EERA Position Update on FP10 – November 2026

FP10 at a crossroads: securing Europe's research and innovation future

As negotiations advance on the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10), key decisions are taking shape on its budget, structure, instruments and governance. These choices will determine Europe's ability to sustain its research capabilities while accelerating innovation and industrial transformation.

The wider negotiations on the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) are putting pressure on the resources available for European research and innovation. Meanwhile, discussions within the European Parliament are bringing greater clarity to some aspects of FP10 while leaving important questions open, particularly regarding collaborative research funding and Pillar II governance.

Against this backdrop, EERA is building on its established FP10 position and its recent contributions to the debate on European Partnerships to highlight the priorities requiring particular attention at this stage of the negotiations: **adequate and protected funding, a strong collaborative dimension, continuity across the full R&I chain and meaningful involvement of research communities in programme governance**.

FP10 funding: protecting ambition and securing long-term investment

The FP10 budget remains a central issue in the wider MFF negotiations, as Member States seek to reconcile competing priorities within the EU's future financial framework. The scale of the challenge is illustrated by recent proposals in the MFF negotiations, including the Irish Presidency's negotiating box, which envisages reducing FP10 funding from the Commission's proposed €175 billion to approximately €158 billion. With significant differences persisting among Member States, the risk of research funding being scaled back as part of wider budgetary compromises remains a major concern, as highlighted in EERA's recent assessment of the MFF negotiations.

Such reductions would be particularly concerning given the investment and innovation gaps identified by the Draghi report on the future of European competitiveness and Europe's ambitions to strengthen its competitiveness, energy security and decarbonisation capacity. While the MFF negotiations involve difficult choices between funding priorities, investment in energy R&I should also be recognised as a cross-cutting driver of competitiveness, supporting innovation, sustainability and resilience across different policy areas, including for example cohesion and agriculture, and contributing to their respective objectives.

EERA therefore **maintains its call for an FP10 budget of €200–220 billion**, reflecting the ambitions set out in the Draghi report and the Heitor report on maximising the impact of EU R&I. In this respect, EERA welcomes the European Parliament's latest compromise proposals, released on 30 October, which envisage a **€200 billion budget** and **additional provisions to safeguard FP10's autonomy**, and calls for this level of ambition to be maintained throughout the broader MFF negotiations.

In this context, EERA supports a **larger and more ambitious common EU budget**, alongside the European Commission's proposal for new EU own resources to help finance shared European priorities. The negotiations must ensure that FP10 and other strategic instruments, including the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), receive funding commensurate with their objectives, without making research investment contingent on uncertain future revenues.

Equally important, **FP10 funding must remain securely ring-fenced**, protecting it from reallocations during implementation in response to changing political priorities. Predictable and sustained investment is essential for research organisations to develop long-term capabilities, maintain scientific excellence and contribute effectively to Europe's strategic objectives.

European Partnerships: strengthening coherence while preserving strategic diversity

EERA has further developed its **position on the future European Partnership landscape** through its contribution to the Commission's call for evidence and its position published on 20 October 2026. Together, these contributions call for a Partnership portfolio that recognises the strategic role of energy R&I, builds on established European cooperation frameworks and reflects the diversity of Europe's energy research community.

A central priority is to **secure energy as a distinct thematic area** in the future Partnership portfolio, while also recognising its enabling contribution across other strategic R&I priorities. The specific technological and systemic challenges of the energy transition require sustained and coordinated European research efforts.

EERA also calls for the future Partnership landscape to **build on the SET Plan architecture**, drawing on its established priorities, expertise and coordination mechanisms to strengthen alignment between European and national energy R&I efforts.

While greater coherence and synergies across Partnerships are desirable, **any consolidation must preserve the visibility, distinct priorities and adequate funding of strategic energy technology communities**. The future portfolio should build on successful existing Partnerships while remaining open to new initiatives demonstrating clear European added value.

Crucially, **Partnerships must retain a strong R&I focus**, with effective links to the ECF for subsequent deployment and scale-up. Such coordination should facilitate the transition from research to industrial uptake without creating gaps or rigid divisions along the R&I chain.

At the same time, Partnerships are not the only instrument capable of providing the continuity and critical mass that strategic energy R&I communities require. **Research areas without a dedicated Partnership must continue to receive adequate support through other FP10 instruments**, including sustained collaborative programming and, where appropriate, recurrent flagship calls. Maintaining a balanced allocation of resources between Partnerships and other collaborative research activities is therefore essential.

EERA also strongly advocates **simpler implementation arrangements and fair recognition of research organisations' in-kind contributions**, avoiding disproportionate administrative and financial requirements that could undermine participation.

Pillar II and the ECF: protecting collaborative research and ensuring continuity across the R&I chain

The emerging FP10 architecture brings the relationship between collaborative research and the European Competitiveness Fund into sharper focus, particularly regarding the allocation of resources, the respective roles of the two instruments and continuity across the R&I chain.

EERA welcomes efforts to strengthen technology scale-up and market deployment, but stresses that **these ambitions must not come at the expense of the collaborative research base on which future innovation depends**. The balance between research, demonstration and innovation should reflect the objectives and maturity of different technologies and ecosystems, rather than being determined by rigid boundaries based on technology readiness levels (TRLs).

A **strong collaborative research dimension** is essential to Europe's capacity to address complex, cross-cutting challenges, bringing together complementary expertise, disciplines and research communities to develop solutions that no single organisation or sector can deliver alone. **Sustained support across different stages of research and innovation** is equally important to maintain a pipeline of future technologies and solutions.

Against this background, **collaborative research under Pillar II must remain a cornerstone of FP10**. Under the Commission's July 2025 proposal, Pillar II would account for 43.4% of the programme's overall budget, compared with approximately 56% under Horizon Europe. The European Parliament's latest compromise proposals, released on 30 October, envisage **€88.8 billion for Pillar II, representing approximately 44.4% of the overall FP10 budget**. While this represents a slight increase, the proposed allocation remains well below the level of investment EERA considers necessary to sustain collaborative research.

EERA therefore **reiterates its call for at least 60% of the FP10 budget to be allocated to Pillar II**, ensuring adequate resources for collaborative, interdisciplinary and system-oriented research addressing Europe's strategic challenges.

At the same time, stronger pathways are needed to ensure that research results can progress towards demonstration, industrial uptake and deployment. These should include project formats accommodating different TRL stages and **effective coordination between FP10 and the ECF**, while preserving their respective missions and avoiding funding gaps along the R&I continuum.

The **SET Plan offers an established framework for supporting this coordination**, particularly in relation to the proposed "Clean Transition and Industrial Decarbonisation" policy window. By bringing together the European Commission, Member States, industry and the research community, and drawing on structures including Implementation Working Groups (IWGs), European Technology and Innovation Platforms (ETIPs) and EERA itself, it provides a valuable basis for aligning strategic priorities and fostering synergies between research, innovation and deployment. Building on these mechanisms would help strengthen coordination without introducing unnecessary duplication or blurring the respective responsibilities of FP10 and the ECF.

Pillar II governance: putting research communities at the heart of priority-setting

The future governance of Pillar II remains an important issue in the FP10 negotiations, particularly in relation to proposals to give independent expert bodies a greater role in shaping and implementing collaborative research activities.

The European Parliament's initial proposals envisaged two expert councils, while subsequent discussions have explored alternative arrangements, including a possible single expert body. A revised governance structure for Pillar II is now taking shape following the latest parliamentary compromise, with the proposed introduction of a High-Level Council, Lead Experts and supporting expert teams. This provides greater clarity on the proposed arrangements, although questions remain regarding the respective roles of policymakers, independent experts

and established research communities, particularly how the latter will be meaningfully involved in defining research priorities.

In this respect, EERA recognises the importance of grounding research priorities in scientific and technological expertise. However, it **questions the added value of creating new expert councils where established structures and research communities already provide relevant expertise and channels for stakeholder engagement**. The central concern is to **ensure that research communities can contribute meaningfully to the definition of research priorities**, rather than being consulted only after strategic choices have been made. Governance arrangements must therefore **safeguard transparency, accountability and effective stakeholder participation**.

EERA advocates **meaningful co-creation and systematic engagement with existing European R&I communities and coordination structures**, including those operating under the SET Plan. These can contribute to shaping research priorities in a transparent, inclusive and coordinated manner.

A further question concerns the emerging proposal for **"sectoral plans"**, intended to provide groups of research institutions with longer-term funding to pursue jointly defined research agendas. Initially discussed in connection with Pillar I, their possible relocation to Pillar II raises questions about their purpose and added value within the future FP10 architecture.

While the objective of providing greater continuity and predictability for longer-term research is relevant, **the rationale for introducing sectoral plans under Pillar II, the added value and their potential expansion beyond the initial pilot need to be clearly established**, particularly given the strategic research agendas and long-term collaboration already supported through European Partnerships.

Although the limited scope of the pilot reduces immediate concerns about duplication with existing Partnerships, its relationship with other proposed instruments and coordination mechanisms also warrants careful consideration. Introducing additional arrangements without clearly defined roles and complementarities could increase complexity and fragmentation rather than strengthen the coherence of the European R&I landscape.

EERA therefore calls for **a careful assessment of the added value, complementarity and governance of any new instruments**, ensuring that they address genuine gaps in the existing framework rather than duplicate established mechanisms or divert resources from collaborative research.

Turning Europe's research ambitions into lasting impact

The choices made on FP10 will have consequences well beyond the next programming period. Europe's ability to strengthen its competitiveness, security and decarbonisation capacity will depend not only on scaling up technologies ready for deployment, but also on sustaining the research capabilities, collaborative ecosystems and scientific advances that make future innovation possible. In this context, FP10 should remain an open and inclusive programme, enabling the broadest possible participation of researchers and organisations from across Europe and associated countries, thereby maximising scientific excellence, impact and competitiveness.

An ambitious and coherent FP10 must support the full innovation continuum: from the research that generates new solutions to the pathways that bring them to society.

EERA will continue to engage with European institutions and stakeholders throughout the negotiations, bringing the expertise of Europe's low-carbon energy research and innovation community to the development of a programme capable of delivering on these ambitions.