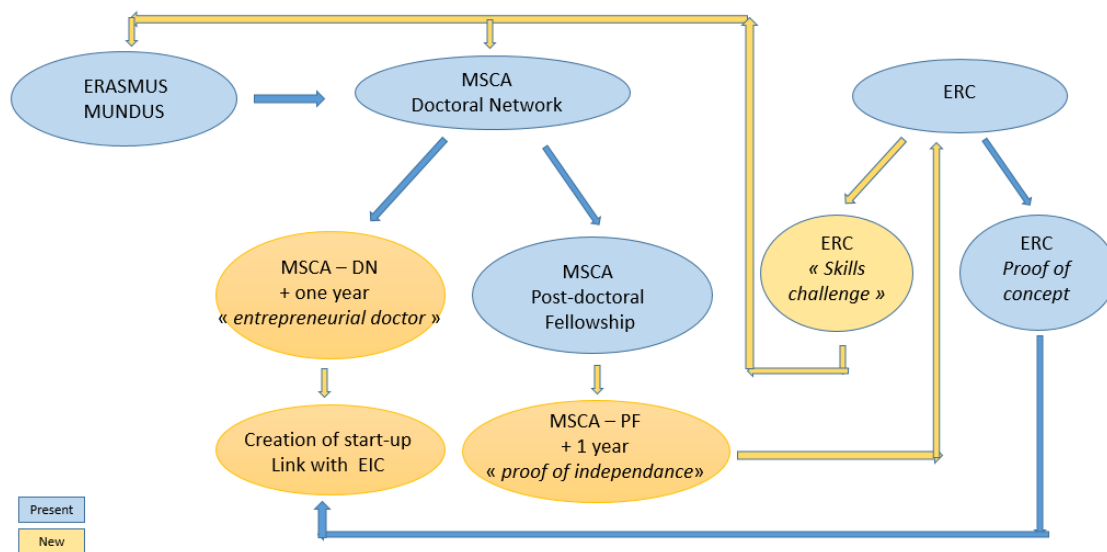
#### Pillar 1: bridges and fluidity between programs and program actions to strengthen impact

It is desirable to strengthen the knowledge transfer from Pillar 1 projects, particularly through lifelong training, and to streamline circulation between the different actions. France universités proposes in particular:

**Recommendation 7:** financial support at the end of the MSCA-PF project with a view to developing an ambitious project to become an independent researcher;

**Recommendation 8:** strengthening synergies between the Erasmus program and the FP, in particular via the Erasmus Mundus joint master degrees, the Marie Curie MCSA actions (notably the doctoral networks) and the ERCs which in return could nourish the dissemination of knowledge, notably via incentives to implement new training (knowledge challenge);

**Recommendation 9:** that doctoral students recruited as part of an MSCA-DN project can benefit from an additional year to promote a result of their research, in particular via the creation of a start-up (in conjunction with the EIC ), with the status of “doctor entrepreneur”.



## A pillar 2 in interaction with training and innovation

Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe (Global issues and industrial competitiveness) includes numerous calls for projects with a high level of technological maturity (TRL). These contribute to short-term solutions, but they must be supplemented by calls for projects that can improve our understanding of societal issues in the long term. France Universités wishes:

**Recommendation 10:** that the next framework program respects a principle of balance by increasing the number of call subjects focused on the creation of new knowledge and low TRLs for research resourcing;

**Recommendation 11:** there is a bridge between Pillar 2 projects that have reached a sufficient level of maturity and the EIC transition, like the link between the ERC proof of concept and the EIC transition;

**Recommendation 12:** training be considered as a possible impact of projects, in the form of a module designed based on research results. This module should be planned in the initial call for proposals and implemented at the end of the project<sup>1</sup>;

**Recommendation 13:** a cost/benefit study of KICs be carried out, which would make it possible to question their model for the implementation of the research, innovation and training triptych.

## 5. Targeted international cooperation in the context of open strategic autonomy

In a context of growing international tensions, it is fundamental to strengthen cooperation with similar countries and at the same time safeguard Europe's strategic interests. For France Universités, these pass through:

**Recommendation 14:** the possibility of developing strategic international partnerships organized by sectors of activity or thematic and including the research, innovation, training continuum (by integrating training into RIA call for proposals for example).

<sup>1</sup> This plan cannot be reserved for the KIC because meeting the needs for retraining or upskilling and new jobs requires training modules in all R&I and CSA projects to meet skills challenges.

**Recommendation 14bis:** Prior to association agreements which require time, a sectoral approach as part of the FP association process will allow cooperation in priority sectors of activity.

## 6. Human and social sciences in support of European ambition

The human and social sciences play an essential role in achieving European ambition. These disciplines provide critical perspectives that enrich our understanding of the world. They allow us to shift our focus and formulate proposals relating to a set of questions both for fundamental research and for our present and future society. They thus make it possible to explore cultural values, political and economic systems and social dynamics to be a force for proposals.

In order to achieve the research-innovation-society continuum, it is necessary to better take into account, in the responses provided by research and innovation, the question of specificities, needs and social uses. In this context, France Universités proposes to:

**Recommendation 15:** maintain a cluster dedicated specifically to the human and social sciences, with a strong link to the major current transitions;

**Recommendation 16:** strengthen the involvement of HSS in other FP clusters;

**Recommendation 17:** encourage the participation of expert evaluators from the human and social sciences in the evaluation of all projects;

**Recommendation 18:** create a “societal evaluation and research area” allowing an analysis of results/prototypes/low TRL solutions, in specific areas such as AI, for example, identified as potentially interesting but which should benefit from a societal view before being pushed towards development and higher TRL. This recommendation could, for example, take the form of a new typology of dedicated projects, adapted to this type of research and mainly mobilizing expertise in HSS.

## 7. Infrastructure serving the European Research Area (ERA) and Higher Education (EHEA)

In Europe, infrastructures represent a major challenge both in responding to the structuring of the European Research Area and in strengthening the research-innovation-training continuum.

They indeed mobilize various skills necessary for their use, their development but also for the transfer of technology and knowledge that they generate.

They are also major instruments of open science serving the acceleration of knowledge, and make it possible to meet the societal challenges of today and tomorrow.

New possibilities exist today to deploy them, particularly within European Universities.

In order to strengthen these strategic aspects, France Universités requests:

**Recommendation 19:** that infrastructures be recognized for their role in training in and through research and innovation. A targeted MSCA call for proposals could, for example, consolidate the link between training and research;

**Recommendation 20, an integrated approach to infrastructures:** not to make the distinction between research infrastructures and technological infrastructures, claimed by certain stakeholders who have developed an approach by industrial sectors serving the socio-economic world. We are, in fact, in the presence of a continuum of expertise and needs;

**Recommendation 21, collaborations between infrastructures in Europe and with third countries:** support for infrastructures, stakeholders in international strategies, while respecting shared values and the principle of reciprocity. This involves strengthening training programs linked to these international infrastructures and setting up international mobility mechanisms in order to facilitate access for researchers and technical staff to the most

relevant infrastructures for their work. They will thus promote the exchange of good practices for the benefit of all stakeholders;

**Recommendation 22** the acquisition of heavy and medium-heavy equipment for the sustainability and updating of infrastructure, as well as incentives for Member States to coordinate national investments with them;

**Recommendation 23:** strengthening links between infrastructure and society, particularly through participatory science actions.

## 8. Missions and partnerships

### a) Missions

The universities are poorly integrated into the Missions which, in their organization, are very different from each other. If they are maintained in the next FP, the Missions:

**Recommendation 23:** should be integrated into clusters, like the new European Bauhaus;

**Recommendation 23 (bis):** must benefit from co-financing by other Directorates-General (GROW, DG EMPL or REGIO) due to the role of **conductor** that they play;

**Recommendation 24:** the role of universities within missions must be strengthened due to the need for skills transfer and innovation...

### b) Partnerships and a specific partnerships for European Universities

France Universités underlines the essential role of partnerships in strengthening universities strategy. They allow industrial stakeholders to better identify the networks to which they can provide support and universities to strengthen their contribution to industrial sectors both in terms of R&I and skills.

In particular, a specific partnership for universities in Europe, which would also finance research, is the sine qua non condition for the sustainability of European university alliances, the consolidation of the governance of transnational university networks, and better interweaving universities and their territorial innovation ecosystem.

To this end, France Universités proposes:

**Recommendation 24:** consolidate the R&I component of European Universities through the creation, in 2025, of a partnership co-financed by the FP, Erasmus + and the Member States, which will make it possible to establish a coordination mechanism between MS to support the research part of alliances, to consolidate their governance and strengthen their role in their ecosystem. A pilot project over the period 2025-2027 would make it possible to test the relevance and European added value of a holistic approach to the research, innovation, training triptych.

## 9. Participation rules

**Recommendation 25:** consolidate the rules of participation from the start of the FP and make them widely known to agencies, participants and controllers:

- o ensure better uniform application of the rules of participation by all EC agencies and services;
- o take into account the diversity of R&I stakeholders (for example the case of university development subsidiaries, barely resolved midterm through the Horizon Europe program);
- o Regarding the evaluation of projects in 2 stages, carry out an evaluation before decision.