



Position Paper to the European Commission on the next Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe

INTRODUCTION

- Positive that the present Strategic plan 2021-2024 acknowledges the importance of the ERC as an independent funder of bottom-up initiated research with scientific excellence as sole criterion and of a broad and solid knowledge base as the necessary foundation of challenge-oriented research and innovation
- Positive that the present plan emphasizes that research in Pillar I contributes scientific breakthroughs and research infrastructures needed to address societal challenges, and that insights from projects in Pillar I will feed into future programming in Horizon Europe.
- UiB's view is that most of the funding in Horizon Europe should be available on open arenas, and not through channels with restricted participation such as partnerships – this will promote excellence as well as wider participation
- Main challenges the next 3 years:
 - Democracy
 - Climate, the environment, and biodiversity
 - Health

In the light of these main challenges, the EU should have increased focus on the following themes/fields in funding of R&I activities in Horizon Europe:

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Basic research

To find sustainable solutions that make us able to tackle the diverse challenges we face, there is a need for **basic research** in several different fields, to enhance understanding of complex systems and processes, e.g., in global climate systems, ecosystems, and the human body.

This applies to challenges related to all 4 Key Strategic Orientations and to all Clusters in Pillar II, for example related to:

- climate change
- pollution
- loss of biodiversity,
- health risks,
- the need for better medical treatments and
- the need for more renewable energy

The Strategic plan for Horizon Europe should explicitly acknowledge the need for basic research in a wide range of disciplines to support the efforts to find research- and innovation-based solutions to concrete problems.

SS and H!

- Positive that Social Sciences and Humanities is included as a Specific Issue in present plan; UiB supports continued focus on SSH.
- The importance for resilient democratic societies of the range of perspectives in different disciplines in SSH should be acknowledged to a greater degree, and in particular the importance of historical knowledge and the historical perspective that is an integrated part of many disciplines within social sciences and humanities.
- The next strategic plan should emphasize that social sciences and humanities are relevant in all Clusters and should have funding opportunities, in their own right, in all Clusters

- It should be emphasized that ethical, psychological, societal, and legal perspectives are relevant in the effort to find solutions related to all the challenges outlined by the Key strategic orientations and in all Clusters.
- The special character, methodology, and contribution of disciplines within the humanities as well as of art should to a greater degree be highlighted and acknowledged

Legal research

- Legal research should be prioritized
- EU (and EEA) is a unique legal order that is under-researched given its importance for the development of rule of law in Europe
- The green and digital transitions involve complex legal and regulatory questions, both at national and international level, e.g. in relation to
 - EU Climate policy
 - Common use of coastal and ocean areas – offshore wind, aquaculture, fisheries
 - Digital solutions in health services, health data
 - Sustainable use of natural resources
 - Civil security
 - Artificial Intelligence (the need for a legislative framework)
- Legal research is necessary in the defence and development of resilient democracies
- Legal research can also form the basis of legal and regulatory innovations
- We suggest that legal research is introduced as **a new Specific Issue** to ensure that legal perspectives are considered in the wide range of fields and contexts where they are relevant

Innovation in a wider perspective

- UiB agrees with the New European Innovation Agenda that European innovation must be based on a comprehensive approach
- We encourage a broad understanding of innovation with regard to innovation routes, contributing disciplines, and forms of solutions
- Innovation funding opportunities should equally include technology and the arts; humanities and legal studies, social sciences and health research
- We encourage incentives for projects that explore how market creation for new technologies is dependent on social issues and the human experience, including user acceptance, fairness, and ethics

SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

Democracy, cultural heritage, and History in Europe

- European modern democracies and values have developed in critical dialogue with European history and tradition over centuries, and critical discussion informed by historical knowledge and the rich multitude of cultural perspectives are a central part of our democratic societies. Research that contributes to such historically and culturally informed critical public discussion should be prioritized.
- To uphold the European values of democracy, academic freedom, and inclusion, knowledge of what these values are and entail and how they have developed is crucial. To make full use of the potential of the European cultural heritage, there must be knowledge of this heritage, through research that is able to demonstrate the richness of the tradition as well as the relevance of its perspectives.
- In the existing Strategic plan Cluster 2 is mentioned as particularly relevant only for Key Strategic Orientation A. and D., but it should be highlighted as relevant also for KSO B. and C.

Health

- The covid19-pandemic has demonstrated the need to be broadly prepared for sudden health crises
- Effective health care available for the population is a fundamental part of European societies, promoting well-being and equality
- Aging population will lead to new challenges
- Fight against cancer central concern
- Mental health

Climate, Ocean and Coast

Henvise til posisjonsnotatet [«Making the Green Wave Blue»](#) og understreke betydningen av bred tverrfaglig innfallsvinkel, og gi støtte til KIC på Hav.

PILLAR II AND THE LINKS TO PILLAR I AND III:

UiB encourages the new Strategic plan to lay the ground for new types of Action within Pillar II; smaller scale Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions oriented towards the different Key Strategic Orientations, that may include basic research relevant to the challenge outlined in the relevant KSO.

Smaller scale RiAs and IAs that have fewer partners and less detailed demands for specific activities will make it easier for younger researchers, SMEs, and in general new actors to participate, and will give room to test creative ideas on a smaller scale. These types of action may foster increased cross-fertilization between the Pillars, as insights from Pillar I and III may be developed further in these projects, as well as synergies with other funding instruments. If such small-scale actions are related directly to the Key Strategic Orientations rather than placed in the Clusters, they may also foster creative cross-disciplinary research and innovation realizing the potential for fruitful interaction between the Clusters.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Positive that existing Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of international cooperation, both with associated and other third countries – UiB encourages continued focus on this issue.

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Til orientering: Nåværende Strategisk plans **Key strategic orientations for research and innovation:**

- **A: Promoting an open strategic autonomy by leading the development of key digital, enabling and emerging technologies, sectors and value chains**
- **B: Restoring Europe's ecosystems and biodiversity, and managing sustainably natural resources**
- **C: Making Europe the first digitally enabled circular, climate-neutral and sustainable economy**
- **D: Creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society**