



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION,
SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

POSITION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA ON THE 10th EU FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

SI POSITION ON FP10

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Introduction

The Republic of Slovenia expresses its commitment and desire to participate constructively in the shaping of the European Union's 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10). This programme will be a key tool of the European Research Area (ERA) to promote scientific research, technological development and innovation in Europe and to strengthen competitiveness in the global market. Slovenia is aware of the importance of active participation in the design of the Framework Programme, as it has a direct impact on the development of the research and innovation (R&I) ecosystem in the country.

The legislative framework covering research, development and innovation places R&I at the heart of the country's economic, social and cultural development. Slovenia, also in line with the Resolution on the Slovenian Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 (ReZriS30), aims to continuously improve the conditions for R&I and promote constant progress in these fields. The commitment to R&I is key to maintaining and strengthening Slovenia's competitiveness in the international environment, where the integration into the European Research Area (ERA) is a key element, and whose driving force is provided through the EU's Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation each year. As active players in ERA, Slovenia's various stakeholders are committed to co-creating an R&I landscape that fosters openness and synergies between different actors and enables the exchange of knowledge and best practices. We are fully aware that only through joint efforts and coordinated action sustainable progress can be achieved and global challenges such as climate change, demographic change and the comprehensive transition to the digital age effectively addressed.

Within FP10, Slovenia will strive to integrate the views, interests, and needs of different stakeholders and to promote comprehensive and well-considered solutions that will contribute to the sustainable, equal, equitable and inclusive development of Europe. We are aware that by working together, in a spirit of multi-actor cooperation, we can shape a future in which, we will contribute to creating prosperity for all European citizens.

Summary of key recommendations

Through an open and collaborative process involving a variety of stakeholders, seven thematic clusters were identified, reflecting areas in which the stakeholders involved expressed the most interest. The thematic areas also overlap, complement each other, and are interconnected. Their implementation can form a comprehensive approach to fostering R&I in the next EU's seven-year framework programme.

These thematic clusters include:

1

Strategic governance and management of the Framework Programme

Slovenia underlines the importance of the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the cooperation between the European Commission and the MS/AC in the areas of identification of common priorities and governance under FP10.

The latter should include efforts to strengthen dialogue, transparency and coordination between the European Commission (hereafter: EC) and the national (science and innovation) authorities and their representatives, including by ensuring in-depth and comprehensive discussions at the FP Programme Committees. Priority-setting procedures need to be renewed in a way that will allow for a genuine partnership between the EC and MS in the further development of the current R&I system.

2

Challenge-based calls

The approach to challenge-based calls (rather than prescribing expected results), should allow researchers greater autonomy in their activities and pursuits to achieve a particular objective, which can lead to more creative, interdisciplinary and effective solutions. Calls that pose challenges with the expectation of finding solutions enable greater responsiveness to evolving societal needs and challenges. This approach ensures that research themes and priorities are shaped by genuine needs and opportunities in research and innovation, rather than being dictated by political decision-makers.

The focus of FP10 on R&I should be clearly underlined in the text of the European regulation for this programme. It should specify more precisely which themes can be included in the programme toward ensuring and maintaining the programme's focus on the key objectives of R&I. We also argue for a more balanced integration of basic science in the thematic collaborative research projects of the current second pillar of Horizon Europe, including European partnerships. There is a need to reinforce the recognition that not only mono beneficiary but also collaborative projects at low TRLs are key to fostering cutting-edge research, increasing the long-term societal impact, and underpinning competitive innovative solutions to some of the most pressing societal challenges (e.g. climate change).

A balanced approach to
(co)funding of both basic
research and R&I at higher
TRLs

3

4

Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence (countries with potential for improving research excellence)

For Slovenia, Widening is thus relevant mainly from the point of view of strengthening the national R&I system and enhancing the capacity to connect with the most successful institutions and networks beyond the Widening countries. When designing the Widening measures in FP10, Slovenia recommends that all Widening instruments do not necessarily need 100% funding from the EC, but can also be co-financed. While the overall funding for this measure, which is an important tool not only for closing the gap but also for demonstrating the common strength of the ERA, should be further increased, it would be more rational to design the instruments as co-financed in order to stimulate national investment. We also propose the introduction of calls for proposals for smaller R&I projects to be coordinated by beneficiaries from the Widening Countries. Such an approach would improve the capacity to achieve comparable quality of R&I in the Widening Countries and contribute to raising the overall excellence of the ERA.

5. Partnerships and missions

5.1

Partnerships

FP10 should put more emphasis on the function of partnerships as a policy instrument. Partnerships in FP10 should be more focused on attracting investment rather than just joint programming, concentrating on areas where the conditions and interest for joint development are clearly articulated and justified. There is a need for greater transparency in the design of partnerships, particularly with their clearly defined objectives, benefits and modus operandi, as this is the only way they can reach their full potential. Slovenia also believes that there is a need to significantly reduce the number of partnerships that do not attract sufficient national investment.

5.2

Missions

Slovenia's assessment is that the Missions are currently failing to attract sufficient funding for projects outside the FP. The Missions should place greater emphasis on bringing in additional EU funding to strengthen their potential and to achieve their objectives of high societal relevance. Prior to the launch of FP10, a thorough review is needed on how to improve the funding of Missions to maximise their potential. If the FP rules cannot ensure adequate cross-sectoral funding for the Missions' activities, Slovenia proposes that Missions are excluded from FP10 and that a separate cross-sectoral funding stream is created for them, combining a variety of sources, as Missions by their nature and objectives go well beyond R&I, as they also include broader policy objectives, such as sustainable development, social inclusion, environmental protection, improving quality of life, and changing lifestyles.

Knowledge valorisation

6

FP10 should reinforce the knowledge valorisation dimension in order to further emphasise the economic, social and environmental benefits of R&I and to ensure that European research efforts make a real contribution to improving European citizen's lives and to sustainable development. FP10 should address the untapped potential of knowledge valorisation through a new instrument (top-up co-funding) to promote the exploitation of research results through national funding and a rapid transition to the EIC instruments. In addition, FP10 should also systematically promote the involvement of end-users in collaborative projects.

7

Social sciences and humanities (SSH)

FP10 should ensure an autonomous role of SSH, contributing to a more balanced, ethical, socially inclusive and culturally sensitive development of R&I in Europe. At the same time, we expect the EC to carefully consider the findings of SSH research on the challenges and expectations of society as a whole when planning its priorities. It is essential that FP10 ensures the early involvement of experts in the field of SSH, already in the process of designing work programmes and preparing calls for proposals. More effort is also needed from the EC to mobilise experts in this field for the purpose of evaluating all project proposals (including in the fields of science and technology).

The process

The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (hereafter: the Ministry) has taken an inclusive and participatory approach to developing Slovenia's position to FP10. We recognise that it is of paramount importance that the country's position reflects the needs and expectations of the national R&I environment, as well as those of the wider community.

As a country, we provided our first input to the design of FP10 in the context of a wider public consultation by the European Commission, which launched an online consultation on the past, present and future of European research and innovation on 1 December 2022. The consultation resulted in two main orientations which have contributed to further informing and shaping Slovenia's position. The first underlines the need for financial reinforcement of FP10, which is crucial to ensure an efficient and ambitious, but at the same time fair and transparent, implementation of R&I in Europe. The second calls for ensuring a balance between basic and applied research, which is key to creating a coherent R&I environment that will foster both basic research and its application in practice, as sufficient investment in science is a prerequisite for achieving the ambitious objectives and strengthening EU's global innovation competitiveness.

With a view to prepare Slovenia's position on FP10, the Ministry organised and conducted three brainstorming sessions in 2023, focused on discussing the fundamental principles, governance and instruments that should constitute FP10. Through intensive discussions, different governance models that would allow for an efficient implementation of the programme and ensure coherence with the set objectives and the needs of the R&I community were discussed. Particular attention was also paid to measures targeting countries with the potential to improve research excellence, i.e. Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence actions.

In December 2023, the Ministry organised a so-called visionary workshop with the beneficiaries of the previous EU Framework Programmes, focusing on visualising the ideal FP. The workshop brought together the experiences and insights of past beneficiaries and encouraged them to think creatively about what the ideal future FP could look like.

In January 2024, the Ministry held a Horizon Dialogue with Horizon Europe Programme Committee delegates, designated national experts, Horizon Europe National Contact Points (NCPs) and support staff of the NCP network, funded under the national Recovery and Resilience Facility, where both the strengths and

weaknesses of the existing and previous Framework Programmes were identified and successfully transformed into constructive guidelines to ensure the success of FP10.

In April 2024, the Ministry organised and successfully conducted the last broad stakeholder consultation to co-design FP10 with stakeholders, where we openly discussed key aspects, needs and expectations of FP10.

In addition, the Ministry has also given opportunity on several occasions to co-draft the FP10 position in the context of the meetings of the Programme Committee for the Operational Coordination of Science Research and Innovation Policy.

Finally, the Ministry organised an online consultation with the interested public, which took place in between June 26th and July 5th, 2024. Within the framework of the online consultation the Ministry received six responses from public research organisations and other stakeholders.

This process has ensured that Slovenia's draft position on FP10 is based on a broad consensus and, above all, incorporates the diverse perspectives and needs of the many and varied stakeholders of the R&I community.

Key recommendations

Based on the process described above, seven thematic clusters are identified, reflecting the areas in which the stakeholders involved expressed the most interest. The thematic areas also overlap, complement each other, and are interconnected. Their implementation can form a comprehensive approach to fostering R&I in the next EU's seven-year framework programme.

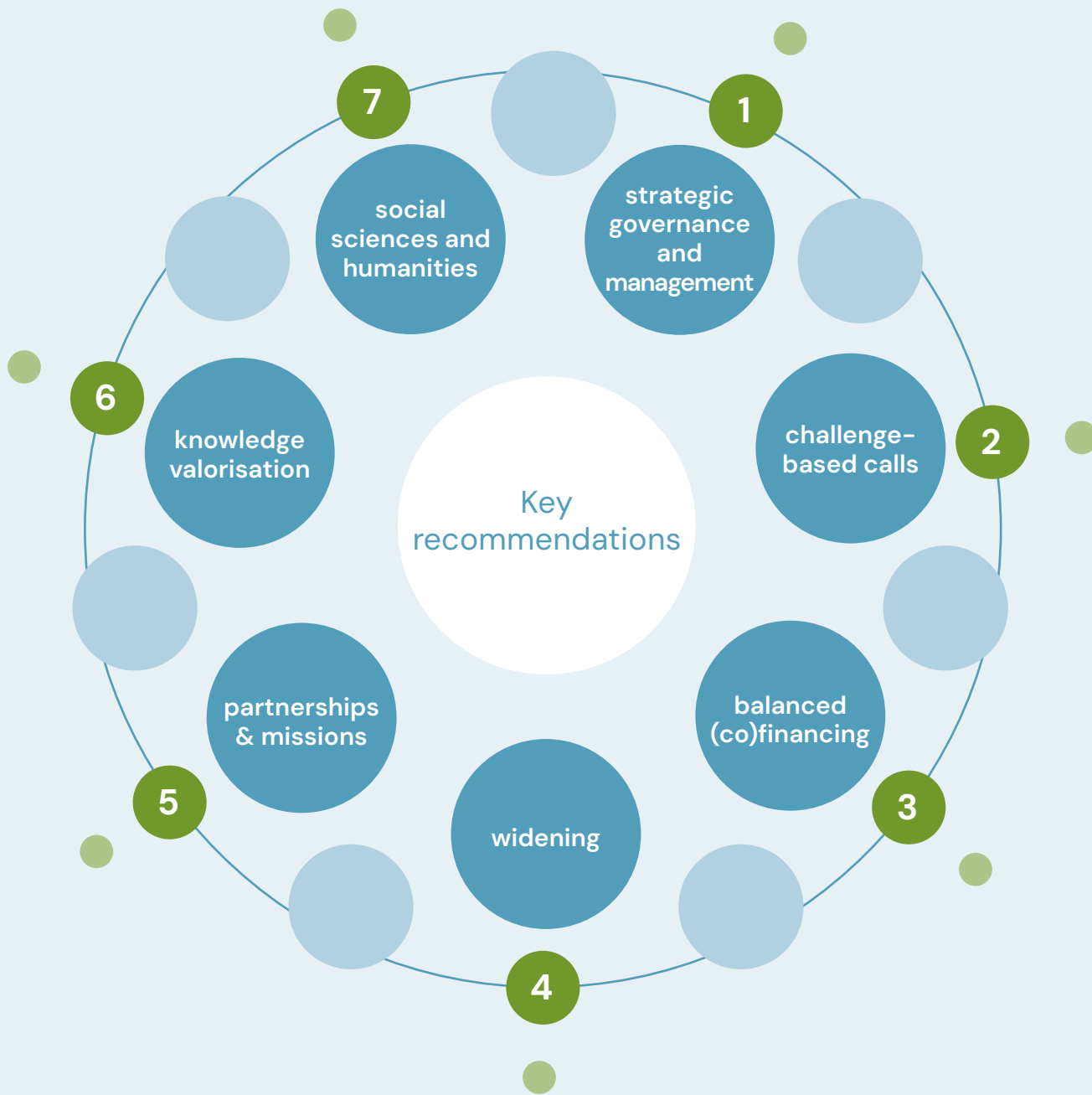
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7. Social sciences and humanities (SSH)

Additional considerations: the interrelation between FP10 and ERA and integration of the gender dimension

Focus on excellence and the impact of competition

The focus on excellence should be at the heart of the thematic clusters as a core priority of FP10. The unwavering focus on excellence of the previous Framework Programmes has contributed greatly to its success and quality over the years. FP10 should maintain the collaborative and competitive elements of its predecessors, thus further contributing to delivering European added value. The objective application of excellence, impact, quality and efficiency criteria in programme implementation is crucial to strengthening the European knowledge base, which in turn contributes to the EU's social, political and economic objectives.

Promoting excellence through EU-wide competition increases the quality of R&I, and its global visibility. By encouraging competition, the Framework Programme motivates researchers and other beneficiaries to strive for excellence, push the frontiers of knowledge and stimulate technological progress. This approach attracts top talent and private sector investment, including from newcomers, underlining the EU's commitment to cutting-edge R&I.



Infographic 1: schematic representation of the seven thematic clusters

1. Strategic governance and management of the framework programme

The strategic governance and management of FP10 must emphasise the funding of basic science to ensure the EU's global competitiveness and sovereignty and is crucial for several reasons. First, it allows R&I activities to be steered in a direction that is aligned with the long-term strategic objectives of the EU and the national interests of the Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC). When priorities at EU level reflect national priorities, the opportunities for pooling efforts and resources are much better, and the translation of R&I results into societal and industrial applications is faster and more straightforward. This means that the FP, together with the efforts of the MS/AC, can contribute to tackling current social, economic and environmental challenges and foster innovation for sustainable development. Accordingly, links with national programmes need to be strengthened as the FP must be based on the recognition and further development of a single research and innovation ecosystem, delivered through the FP. Second, strategic planning and governance allows for better coordination between different stakeholders, including MS/AC, industry, academia and civil society, which can increase the programme's effectiveness and societal impact. In addition, strategic planning can contribute to greater clarity, accountability and transparency in the governance of the programme, which is crucial for building public trust in R&I activities and strategic decision-making. Finally, improved strategic planning can also help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the FPs and provide more added value for the EU and its citizens.

Slovenia underlines the importance of the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the cooperation between the European Commission and the MS/AC in the areas of identification of common priorities and governance under FP10. The latter should include efforts to strengthen dialogue, transparency and coordination between the European Commission (hereafter: EC) and the national (science and innovation) authorities and their representatives, including by ensuring in-depth and comprehensive discussions at the FP Programme Committees. Priority-setting procedures need to be renewed in a way that will allow for a genuine partnership between the EC and MS/AC in the further development of the current R&I system. These processes should include the development of a comprehensive mapping of national priorities and capabilities as a prerequisite for identifying a set of priorities that are common to all or most MS/AC. It would then be sensible to develop

initiatives that promote joint investment in the areas identified through such a procedure. An example of good practice and potential source of inspiration is the creation of ESFRI roadmaps and the national joint ventures that have followed them. At the same time, we are aware that such an approach also requires a more proactive involvement on the part of the countries involved in the FPs.

While maintaining the necessary degree of flexibility to adapt to unexpected challenges, we advocate for ring-fenced FP10 R&I funds and that FP10 funds are not diverted to spontaneously emerging policy priorities, ensuring that funds are strictly earmarked – primarily for R&I – rather than pursuing the objectives of multiple sectoral policies that do not provide their own financial resources. Assuming that all sectors are involved in joint priority-setting, we advocate for a **clearer division of responsibilities and funding between R&I policy and other sectoral policies in delivering the joint priorities**. Slovenia is convinced that R&I should be a horizontal component of various sectoral policies, but that they should be supported by other sectoral centralised programmes (e.g. Digital Europe, European Defence Fund, European Space Programme, EU4Health, LIFE, etc.). The latter also makes sense from the point of view of the changed geopolitical and security dimensions in Europe and the wider world (for the EU, member states and all citizens) and from the point of view of other complex global social challenges, for which it is necessary to develop appropriate interdisciplinary and cross-sector supported solutions. The FP should focus exclusively on funding R&I that generates the necessary knowledge along the entire value chain from basic to applied R&I. Bridges must be established to allow easy transition of solutions from FP10 to relevant sectoral programmes that can build on them (e.g. a result of civilian research in FP10 to an upgrade for defence applications through the European Defence Fund). At the same time, **FP10 itself must provide rapid internal funding pathways, stretching from research in one part of the programme to innovation in the other**.

2. Challenge-based funding calls

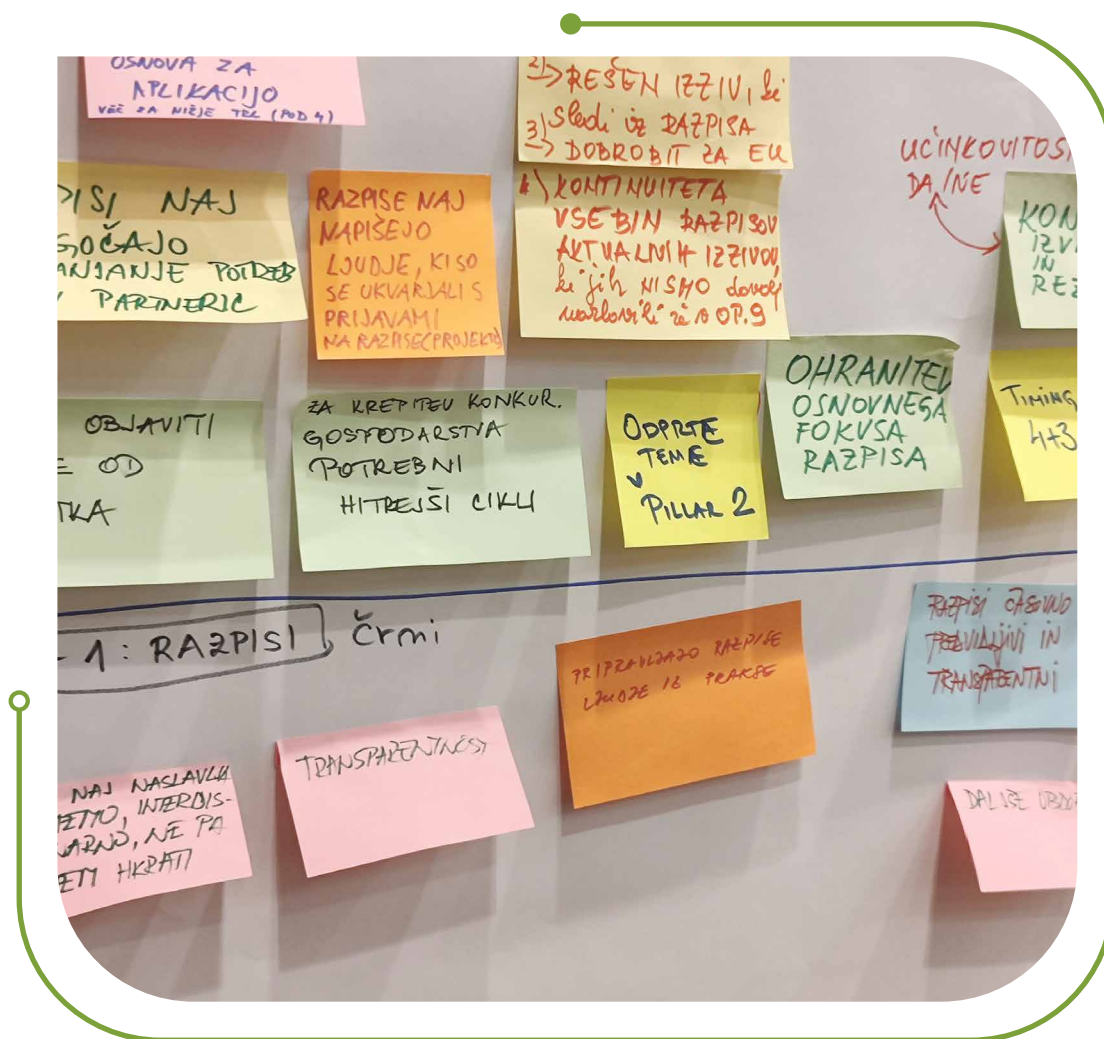
The challenge-based funding approach (in contrast to prescribing expected results) should allow researchers greater autonomy and foster activities towards a specific objective, which can lead to more creative, interdisciplinary and effective solutions. Challenge-based calls should allow for better responsiveness to changing (societal) needs and challenges, as research topics and priorities are developed based on real-time needs and opportunities in R&I (bottom-up), rather than being determined (solely) by political decision-makers (top-down). This also ensures greater flexibility and agility of the programme and increases the chances of successful innovations in practice. Finally, challenge-based calls allow for a more direct link between the results of R&I and their application in society, which is key to increasing their societal impact.

We believe that the current second pillar, with its clusters, should focus on prescribing overarching themes rather than narrowly defining them. It is necessary to avoid political constraints and orientations in calls and focus on topics that concentrate on identifying the challenges to which the results of R&I should contribute. In this manner, innovation would be particularly encouraged and the effectiveness in addressing contemporary challenges could be increased. We call for the **introduction of a challenge-based funding approach (mission-oriented approach) throughout Pillar 2**, where R&I activities should be geared towards solving real-time societal challenges, in particular environmental ones, and where calls for proposals encourage researchers to develop concrete solutions to these challenges. This would also allow for more targeted research and accelerate the transfer of knowledge into practice.

If the existing structure of Horizon Europe pillars and clusters is maintained in FP10, attention should also be paid to the number of areas or actions covered by each work programme within a specific cluster. The excessive complexity of certain thematic areas, in particular clusters 4, 5 and 6 of Horizon Europe, is not in line with the principles of simplicity, clarity and transparency for beneficiaries and hampers an open and a partnership-based approach to governance of the programme between MS/AC and the EC.

Furthermore, Slovenia considers that the **application (e.g. shorter application form, examination of the necessity and applicability of all principles), evaluation and implementation procedures should be optimized** and burden

for the beneficiaries reduced, already at the stage of project application. Slovenia believes that the latter can also be achieved by **reversing the trend of growth of project consortia and reversing the downward trend of projects foreseen for an individual thematic call for applications**. The introduction of **smaller (fewer project partners) and shorter (project duration) pilot projects** and opportunities for bottom-up financing, that would enable greater competitiveness of ideas and project results should also be considered.



3. A balanced approach to (co)funding of both basic research and R&I at higher TRLs

It is essential to cover the entire research and innovation value chain and ensure a lasting impact in order to develop innovation from concept to market deployment. This can lead to synergies, innovation and knowledge transfer between different sectors and stakeholders, which can accelerate the innovation process. The understanding that R&I are intertwined, and that successful innovation cannot be expected without adequate investment in basic science needs to be built into the core of the FP. In addition, balanced co-funding also ensures better resilience and sustainability of the research system by reducing the risks of unilateral or over-focused funding in certain areas, thereby increasing the diversification of research activities and increasing the base of applied knowledge and, thus, the potential for innovation and development in broader fields. Equivalent approach has been shown to allow for a rapid response to unexpected situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The focus of FP10 on R&I should be clearly embedded in the text of the upcoming regulation for the future FP. The latter should specify precisely which themes and topics can be included in the programme in order to ensure and maintain the programme's focus on the key objectives of R&I. This prevents the indiscriminate introduction of topics that in their core are not considered R&I.

We advocate for **a more balanced integration of basic science also in the thematic collaborative research projects of the current second pillar of Horizon Europe, including European partnerships.** There is fully recognized need that not only mono beneficiary but also collaborative projects at low TRLs are key to fostering cutting-edge research, increasing the long-term impact on societal change, and underpinning competitive innovative solutions to some of the most pressing societal challenges (e.g. climate change).

There is also a need to ensure an appropriate balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches to programming, as this is the only way to better match the needs of the research community and societal challenges, which must include research at low TRLs.

The importance of applied research at higher TRLs, where technology moves from laboratory testing and prototyping to actual societal use and commercial products,

should not, however, be neglected on the way to the overall objective (bringing innovations to market or applications for societal benefit). In fact, strong industrial research development is key to successfully bringing new technologies to market, reducing risks, attracting investments and fostering innovation, all of which contribute to overall technological progress and economic growth. We therefore **propose closer integration between all three pillars of the current programme**, where the existing cooperation between the ERC and the EIC should serve as a good example. Based on successful practices of Horizon Europe such as ERC Proof of Concept, Widening's Pathway to Synergies and connection to EIC instruments, Slovenia considers that the FP should be designed in a way that will accelerate the transition from successful research results to funding opportunities and implementation of innovation activities.

Ensuring complementary balance between research and innovation and between knowledge creation and knowledge exploitation is key to the sustainable development of the scientific and innovation landscape in Europe. The latter will only be achieved, if we clearly and unequivocally recognize the need for adequate funding on the entire R&I spectrum, consisting of programmes and instruments at EU and national level, jointly contributing (as a true European community) to tackling the key societal challenges of our planet. In Slovenia's view, such an endeavour could also be supported by increasing the level of financial support (up to 90% of co-financing) for innovation activities of star-ups that collaborate with research partners.

FP10 should also act as a catalyst to mobilise complementary national and independent schemes and engage them in a shared responsibility of knowledge transfer. By narrowly focusing on short-term results, one could jeopardise the development of future innovations and may even contribute to brain drain at the European level.

We therefore propose to **create incentives in FP10 to accelerate the funding of Seal of Excellence projects at national levels** and enhancing EU researchers' access to research infrastructures, which need to be more systematically engaged in collaborative research projects of FP10 as consortium partners.

Nonetheless, **scientific excellence must remain the guiding principle of the FP.**

4. WIDENING participation and spreading excellence (countries with potential for improving research excellence)

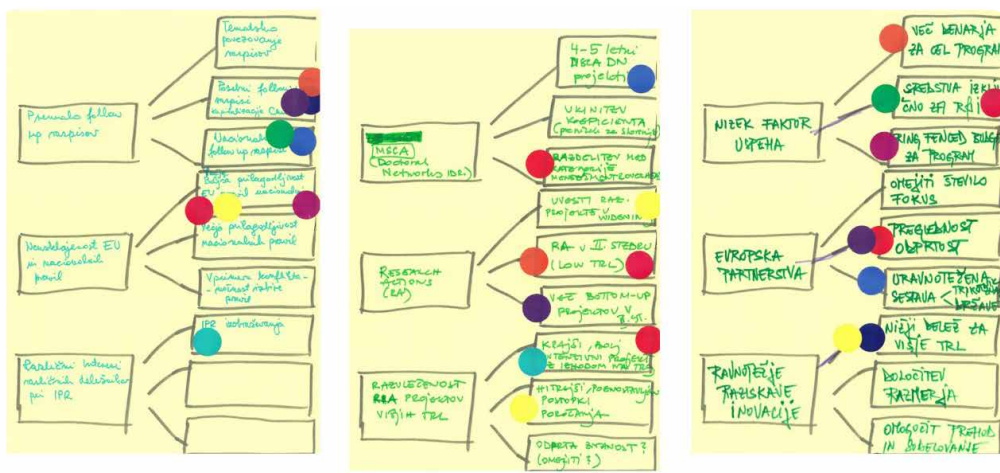
The actions of Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence for countries with the potential to improve research excellence (Widening) are of immense importance for Slovenia, as they pursue the objective of reducing the gap in research efficiency and effectiveness and, consequentially facilitate narrowing the innovation divide. The actions have so far enabled Slovenia to design and implement systemic reforms that increase R&I performance as well as national investment in R&D, that is why **Slovenia expects to continue to benefit from the actions in the next FP**, which is further justified by the recently published results of the European Innovation Scoreboard 2024.

For Slovenia, **Widening is thus relevant mainly from the perspective of strengthening its national R&I system and enhancing the capacity to connect with the most successful institutions and networks of its strategic partners.**

In the design of the Widening actions in FP10, Slovenia is considering the possibilities of linking its instruments to national priorities, also from a financial perspective. While the overall funding for these actions, which represent an important tool for closing the gap as well as for demonstrating the common strength of the ERA, should be further increased, Slovenia is of the opinion that it would be **rational to design certain instruments as co-financed to further stimulate national investment.** However, the instruments should be carefully selected based on thorough and detailed ex-post analyses of the implementation of the existing ones. The instruments selected should be target-oriented and capable of achieving the objectives set at EU level.

Slovenia proposes to allow more **targeted calls within Widening actions for funding research infrastructures and equipment that foster research capacity**, as this would create the conditions for Widening countries to close the research infrastructure gap, improve their own research capacities and achieve a level playing field in excellent research.

Furthermore, Slovenia proposes **the introduction of calls for proposals for smaller R&I collaborative projects, coordinated by beneficiaries from the Widening countries.** The latter would improve the capacity to achieve comparable quality



of R&I in the Widening countries and contribute to raising the overall excellence of the ERA. The successful implementation of such a proposal would, in our view also enable the Widening countries to progressively build up their capacity, achieve excellence, acquire the relevant experience in managing projects of the highest complexity, and increase their visibility in the ERA. In turn, this will empower the Widening countries to become an equal and important co-creator of the European research community.

Finally, Slovenia is convinced that within the framework of Widening actions, **FP10 needs to further exploit the potential for closer coordination and complementarity of funding between the different thematic instruments and between the different EU and national programmes, while simultaneously adapting the implementing rules** in order to facilitate access and co-funding opportunities and strengthen competences to implement synergies in practice.

5. Partnerships and missions

5.1 Partnerships

European Partnerships for Research and Innovation (hereafter “Partnerships”) are a key mechanism for pooling EU, national and private funding, fostering cooperation between different stakeholders, including research organisations, industry, public authorities and civil society, and were originally designed to achieve common objectives in R&I. Partnerships are important at both national and European level, as they allow the sharing of knowledge, experience and resources and they jointly tackle global societal challenges that cannot be effectively addressed by individual countries alone.

FP10 should further emphasize the function of partnerships as a policy instrument. Partnerships allow the pooling of financial resources and expertise of different partners, which can lead to a more rationale use of public funds and a greater volume of R&I than if each country or partner acted alone. Partnerships enable participation in the development of a wide range of policies and strategies at European level, and influence EU decisions and policies in the field of R&I, as well as health, environment, transport and other policies. This in turn can contribute to greater coherence between European and national policies in different areas and to the successful implementation of common objectives.

Partnerships in FP10 should focus on attracting investment rather than joint programming alone, and should concentrate on areas where the conditions and interest for joint development are clearly articulated and justified. Together with other instruments such as the Research Infrastructure initiatives, the support actions and Knowledge Transfer mechanisms, partnerships should remain a key part of the ERA. **Greater transparency in the design of partnerships,** in particular with their clearly defined objectives, benefits and modalities of operation, is paramount, and a prerequisite for reaching their full potential. Partnerships should be fully involved in strategic planning and priority setting of FP10, the selection process for partnerships should be based on early stakeholder involvement, be predictable and open for new partners throughout its lifetime. In this context, Slovenia is opposed to the current practice of setting up partnerships, where their funding is secured by reallocating funds from other parts of the FP, which consequently undermines the overall strategic objectives of the programme in these areas. Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure greater transparency in the establishment and operation of

co-programmed partnerships, especially in terms of identification and disclosure of the actors (associations and platforms) that propose and initiate a partnership, and in terms of **ensuring openness and inclusiveness for all stakeholders in the process of partnership formation and implementation.**

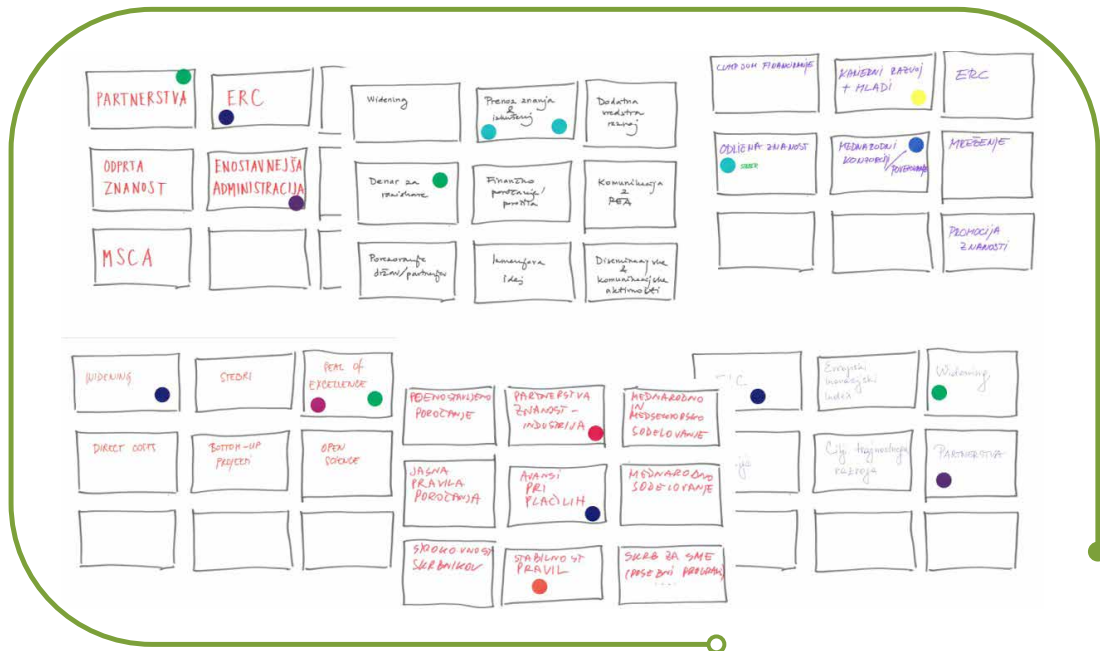
Furthermore, Slovenia is of the position that **EIT-KICs should be excluded from the framework of European Partnerships or only be considered in cases where they fully adopt and comply with the rules of the FP** (e.g. participation and involvement of stakeholders in the strategic development of EIT-KIC Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas – SRIAs).

In the context of co-programmed and institutionalised partnerships, a clear and decisive role for country representatives in advisory boards (State Representative Groups – SRGs – or similar) should be ensured to secure equal and balanced influence on the co-design of thematic priorities for R&I projects. **Slovenia also proposes that funding for co-programmed and institutionalised partnerships is limited to 10% of the budget of the next FP.**

European partnerships should only be established in cases where the expected results cannot be achieved through other existing instruments and actions of the FP, and only in cases where their existence clearly contributes to the objectives of R&I and demonstrates a clear added value at European level, and where a partnership does not already exist in the thematic area or where the content and objectives of the proposed partnership cannot be expanded within the framework of an existing partnership. **Slovenia is also of the opinion that there is a need to significantly reduce the number of partnerships that do not attract sufficient national investment.**

5.2 Missions

The Horizon Europe EU Missions (hereafter “missions”) provide a strategic framework that brings together different stakeholders such as the scientific community, industry, the public sector and citizens, and encourages them to actively co-create common solutions. The concept of the Missions is in general a positive one, focusing on tackling the five identified grand societal challenges of (1) climate change, (2) cancer, (3) clean oceans and waters, (4) soil, and (5) smart and climate-neutral cities.



In Slovenia’s view the missions are currently failing to attract sufficient funding for projects beyond the FP. **The missions should focus on securing additional EU funding to strengthen their potential and to achieve their objectives of wider societal relevance.** The latter would allow for a greater diversity of projects, socially engaged innovation and better coverage of key challenges, particularly by ensuring a broader recognition of ownership of the missions by different sectors of society, policy and industry.

The missions would also benefit from actively identifying and securing funding from national and regional sources, as this could enhance the effectiveness, impact and

influence of missions in practice and ensure better integration with policies and strategies at national and regional level.

Before FP10 is launched, a thorough evaluation is necessary that should also provide information on how to improve the financing and maximise the missions' potential. Missions by their nature and objectives go well beyond R&I, as they also include broader policy and societal objectives, such as sustainable development, social inclusion, environmental protection, improving quality of life, and changing lifestyles. With this in mind, **if the future FP rules cannot ensure adequate cross-sectoral funding for missions, Slovenia proposes that missions are excluded from FP10 and that a separate cross-sectoral funding stream is created, combining a variety of financial resources.** The implementation of missions, which are large-scale, transformative, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary activities, needs to take into account different policies, regulatory frameworks, societal needs and interests, not only (in this case) the narrowly defined fields of R&I. In addition, challenge-based calls (see Recommendation 2) could sufficiently ensure the so-called mission-oriented approach of R&I, which in practice could replace the need for a separate missions' instrument in FP10 and contribute to the successful implementation of the objectives of the current missions.

6. Knowledge valorisation

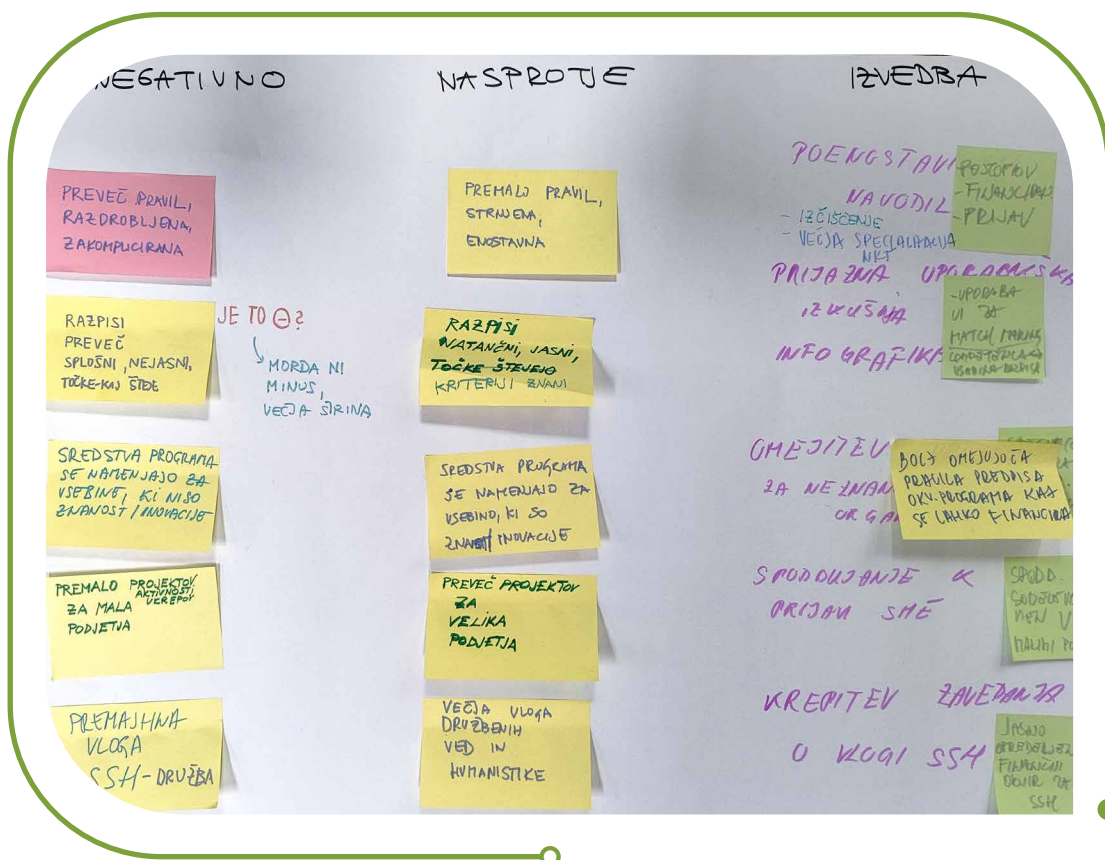
Knowledge valorisation is the process of creating social and economic value from knowledge by bringing together different disciplines and sectors and transforming data and research results into solutions that benefit society and the economy. By promoting the commercialisation of innovation and creating social value from knowledge, the competitiveness of the European economy in the global market can be enhanced. Knowledge valorisation should enable research results to be used to address concrete societal challenges and improve people's wellbeing. It is necessary to ensure that R&I contribute to or have a real impact on society and individuals, whether through peoples' wellbeing, creating new jobs, economic growth, social innovation or the creation of an innovative and entrepreneurial environment.

FP10 should reinforce the knowledge valorisation dimension to further emphasise the economic, social and environmental benefits of R&I and to ensure that joint research efforts improve people's lives and contribute to sustainable development. Progress in this area has been made in particular through the establishment of the Knowledge Valorisation Platform, **where its networking element needs to be strengthened**. Additionally, we believe that the overarching communication of research and innovation results of the FP and its societal and economic impact needs to be strengthened on the side of the funder, i.e. the European Commission, as it is paramount to clearly link the results achieved to everyday societal progress, and thus also strengthen public's understanding and trust in science.

Further awareness-raising and the development of a common understanding of the key concepts of knowledge valorisation, including the management of intellectual assets, is needed. In order to achieve common objectives, the community also needs facilitated access to networks for knowledge sharing, exchange of experiences and resources and collaborations that enable better transfer of knowledge into practice and/or commercialisation of knowledge.

Instruments to finance projects and activities aimed at building knowledge valorisation capacity should also be co-designed. The latter should include funding for research infrastructures, training for experts and fostering cooperation between different stakeholders. For successfully implementing knowledge valorisation, it is also necessary to step-up efforts to further develop the industrial ecosystems, which Slovenia believes can also be achieved through better cross-sectoral integration within the European Commission and its responsible Directorates.

Finally, FP10 should also address the untapped potential of knowledge valorisation through a new instrument to promote (top-up co-funding) the exploitation of research results through national funding and a rapid transition to the European Innovation Council (EIC) instruments (see also Recommendation 3), and FP10 should also more systematically promote the involvement of end-users in collaborative projects.



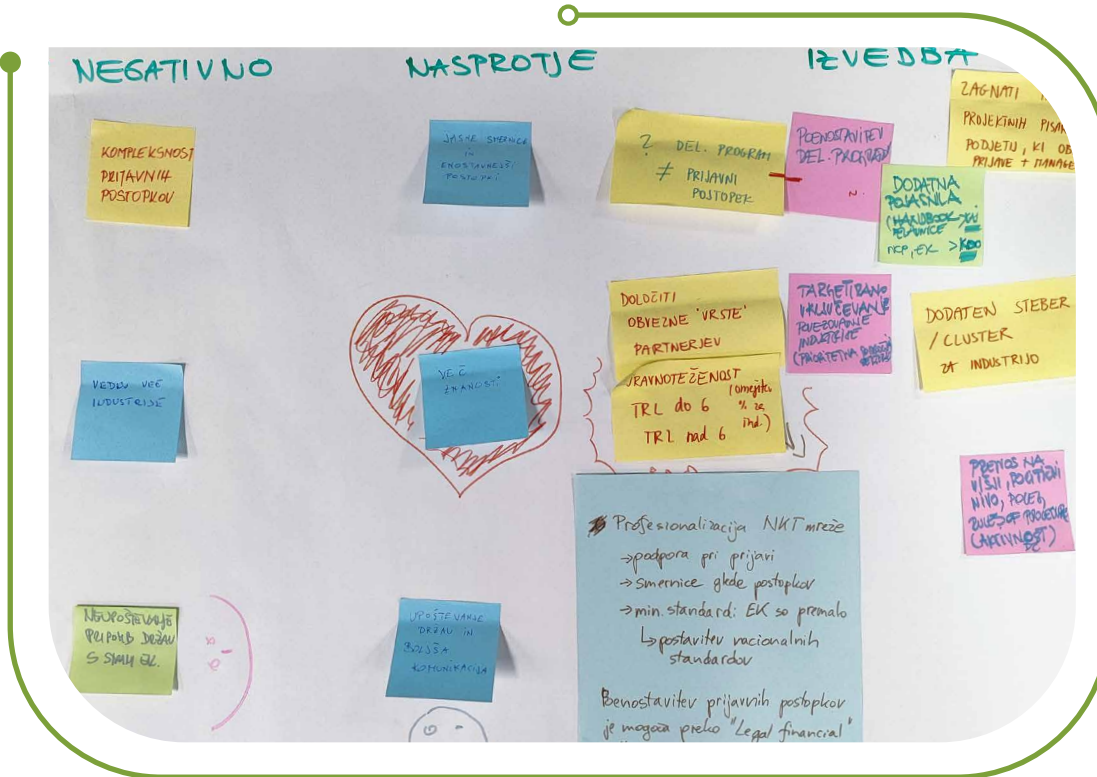
7 . Social sciences and humanities

The knowledge created through Social Sciences and Humanities (hereafter: SSH) and analyses provided are key to a comprehensive understanding of all social processes and phenomena (economic, social, educational, cultural, ethical, political, energy-related, environmental and others). It is the SSH that is most aware of the strategic role of excellent knowledge, or science and research, respectively, in the design of high-quality sectoral strategies, policies and instruments. There can be no strategic foresight and no macro-, meso- and micro-economic and social development models without the central role of SSH. It best integrates all scientific disciplines in an interdisciplinary manner to achieve common societal strategic and development objectives. Furthermore, SSH is also the discipline that can best define the societal impact of these strategies, policies and their implementation. A multidisciplinary approach, characteristic of SSH, ensures greater quality of research and research results.

By combining knowledge and methods from these fields with STEM, we can better understand complex societal challenges and develop increasingly sustainable and integrated solutions. SSH research provides a better understanding of the needs, expectations and perspectives of different communities and stakeholders in society. It contributes to greater social inclusion and legitimacy and ensures that research projects are genuinely tailored to people's needs. SSHs analyses ethical and moral issues related to the development and use of new and emerging technologies and innovations. Integrating its perspectives into R&I policies contributes to responsible and ethical action and avoids the potential negative consequences and misuse of technological progress. SSH also examines the importance of cultural diversity and its impact on the development of innovation and the adoption of technological solutions in different societal contexts.

A recognizable and integrating role for SSH in FP10 should be ensured, contributing to a more balanced, ethical, socially inclusive and culturally sensitive development of R&I in Europe. At the same time, when planning its priorities, we expect the EC to carefully consider and make use of the research results of SSH on the challenges and expectations of society.

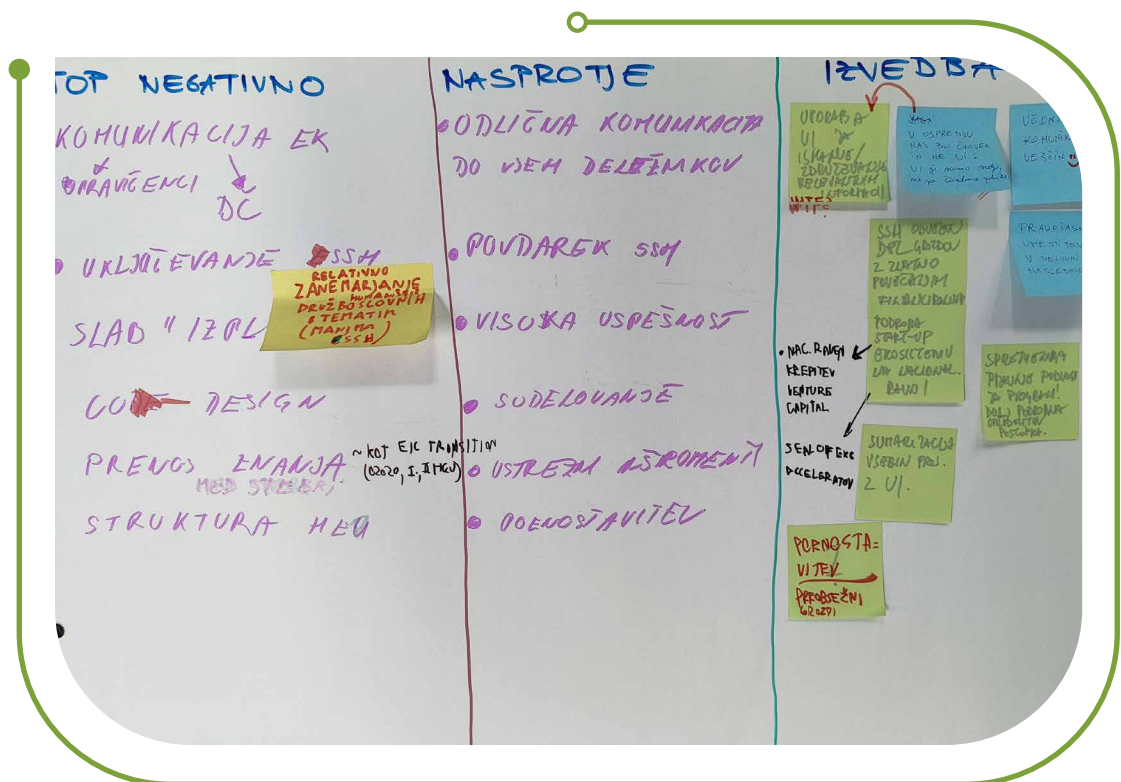
It is essential that FP10 ensures the early involvement of SSH experts, starting with the design process of work programmes and particularly preparing calls for proposals. Additional effort is also needed from the EC to **mobilise experts in the field for the purpose of project evaluation (including in the fields of science**



and technology). In parallel, the identification of thematic priorities should ensure that **basic research in SSH is carried out**, or that the field is given appropriate attention within the framework of the current second Pillar. A comprehensive, horizontal integration of SSH in the future FP and its activities is necessary, with the basic guideline for evaluation being the integration of SSH in all project proposals, with exceptions applicable only to specific topics, where such an integration would not be sensible.

The interrelation between FP10 and ERA and integration of the gender dimension

With the renewal of the ERA and the growing awareness of the need to make it also fully operational as part of the EU single market, there is a growing need to optimise the relationship between the ERA as a public policy framework and the FPs as a key tool of European R&I policy. So far, the FPs, with their supporting instruments, have played a decisive role in structuring the R&I communities in Europe. FP10 should continue to play this role, but with close attention to the priorities and joint efforts of countries, stakeholders and the EC in the context of the 3-year ERA Policy Agenda. **FP10 should remain a key tool at EU level, supporting the implementation of ERA actions and policies.**



FP10 should implement the fundamental principles and values of R&I cooperation set out in the Pact for R&I at least as carefully as its predecessors. Through its rules, practices and guidelines, **FP10 should ensure that its implementation takes into account the new approaches and tools that will be agreed by all ERA partners**, from research assessment, research careers, academic freedom and the global approach to gender equality and research management. Within the latter, appropriate measures to recognize, support and further develop the research support environment should be put as excellent research management is a precursor of excellent research. Appropriate development of the research support environment and its further professionalisation are key criteria for measuring the success of the FP.

In view of the objective of strengthening the EU's competitiveness and in light of the global competition for talents the FP should also continue to recognize and further support the different and diverse research paths and raise the profile of the profession among young people, in particular in light of the importance of science and researchers for the European community as a whole.

In gender equality, Horizon Europe has taken a major step in the right direction by introducing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) as an eligibility criterion for funding applications within the programme. We are committed to continuing this approach in FP10, monitoring its impact and, where appropriate, introducing additional measures to reinforce its objectives. Furthermore, we note that the principle of **gender mainstreaming in R&I projects has not yet been sufficiently implemented and recommend that additional attention is given to this aspect within project evaluation** (notably through awareness raising and skills development among evaluators). We are committed to mainstreaming gender equality in all areas and in all aspects of FP10.

