

Interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 at COMPET meeting in Tallinn

The Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union hosted the meeting of the European Union's Competitiveness Council (COMPET) on 25 July 2017 where József Pálincás, President of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office of Hungary argued for the positive effects of R&D on economic growth and for the importance of an enhanced coordination between national and EU funding programmes.

The informal **COMPET meeting** in Tallinn discussed the impact and value of research and innovation investments and the role of European RDI partnerships on the basis of the [interim evaluation of Horizon 2020](#), the EU's framework programme for research and innovation and the report of the "Lamy Group". **Pascal Lamy**, chair of the expert group established in 2016 to lay the conceptual foundations of the EU's next framework programme, presented the recommendations which in their opinion can help maximise the impact of the EU's R&I investments in the future. Both the evaluation and the report showed that despite the high rates of return on RDI investments, their contribution to social goals, the quality of life and growth is more difficult to quantify. Thus, substantially more funding is necessary both at EU and national level, and a stronger narrative should be built on the broad social and economic impact and added value of R&I investments that speak to policy-makers and the general public. Politicians responsible for budgetary policy also have to be persuaded about the importance of providing increased and sustainable funding to RDI activities.

In his contribution **Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation** emphasised the importance of adopting a mission-oriented approach in designing programmes, and the role of open science in reaching the impacts of RDI.

At the meeting József Pálincás said that R&D investments are becoming increasingly complex and it is a legitimate demand from policy-makers to measure return on investment and monitor effectiveness. R&D substantially contributes to economic growth and sustainability and it is essential for creating a welfare society. He pointed out that the training of creative talented researchers is a central issue. He argued that the best way to make RDI investments more effective is through the coordination of national and EU programmes, preparing mission-oriented calls and promoting real synergies between the framework programme and the Structural Funds. For the smooth implementation of the latter the rules of EU funding need to be more flexible.

In the discussion on partnerships, Commissioner Carlos Moedas stressed the importance of a stable cooperation environment between stakeholders.

In his contribution to the discussion, József Pálincás said that for a partnership to function well it is elementary that its stakeholders' competencies and capacities complement each other. Partnerships implement large and complex tasks so they must be built on solid and long-term cooperation where the partners' commitment is essential. In agreement with the other Member States he also backed the ideas to reduce the number of EU partnership programmes, and expressed hope that partnerships will function more efficiently in the next RDI framework programme.