



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SEDEC - Commission for Social Policy, Education,
Employment, Research and Culture

The Chair

Brussels, *date of official registration*
KT/SA/dfm - D/2954 (2025)

H.E. Marcin Kulasek
Minister of Science and Higher Education
Government of Poland

Dear Mr Kulasek,

In the context of the forthcoming negotiations on the **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post-2027** and especially the next **Framework Programme (FP10)**, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) strongly reiterates the political positions and proposals it put forward in its various opinions and resolutions in favour of an ***ambitious, clear and territorially-aware research and innovation (R&I) policy***.

We, the CoR rapporteurs on [FP10](#), [EU Missions](#), a [New European Innovation Agenda](#) and the upcoming [ERA Act](#), **advocate** for the period post-2027:

- A **standalone FP10 programme** in the next MFF with enhanced support for **regional innovation ecosystems**;
- An ambitious, **predictable, independent and strategic FP10 budget**, caring also for local and regional interests in this field;
- To mainstream the **place-based approach** to particularly improve the connectivity between local innovators, researchers and industries, as they often share common challenges and value chains;
- To fund the entire **value chain from basic research to technology transfer and product maturity** to increase the impact of European R&I efforts;
- To complete the **European Research Area (ERA)** together with local authorities;
- To strengthen **collaborative research** between universities, research centres, businesses and regional and local authorities.
- To increase the financing and improve the implementation of **EU Missions** as a truly novel, society-driven R&I instrument, placing greater emphasis on bottom-up ideas;
- To maintain the key principle of **Smart Specialisation (S3)** and **the synergies** with other EU funds;
- To rethink the **Widening programme**, while attempting to include lagging regions from all 27 Member States; and
- To increase **public-private R&I investments** to improve the global competitiveness of European research, businesses and industry.

Yours sincerely,

Heike Raab

Cc: CoR rapporteurs Anne Besnier (FR/PES), Melanie Kühnemann-Grunow (DE/PES), Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)

Annex I

Detailed explanations of the above positions:

1. **Research and innovation (R&I)** have proved in times of prosperity and in times of crisis that they make an essential contribution to European competitiveness. Throughout its four decades of existence, **the R&I framework programmes (FP) have demonstrated their effectiveness as a catalyst for excellence, strongly contributing to the development of innovation ecosystems** (regional and local in particular) all over Europe and solving the significant societal challenges of our time.

More than ever threatened by an **unstable geopolitical situation** and increasingly **tough competition**, European excellence in research and innovation must be **supported and cultivated wherever necessary**, as was recently highlighted in the reports by Mario Draghi, Enrico Letta and the Expert Group on the Interim Evaluation of Horizon Europe under the leadership of Prof. Manuel Heitor.

Europe has not kept up with other major economies due to a persistent gap in productivity growth. Europe must act now **to lead in crucial technologies in order to position itself as a global frontrunner** when it comes to **innovation, productivity, and decarbonisation of pivotal technological fields** to regain its competitiveness and secure its prosperity.

2. The CoR stresses the need to intensify efforts to develop **place-based innovation ecosystems** to fully resolve innovation disparities and **close the innovation divide both within Europe and between the EU and the US, as well as with China**.

The CoR notes that in many societally critical sectors—such as **climate**—much of the necessary scientific and technological knowledge either does not yet exist, is not sufficiently mature, or is not commercially viable. Therefore, well-defined technology and commercial roadmaps, supported by targeted action plans and financing, are essential to **bridge the gap between basic research, commercialisation, scaling, and real-world application**.

The CoR reaffirms **the important role played by cities and regions in shaping the EU's scientific and technological excellence**, both in the context of cohesion policy and through their participation in projects under the various FPs, by cultivating fertile ground for the design, production and dissemination of knowledge, the exploitation of results and the innovative technologies of tomorrow. In this sense, **this level of action is essential for the completion of a true European Research Area (ERA)**, in particular by pursuing the development of ERA hubs and the establishment of free movement of researchers and collaborative research among universities, research centres, businesses and local and regional authorities.

3. In this respect, the CoR reiterates **the crucial importance of supporting collaboration and partnerships not only within but also between regional and local innovation ecosystems**, which bring together all the knots of excellence scattered across Europe and which represent a vital vector of competitiveness for Europe. With this in mind, it is necessary and useful to continue to set up and develop **Regional Innovation Valleys (RIV)**, supported by the 'Regional Innovation Partnerships' (PRI) pilot action. This **place-based approach to innovation** must be strengthened in the current and future ways of implementing the Framework Programme, such as **European R&I partnerships**.

4. **‘Smart specialisation strategies’ (S3/S4) represent a powerful driver of excellence for regional and local innovation ecosystems.** It is therefore essential that the strategic programming of R&I support in Europe must create more effective interfaces with these strategies.

5. **The Committee also reiterates its support for the principle of renewing the measures supporting wider participation in the Framework Programme, and of rethinking its methods of action at regional level,** using new benchmarks such as the *Regional Innovation Scoreboard* to target the areas most in need of participation in and benefiting from the Framework Programme. In this context, the Committee also calls for a simplification of the application procedures and **reducing the administrative burden.** It emphasises the importance of smaller collaborative research projects and open calls as well as the funding of the entire value chain from basic research to technology transfer and product maturity. It highlights the **importance of universities and humanities and social sciences,** not least in connection with the crucial subject of social acceptance of technological and societal innovation.

6. Effectively addressing these issues requires a **dedicated, earmarked and ambitious EU budget for R&I,** with a clear and sustained **long-term vision.** The European Committee of the Regions therefore advocates maintaining **a framework programme (FP)** as foreseen in **Art. 182 TFEU,** to guarantee stable and predictable programming, which is essential for all R&I players, including regions and cities, in Europe.

7. The CoR proposes also to address areas requiring very large investments, such as **electrification, clean car technologies, hydrogen, quantum computing and semiconductors,** where public funding can play an important role to complement and stimulate private funding investment.