



VCI Position on Horizon Europe

European Commission's proposal of 7 June 2018 for 9th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (COM(2018)435, COM(2018)436)

The German Chemical Industry Association (VCI) welcomes the proposal of the European Commission for Horizon Europe. Industry is given a decisive role in the programme by placing it in the central pillar “Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness”. In order to exploit the full innovation potential of Horizon Europe the German Chemical Industry Association recommends substantiation of decisive programme elements to foster Europe’s global competitiveness and, possibly, market leadership. It is important that funds of Horizon Europe are on top of national Research and Development budgets and not replacing them. Member states have a responsibility to sufficiently allocate own means, and by tapping on Cohesion and Structural funds, to strengthen their innovation system.

R&I Missions

Research & Innovation (R&I) Missions will help giving Europe’s innovation potential a clear focus and more momentum. Also, the public acceptance of Europe’s strong investment in Research and Innovation will be improved by the implementation of R&I Missions, by emphasizing its benefits and value to the European society. Thus, R&I Missions are rightly a clear focus. Clear rules are required for managing the R&I Mission definition process. The involvement of industry representatives in this process will accelerate the market entry of project results. The involvement of citizens, with expertise in the subject, in R&I Mission definition is appreciated.

It is important that R&I Missions are technologically neutral and cover the whole innovation process from breakthrough research through the key technologies and application development to market availability. Programs like Sustainable Mobility, Circular Economy Ecosystem, GHG Emission Reduction Fostering Growth, Digitalisation of Industry, should become building blocks of the future Horizon Europe R&I Missions.

Key Enabling Technologies

The focus of the European Commission proposal for Horizon Europe is on digitisation and a circular low carbon economy. This, however, does not adequately cover the innovative performance of the European chemical and life science industry with respect to global challenges such as climate change, medicinal products, food, environmental protection and resource conservation. With Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, new materials, catalysis and chemical-based production technologies the chemical and life science industry has the pivotal position to address all five cluster of the “Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness” -

Pillar of Horizon Europe and to cover the entire breadth of the innovation activities. The German Chemical Industry Association strongly recommends to fully exploit the potential of all Key Enabling Technologies, not only those on digitisation and carbon circularity, to enlarge the impact of the “Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness” - Pillar.

Public-Private-Partnerships

Industry-led cross-sectorial Public-Private-Partnerships, such as Sustainable Process Industry through Resource and Energy Efficiency (SPIRE) and Bio-based Industries (BBI), which are closely linked to the Technology Platform for Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem), substantially increase knowledge transfer and innovation in the value chain. In order to increase the participation of the chemical and life science industry, as a whole, in Horizon Europe an early inclusion of industry expertise in the topic-finding and project-execution phase of Public-Private-Partnerships are crucial factors for the generation of European added value.

European Innovation Council

The European Innovation Council, should build a strong link and create synergies and co-operation between the “Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness” and the “Open Innovation” - Pillar to foster a collaborative and market-oriented innovation ecosystem. The European Innovation Council should support innovative companies independent of their size (i.e. start-ups, small-medium enterprises, mid-caps and large enterprises) in a targeted manner by merging, streamlining and focusing the various innovation oriented Research and Development programmes – guided by the principle of technological and scientific excellence of project proposals and the expertise of the project partners. The European Innovation Council should furthermore support all forms of innovation, including breakthrough and incremental innovations from all sectors through market-based incentives.

Participation Rules

To ensure the participation of the European chemical and life science industry and particularly technology-oriented small enterprises and mid-caps, in EU-funded innovation projects, the European Commission should substantially simplify the Rules for Participation and considerably speed up the procedures by lowering the administrative burden.

Small enterprises and mid-caps are often above the threshold values given in the European Commission’s recommendation on a definition of a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME). This creates a gap that excludes these companies from some funding programmes. Yet, the involvement of companies just beyond the small and medium-sized enterprise threshold is especially important in the EU R&D policy areas.

Innovation Friendly Regulatory Framework

The rising competitive pressure in a global economy requires clear legal frameworks and intellectual property protection instruments, which do not force an “Open to the World”-approach for scientific data. Intellectual Property (IP) protection for commercial valorization of research by the European industry should have priority over Open Access to project data. Legislative schemes should support the Innovation Principle and address the high regulatory burdens in the case of market entry, especially of chemistry and life science-related products.

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- Identification no. in the EU Transparency Register: 15423437054-40
- The VCI is registered in the “public list on the registration of associations and their representatives” of German Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag).

The VCI represents the politico-economic interests of around 1,700 German chemical companies and German subsidiaries of foreign businesses. For this purpose, the VCI is in contact with politicians, public authorities, other industries, science and media. The VCI stands for over 90 percent of the chemical industry in Germany. In 2017 the German chemical industry realised sales of more than 195 billion euros and employed around 453,000 staff.