



Council of the
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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 23/2022 'Synergies between Horizon 2020 and European Structural and Investment Funds - Not yet used to full potential' - Presidency text

Delegations will find attached a Presidency text on the draft Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 23/2022 'Synergies between *Horizon 2020* and European Structural and Investment Funds - Not yet used to full potential' with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on 12 December 2022.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 23/2022 entitled 'Synergies between *Horizon 2020* and European Structural and Investment Funds - Not yet used to full potential'

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- *Horizon 2020*'s contribution to closing the research and innovation divide within the Union by promoting synergies with the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs);
- the Common Provisions Regulation¹, which stresses the need to strengthen coordination, synergies and complementarities between the ESIFs and *Horizon 2020*;
- its Conclusions of 1 December 2017 'From the Interim Evaluation of *Horizon 2020* towards the ninth Framework Programme'², which highlight the importance of improved synergies and complementarities between the Framework Programme and other EU funding instruments;
- its Conclusions on European Court of Auditors' (ECA) Special Report No 15/2022, adopted on 13 October 2022³, which stressed the importance of synergies between Union programmes and the European, national and regional levels.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159–706.

² 15320/17.

³ 13426/22.

1. WELCOMES ECA Special Report No 23/2022 entitled ‘Synergies between *Horizon 2020* and European Structural and Investment Funds - Not yet used to full potential’⁴ complementing ECA Special Report No 15/2022 on the measures to widen participation in *Horizon 2020*; TAKES NOTE of the Commission’s replies to Special Report No 23/2022⁵; RECOGNISES the efforts the Commission has made in response to shortcomings in rules and regulations, by mirroring provisions in the relevant legislation.
2. ACKNOWLEDGES the recommendation to improve cooperation between bodies involved in the management of the ESIFs and the framework programmes, in particular between managing authorities (ERDF) and National Contact Points (*Horizon Europe*), and ENCOURAGES the Commission to set up regular structured dialogue bringing together the relevant bodies from the Commission and Member States at policy and implementation level, as well as to work with Member States in fostering such cooperation at a national/regional level.
3. STRESSES the need for the availability of data about projects and beneficiaries, ENCOURAGES the Commission and relevant authorities in the Member States to collect and share relevant information about beneficiaries of *Horizon Europe* and cohesion policy funding, e.g. via the National Contact Points or managing authorities, and INVITES the Commission to facilitate the creation and monitoring of synergies, to further exploit databases for the framework programme and the cohesion policy funds (the successor to the ESIFs) so as to allow easier matchmaking between projects and beneficiaries. The Commission should also use existing tools, such as CORTEX or the ‘Seal of Excellence Community of Practice’, as well as identify and promote examples of good practice.
4. EMPHASIZES the recommendation to increase the use of downstream synergies and INVITES the Commission to support managing authorities in designing and implementing actions to create downstream synergies with *Horizon 2020* and *Horizon Europe* projects and to promote public procurement for innovation based on the results of research projects; ENCOURAGES Member States to include synergies in strategic planning and implementation.

⁴ OJ C 442, 22.11.2022, p. 2. The report can be consulted at the European Court of Auditors’ website <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=62446>.

⁵ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECARepplies/COM-Replies-SR-22-23/COM-Replies-SR-22-23_EN.pdf.

5. WELCOMES the recommendation to improve the information flow about projects that have received the Seal of Excellence and CALLS UPON the Commission to regularly provide all managing authorities with data on project proposals that have received the Seal of Excellence in their Member State or region.
 6. REITERATES, inter alia, the principles and guidelines set out in the Prague Declaration on Synergies in the Research and Innovation Funding in Europe of 8 July 2022⁶ and the Commission Notice on synergies between *Horizon Europe* and the European Research and Development Fund (ERDF) programmes⁷.
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⁶ <https://synergies2022.eu/>

⁷ COMMISSION NOTICE Synergies between *Horizon Europe* and ERDF programmes, 2022/C 421/03