

European Commission
Commissioner Carlos Moedas
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 16 February 2018

Strengthening the impact of the next framework programme on Innovation and SMEs

Dear Commissioner,

In the run-up for the discussion about the mid-term review of Horizon 2020 and the future framework programme for Research and Innovation (FP9), UEAPME has provided the European Commission with our [first ideas](#) for FP9. In this position paper, UEAPME fully supports your general approach that Europe has to do more to turn knowledge into economic activities in order to create growth, jobs and welfare. Consequently, UEAPME asked for a stronger focus on innovation and welcomed your initiative to create a European Innovation Council (EIC) to ensure a more stringent intervention logic within FP9.

During the autumn, UEAPME met your services at several occasions and discussed different aspects of a future FP9. Now, as the ideas about the structure and content for a future proposal from the European Commission become more and more concrete, I would like to come back to you on two specific aspects, which are the main concerns of our members at the current stage of discussion:

1. UEAPME fully supports to keep the current structure of the programme with 3 specific pillars and agrees with the differentiation in fundamental science (1), global challenges (2) and open innovation (3). However, according to our experience with the implementation of Horizon 2020, we only see in pillar 3 (including the EIC) a strong support for innovation, while pillar 2 still is very much focusing on applied science and research. At the same time, and according to our current information, only 15% of the overall budget would be available for pillar 3, while 50% would go to global challenges.

Therefore, UEAPME proposes adaptations to ensure a stronger impact on innovation. First, the various instruments in pillar 2 should aim as much as possible to contribute to solutions for societal challenges and to create new business ideas and should not follow a mere scientific approach. Secondly, UEAPME recommends providing a larger part of the overall budget for pillar 3, to underline the objective that Europe needs a strong support programme for break-through innovation.

2. Already with the SME instrument in the current Horizon 2020, UEAPME supported the idea that a European programme has to aim to support projects with a European added value and projects, which will not find support at national or regional level due to their complexity or size. We agree with this intervention logic and we support your aim that the EIC should focus on market creating innovation.

Therefore, UEAPME asks to make sure that all SMEs and start-ups, which aim for market creating innovation and have projects with a European dimension, should have access to both instruments in the European Innovation Council.

We will continue to work with your services to ensure that FP9 is taking into account the needs of highly innovative SMEs in our joint interest to make Europe a strong innovative society and competitive economy and remain available for further discussions on these topics. .

Yours sincerely,



Véronique Willems
Secretary General