

# FP10:

## A Robust R&I Framework Programme in Light of the EU Competitiveness Agenda

### Event summary

4 June 2025

The publication of the first proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is fast approaching and it will shape the future of European science, defining the budget and structure of the 10<sup>th</sup> EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10). While the European Commission has confirmed that the FP10 will be a “self-standing” programme, it emphasised that it will be “closely connected” to a Competitiveness Fund. Many stakeholders of the research community view these developments as potentially detrimental to R&I, decreasing investment in fundamental research as well as in disciplines that may not generate short-term economic benefits – such as Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA).

Rather than further the dichotomy between competitiveness and all-encompassing R&I in light of this novel structure, Science Europe advocates for an R&I ecosystem which supports both. This view provided the foundation for Science Europe members, as well as representatives of relevant stakeholders and policymakers, to discuss and establish advocacy priorities. For R&I to thrive whilst the framework programme has become “closely connected” to the Competitiveness Fund, FP10 must **remain transparent, and reliable; allow a dedicated, ambitious and ringfenced R&I budget; and adopt a broad definition of competitiveness, involving R&I input.**

As an outcome of the discussions that took place at the event, Science Europe Member Organisations made the following key recommendations:

- **Scientific excellence, autonomy, integrity, and academic freedom must not be compromised.** These are fundamental characteristics that must be safeguarded, regardless of the policy framework surrounding R&I. In order to do this, FP10 must retain a clear, transparent governance, that includes the researcher community within the Competitiveness Fund, and define policies for R&I that allow the programme to remain scholarly sound and accountable to society.
- **The MFF should provide an ambitious, ringfenced and transparent R&I budget.** R&I needs not only ambitious, but also predictable financing to maintain high standards, and to attract excellent talent. Ringfencing the budget provides the necessary means, transparency and accountability for this. In addition, the funding should support research across all stages from fundamental research to innovation and market uptake.
- **The Competitiveness Fund should strive for coherent governance of R&I and beyond.** Integration into the fund has the risk to generate multiple, parallel forms of governance. In any situation, the R&I aspects of these governance structures must be coordinated in a

coherent manner. Given the central role of R&I in economic and cultural development, other elements of the fund should be coherent with R&I policies.

- **Adopt a broad and dynamic definition of competitiveness and include research communities in its development.** If R&I is to be a part of a broader Competitiveness Fund, then the notion of competitiveness should also remain broad, and have a wider remit than solely financial objectives. To enable this, research communities should be provided ample opportunities to contribute to the definition of competitiveness and refine it on the basis of scientific knowledge.
- **Support simplification – but avoid reductionism.** Reducing the complexity of application and reporting processes is an important goal. However, simplification should not be achieved at the expense of lowering the standards of good practices that foster positive research cultures. Rather, simplification efforts should be built around trust in researchers and research organisations.

With the nearing release of the MFF 2027-2033 first proposal, and the upcoming trilogue, a unique opportunity presents itself to lay down the foundations of the EU's R&I leadership, along the lines of the recommendations expressed above. In order to seize it, R&I policy stakeholders, policymakers and other relevant actors should engage in regular dialogue.

The development of the programme, as well as advocacy towards it, should be carried out as a co-creation process, and a dialogue with policymakers as well as relevant actors at European and Regional/National levels, across all relevant sectors. The common voice of the R&I community must be maintained, and collaborations with other actors, such as in the educational, cultural and financial sectors, should be further explored.

### Context

*Leaders and senior-level representatives of Science Europe Member Organisations met in Brussels on 14 May to continue the discussion on Science Europe's priorities for the upcoming 10th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10), following the [previous event](#) in February. The workshop was held in context of the upcoming proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and focused on the relationship between the proposed Competitiveness fund and FP10. The event was kindly hosted by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) in Brussels. We would like to express our thanks to the representatives of the European Parliament, the European Innovation Council, the European University Association, and the European Association of Research and Technology Organisations, who participated in the first panel session.*