

## **Meeting with members of EU-LIFE research centres alliance**

### **Scene setter**

You will meet with representatives from EU-LIFE, an alliance of research centres whose mission is to support and strengthen European research excellence. EU-LIFE members are leading research institutes in their countries and internationally renowned for producing excellent research, widely transferring knowledge and nurturing talent.

Since its foundation in 2013, EU-LIFE has become a relevant stakeholder in European policy participating regularly in the EC policy dialogue.

In September, EU-LIFE released an open letter urging the EU Council and European Parliament to prioritise Research & Innovation by committing a budget of € 150 Billion for Horizon Europe. EU-LIFE institutes are deeply concerned about the growing trend at the political level to reduce support for discovery research and innovation at European level.

The aim of the meeting is to exchange views on priorities in your upcoming mandate for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.

### **Objective(s)**

- Courtesy meeting and opportunity to have a first exchange on your new mandate and on the state of play of Horizon Europe.
- In view of your new portfolio, solicit their feedback on policy needs and actions under Horizon Europe and other programmes.

## **Line to take**

### **On EU-LIFE**

- We consider alliances of research institutes like EU-LIFE to be true game changers in Europe, operating from the centre of research and innovation;
- As producers of scientific knowledge and key actors in innovation ecosystems, alliances of research institutes have become instrumental to build a society based on knowledge creation and sharing;
- I would like to thank you for your contribution in support of research and innovation in the next multiannual financial framework as well as for your open letter with recommendations to focus on collaborative and long-term impact research as far as the Health Cluster of Horizon Europe is concerned.

### **On Horizon Europe**

#### **a) Missions**

- As you are probably aware, Missions are a key feature of the future Horizon Europe Programme for which Research and Innovation will set the direction and provide the stimulus to address major challenges which go far wider than the fields of the R&I itself;
- To be successful, Missions must resonate with and be well understood by citizens. Missions should be identified and implemented using approaches that encourage and enable citizens to get involved.
- Further still, the development of missions gives the opportunity to build tools and mechanisms for empowering citizens in the processes for decision-making on EU activities.
- Five mission areas have been identified and dedicated boards have been created and are now fully operational.

#### **b) Mission on Cancer**

- Among the five mission areas proposed, one addresses **cancer**, a disease with a tremendous burden for society affecting everyone. Cancer is one of the leading causes of death worldwide, and the number one killer for men in a growing number of Member States and elsewhere.
- The Cancer Mission Board is preparing a mission outline with a comprehensive approach focusing its discussions on four main themes: understanding, prevention, treatment and survivorship/quality of life.
- The mission Board on cancer consists of 15 top-level experts. The chair is Walter Ricciardi, who is a Professor of Hygiene and Public Health at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Rome.
- For a mission to be successful, citizens need to feel involved. An important part of the board's work is to engage with citizens and stakeholders as well as with the European Parliament.

- In fact, Member States have been asked to organise citizen engagement activities including conferences and large-scale events, to help in particular with the task of identifying Missions.
- Let me emphasise that a mission on cancer must aim to deliver results that are meaningful to citizens within seven to ten years. You and many others rightly have high expectations for this mission to be a success.
- Let me also emphasise therefore that for the cancer mission, we would like European citizens, cancer patients and survivors to engage in this endeavour as much as possible and as early as possible.
- Therefore, I invite EU-Life to contribute to this process, especially since members of your alliance are active in oncology and biomedical research.

### European Research Area

- As part of my mandate I am keen on developing policy actions that help us deliver on our ambitions and wider objectives. The key to success is to ensure engagement and fruitful cooperation with major stakeholders, such as EU-LIFE. Therefore, I am keen on continuing our exchanges in the future;
- We believe that alliances like EU-LIFE have the potential to further structure around global challenges, across languages, borders and disciplines, pushing the barriers of science, mobilising innovation ecosystems, providing the necessary environment for the emergence of innovative initiatives and enterprises, empowering engaged and active citizens.
- Europe will achieve its ambitious R&I objectives only if we all join forces and cooperate better across borders. This is at the core of the European Research Area: it is all about creating an attractive and fully open research space, where all actors can cooperate, reinforce each other and together ensure that research and innovation set the path on our transition towards a fair, sustainable and prosperous society.
- Since the Commission launched its latest initiative on ERA in 2012, the context in which R&I operates has dramatically changed: digitalisation is pervasive, globalisation and multilateralism are under threat and our policy focus has shifted significantly with a much stronger focus on achieving the transition towards a sustainable society, with the SDGs as the reference framework.
- The ambition of the new College is to revitalise the European Research Area, both to make it fit for purpose in a globally changed environment and to tackle its longstanding challenges.
- This will include redefining the objectives of ERA and reconsidering some of the key principles and priorities that underpin ERA. We need to decide together whether they continue to be relevant or rather new priorities should be established (e.g. inclusiveness, freedom of science, research integrity) and how we can better ensure their implementation.
- In this perspective, I want to work with your organisation, Member States and with all stakeholders in the coming months on a modern, forward-looking vision for ERA.

### **Defensive points**

#### ***What is the state of play of the Horizon Europe negotiations and when will the budget allocation be determined?***

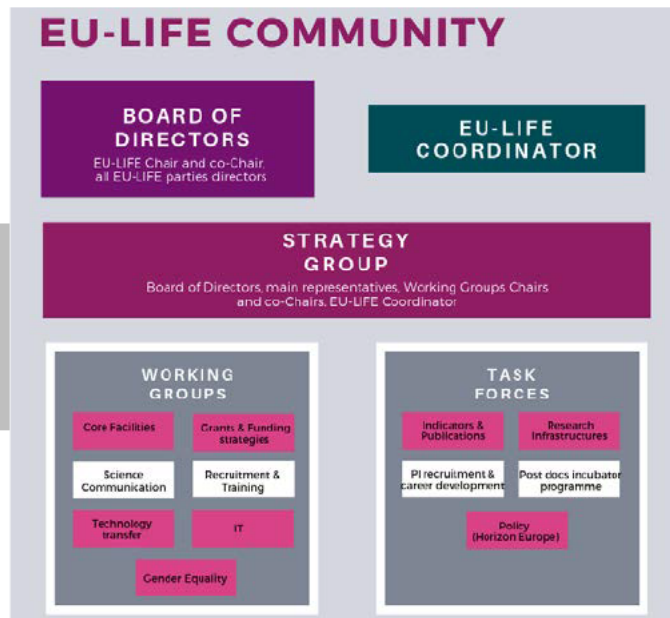
- The Common Understanding reached between the Council and the Parliament which has allowed the Commission to start the preparations of the implementation of the programmes, including strategic planning, preparations for missions and partnerships.
- Horizon Europe, with an overall budget of €100 billion, aims to keep the EU at the forefront of global research and innovation with a number of Missions and ambitious initiatives aiming to have a transformative impact on the challenges that European citizens face.
- Besides, making synergies happen in practice is a priority for us, in particular as regards synergies between Horizon Europe and the structural funds, and with Erasmus+/ European universities.
- To address all of these priorities, the Commission has proposed a budget of € 100 billion for the next 7 years. During the negotiations, the European Parliament had called for an increase of the Horizon Europe budget to €120 billion. However, this will depend on the overall MFF negotiations that will resume in the next months.

## **Background**

### **EU-LIFE**

**EU-LIFE** is an alliance of 13 independent European research institutes in the life sciences in 13 European member states (including Babraham institute in Cambridge and Institut Curie in Paris).

The structure of the alliance is based on a Board of Directors, a Strategy group, several Working groups & Task forces and an EU-LIFE Office. Its Director or Scientific Director represents each member.



EU-LIFE contributes to the improvement of research by influencing European science policies and by developing, implementing and disseminating best practices in the organisation and management of research institutes.

EU-LIFE aims to be a voice for independent research institutes, by influencing European policy and to strongly advocate the key role of excellent research for the benefit of society. EU-LIFE aims to create an environment that stimulates excellence in research through sharing good practices and expertise in research organisation and management (including quality evaluation, infrastructure, personnel management, training and career development) and to inspire institutions to support ethically responsible research and innovation, open science and knowledge transfer to society.

EU-LIFE institutes share the view that scientific excellence in life sciences can only be achieved through strong adherence to principles of quality, scientific integrity, ethical responsibility, societal accountability, ecological sustainability, gender equality and cultural diversity while promoting a strong dialogue with society. EU-LIFE has a long-term mission to spread these values and best practice within Europe, to other institutes, existing or new.

EU-LIFE supported ERA in the past already by:

- participating at the European Commission ERA Stakeholder's platform and in related working groups and meetings aimed at the advancement of ERA.
- being a member of the European Open Science Platform (OSPP) launched by Commissioner Moedas, by contributing actively to its advisory role, working groups and reports on the different topics of open science.
- involvement in transition to Open Science in the support to the Science with and for Society work programme of Horizon 2020 with calls addressing innovative approach to release and disseminate research results and measure their impact.
- expressing views and formulated recommendations on Plan S and its implementation.

### Missions – State of Play

Five Mission Boards have been created to provide independent advice. There is one Mission Board for each **Mission Area** and all are now fully operational:

- Adaptation to Climate Change including Societal Transformation
- Cancer
- Healthy oceans, Seas, Coastal and inland Waters
- Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities
- Soil health and Food

#### Board Meetings

- All Missions Boards have now met at least twice; 'Cities' and 'Cancer' have already held their fourth Board meetings.

#### Engagement with stakeholders

- Each Board participated in a dedicated interactive session at the R&I days on 25 September, the feedback from which was very positive.
- The 'Ocean' Mission Board has engaged collectively with stakeholders at the Paris Peace Forum on 11-12 November. Similarly, initial consultation of stakeholders have started for the 'Cities' mission (e.g. EuroCities, Smart Regions Conference, etc.)

#### Member States

- Five sub groups, one for each Mission Area, of the Strategic Configuration of the Shadow Programme Committee have been created. These are composed of experts, one proposed by each Member State.
- These groups met for a one hour meeting each during the R&I days. Further meetings will take place, aligned with the meetings of the Mission Boards.

#### Interactions with the European Parliament

- Mission Boards have been asked to designate one of the members as link to the European Parliament to support an extensive dialogue with the EP on future Missions, as was agreed during the negotiations on Horizon Europe.
- A public hearing of the European Parliament on Missions is under consideration for January/February 2020.

#### Citizen engagement

- An extensive programme of citizen engagement is being prepared, including possibly 10 events in Jan/Feb 2020 organised by Member States.
- A training event or series of events on citizens' engagement is being organised with support of DG JRC and HR, for Mission Board Members (+ MS experts and Commission officials), for early January 2020.

#### Mission Assemblies

- The assemblies were created to provide a source of additional expertise and to support the reflections of the Mission Boards.
- Several Mission Boards have signalled their intention to meet with the Assemblies, or members of the Assemblies, back-to-back with Mission Board meetings.

### Cancer Mission

**The Mission on Cancer**<sup>1</sup> aims at addressing sectors, policies and systemic, transformative solutions (governance, technological, non-technological, services, behaviour changes, investments), for the entire health continuum of the disease. Citizen engagement will be an important contributing process in the design, implementation and review of the mission on cancer.

The Commission appointed the members of the five mission Boards in July 2019. The Chair of the cancer mission Board is Professor Walter Ricciardi, who led the Italian National Institute of Health. The former Chair, Professor Harald zur Hausen and Nobel prize winner had to step down for personal reasons<sup>2</sup>. The vice-Chair is Professor Christine Chomienne, known for her leading role at the French National Cancer Institute INCa.

The cancer mission Board consists of 15 members bringing expertise from cancer research, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care, oncology, epidemiology, toxicology, radiology, law, cancer charity funding, communication, public health policy, patient representation, health pharmaceutical industry.

In addition, the Commission established an Assembly, which is composed of 26 top-level experts and chaired by Walter Ricciardi. The Assembly will support the board in developing the mission on cancer and engage with citizen representatives.

So far, the Board has agreed to focus its reflections around four main themes: understanding, prevention, treatment and survivorship. In 2019, four Board meetings took place (3 September, 25-26 September, 21-22 October, 19-20 November). The next one, scheduled for 12-13 December, will include a meeting with Member States representatives.

The mission letter to the Health Commissioner-designate proposes the adoption of a European Action Plan against Cancer to support Member States in improving cancer control and care. This plan will be closely linked to the mission on cancer.

The Cancer Plan responds to a call from MEP Manfred Weber who proposed a “European Masterplan to join our forces to fight against cancer”, as part of this election campaign.

The Parliament closely follows the work on the Cancer Plan, providing early input through a first plenary debate on 18 September and dedicated events/workshops in preparation.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme/mission-area-cancer\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme/mission-area-cancer_en)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/professor-harald-zur-hausen-step-down-chair-horizon-europe-cancer-mission-board-2019-oct-08\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/professor-harald-zur-hausen-step-down-chair-horizon-europe-cancer-mission-board-2019-oct-08_en)

**Annex I: EU-LIFE Open letter to the EU Council and EP to prioritise R&I by committing an appropriate budget for Horizon Europe (Barcelona 23 September 2019)**

Europe is at a critical crossroads. While new major societal challenges emerge, the EU is at the same time called to revisit its founding values and questioned on its role in Europe and the World. Therefore, refocusing on real beacons of the EU ideal is needed to secure and nurture the EU added value for citizens. In this context, European R&I emerges not only as a true success, but also as a real pillar of the EU ideal. Few other fields illustrate so clearly how crucial it is to have a strong EU that leverages local potential while guiding national and regional policies. It is clear from studies on previous Framework Programmes that every Euro spent on Research & Innovation will generate roughly five-fold the investment in economic benefit, as well as improving social, health and environmental standards. However, R&I represents less than 10% of the total EU budget. Consequently, it is time that the EU promotes R&I to a higher ranking on its list of priorities. This must be reflected in the EU's Multi-Annual Financial Framework through an increase in the Horizon Europe budget as recommended by the Lamy report and in an earlier EU-LIFE position paper. We therefore urge the European Parliament and the EU Council to provide Horizon Europe with 5 key assets:

1. **An appropriate budget:** To achieve high impacts, Horizon Europe needs a commensurate budget. We were the first organisation to publicly support the recommendations in Lamy's report to double Horizon Europe's budget compared to H2020, to 150 Billion Euros. We stand by this and maintain our recommendation to double the budget of Europe's Research & Innovation framework programme in order to realise its impact and global challenges.
2. **A balanced programme:** the impact of tomorrow depends on the discoveries of today and the highest value over time comes from high-risk, open-ended excellent research. This should be the main priority of public funding such as Horizon Europe. The investment in close to the market stages will then follow from the private sector. Therefore, we recommend to double the budget for discovery research (Pillar 1), including the European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA).
3. **Making the European Research Area (ERA) a reality:** Realising ERA and advancing in open science including gender equality cannot fall solely on the shoulders of individual researchers, innovators or projects. Excellent R&I needs a healthy R&I ecosystem that in turn needs strong institutions with international standards. EU-LIFE strongly supports the policy that European framework programmes should not substitute national or regional investment and measures should be adopted to incentivise prioritisation of R&I in Member States' budgets aiming at 3% GDP at least.
4. **Addressing knowledge transfer:** Building a proper research ecosystem that efficiently catalyses translation of knowledge is essential since the path to innovation is not linear and includes several feedback loops. The true challenge is to actively assist researchers with identifying and enabling commercial and/or social use of their findings.
5. **Realistic impact and collaborative approaches:** Innovation provides solutions based on knowledge. Solutions without new knowledge are not innovation; they are merely implementation. The role of open-ended research within multi-sectoral collaboration must be nurtured. Therefore, expected timing of impact of research outputs in Horizon Europe should be realistically adjusted to a longer timescale and its definition broadened beyond economic competitiveness to include wider social impact.



## **Annex II: EU-LIFE recommendations for collaborative research in the Health Cluster of Horizon Europe**

- Re-balance public funding in the Health Cluster towards collaborative, long-term impact research and leave the investment in short-term research (at higher TRLs) to the private sector. Whereas the less risky, close-to-market stages are amenable to private funding, lower TRLs that encapsulate longer-term impact are higher risk and therefore not fundable by industry or the private sector - this should be the main responsibility of public funding in Horizon Europe.
- Define major challenges for specific disease areas and include calls for proposals on “understanding mechanisms of” to ensure collaborative approaches regarding the fundamental understanding of mechanisms that form the knowledge base of disease and treatment.
- Build a more realistic definition of impact. Impact in the current calls requires heavy speculation as to what might happen often ending in hand waiving and the description of “impact unicorns”. EU-LIFE recommends a shift towards explaining how the current research environment facilitates further development and exploitation to enable research impact.
- Use a wider and modular definition of “expected impacts” by taking into account what is more commonly the result of discovery research in the area of the call, and by including “fundamental understandings” as expected impact. Value the collaborative aspect of the project as a measure of impact. Brief officers and evaluators to appreciate the impact of research for the area and TRL in question.
- Remove the - direct or indirect - pressure to cover too many and too high TRLs in a single project by introducing several stages for a research theme: the first stage starting at lower TRLs and if successful progressing to higher TRLs.
- Implement a retrospective model of evaluation for collaborative research: Rather than evaluating “unicorns”, evaluate a track record of generating impact. Look back at what research has achieved following funding at the portfolio or programme level.

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