EVENT REPORT

FP10: BEYOND AN INVESTMENT

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SCIENCE EUROPE
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Lead author: **Márton Kottmayer** (Science Europe)

Co-authors: **Alexander Halksworth**, **James Morris**, **Diana Potjomkina**, **Bregt Saenen** (Science Europe), **Marta Vormansika** (ETAG)

Editor: **Lidia Borrell-Damián** (Science Europe)

Copy editor & graphic design: **Alexander Halksworth** (Science Europe)

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For further information please contact the Science Europe Office: office@scienceeurope.org

FP10
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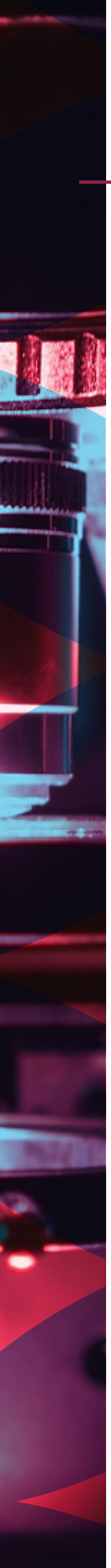

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Introduction

This report summarises the sessions of the Science Europe High Level Workshop 'FP10: Beyond an Investment', which was held on 18–19 February, in Brussels, Belgium, kindly hosted by Research Foundation Flanders (FWO).

In light of the preparations for the EU Multiannual Financial Framework, and the proposal for the 10th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10), Science Europe organised this workshop for Heads and high-level representatives of its members, European research performing, and research funding organisations.

The event aimed to articulate the positions of Science Europe, initially outlined in the publications '10 Key Messages for FP10' and 'What European Research Needs'. The landmark reports on European R&I – 'Much More than a Market' by Enrico Letta, 'The future of European competitiveness' by Mario Draghi, and 'Align, Act, Accelerate' by the EC Expert Group led by Manuel Heitor – provided significant background information to this dialogue. In addition, recent developments, such as the Competitiveness Compass, as well as the European Commission's communication on the MFF were also taken into account.

The event fed forward to Science Europe's advocacy strategy on FP10, by providing key points related to 'FP10 Objectives, Priorities, and Investments', 'FP10 Structure & Programme Characteristics' and 'An Open & Secure FP10' – which were the themes for the workshop's panels. These panels followed insightful opening keynotes by distinguished speakers, including European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, Ekaterina Zaharieva, and lead author of one of the landmark reports, Manuel Heitor.

The key conclusions of the event were published on 27 February 2025. This document recalls the discussions that took place during the keynotes, panels and parallel sessions.

Welcome & Keynotes

Francisco Javier Moreno Fuentes, Vice-President for International Affairs, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) & Vice-President of Science Europe representing RPOs

Hans Willems, Secretary-General of the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO)

Ekaterina Zaharieva, European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation

Manuel Heitor, Lead author of the report 'Align, Act, Accelerate'

Mari Sundli Tveit, Chief Executive of the Research Council of Norway (RCN); President of Science Europe

André Sapir, Professor of Economics at Université Libre Bruxelles, Belgium, Senior Fellow at Bruegel

Rapporteur: ***Diana Potjomkina,*** *Science Europe*

Participants were welcomed by Science Europe Vice President **Javier Moreno Fuentes**. This is the first of a series of events on FP10 that Science Europe will convene periodically, in order to inform the members on the latest developments and to gather their views to continuously develop Science Europe's advocacy, noted Science Europe Secretary General **Lidia Borrell-Damián**.

The programme was put together to hear the views and concerns of the Heads of Member Organisations, and their proposed ways forward, to define advocacy messages that carry the strength of the leadership of research funding and research performing organisations. In his opening speech, Javier Moreno Fuentes highlighted the growing number of challenges Europe faces, while its ideals of international co-operation and science-based public policies are increasingly being threatened on the global scale. Europe, he added, can and should stand up to these challenges, and science can play a key role in this response.

By investing in FP10, Europe invests in solutions that will benefit all its citizens and contribute to achieving other strategic goals, such as security, welfare, and competitiveness. He finished his speech by stating that science and knowledge also represent key components of Europe's soft power on the global scale, and they serve as instruments for achieving a peaceful and prosperous world for all.

Hans Willems, Secretary-General of the institution kindly hosting the event, Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) presented the organisations strategy and key takeaways for FP10: supporting both fundamental and basic research; international mobility and collaboration; investing in trust in science; supporting freedom of research, scientific independence and responsibility; as well as research security. While scientific excel-

lence should be kept as the main priority, he stated, it is also important to have acceptable success rates, stable priorities and funding allocation, and to avoid excessive complexity when it comes to applications for funding. He pointed out that linking ERC and EIC can help bridge fundamental science and more solution-oriented research, and highlighted the importance of ERA-NET and partnerships to promote collaboration.

Economic competitiveness, research security, ethical and sustainable research, and researcher mobility – amongst a range of other topics – should be addressed in the next Framework Programme, stated **Ekaterina Zaharieva**. She confirmed that the European Commission intends to closely collaborate with stakeholders, including researchers, universities and research organisations, as well as Member States, regions, and industry representatives, in drafting FP10. She expressed her support for several of the priorities expressed by Science Europe in its 10 Key Messages for FP10, highlighting balanced investment between low and high Technology Readiness Levels; the reinforcement of international co-operation, improving trust in science and an ambitious FP10 as a response to the pressing societal challenges and a way to boost European competitiveness. She highlighted the need to optimise and simplify the next Framework Programme. Finally, she stressed the importance of tapping into the potential of private spending on R&I.

After commending the recent joint statement "A Stronger Europe through Research and Innovation" by Science Europe and industry and academic stakeholders, **Manuel Heitor** argued that Europe is facing a unique opportunity to better foster knowledge towards its global strategic autonomy. He stated that after the change in the US political administration, we clearly know that Europe is the most reliable partner with the most efficient by outputs per resources thanks to our diversity. Our values and democracies are a world reference, to be preserved and strengthened, at any cost. However, Europe is lagging behind in terms of R&I investment and improvements and changes are necessary, to take advantage of this opportunity. He presented three key messages inspired by the 'Align, Act, Accelerate' report to do so.

Firstly, he highlighted that the trend in the political debate at EU level is giving priority for "defense as the main driver of EU competitiveness." This should be associated with a better articulation of R&I with the challenges Europe is facing, with increased investments to foster an increased growth layer of innovative companies. R&I is critical to strengthen the EU's defence, security and preparedness, as well as to provide new solutions to society's climate, nature and biodiversity crisis.

Secondly, he called for engaging young generations and providing better jobs to guarantee a better future for them. This is critical to face the rise of "populist" movements in Europe and the world, supported by many young adults. It requires significantly increasing the interaction between academia, RTOs and enterprises, stimulating the exchanges among successive generations. He recommended launching 'Choose Europe', making use of the existing co-fund mechanisms, as an European new program to attract young talent researchers for European public and private institutions.

Thirdly, he advised to take much more risks by accepting failures as steps to success. We are facing an accelerated rate of technical change, he highlighted, which requires much more disruptive innovation together with fundamental science. We need to build on the experience of ERC and EIC, together with strong "mission-oriented collaborative research," but experiment new ways to assess and fund R&D, with faster funding, decreased

transaction costs, and increased risks, starting with creating an "experimental unit" under the EIC.

Lidia Borrell-Damián, reading a speech on behalf of **Mari Sundli Tveit**, called for a swift action on protecting academic freedom and autonomy worldwide, fostering diversity and reciprocity in research collaboration, open science, R&I integration, and mainstreaming environmental sustainability. She acknowledged the importance of ambitious research and investment across all disciplines, and at all TRLs – highlighting the role of basic research – as a way to safeguard Europe's long-term competitiveness and strategic resilience. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance collaboration, and the elimination of the research gap within EU Members, as well as balancing Freedom of Knowledge and research security. For this, an FP10 that fosters scientific excellence and delivers long-term benefits is necessary, This requires an investment of at least €200 billion, that can leverage knowledge created through research and innovation.

Noting the reports by Enrico Letta and Mario Draghi, **André Sapir** reinforced the point that geopolitics and security represent a new dimension in the conversation on European competitiveness. Sapir stressed that while EU's public spending on research and innovation is comparable with that of the US and China, it lags behind when it comes to harnessing private investment and building the connection between the private and the public sectors. Moreover, funding in the US is mostly federal, enabling effective specialisation, while in the EU, it is mostly distributed by the Member States, prioritising cohesion over research excellence. Sapir called for higher, more streamlined and competitive EU-level funding for R&D and for seizing the potential of public–private partnerships.

The audience engaged with a number of keynote speakers during a Q&A session, which touched upon the need for the EU to decrease fragmentation in its research and innovation sector, particularly when it comes to promoting excellence in universities; the difference between the incumbent and emerging industries, with the latter having more difficulties in accessing capital within Europe compared to the incumbents (especially the automotive sector); as well as attracting top talent, increasing salaries in the research sector and improving the availability of support staff.

Panel: FP10 Objectives, Priorities, and Investments

Katarina Bjelke, Director General of the Swedish Research Council (VR); Science Europe Governing Board member

Matthias Koenig, Vice-President of the German Research Foundation (DFG); Science Europe Governing Board member

Gintaras Valinčius, President of the Research Council of Lithuania (LMT)

Robert Mistrík, Chairman of the Slovak Research and Development Agency (APVV)

Moderator: **Anna Di Ciaccio**, Director of the National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN), Italy; Science Europe Governing Board member

Rapporteur: ***Marton Kottmayer,*** *Science Europe*

The panel, moderated by **Anna di Ciaccio**, addressed the key priorities and objectives of FP10, as well as the levels of investments necessary for them. During their introductory statements, panellists briefly demonstrated their approach towards the themes of the panel.

Katarina Bjelke began her address by emphasising the need to focus on both long and short term by building a strong research base, while reinforcing the European R&I ecosystem urgently. Echoing the keynotes, she called for ambition, excellence, collaboration, and the reduction of fragmentation. Therefore, the key objective of FP10 should incorporate high-quality research, talent attraction and retainment, societal needs and competitiveness. This, according to her, must be achieved by a balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches, addressing critical challenges, while enabling disruptive, creative discoveries. She highlighted long-term industrial investment, citing the example of Sweden's tradition of collaboration between R&I and industry which brings about significant private funding.

Matthias Koenig stated that competitive innovation – the necessity for which was highlighted in all the landmark reports – requires excellent basic research. In turn, this necessitates an ambitious, reliable and ringfenced budget, as well as institutional autonomy. Exemplifying this, he cited the success of the European Research Council (ERC), and the recommendations by the European Commission and the Parliament's ITRE Committee to expand it. He also highlighted the key role of international collaboration in FP10 and argued the need for thematically open collaborative calls for basic research. He added that the true value of research reaches far beyond its contribution to economic competitiveness, as it serves as an integral pillar of pluralistic democracy. Therefore, he expressed his scepticism towards funnelling funds for R&I into the proposed competitiveness fund and

called for FP10 to recognise the diversity of academic disciplines – including social sciences, humanities and arts. Excellent science, he stated, can only be pursued in the context of full academic freedom.

"Why does the United States government invest more than twice per capita [into R&I]?" asked **Gintaras Valinčius.** He fully endorsed doubling the budget for FP10, implying that he would be even more satisfied with more ambitious increases – however, he highlighted that for such calls to be taken seriously, a good justification is needed and finding that is a key challenge. However, he argued that having funds is only one side of the equation; the way they are invested is equally important. He also protested merging different funds, arguing that doing so would reduce efficiency and transparency, and therefore strongly supported the independence of FP10. Further discussing the 'how's of investment, he also asked whether we should make proposals on the distribution of the funds between the instruments of FP10. Additionally, he stated that flexibility is key for the programme, as it helps bridging lower and higher TRL, and supports the non-linear nature of research, and revisiting lower TRLs again in the same project.

Based on his personal experience to illustrate the difficulties some may face with regards to public–private co-operation, **Robert Mistrík** recalled that, despite his startup's relevance for R&I, he failed to attract EU funding agencies. The company finally was acquired by a US corporation, proving to be an example of innovative enterprises departing Europe. Expressing a critical view on current EU funding structures, Robert Mistrík further highlighted the mismanagement of the grant evaluation processes and the design flaws in the criteria which can result in them being exploited.

Kicking off the open conversation, **Anna Di Ciacco** asked how FP10 can reinforce *strong support for fundamental science while setting its sights on competitive innovation*. There was a general consensus amongst all panellists that a strong basic science foundation is a prerequisite for innovation and financial competitiveness. Examples were raised on the tangible benefits of basic research, such as the mRNA vaccines, or good rate of commercialised patents made by ERC grantees. Therefore, rather than creating a dichotomy between the two, research and innovation should be linked. Acknowledging this, however, requires decision makers to be able to think in short- and long terms in parallel, and create a framework that creates such connections. Multiple opinions emerged on how FP10 support for this should be realised.

The topic of FP10 *facilitating collaboration* was discussed prominently, however, exploring the concept showed different approaches. On the one hand, researchers and entrepreneurs contributing to a project according to their respective talents at 'innovation hubs', thus supporting the fundamental research to innovation pipeline, was recommended. On the other, more collaboration on the fundamental research level via 'clusters of excellence', and leveraging the strength of Europe's 'polycentric' research network was advocated. In addition, bilateral collaboration in basic research, especially with the United States, was also addressed briefly. Concluding the topic of collaboration, the invaluable nature of human resources – researchers – was emphasised. Therefore R&I integration, talent attraction, and importantly, talent retention were also described as key objectives.

The discussion steered toward the 'Align, Act, Accelerate' report's recommendations on *establishing an Industrial Competitiveness and Technology Council, and a European Societal Challenges Council,* and their implications on the programme's governance. Panellists expressed caution with regards to the proposals, on the grounds of fragmentation and bureaucratic complexity, as

well as related to them risking the independence of other instruments, most notably the ERC, the independence and expert leadership of which was considered unequivocally crucial. Zoning in on pillar 2, it was noted that there should be a place for thematically open collaborative research, which should not be under the jurisdiction of these councils. In addition, the operation of the councils was discussed, and attempts were made to position them in relation to the ERC and EIC, while acknowledging that the former is performing better. Ultimately, calls for justification of developing these councils were made. Such justifications were made promptly by the Coordinator of the Expert Group who authored the 'Align, Act, Accelerate' report, **Manuel Heitor**. He reiterated the successes of ERC, and explained that following its footsteps, the new councils should be more efficient due to their independence from national and EU bureaucracy, and their expert governance.

Another proposal from the report, the '*Technology monitoring initiative*' was discussed as well, with regard to which Manuel Heitor stated that it could build better links between fundamental science and disruptive innovation. It could serve as a tool, he stated, which can provide justification – and thus, funding – for fundamental research by demonstrating how bottom-up research generates impact. Panellists agreed that monitoring successful projects are important, as it could also improve project selection mechanisms – however, such monitoring should not create additional administrative burdens, neither should it interfere with academic freedoms.

Similarly, the panel expressed worries with regards to stringent ethical guidelines potentially serving as artificial barriers for innovation – especially if these guidelines are prepared by people not involved in the research processes. While agreeing on the importance of ethics, panellists highlighted that guidelines should be prepared in consultation with the scientific community, and enforced in a decentralised manner. From the audience, Manuel Heitor also added that due to science's ubiquitous nature, ethical challenges, and consequently, risks will always emerge – however, despite this, research ultimately remains beneficial for society.

Nearing the end of the first panel, panellists engaged with the audience within a **Q&A session**, during which the audience asked about how to better connect the pillars, and research with innovation. The importance of flexibility during project management was emphasised, and a panellist called for exploring possibilities on "borrowing" ideas from private companies. In addition to flexibility, deeper bottom-up collaboration, involving academia and industry, as well as speeding projects up, while maintaining excellence was also part of the response. To conclude the discussion, panellists reiterated the key message stating that committing to basic research and an autonomous science are amongst the key FP10 objectives, which go beyond economic competitiveness, defence or innovation.

Panel: FP10 Structure & Programme Characteristics

Dominique Dunon-Bluteau, Director of Scientific Operations at the French National Research Agency (ANR)

Véronique Halloin, Secretary General of the Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), Belgium

Angelika Kalt, Director of the Swiss National Research Foundation (SNSF)

Christopher Smith, Executive Chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI); Science Europe Governing Board member (online)

Gyula Sümeghy, Head of Cabinet for International Affairs of the Hungarian Research Network (HUN-REN) (online)

Moderator: Lidia Borrell-Damián, Secretary General of Science Europe

Rapporteur: ***James Morris***, Science Europe

Continuity from Horizon Europe, as well as matters of simplification and risks, amongst other topics, were discussed in this panel, moderated by **Lidia Borrell-Damián.** The panellists began with sharing brief **introductory statements.**

Angelika Kalt began with listing components of Horizon Europe which should be retained: excellence and curiosity-driven elements, such as the ERC, and links between ERC and EIC, to foster innovation. In the spirit of links, she also highlighted that pillar 2 should be reformed to collaborate better with other pillars, and make it more focused, while enabling "no strings attached" large consortia projects. She proceeded to address the governance of FP10, which, according to her, should be driven by expert councils, with dedicated support. She acknowledged the issue of brain drain, and proposed that improving infrastructure and smart specialisation can help that – however, talent must be retained within Europe. She argued that risks should be taken across all aspects of the programme, and concluded that FP10, at its core, it is about fostering excellence in all its form.

Training and development of talent is a short-term return on investment across all aspects of the framework programme, emphasised **Veronique Halloin,** following which, she called for a ring-fenced, and dedicated budget to support curiosity-driven research. She also highlighted interdisciplinary research supported by synergy grants – but argued that panel assessments should be rethought. With regards to brain circulation from outside of the EU, she recommended a new visa model which would provide better access to talent attracted by ERC and MSCA. Mentioning ERC, she also addressed the role of 'ERC for institutions' recommendation, which should be implemented on a separate budget, and in collaboration

with European university alliances. Appreciating the need for R&I integration, she supported the equitable distribution of funding across associated countries. Finally, she addressed co-funding partnerships, reiterating their importance, but highlighting how they rely too much on national funding. She argued that more commitment and resource dedication is needed from the European Commission.

The first point made by **Dominique Dunon-Bluteau** was highlighting the complexity of co-funded partnerships, citing how ANR is involved in numerous ones, and each is perceived as a separate instrument. He criticised partnerships on the grounds of their administrative burden, and lack of funding. In general, he put emphasis on simplification, the reduction of the overall number of tools, while improving efficiency. He also called for better integration of interdisciplinarity – particularly in the assessment of proposals and panel structures. Meanwhile, he considered strengthening the support for academic freedom crucial as well. He concluded by highlighting that research is not an expenditure, rather, it is an investment, therefore, the value of research must be communicated better.

"Aim for a clear, coherent, and transparent structure," began **Cristopher Smith**, emphasising that R&I is a good investment. He continued to argue that associated non-EU countries should have access to as much of the programme as possible. In addition, he argued that exclusions must be approached pragmatically, and especially the UK should not be excluded from high-TRL calls. He found the three-pillar structure ideal, and called for improvements rather than revolution. Highlighting pillar 3, he called for building stronger links between its elements and other pillars, as well as more experimentation in its key areas. With regards to simplification, he called for a balance, and pointed out the importance of agility. Finally, he noted the importance of EU funding to Social Sciences and Humanities, and argued that this should not be reduced, despite the inevitable rise of defence spending amongst member states.

Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts (SSHA) was also the introductory topic for **Gyula Sümeghy,** who highlighted that we need to focus on societal impact, not just economic impact. The outreach potential of SSHA may be larger than other sciences, and it is well positioned to contribute to trust in science overall, he argued, also noting that it must be integrated, via an interdisciplinary approach. He expressed his support for retaining the pillar structure. With regards to FP10 budget, he agreed with the need for increase, but he added that national investments should support this as well. In addition, he called for dedicated funds for widening countries within the ERC, while maintaining excellence, arguing that a significantly increased FP10 budget will not close, by itself, the research gap within Europe. He also commented on simplification, recommending an applicant-centred simplification of grant and proposal management, which would allow researchers to focus on their research, rather than on administration. He highlighted the importance of predictability, calling the Commission to share its plans as early as possible. In this regard he recalled the CoARA process, which is far from being over, while it is predictable that the European Commission would like to introduce the principles of CoARA into FP10.

The **open discussion** begin with the theme of *Mobility*. The 'Align, Act, Accelerate' report's *'Choose Europe'* recommendation was received favourably by panellists, who argued that such policy initiatives should not only be there to retain talent, but also to make EU R&I globally attractive. However, attractive conditions are necessary for this, and different conditions are considered attractive depending on career stages. Attractiveness was also linked to success rates – highlighting that we need to aim for higher than 10% as a minimum. Mean-

while, the point was raised that European attractiveness should not be the cause of brain drain elsewhere. Empowering other countries and regions remains key, and an integrated R&I system should benefit all. Building on this, the Fulbright Scholarship model – which guarantees a return of the applicant to their original country - was brought up as an example.

Further discussion addressed *startups and innovation*, and dissected the issue panellists called a "startup drain", which causes SMEs to leave for the United States. The panel highlighted that finances are a key issue. A higher "risk appetite" led to more attractive salaries and benefits in the US, circling back to the notion of 'competitiveness'. For Europe to get ahead, a green, digital, and healthy society should be achieved, as this would also be a more competitive one. This requires a link between competitiveness and targeted approaches to societal challenges, for which a broader, holistic view on the concept of competitiveness is necessary. This could turn into a unique selling point for Europe.

The panellists also had a range of opinions on *FP10's proposed structure*. As the introductory statements have shown, there was a general consensus on support for retaining the three-pillar structure. However, there were comments on constitution and balance of pillars, as panellists argued that the current structure places a big burden on small institutions and organisations. Panellists indicated different ideas with regards to streamlining pillar 2 and reforming partnerships. Reducing the size of this pillar, and incorporating some of its aspects into a strengthened pillar 1 was discussed as an option. In doing so however, it is important not to break fundamental connections. An argument was also made on the strong industry influences in pillar 2, calling for moving some of the collaboration with industry and innovation out of this pillar, and into pillars 1 and 3.

Meanwhile, panellists recommended considering fast-acting, and risk-taking ARPA-type models, especially in pillar 2. However, the characteristics of such ARPA-type funding should be tailored to the purpose it serves. Finally, this type of model must be integrated within existing FP10 structures, rather than competing with them. However, the panel also reiterated that high-risk research relies on continuously supported 'low-risk' research – therefore, it is important not to forget the key role of existing research and infrastructures.

Despite the general "evolution, not revolution" approach of the panel also highlighted in the introductory remarks, some "revolutionary" ideas were considered with regards to governance, such as *expert councils,* which would be important if higher risks are involved. However, such should further contribute to simplification and efficiency, not further increase administrative burdens. Panellists agreed that Science Europe should take a stance on principles, such as mobility or collaboration, which are key to the next FP, however, some argued that there is no need to have clear positions on very specific proposals.

Furthermore, during the **conversation with the audience,** it was highlighted that the landmark reports may not be completely aligned. Based on these reports, providing a wealth of new possibilities whilst also requesting simplification, Science Europe should give a position on what should not be taken forward. In addition, in context of the recent developments, especially with regards to the Commission's competitiveness fund, the research community agreed on the importance of getting ready for major changes, even if advocating an evolution, not a revolution. The panel concluded with panellists expressing their final main wishes for FP10: simplification, excellence, maintained and and strengthened ERC and the success of researchers.

Panel: Open & Secure FP10

Paula Eerola, President of the Research Council of Finland (AKA)

Francisco Javier Moreno Fuentes, Vice-President for International Affairs, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC); Vice-President of Science Europe representing RPOs

Christof Gattringer, President of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF); Science Europe Governing Board member

Krzysztof Jóźwiak, Director of National Science Centre (NCN), Poland

Olga Polotska, Executive Director of the National Research Foundation of Ukraine (NRFU) *(online)*

Moderator: **Anu Noorma**, Director General of the Estonian Research Council (ETAG); Science Europe Governing Board member

Rapporteur: ***Bregt Saenen****, Science Europe*

This discussion on research security, nuanced international collaboration, and the interplay between dual-use or defence-related R&I and open science takes place in a world characterised by fast-changing geopolitics, as highlighted by **Anu Noorma,** upon calling panellists to present their **introductory statements.**

Olga Polotska recalled that due to the experiences of the Russian aggression, Ukraine is highly familiar with the topics and practical implications of dual-use and research security, such as provisions and mechanisms of protecting research data relevant to national security. She explained that decisions, such as deciding on possible research partners, are made at national level – as, in the case of Ukraine this is the only viable option. If insufficient attention is paid to these topics for too long, the research system will be exposed to vulnerabilities. The lessons learned in Ukraine, she noted, can serve as valuable experiences for Science Europe members, as well as for FP10. She added that even if not publicly available, sensitive research data can still be vulnerable to cyberattacks, and called for awareness of all relevant actors.

Delving deeper into the definition of dual use, **Francisco Javier Moreno Fuentes** asked whether it refers to research on civilian and military applications, or has implications of scholarly research for our security in a much broader perspective. In case of the former, not all institutions and disciplines are equally affected, or have equal exposure. This complicates achieving a common position. In addition, as many researchers will be opposed to their research being used for military applications, ethical and moral considerations are part of this discussion. However, if it refers to the broader notion of security, then more researchers are affected, but much legislation, policy making and funding already contributes to the 'Open strategic resilience' view of security. He continued to pose a question on the implications of the actions, and potential naiveté of the research community from a security perspective.

Christof Gattringer provided an anecdote on the changing mindset among researchers, becoming more open to considering military applications of research. He provided examples from technical universities in Austria, which are building up support for research with dual-use potential, or even explicitly for military purposes. On how to approach this from an FP10 perspective, by supporting the choice of colleagues choosing to engage in dual-use research, he also evaluated the options presented by the white paper of the Commission on dual use. He proposed that a new funding instrument for dual use should be ruled out, and an optimal balance between retaining the current structure, but systematically inviting dual use research through the programme would be ideal. However, referring to the White Paper, 'Stakeholder community in civil domain might have concerns', he also highlighted that it is important to consider researchers that do not wish to participate in dual use.

Broader research security aspects are becoming increasingly important, **Paula Eerola** emphasised. However, to not inflict damage on ourselves, research must also remain open. She mentioned a new law in Finland related to research security, which obligates AKA to ensure that its activities are not in conflict with national security and national interests. She explained that AKA will be able to tackle possible research security risks, as intended by the law. However, the public debate, also among researchers, has focused on risks to academic freedom. The law is being reworded in response to these concerns. In addition, Finland has just started a debate on dual-use research. This is time-dependent, because technologies develop very fast, but development timescale is also variable.

Echoing an earlier statement, **Krzysztof Jóźwiak** also appreciated that the concept of dual use could be further elaborated upon. He highlighted that in light of the volatile environment, it is crucial to focus on support measures for institutions and researchers to help them navigate ethical and moral considerations and maintain academic freedom. He pointed out that this should be the responsibility of national – as well as international actors, including Science Europe. This, he proposed, could lead to a co-ordinated network on the topic. He argued against 'one-size-fits-all' solutions, stating that security measures should be applied to specific projects and researchers, rather than the whole programme. He called for an environment that brings sensitivity to security risks, at different levels, considering the rapidly changing environment.

Launching the **open discussion,** Anu Noorma asked about the *ideal approach to international collaboration frameworks in light of research security considerations*. Panellists cautioned against putting too much of the burden on individual researchers. In addition, the 'list approach' – having a set of countries that should not be collaborated with – could result in diplomatic incidents, which would lead to increased complexities.

While there was an agreement on the *need for at least national, but ideally, EU-level guidelines*, opinions diverged on how to achieve this. Some argued that security considerations should be co-ordinated by national authorities, and a unified approach should be presented for funders and performers. However, other examples have shown that, due to the novelty of the research security discussions, institutions are piloting their own approaches right now, before co-ordinating and aligning, identifying topics according to EU guidelines – this could feed forward into national frameworks, which would be welcome. Such guidelines could focus on specific domains, thus prevent unnecessary burdens on researchers. This, however, is not only the development of a framework, rather, establishing a "culture" of risk assessment, awareness and mitigation from the ground up. Additionally, acknowledging

the EU guidelines, a recommendation for an "EU help desk" was brought up, which would support putting these recommendations into practise, specially in member states with limited resources.

In general, the panel recommended to work on measures, guidance and support at European level, especially in light of different approaches and initiatives in different countries. Nevertheless, the notion of restrictions should not be a novelty, as in the past years, sanctions and export controls were already applied – including on the transfer of knowledge. Therefore, conditions for, and a scrutiny of applications could be established, based on what is being done already.

Discussing the *research security experiences of Ukraine*, it was highlighted that research results, depending on topics, pose different security risks. Hence, there are different levels of classifications, and different protocols, coming from government bodies and research institutions. With regards to subjects of strategic importance, such as Artificial Intelligence, material sciences or nuclear physics, these protocols are very strict, and institutions engaged exclusively with defence R&D are not eligible to apply to the calls of the civilian funder. Ultimately, through the country's experiences and tangible security needs, an increasingly 'systemic' approach is being developed. This includes designated officials working at some performing institutions (depending on their research domains) that can support assessing potential security risks – however there is still a challenge in identifying what projects and project components pose such risks.

The conversation moved on to the *balance between open and safe research,* building on the phrase "*as open as possible, as closed as necessary*", and who should make decisions on this balance. The panel's views included a widespread approach, covering the issue on a high level to assist in co-ordination and mobility, but also highlighting the importance of clarity of responsibilities on the institutional, individual or national level. The versatility of the above-mentioned phrase was highlighted, showing that the way this issue is addressed depends on the starting paradigm – which has shifted from open collaboration to security. The panel therefore cautioned against "falling off at the other end" by overtly focusing on safety and losing the benefits of a system guided by the principles of openness. Issues were raised with regards to using public money to fund research that is "closed", such as the difficulties in evaluation and considering its impact.

The **discussion with the audience** touched upon the topic of the agency of individual researchers, noting that founders should make researchers aware and support them -, following FP10 measures and recommendations. These should serve as checks and balances, which should be expanded to include dual use research, while keeping awareness raising as a responsibility of the founders. Finally, it was noted that evaluation and risk assessment should happen on a case-by-case basis, and remain country agnostic, crucially minimising barriers to reciprocal international collaboration.

The panel concluded by developing final messages with regards to research security and openness. These were highlighting the importance of balancing possible disadvantages with benefits, reiterating the importance of involving all relevant actors, remaining in alignment with EU level guidelines, and acquiring clarity on how to apply them. Advocating for openness, the panel emphasised that FP10 has a potential to serve as an instrument of soft power, but to do so, the EU should be positioned as a reliable partner, interested in the benefit of all. Meanwhile the significance of research security, and the need for a proactive approach towards in FP10 was reiterated: awareness to security is crucial, alongside maintaining collaboration and security.

Key Policy Messages and the Role of Science Europe

Ágúst Hjörtur Ingþórsson, Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannís)

Daniel Ruíz Iruela, National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII)

Moderator: **Kristin Danielsen**, Research Council of Norway (RCN)

Rapporteurs: ***Alexander Halksworth****, Science Europe,* ***Márton Kottmayer****, Science Europe* ***Marta Vormansika****, Estonian Research Council (ETAG)*

The key messages and policy recommendations from the event were co-developed by all participants in parallel sessions. Attendees were asked "*What are the key messages from this event? How can they best be implemented on a European level by Science Europe and on a national level by Member Organisations?*" In reflection to the first part of the question, the breakout group conclusions showed consensus on a number of issues that were covered by the panels.

The breakout groups highlighted the need for a **reliable budget** that is more ambitious than of Horizon Europe's, and crucially, is reserved for R&I only. While some members refrained from recommending a specific amount, a call for an increased budget was consistent across all groups. The financial independence of FP10 was established as paramount, and participants expressed a strong disapproval of FP10's potential integration into a competitiveness fund.

Breakout group members called for the **continuous, reinforced support for basic, bottom-up research**. Participants underlined the fundamental nature of basic research, serving as a prerequisite for all subsequent research stages. This calls for a reinforced ERC, which could also be expanded on a global level. However, in doing so, breakout group members underscored that it is important not to lose sight of other instruments, and integrate basic research everywhere, including, for example, low-TRL collaborative projects.

Furthering **collaboration** with partners within and beyond the EU was highlighted as a priority by the members of the parallel session. This was deemed important during all stages of research starting from fundamental science. FP10 should be a framework of strong linkages between basic research by ERC and innovation by EIC and EIT, linking academia, industry and business. Interdisciplinarity and flexibility in these collaborations is essential.

In light of the numerous conversations related to **simplification**, participants of the parallel sessions acknowledged its importance. However, many emphasised, simplification should be first and foremost **applicant-centred.** The opportunities to streamline and simplify the structure, especially regarding partnerships were also noted. However, participants emphasised that structural changes should also contribute to the alleviation of administrative burden.

With regards to structure, in addition to simplification, breakout group members highlighted the importance of **structural continuity**. The general consensus was positive on the existing pillar-structure of FP10, but participants acknowledged shortcomings within pillars. Therefore, they called for improvements to take place within this pillar structure, and in the process, synergies between pillars should be strengthened.

Following the extensive conversation on the matter in the first panel, breakout groups emphasised the importance of **monitoring, reporting, and the communication of research achievements**. Participants stated that success stories play a crucial role in demonstrating the benefits of R&I – and consequently, justifying budgets. Monitoring could also be complemented by reformed assessment on multiple levels, which could contribute to an overarching view on research and connect TRL stages.

European-level alignment was also an overarching point across all parallel sessions. Participants highlighted that having an elevated perspective that looks beyond national interests only is is crucial for the strategic and research independence of the EU. Intra-European value chains, and 'clusters of excellence' should be developed, focusing primarily on Europe as a whole, but in the meantime, not neglecting Member State needs.

With regards to **implementation,** participants recommended that Science Europe takes a proactive role in advocacy, especially with regards to the priorities outlined above, such as research and impact assessment. Science Europe should continue to build connections and use them to further articulate the views of its members. It should also maintain communication with European institutions, and encourage them to share R&I related developments at the earliest possibility to support stability and good co-operation between policy makers and key R&I stakeholders.

Next Steps

Closely following the high-level event, Science Europe published its main conclusions. The advocacy points gathered at this event will be further elaborated by the Science Europe Office, working with the Science Europe Working Group on the EU R&I Framework Programmes (previously the Working Group on Horizon Europe). The outcomes will inform our FP10-related activities, and ultimately, they will shape up to form a final set of recommendations and messages.

A second FP10 event is scheduled for 14 May. It will further elaborate on the conclusions of the February event, and consider latest developments.

Key advocacy messages, based on both FP10 events and a survey on FP10, currently under development, are being continuously discussed with the Working Group. Once the first set of messages are developed, a consultation is expected to be held with all Science Europe members to finalise them.

Once the messages are finalised, Science Europe will present them to key policy makers at the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, to contribute to the development of FP10.

In addition, content based on the advocacy messages will be circulated amongst national and international media, and a related public-facing campaign will be launched by Science Europe, to raise awareness on the importance of R&I.

Last, but not least, Science Europe will circulate the messages amongst its members, allowing them to tailor and use the advocacy points at their discretion.

Context

Leaders and senior-level representatives of Science Europe Member Organisations met in Brussels on 18 and 19 February to discuss Science Europe's priorities for the upcoming 10th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10). The recommendations in the landmark reports by Enrico Letta, Mario Draghi, and the Expert Group on the Interim Evaluation of Horizon Europe led by Manuel Heitor were taken into account. The event was kindly hosted by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) in Brussels, with the Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation Ekaterina Zaharieva participating in the opening session.

Science Europe is the association of major research funding and research performing organisations in Europe.

Our vision is for the European Research Area to have the optimal conditions to support robust education and research & innovation systems.

We define long-term perspectives for European research and champion best-practice approaches that enable high-quality research for knowledge advancement and the needs of society.

We are uniquely placed to lead advancements to the European Research Area and inform global developments through participation in research initiatives where science is a strong and trusted component of sustainable economic, environmental, and societal development.

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