



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Draft Council Conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2022: "Measures to widen participation in Horizon 2020 were well designed but sustainable change will mostly depend on efforts by national authorities"
- Presidency text

Delegations will find attached a Presidency text on the *draft Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2022: "Measures to widen participation in Horizon 2020 were well designed but sustainable change will mostly depend on efforts by national authorities"* with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on 14 July 2022.

Draft COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2022:

"Measures to widen participation in Horizon 2020 were well designed but sustainable change will mostly depend on efforts by national authorities"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- Horizon 2020's specific objective "Spreading excellence and widening participation" which aimed to fully exploit the potential of Europe's talent pool and to ensure that the benefits of an innovation-led economy are both maximised and widely distributed across the Union in accordance with the principle of excellence;
 - its conclusions of 1 December 2017 "From the Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020 towards the ninth Framework Programme"¹, in which it acknowledged that measures addressing "Spreading excellence and widening participation" have to continue and should be strengthened, including monitoring them as a cross-cutting issue;
1. WELCOMES the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2022: *Measures to widen participation in Horizon 2020 were well designed but sustainable change will mostly depend on efforts by national authorities*² and TAKES NOTE of the Commission's replies accompanying the Special Report³; WELCOMES the Court's findings that widening measures have already delivered a number of positive intangible and tangible outcomes;

¹ 15320/17

² The Special Report is available in all official languages on the Court's website: [SR 15/2022: Horizon 2020 widening measures \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eua/press_corner/press_releases/1532017_en.htm).

³ The Commission's replies accompanying the Special Report are available in all official languages on the Court's website: [COM-Replies-SR-22-15 EN.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eua/press_corner/press_releases/1532017_en.htm)

2. TAKES NOTE of the Court's recommendation to strengthen the use of the Policy Support Facility; ACKNOWLEDGES the importance of accompanying measures under the Policy Support Facility to support Member States in upgrading their national R&I system; ENCOURAGES regular policy dialogues between the Member States and the Commission to jointly identify pathways for the implementation of reforms, including those planned under the Recovery and Resilience Facility;
3. TAKES NOTE of the Court's recommendation to aim for a more balanced participation of widening countries in widening measures; CALLS on the Commission to assess the need for a more diversified portfolio of actions and targeted networking activities, including through National Contact Points, to address disparities in participation among widening countries;
4. WELCOMES the Court's recommendation to facilitate the timely availability of complementary funding; RECALLS the importance of synergies between Union programmes, on the one hand, and between European, national and regional levels, on the other hand, in order to ensure coherent programming and co-financing; CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to tackle delays in the implementation of complementary funding and to strive for simplification;
5. SUPPORTS the Court's recommendation to enhance the capacity of project beneficiaries to exploit their research results and INVITES the Commission to provide training and coaching to widening projects' beneficiaries, to promote contacts between beneficiaries and potential business partners, and to encourage valorisation of widening measures' research results;
6. SUPPORTS the Court's recommendation to enhance monitoring of the widening measures; INVITES the Commission to identify indicators assessing the contribution of widening measures to key impact pathways, including beyond the duration of individual projects;
7. ASKS the Commission to take the European Court of Auditors' special report No 15/2022 and the Court's recommendations into account when designing and implementing current and future widening measures.