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Subject: European Missions

- Council conclusions (adopted on 10 June 2022)

Delegations will find in annex the Council conclusions on “European Missions”, adopted by the Council at its 3877th meeting held on 10 June 2022.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON EUROPEAN MISSIONS

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- Regulation (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe’s Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and laying down its rules for participation¹, setting out in particular the characteristics of European missions and identifying the areas in which missions could be established;
- Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe’s Framework Programme for Research and Innovation², which, *inter alia*, defines the role of mission boards;
- its conclusions of December 2020³ on the new European Research Area, which refer to the principle of directionality, multi-level governance and involvement of citizens in order to maximise the impact of investments in research and innovation (R&I);
- its conclusions of September 2021⁴ on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation — Europe’s strategy for international cooperation in a changing world, highlighting the need to strengthen existing multilateral R&I partnerships and alliances;
- Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe⁵, which sets out the priority areas for joint action in the EU, including jointly addressing the challenges of the green transition and digital transformation, and increasing society’s participation in the European Research Area;

1 OJ L 170/1, 12.5.2021
2 OJ LI 167/1, 12.5.2021
3 13567/20
4 12301/21
5 OJ L 431, 2.12.2021

- the European Commission communication of December 2019 on the European Green Deal⁶ and the European Commission communication of July 2021 on a Fit for 55 package: delivering the EU’s 2030 Climate Target on the way to climate neutrality⁷;
- the European Commission communication of September 2021 on European missions ⁸, which identifies five European missions;
- the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015, which serves as a source for the design and implementation of European missions;

I. Steering European R&I to support public policies that better respond to societal challenges

1. STRESSES that the main characteristics of a mission-oriented approach are:
 - a collaborative, transnational, inclusive, multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to address complex societal challenges through the development of a systemic and coordinated approach across the whole value chain at EU, national, regional and local level through relevant actors, public policies, private initiatives and funding instruments and programmes within a set timeframe and with measurable goals;
 - the directionality element, which aims at strategically guiding and prioritising R&I and other sectoral investments at European, national and regional level as part of a process of strategic coordination between R&I and other relevant policy areas to achieve an impact on society and policy-making through science and technology;
 - the process of co-design, co-implementation and co-monitoring with public actors, the private sector and civil society at national, regional and local level;

⁶ COM(2019)640 final
⁷ COM(2021)550 final
⁸ COM(2021) 609 final

2. RECALLS that R&I is the basis for European missions and that achieving their objectives requires short, medium and long-term actions in all relevant sectoral policies by public actors, the private sector and civil society, as well as adequate funding; CALLS on, in particular, the Commission and the Member States to implement coherent public policies based on state-of-the-art scientific and technological advances in the framework of European missions, including policies that stimulate demand, promote knowledge valorisation and encourage behavioural change;
3. RECALLS that Horizon Europe finances R&I activities only, whereas other activities are funded through each relevant programme in other sectorial policies, according to the applicable rules of the respective programmes; RECALLS that the Strategic Plan under Horizon Europe aims to promote synergies between Horizon Europe and other relevant Union policies and programmes;
4. STRESSES the importance of research infrastructures in achieving the objectives of European missions, in particular through their multidisciplinary research capacities, including in social sciences and humanities; EMPHASISES their key role in the development of advanced technologies and methodologies and their links with the education and private sector; NOTES the importance of the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures in order to guide the strategic development of these infrastructures and foster their contribution to the implementation of European missions; UNDERLINES that technology infrastructures can also contribute to the implementation of European missions;
5. CONSIDERS that the societal challenges covered by the European missions are of a global nature; ENCOURAGES the Commission to promote international cooperation, including through synergies with international mission-oriented initiatives, where this contributes to the objectives of the European missions, while ensuring respect for the EU's key principles and values and the protection of EU interests;

II. Ensuring effective governance of European missions

6. STRESSES that the success of European missions requires an effective multi-level governance model between relevant actors, public policies, private initiatives and funding instruments and programmes; RECOGNISES the need to tailor the governance model to each of the European missions;
7. CONSIDERS that effective governance should be based on a horizontal and vertical approach in line with the respective responsibilities; DEFINES horizontal governance as coordination between relevant actors, public policies, private initiatives and funding instruments and programmes at the same administrative level, and vertical governance as coordination between relevant actors, public policies, private initiatives and funding instruments and programmes across multiple levels: European, national, regional and local;

A. Horizontal governance

8. RECALLS that the success of European missions is based on effective synergies between Horizon Europe, including its European Partnerships, and other relevant Union programmes in order to ensure coherent programming and co-financing; INVITES the Commission to put in place, and subsequently into operation, the necessary conditions to ensure complementary actions of all relevant EU programmes both at the level of thematic programming and at the level of individual projects; ACKNOWLEDGES the important effort made by the Commission to set up coordination bodies between its various departments to promote these synergies; UNDERLINES that the governance of European missions within the Commission should reflect the transformative and systemic nature of European missions; CALLS on the Commission to present a detailed mapping of the actions to be undertaken and their corresponding funding made available by other relevant Union policies, programmes and initiatives, in order to ensure coherent thematic programming and implementation for each EU mission; URGES the Commission to ensure further substantial investments from other relevant Union programmes that are commensurate to Horizon Europe investments in support of European missions;

9. INVITES the Member States to take into account the specific objectives of European missions in their national sectoral programming and policies as well as in EU programmes under decentralised management; CALLS on the Commission to put in place the necessary measures and administrative guidelines to promote synergies with EU programmes under decentralised management, in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Cohesion Fund, European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), Just Transition Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the National Strategic Plans (NSPs) of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); RECALLS the importance of smart specialisation strategies and national recovery and resilience plans as a useful programming tool to contribute to the objectives of European missions;
10. INVITES the Commission to explore the option of establishing a labelling scheme for calls for proposals launched by Union funding programmes other than Horizon Europe in order, *inter alia*, to facilitate the construction of missions' portfolios, to increase the visibility of the related initiatives and to gather their results, thus contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the European missions;
11. NOTES the strategic role of mission boards in formulating advice during the preparation and life-cycle of European missions; SUGGESTS that this advice be taken into account at the appropriate political level by the Commission, given the cross-sectoral nature of European missions; INVITES the Commission to report on a regular basis to the strategic configuration and to inform the pertinent thematic configurations of the Programme Committee of Horizon Europe on the results of the work carried out by the mission boards; RECALLS the importance of expertise on citizen engagement in mission boards;

12. STRESSES that horizontal governance efforts should also be undertaken at Member State level; ENCOURAGES Member States to put in place adequate governance structures to enable their relevant actors, public policies, private initiatives and funding instruments and programmes to contribute to the objectives of European missions; TAKES NOTE of the life-cycle character of missions involving specific actors, policies and instruments relevant at different stages of the governance process; STRESSES, therefore, that there is no single model of governance and that Member States are free to set up governance arrangements in line with their own structures and needs; INVITES the Commission to actively promote and facilitate the exchange of good practices among Member States on appropriate governance models for European missions;

B. Vertical governance

13. RECOGNISES that effective coordination at European, national, regional and local decision-making level is essential for the success of European missions; INVITES the Commission and the Member States to ensure that these levels are properly engaged; RECALLS the importance of involving the strategic configuration and the pertinent thematic configurations of the Programme Committee of Horizon Europe to take into account the national context and opportunities to improve alignment with R&I activities carried out at national level;

14. STRESSES the need to analyse the relevance and potential of EU, national, regional and local instruments and initiatives, in particular partnerships, and intergovernmental instruments in order to contribute to the objectives of European missions; INVITES the Commission to carry out this review in close cooperation with other stakeholders; INVITES the Member States to identify national, regional and local programmes or initiatives, including their results, that can contribute to the success of European missions; INVITES the Commission, in conjunction with the Member States, to establish a flexible methodology that Member States and regions can use in the identification of such initiatives or any other measure that may contribute to the success of European missions and their coordination at European, national, regional and local level;

15. RECOGNISES the specific role of regional and local authorities in the implementation of European missions; STRESSES that local and regional authorities play a key role in supporting demonstration initiatives to test solutions, including scientific and technological solutions, with end-users and citizens;
16. NOTES that the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) are pan-European research and innovation ecosystems that bring together a diversity of actors and that the European Universities alliances can also complement this dynamic, notably under their R&I dimension; INVITES, therefore, the Commission and the Member States to promote consistency between the achievement of the objectives of the European missions and the actions of the EIT and its KICs, as well as to promote the activities carried out by the European Universities alliances under their R&I dimension;
17. TAKES NOTE of the potential of the ERA Hub tool to strengthen the capacity of regional research and innovation ecosystems, create framework conditions for collaboration and interconnect these at European level;

C. Governance of the mission portfolio

18. STRESSES the importance of coherent management of projects and actions financed at European, national, regional and local level contributing to the objectives of the missions; RECALLS that European missions are to be implemented through a portfolio approach, consisting of a coherent group of activities; NOTES that the mission portfolio should reflect the entire value chain, including aspects related to Social Sciences and Humanities; RECALLS, therefore, the importance of fundamental research in building the portfolio, as well as the relevance of projects with high innovation potential and high risk level, for example in key and strategic sectors for the Union supported by the European Innovation Council (EIC);

19. STRESSES the importance of mission portfolio management, promoting the necessary flexibility in programming, implementation, portfolio composition and reorientation throughout the implementation of the European mission's life-cycle; INVITES the Commission to regularly inform the strategic configuration of the Programme Committee of Horizon Europe of the methods used in the management of the mission portfolio and of the progress made;
20. RECALLS that the mission portfolio should include activities funded at European, national, regional and local level; ENCOURAGES the Commission to foster and promote the exchange of good practices among Member States on mission portfolio management at national and EU level; RECOGNISES the importance of strategic foresight activities in order to anticipate and take account of scientific, technological and socio-political disruptions in carrying out European missions;

III. Citizen engagement

- 21 AFFIRMS that addressing societal, environmental and economic challenges can only be achieved through a strengthened relationship between policy-making, science and society; NOTES that the COVID-19 pandemic and some of the challenges of the green transition and digital transformation, such as climate change or the challenges underlying the development of key digital technologies, have shown the importance of strengthening the science-society relationship; STRESSES the importance of reinforcing society's confidence in science, promoting knowledge-based critical thinking skills and counteracting the spread of pseudosciences and misinformation; RECOGNISES that strengthening citizens' active role and engagement in research and innovation is one of the means to achieve this;
22. HIGHLIGHTS citizen engagement in science, as it promotes awareness and societal changes; this is all the more important in the context of European missions, as they ultimately aim to improve the lives of citizens; STRESSES the importance of actively involving underrepresented groups;

23. RECALLS that for the full success of European missions, EU-wide citizen engagement should take place from the first stages of identification of specific European missions and throughout their planning, implementation and monitoring; INVITES the Commission to set up a public engagement and communication plan for each mission and assess the effectiveness of such plans in the process of monitoring, evaluation, review and follow-up of European missions; INVITES Member States to promote such public engagement and communication plans at national, regional and local level and to develop, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, tailor-made public engagement and communication plans; CALLS on the Commission to actively facilitate the sharing of good practices on citizen engagement in European missions;
24. RECALLS that higher-education, research and technological institutions are at the interface between science and society and play an active role in strengthening democratic values and practices, preparing students for active citizenship and civic engagement and fuelling public debate with science-based information; ENCOURAGES the Commission and the Member States to cooperate with higher-education and research institutions in acting as possible facilitators between European citizens and European missions where appropriate, in order to encourage societal change;

IV. Monitoring, review and evaluation of European missions

25. RECALLS that an assessment of the first European missions and the review of the European missions areas is to be carried out by the Commission no later than 31 December 2023 and before the adoption of any decision on creating new missions or continuing, terminating or redirecting ongoing European missions; RECOMMENDS that no new missions within the existing mission areas are launched and no new mission areas are proposed until current missions have been positively assessed; INVITES the Commission, given the cross-sectoral dimension of European missions and their impact on the alignment of national policies beyond research and innovation, to inform the Council of any future development in relations to European missions;

26. STRESSES that European missions should benefit from a transparent, gender-responsive and robust monitoring and evaluation system based on the objectives of each European mission to reflect its systemic and dynamic dimension;
27. UNDERLINES that this monitoring and evaluation system should also allow for a periodic assessment of the progress made in relation to the milestones and objectives of the various projects and activities contributing to the European missions, in order to ensure that it is on track and that the objectives set are achieved;
28. INVITES the Commission to develop methodologies and processes for monitoring and analysing European missions based, *inter alia*, on existing expertise, with specific quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators adapted to the specificity of the mission-oriented approach, including its systemic nature, and to inform the Council thereof; HIGHLIGHTS the potential of using innovative methodologies, such as those developed in the context of the OECD Better Life Index or the Green Deal Monitoring Dashboard; UNDERLINES the importance of establishing a mechanism for assessing the impact of European missions;
29. INVITES the Commission to present to the Council measures to stimulate and enhance the knowledge developed in the framework of European missions in Europe, in order to ensure that all countries in Europe can benefit from the results.
