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## Position of the Polish Science Contact Agency PolSCA on the Future Framework Programme

### As an input to the public consultation on EU funds in the area of investment, research & innovation, SMEs and single market

The Polish Science Contact Agency PolSCA is one of the 7 foreign stations of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Established in Brussels in 2006, it is registered in the Moniteur Belge (no. 884.331.776) and in the Transparency Register (since 26/04/2016).

The Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), which embraces 69 research institutes, is already the largest beneficiary of Horizon 2020 in Poland in terms of both the number of projects and the amount of funds received. The organisation has more Horizon 2020 projects than the three largest Polish universities taken together (see Annex).

PolSCA recognizes the outstanding importance of the EU programmes as an example of genuine European cooperation, contributing to greater economic growth, innovativeness and to solving societal challenges. The Future Framework Programme should further support these goals.

#### ***Budget***

PolSCA acknowledges that in order to sustain growth in labour productivity, investments in R&I and in other intangible assets are crucial<sup>1</sup>. This is especially valid for Poland, which should further strengthen the quality, relevance and openness of the public science base and boost innovation in business, notably through cooperation with the public science base<sup>2</sup>. Further strengthening of the future Framework Programme lies at the cornerstone of these processes. Strengthening of the Framework Programme requires not only better management but, first and foremost, an **increased budget**.

#### ***Widening participation***

PolSCA recognizes that excellence must remain the central pillar of the Framework Programme. It must be underscored, however, that although excellence is present in the EU 13 countries it is not sufficiently reflected in the participation in the EU Framework Programmes, mainly due to historical legacy. Therefore, PolSCA supports the idea of discussing **an auxiliary**

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<sup>1</sup> *Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU 2018. Strengthening the foundations for Europe's future*. European Commission 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Research & Innovation performance and Horizon 2020 country participation for Poland*. European Commission January 30, 2018.

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/country-performance/pl\\_research\\_and\\_innovation\\_performance.pdf#zoom=125&pagemode=none](http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/country-performance/pl_research_and_innovation_performance.pdf#zoom=125&pagemode=none)

**selection criterion in cooperation projects** in the form of participation of partners from the EU 13 Member States. At the same time **the widening instruments** should be maintained and further strengthened.

### *Programming, structure and implementation*

PolSCA welcomes the idea of **mission-oriented programming**, as science should be made for society and with society in a transparent way. This should be an opportunity to enhance equal opportunities for all stakeholders from all the Member States to express their interests in the programming phase and facilitate a more bottom-up approach. At the same time this management concept requires **an increased number of smaller scale projects** which would maintain risk at an acceptable level and provide more opportunities for excellent yet not so visible beneficiaries.

Due to the low success rate of EU 13 countries, the costs of preparing applications in H2020 are relatively high in comparison to other funding sources available. The same applies to the costs of project implementation. Therefore, PolSCA urges **further simplification in terms of the number of instruments and implementation rules**. Also, it is necessary to **strengthen the quality of the proposal evaluation process** in order to give clear and valuable feedback to applicants, especially new or less successful ones. **The grant system should be maintained** as the basic one for the public science base, however financial instruments should be promoted especially in the framework of the European Innovation Council. **Remuneration rules** should not discourage beneficiaries from the EU 13 (e.g. in the form of “basic researchers’ salary”).

Societal issues are at the heart of SSH (Social Sciences and Humanities) research. SSH also plays an important role in disruptive innovation and social acceptance of science and technology. SSH research is an important element of delivering a Union of democratic change, which is a central commitment of the Commission<sup>3</sup>. In order to face the grand challenges and to contribute responsibly to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Europe needs these disciplines to fully unfold their capacity. PolSCA strongly encourages **stronger involvement of researchers from the entire range of SSH disciplines** in the next Framework Programme.

### *Synergies*

Bearing in mind the high quality research infrastructure already existing in the EU 13, PolSCA **supports the idea of fostering synergies between the Framework Programme and Cohesion policies**.

If implemented efficiently, this could be an excellent instrument contributing to overcoming the innovation divide. Current experience shows that there is much room for improvement regarding rules and procedures. Better programming in this regard requires close collaboration at the European, national and regional levels.

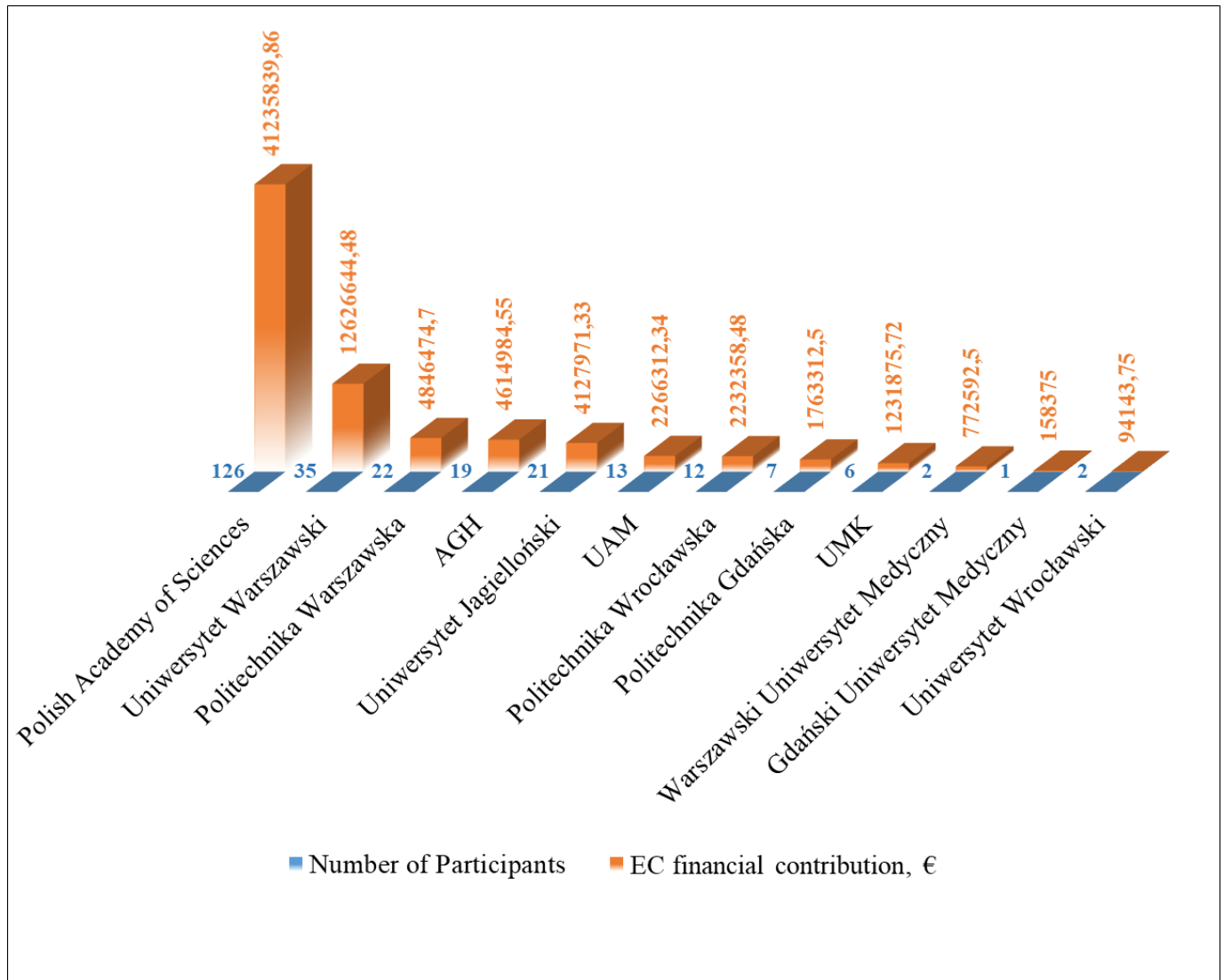
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<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. *Commission Work Programme 2018. An Agenda for a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe*. COM (2017) 650 final.

## Main recommendations :

- To increase the budget of the next Framework Programme,
- To introduce the participation of partners from the EU 13 Member States as an auxiliary evaluation criterion in cooperation projects,
- To maintain and further strengthen the ‘widening participation’ instruments,
- To increase the number of smaller cooperation projects,
- To decrease the number of instruments and simplify implementation rules,
- To improve proposal evaluation processes
- To keep the grant system as the basic one for the public science base,
- To set remuneration rules that are not discouraging to beneficiaries from the EU 13,
- To strengthen the involvement of researchers from the entire range of SSH,
- To foster synergies between the Framework Programme and Cohesion policies.

Annex. Polish beneficiaries of Horizon 2020 and EC financial contribution after 404 calls.



Source: Polish National Contact Point