

Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centers (NFU) reaction to Horizon Europe

NFU commends the European Commission on the effort that has been made to design Horizon Europe by “change through evolution rather than revolution” by building on the solid base provided in H2020. NFU also recognises the importance of the proposed missions as an instrument to generate impact and to address citizens’ priorities. NFU welcomes the introduction of Sustainable Development Goals as key impact parameters. Realisation of these ambitions should involve the entire value chain starting from the very basis of all innovations, i.e. fundamental research. Moreover, the European science base, researchers and industry need access to state of the art research and innovation infrastructure, with interdisciplinary interlinkages between local, national, European and global (data)infrastructures. In our view, the current budget proposal for the programme should better reflect the Horizon Europe’s ambitions on R&I infrastructure.

Smart programming and accompanying financial instruments are needed to meet the high ambitions in an efficient and effective way. The current wide variety of instruments creates a high level of complexity and often unclarities for applicants. A limited number of flexible instruments may better deliver the expected impact of the various calls and topics in a more effective way. Horizon Europe would be able to meet its high ambitions better and more cost effective when the various pillars, its programmes and clusters cooperate in synergistic cross-over activities.

To fulfil Horizon Europe’s ambition to establish Europe as a true leader in global research and innovation, a substantial increase in the total Horizon Europe budget to at least 120 billion Euros is called for. The increase should also reflect that Health is undisputedly one of the most important issues for European citizens. In order to achieve both the new ambitious goals the Commission has set out, including the missions and the proved conventional goals, there is urgent need for:

- in Pillar 1, an increase in the proportional budget to provide the necessary resources to invest in frontier-led research in all areas including ‘Health’;
- in Pillar 2, an increase in the proportional budget as well as a substantial redistribution of resources between clusters, acknowledging Health being of paramount importance to Europe’s citizens.

Sharing passion means being there. NFU will prepare to actively collaborate with the European Parliament, the Member States and the European Commission and other stakeholders in Europe to address common challenges. This means commitment for research and innovation to achieve health priority for citizens in Europe. In order to reach this goal, fundamental research in 'Health' together with translational and applied research is needed to contribute to 'impact in Health' and impact in the economic sector. Jointly we can address urgent issues related to efficiency and sustainability of our healthcare systems.

The Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU) represents the eight cooperating UMCs in the Netherlands. The UMCs offer an excellent infrastructure for health related research due to the combination of an academic hospital and the associated medical faculty. With the unique combination of patient care, education, research and valorisation embedded in their structure, and a strong collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in the quadruple helix, UMCs are very well suited to contribute to addressing the health related challenges Europe and its citizens are facing.