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LIMITE

RECH 276
COMPET 759
IND 407
MI 623
EDUC 265
TELECOM 309
ENER 390
ENV 717
CLIMA 323
AGRI 490
TRANS 413
SAN 472
BIOTECH 76

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
Subject:	Horizon Europe Package: Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2028-2034 Specific programme implementing Horizon Europe - *Preparation for a partial general approach*

Delegations will find below a revised Presidency text with a view to the meeting of the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) on 24 June 2026.

Changes in comparison to the bracketed version of the Commission proposal (document 12005/1/25 EV 1) are marked in **bold** for additions and in ~~strikethrough~~ for deletions.

All reference amounts are pending the conclusion of negotiations regarding the Multiannual Financial Framework.

The provisions in brackets are excluded from the partial general approach.

ANNEX

2025/0544 (CNS)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2028-2034, laying down the rules for participation and dissemination under that Programme, and repealing Decision (EU) 2021/764

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 182(4) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament[1],

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee[2],

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions[3],

Acting in accordance with a special legislative procedure,

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1 OJ C […], […], p. […].
2 OJ C […], […], p. […].
3 OJ C […], […], p. […].

Whereas:

(1) In accordance with Article 182(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2028-2034 ('Horizon Europe'), established by Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation] of the European Parliament and of the Council, is to be implemented through Specific Programmes which define the detailed rules for their implementation, fix their duration and provide for the means deemed necessary.

(2) Regulation XXX[reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation] sets out the general and specific objectives of Horizon Europe, the structure and the broad lines of activities to be carried out, while this Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe (the 'Specific Programme') should define the operational objectives and the activities which are specific to parts of Horizon Europe. The provisions on implementation set out in Regulation XXX apply fully to the Specific Programme.

(2a) In order to achieve the best possible impact on the objectives of the Specific Programme, as well as on the priorities to be defined by the governance mechanisms, a coordinated approach between the different instruments and actions used for the implementation of the Specific Programme should be ensured.

(3) The Board of Governors of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) set up by Commission Decision 96/282/Euratom[4] has been consulted on the scientific and technological content of the Specific Programme on the non-nuclear direct actions of the JRC.

(4) This Council Decision lays down an indicative financial envelope for the Specific Programme.

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[4] Commission Decision 96/282/Euratom of 10 April 1996 on the reorganization of the Joint Research Centre (OJ L 107, 30.4.1996, p. 12, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/1996/282/oj).

(5) In order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of the Specific Programme through work programmes, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission. Those powers should be exercised in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council[5].

(5a) Work programmes should aim at simplification, flexibility and accessibility for applicants. Within the strategically defined thematic priority areas, a balanced approach between bottom-up actions and predefined topics should be ensured. Work programmes should reduce the number of topics, shorten their descriptions and limit single-project topics, thereby promoting a more open and competitive process and providing applicants with more freedom to define their different pathways to reach the relevant R&I objectives.

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[5] Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers, OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13–18.

(5b) **To ensure a coherent and strategic orientation of the Programme and to enable Member States to provide strategic input at an early stage before the development of work programmes, the strategic priority-setting process should begin with relevant analyses, including from the Observatory on emerging Technologies, foresight reports, as well as evidence-based input by stakeholders, followed by advice from the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC). This advice should feed into the preparation by the Commission of the Horizon Europe multiannual strategic document, covering the Programme's four pillars. The part of the Horizon Europe multiannual strategic document covering the competitiveness component of Pillar II should be the same as the part of the ECF multiannual strategic document covering the competitiveness component of Pillar II. The strategic configuration of the Horizon Europe programme committee should provide recommendations to the Commission on the overall strategic direction and priorities of HE before the preparation of the work programmes. The strategic configuration in its advisory role should also serve as a forum for facilitating cooperation and information sharing among Member States on issues related to this Regulation. It should also contribute to ensuring coherence and synergies with other Union programmes and instruments, with a view to maximising impact and avoiding overlaps along the entire innovation journey. In particular, appropriate coordination, including joint meetings, should be ensured with the General Committee established under Regulation (EU) XXX [ECF], acting in its advisory capacity in order to address issues of common relevance relating to research, innovation and competitiveness, in particular the strategic orientations and priorities of the competitiveness component of Pillar II of HE.**

(5c) **The Commission should regularly inform the Programme Committee of the overall progress of the implementation of the Specific Programme and should provide it with timely information on all actions and components. This should include: Information on individual projects, enabling the monitoring of the entire lifetime of each proposal, covering in particular: submitted proposals; evaluation results for each proposal; grant agreements; terminated and completed projects. Information on the outcome of each call and project implementation, covering in particular: results of each call; evaluation scores of proposals and deviations from those scores in their ranking list; requested adjustments to the proposals; outcome of negotiations on grant agreements; project implementation, including payment data and outcome of projects; proposals retained by independent expert evaluation, but rejected by the Commission in accordance. Information on programme implementation, including relevant information at the level of Horizon Europe, the Specific Programme, each specific objective and related themes as well as the synergies with other relevant Union programmes. Information on execution of the Horizon Europe budget components and sub-components.**

(6) The ~~advisory and~~ examination ~~procedures~~**procedure** set out in Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council should be used for the adoption of the work programmes given the important financial implications of the Specific Programme**, with the exception of the ERC, where the advisory procedure will be used**.

(7) The Specific Programme replaces the Horizon Europe Specific Programme established by Council Decision (EU) No 2021/764[6]. Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 should therefore be repealed.

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[6] Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU (OJ L 167I, 12.5.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/764/oj)

(8) The Specific Programme should be implemented in compliance with the principle of the rule of law and the rights and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and be in line with the international obligations of the Union and the Member States arising from the international instruments to which they are party, including **the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Convention for the Protection of** Human Rights **and Fundamental Freedoms and its Additional Protocols, as well as** instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Chapter I
General Provisions

Article 1

Subject matter

1. This Decision establishes the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period of the multiannual financial framework (the 'MFF') 2028-2034 (the 'Specific Programme') as set out in Article 1 (2) point (a) of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation].

2. **[**This Decision lays down the budget of the Specific Programme for the period 2028-2034, the rules for implementation of the Specific Programme and the activities to be carried out under the Specific Programme.**]**

3. The definitions, objectives, structure and budget of Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation set out in Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation] also apply to the Specific Programme.

Article 2

Operational objectives

1. The Specific Programme shall contribute to the general and specific objectives set out in Article 3 of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation].

2. The Specific Programme has the following operational objectives:

   (a) foster the production of ~~high-quality~~**excellent** scientific research and world-leading research institutions;

   (b) support the mobility and training and career development of researchers;

   (c) attract and retain excellent researchers in Europe;

   (d) foster **and strengthen** collaboration and multidisciplinarity, including with Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) to generate new knowledge;

   (e) enhance knowledge valorisation **and encourage exploitation of research and innovation results, including through standardisation activities**;

   (f) connect and develop research and technology infrastructures across the European Research Area (ERA) to provide transnational access**, and optimise their use**;

   (g) support the creation and scale-up of deep tech and innovative start-ups;

   (h) foster technology uptake and demonstration of disruptive innovation;

   (i) increasing the participation of research ~~organisation~~**organisations** from the widening countries and transition countries referred to in Article 19 of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation];

   (j) foster open science and ensure visibility to the public and open access to results where possible.

~~3. The Specific Programme shall also address collaborative research activities under the policy windows of the European Competitiveness Fund.~~

[Article 3

Budget

1. In accordance with Article 6(1) of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation], the indicative financial envelope for the implementation of the Specific Programme for the period 2028 to 2034 is set at be EUR 175 002 000 000 in current prices.

2. The amount referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be distributed among the parts as set out with Article 6(2) of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation].**]**

Article 4

Work programmes

1. The Specific Programme shall be implemented by the work programmes referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article in accordance with Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. **The Commission shall regularly and from an early stage inform the Committee referred to in Article 18 of the overall progress of the implementation of the indirect actions of the Specific Programme, also to allow that Committee to provide early appropriate input in the preparation of the work programmes.**

   Without prejudice to the first subparagraph, the work programmes ~~may in particular~~**shall** set out:

   (a) actions**, type of funding** and associated budget;

   (b) **the** eligibility and award criteria **laid down in Regulation [Horizon Europe]**;

   (c) a single ~~co-financing~~**funding** rate per action;

   ~~(d) rules applicable to actions concerning more than one specific objective;~~

(e) actions to which specific rules apply, in particular on **research security,** ownership of results, valorisation and dissemination, transfer and licensing as well as access rights to results~~.~~**;**

(ea) an evaluation review procedure.

1a. The work programmes referred to in paragraph 2 shall include the collaborative research and innovation activities referred to in Article 11(1) (b) of this Decision.

2. The Commission shall adopt separate work programmes, by means of implementing acts, for the implementation of actions under the following components, as set out in Article 1(3)**. The configurations as set out in Article 18(2) shall be responsible for their respective part of the work programmes**:

(a) the European Research Council (ERC), for which the~~ draft~~ work programme shall be established by the ERC Scientific Council under Article 7(9)(a)(ii), in accordance with Article 18(3). The Commission shall depart from the~~ draft~~ work programme established by the ERC Scientific Council only in accordance with Article 7(4), second subparagraph; in that case, the Commission shall adopt the work programme by means of an implementing act in accordance with Article 18(4); the Commission shall duly motivate that;

(b) the European Innovation Council (EIC), for which the work programme shall be prepared following the advice of the EIC Board under Article 12(1)(b), in accordance with Article 18(4);

(c) Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), ~~global societal challenges~~**Society**~~, EU Missions, New~~ European~~ Bauhaus Facility,~~ innovation ecosystems, ~~reforming and enhancing the~~ European ~~R&I system~~**Research Area**, research and technology infrastructures, widening participation and spreading excellence, in accordance with Article 18(4);

(d) the JRC, for which the multi-annual work programme shall take into account the opinion provided by the Board of Governors of the JRC referred to in Commission Decision 96/282/Euratom.

(da) the work programme based European Partnerships.

3. **[**The research and innovation activities referred to under the policy windows described in Chapters IV to VII of Regulation XXX [reference to the European Competitiveness Fund Regulation]shall be included in a specific dedicated part of the work programmes implementing the corresponding specific objectives referred to in Article 3(2), points (a) to (d) of Regulation XXX [reference to the European Competitiveness Fund Regulation]. Those work programmes shall be adopted in accordance with Articles 15 and 84 of Regulation XXX [reference to the European Competitiveness Fund Regulation].**]**

Article 5

European Partnerships

1. European Partnerships shall follow a clear lifecycle approach, including their **identification,** selection, implementation and monitoring, and ~~transitioning~~**phasing** out of ~~Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation]~~**Union funding,** on the basis of the ~~following:~~**provisions laid down in this Article. The Commission and Member States shall cooperate throughout the entire partnership's lifecycle. In particular, Member States shall be involved from an early stage in the identification of a coherent partnership portfolio.**

~~(a)~~**1a.** European Partnerships shall be selected following a competitive, open, non-discriminatory, and transparent procedure~~, on the basis of areas proposed by the Commission~~ **based on a set of quantifiable criteria and a strong portfolio approach, resulting in a coherent and complementary set of initiatives**. In addition **to** the requirements set out in Article 11 of Regulation (EU) Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation], candidate partnerships shall comply with the following selection criteria:

~~i.~~**(a)** portfolio relevance: overall consistency and coherence of the partnership portfolio shall be ensured, provided that candidates meet all selection criteria and demonstrate relevance as part of a strategic**, coherent and complementary** portfolio of actions;

~~ii.~~**(b)** critical mass: the partnerships' budget (Union and partners' contributions) shall match their duration, ensuring sufficient resources to fund at least one substantial call per year~~, each comparable in size to an average Horizon Europe call in the relevant thematic area~~;

~~iii.~~**(c)** partners' composition: unless duly justified, the participation of public entities from at least ~~five~~**10** Member States ~~and~~**and/or, where appropriate,** private entities representing substantial segments of their respective ecosystems is required, ensuring a broad and balanced involvement of key stakeholders;

~~iv.~~**(d)** pan-European relevance: partnerships shall have pan-European relevance, ~~reflected in a balanced geographic distribution of partners among Member States~~**including through broad and diversified collaboration throughout the Union and engage with relevant research and innovation ecosystems**;

~~v.~~**(e)** ~~mission orientation~~**mission-oriented approach**: partnerships shall formulate clear, measurable, time-bound objectives within ~~the~~**their** duration ~~of Horizon Europe~~ that will inform monitoring, assessment, and evaluation exercises;

~~vi.~~**(f)** ~~business~~**implementation** plan: partners shall develop ~~a business~~**an implementation** plan ex-ante, including a set of key performance indicators to track progress**, dissemination and valorisation activities** ~~and a forward-looking transition strategy~~, including actions for phasing out ~~from Horizon Europe~~**Union** funding;

~~vii~~**(g)**~~.openness and transparency: partnerships shall demonstrate openness and transparency regarding the identification of priorities and objectives – including expected results and impacts – and the engagement of partners and stakeholders across the entire value chain and from diverse sectors, backgrounds, and disciplines, including relevant international ones without affecting European competitiveness;~~

~~viii.~~**(h)**legacy: in cases where candidate partnerships build on predecessor initiatives, the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of previous partnerships shall be demonstrated~~;~~**.**

~~ix~~**1b**. Throughout their implementation, European Partnerships shall ensure:

~~x.~~**(a)** ~~internal~~ transparent governance arrangements and ~~internal~~ rules**, based on common guidelines**, including codes of conduct, that ensure their functioning in an open and transparent manner;

~~xi.~~**(b)** continuous openness of the initiative through clear and transparent accession and exit criteria, including through open **and competitive** calls to potential new partner organisations **and the engagement of partners and stakeholders from diverse sectors, backgrounds, and disciplines, including, where appropriate, relevant international ones with due regard to economic and research security;**

(c) transparency: partnerships shall demonstrate transparency regarding the identification of priorities and objectives, including expected results and impacts;

~~xii.~~**(d)** flexibility through timely revisions of key documents such as the Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) and transition strategies, adapted as necessary to ensure relevance and feasibility;

~~xiii.~~**(e)** continuous monitoring ~~shall include~~**, including** tracking progress towards a set of partnership-specific common indicators**, such as** ~~including~~ partner contributions, cost efficiency, and openness to new partners~~. Partnership-specific common indicators shall build on the common indicators as defined under Regulation XXX [reference to Performance Regulation] and set out in the biennial monitoring reports on the performance of European partnerships under Horizon Europe 2021-2027~~;

(f) detailed information on the evaluation process and results from all calls for proposals within European Partnerships, to be made available to the Programme Committee in a timely manner.

(g) data strategy: a data strategy shall include stipulations to the use of data created during the partnership and ensure availability of data at least 10 years after its end, in line with the FAIR data principles;

(h) SME and scale-up integration: where relevant, partnerships shall formulate clear strategies to promote the inclusion of SMEs and scale-ups in the innovation cycle, taking into account their specific needs and challenges;

~~xiv(i).European Partnerships shall launch their final calls before 31 December 2034. European Partnerships shall determine and implement the best mode of transition. Taking into account the transition strategies prepared ex-ante, partnerships shall undergo an independent assessment determining whether their objectives have been met, the suitability of the partnership approach, and their continued relevance for the Union's policy priorities. This assessment should include a recommendation for the most effective policy intervention mode for any future actions.~~

~~(b)~~**(j)** In the absence of renewal, European Partnerships shall implement appropriate measures based on their phasing-out actions identified in their transition strategies.

1c. Partnership-specific common indicators shall build on the common indicators as defined under Regulation XXX [reference to Performance Regulation] and on the biennial monitoring reports on the performance of European partnerships under Horizon Europe 2021-2027.

1d. European Partnerships shall launch their final calls before 31 December 2034. European Partnerships shall determine and implement the best mode of transition. Taking into account the transition strategies prepared ex-ante, partnerships shall undergo an independent assessment determining whether their objectives have been met, the suitability of the partnership approach, and their continued relevance for the Union's policy priorities. This assessment should include a recommendation for the most effective policy intervention mode for any future actions.

1e. In case of non-compliance with the above requirements, the Commission may reduce, suspend, or terminate Union funding, or take other appropriate measures. Member States shall be informed in due time of such measures.

Chapter II
Excellent Science

Article 6

European Research Council

1. The Commission shall establish a European Research Council (the 'ERC') to implement the actions under Part I 'Excellent Science' of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation] which relate to the ERC. The ERC shall succeed the European Research Council set up by Council Decision (EU) 2021/764.

2. The ERC shall be composed of the independent ERC Scientific Council provided for in Article 7 and the ERC dedicated implementation structure provided for in Article 8.

3. The ERC Scientific Council shall have a President ('ERC President') who shall be chosen from among ~~senior~~**leading** and internationally respected scientists.

4. The ERC President shall be appointed by the Commission following a transparent recruitment process involving an independent dedicated search committee. The recruitment process and the candidate selected shall have the approval of the ERC Scientific Council. The term of office of the ERC President shall be limited to ~~two~~**four** years, ~~extendable once for up to two years~~**renewable once**.

5. The ERC President shall chair the ERC Scientific Council and ensure the leadership of the ERC Scientific Council and its liaison with the ERC dedicated implementation structure and shall represent the ERC Scientific Council in the world of science.

5a. The ERC President shall devote in principle at least 80% of their working time to ERC business. The ERC President shall be provided by the ERC dedicated implementation structure with the necessary support to carry out their functions.

~~6. The President shall be assisted by three Vice-Presidents chosen by the Scientific Council from among its members.~~

7. The ERC shall operate according to its core principles which are scientific excellence, open science, autonomy, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, accountability and research integrity~~, while respecting the corporate policies of the European Commission~~. It shall ensure continuity with ERC actions conducted under Council Decision (EU) 2021/764.

8. Through its activities, the ERC shall support, in a bottom-up manner, frontier research carried out across all fields by principal investigators and their teams in competition at European level, including ~~early-stage career~~**early-career** researchers.

9. The Commission shall act as the guarantor of the autonomy and integrity of the ERC and shall ensure the proper execution of the tasks entrusted to it.

10. The Commission shall ensure that the implementation of ERC actions is in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 7 of this Article as well as with the overall strategy for the ERC, referred to in Article 7(4)(a), established by the ERC Scientific Council.

Article 7

ERC Scientific Council

1. The ERC Scientific Council shall be composed of **up to** 22 independent scientists, engineers and scholars of the highest repute and with the appropriate expertise, including both women and men in different age groups, and ensuring a diversity of research areas and a variety of geographical origins. They shall act in their personal capacity, independent of extraneous interests. The members of the ERC Scientific Council shall be appointed by the Commission, following an independent and transparent procedure for their identification agreed with the ERC Scientific Council, including an open consultation of the scientific community and a report to the European Parliament and the Council.

2. The term of office for members of the ERC Scientific Council shall be ~~up~~**limited** to four years, ~~extendable once by up to two years~~**renewable once**, based on a rotating system which shall ensure the continuity of the work of the ERC Scientific Council.

3. The ERC Scientific Council shall elect from amongst its members three Vice-Presidents who shall assist the ERC President in its representation and the organisation of its work. ~~They shall hold the title of ERC Vice-President. The members of the ERC Scientific Council~~**Support** shall be ~~compensated for the tasks they perform by means of an honorarium and, where appropriate, reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses~~**provided to the three Vice-Presidents to ensure adequate local administrative assistance at their home institutions**.

3a. The members of the ERC Scientific Council shall be compensated for the tasks they perform by means of an honorarium and, where appropriate, reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.

4. The ERC Scientific Council shall exercise its tasks solely and exclusively within the scope and for the purposes of the Specific Programme. In that context, it shall establish:

(a) the overall strategy for the ERC;

(b) the ~~draft~~ work programme for the implementation of the ERC activities;

(c) the methods and procedures for peer review and proposal evaluation on the basis of which the proposals to be funded are determined;

(d) its position on any matter which from a scientific perspective may enhance the achievements and impact of the ERC and the quality of the research carried out;

(e) a code of conduct covering, among other matters, the avoidance of conflicts of interest;

(f) the procedure for the election of the ERC Vice-Presidents.

The Commission shall depart from the positions established by the ERC Scientific Council in accordance with the first subparagraph only if it considers that this Decision has not been respected. In that case, the Commission shall adopt measures to maintain continuity in the implementation of the Specific Programme and the achievements of its objectives, setting out and duly motivating the points of departure from the ERC Scientific Council positions.

5. The ERC Scientific Council shall inform the Commission on research trends, data and any matter relevant for policy making and may perform analysis in this respect**, which the Commission shall convey to the Member States**.

6. The ERC Scientific Council and the Commission shall meet at least twice a year to have a broad and timely exchange of views in the context of the development **and implementation** of the ERC's strategy and the Commission's policy making.

7. The ERC Scientific Council is the guarantor of the quality of the activity from the scientific perspective and has full authority over decisions on the type of research to be funded.

8. The ERC Scientific Council shall act exclusively in the interest of the ERC, according to the principles set out in Article 6(7). It shall act with integrity and probity and carry out its work efficiently and with the greatest possible transparency.

9. In the context of the implementation of the Specific Programme, and in order to carry out these tasks, the ERC Scientific Council shall do the following:

(a) as regards scientific strategy:

i. establish the overall scientific strategy for the ERC, in the light of scientific opportunities and European scientific needs;

ii. establish the work programme and develop the ERC's mix of support measures in accordance with its scientific strategy;

iii. establish the necessary **European and** international **outreach and** cooperation initiatives ~~including outreach activities~~, to increase the visibility of the ERC for the best researchers **within the Union and** from the rest of the world, in accordance with its scientific strategy~~;~~**.**

(b) as regards scientific management, monitoring and quality control:

i. ensure a world-class peer review system based on scientific excellence and on fully transparent, fair and impartial treatment of proposals by establishing positions on the implementation and management of calls for proposals, evaluation criteria, peer review processes including the selection of experts, the methods for peer review and proposal evaluation and the necessary implementing rules and guidelines, on the basis of which the proposals to be funded will be determined under the supervision of the ERC Scientific Council;

ii. make a proposal based on which experts shall be appointed in the case of ERC frontier research actions;

iii. ensure that ERC grants are implemented according to simple and transparent procedures that maintain the focus on excellence, encourage initiative and combine flexibility with accountability by continuously monitoring the quality of the operations and implementation;

iv. review and assess the ERC's achievements and the quality and impact of the research funded by the ERC and make recommendations and guidelines for corrective or future actions accordingly;

v. establish positions on any other matter affecting the achievements and impact of the ERC's activities and the quality of the research carried out under this part of Horizon Europe.

(c) as regards communication and dissemination:

i. raise the global profile and visibility of the ERC by conducting communication and outreach activities, including scientific conferences, to promote the ERC's activities and achievements and the results of the projects funded by the ERC with the scientific community, key stakeholders and the general public;

ii. where appropriate, consult with the scientific, engineering and academic community, regional and national research funding agencies and other stakeholders;

iii. regularly report to the Commission on its own activities.

Article 8

ERC dedicated implementation structure

1. The ERC dedicated implementation structure shall be responsible for the administrative implementation and execution of this component of the Specific Programme.– It shall, in particular, implement the evaluation procedures, peer review and selection process in accordance with the strategy established by the ERC Scientific Council and shall ensure the financial and scientific management of the grants.

   The ERC dedicated implementation structure shall support the ERC Scientific Council in the conduct of all of its tasks as set out in Article 7 including the development of its scientific strategy, its monitoring of the operations and its review and assessment of the ERC's achievements as well as its outreach and communications activities. The ERC dedicated implementation structure shall also provide access to the necessary documents and data in its possession and keep the ERC Scientific Council informed of its activities.

   To ensure an effective liaison with the ERC dedicated implementation structure on strategy and operational matters, the leadership of the ERC Scientific Council and the Director of the ERC dedicated implementation structure shall hold regular coordination meetings.

2. The Commission shall ensure that the ERC dedicated implementation structure follows strictly, efficiently and with the necessary flexibility the objectives and requirements of the ERC alone. To fulfil its responsibilities as set out in Articles 6 and 7 and in this Article, in the context of its own responsibilities for budget execution, the Commission shall:

   (a) ensure the continuity and renewal of the ERC Scientific Council and provide support for a standing Identification Committee for the identification of future ERC Scientific Council members;

   (b) ensure the continuity of the ERC dedicated implementation structure and the delegation of tasks and responsibilities to it, taking ~~into~~**due** account **of** the views of the ERC Scientific Council;

(c) ensure that the ERC dedicated implementation structure carries out the full range of its tasks and responsibilities;

(d) appoint the Director and the members of the management of the ERC dedicated implementation structure, taking into account the views of the ERC Scientific Council;

(e) ensure the timely adoption of the ERC work programme, the positions regarding implementing methodology and the necessary implementing rules including the ERC rules of submission and the ERC model grant agreement, taking into account the views of the ERC Scientific Council ~~and the Commission's corporate policies implemented through the Specific Programme~~;

(ea) regularly and in a timely manner inform and consult the ERC Programme Committee configuration on the implementation of the ERC activities;

(f) monitor, as responsible for the overall implementation of the Programme, the ERC dedicated implementation structure and evaluate its performance.

Article 9

Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions

1. The Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) shall focus on **bottom-up,** investigator-driven research founded exclusively on scientific excellence to support researchers' career, skills development, and mobility**, with particular emphasis on early career researchers, while remaining open to** ~~at~~ all career stages.

2. The MSCA shall be open to any scientific domain under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community. **In duly justified cases,** if specific needs arise **and additional funding becomes available**, the MSCA may target certain activities in specific thematic priorities, types of research and innovation institutions, or geographical locations to respond to the evolving requirements and needs of the Union regarding skills, research training, career development and knowledge sharing, in pursuit of the Union strategic autonomy.

3. The implementation of the MSCA shall:

(a) offer attractive conditions and opportunities for career progression, helping to address systemic issues of career instability and precarity in the research sector. The MSCA shall actively support the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers promoting fair recruitment, transparent procedures, and merit-based advancement[7];

~~(b) ensure strategic synergies with the European Research Council (ERC) but also with Union instruments that foster innovation, such as the European Innovation Council (EIC) and the activities to foster the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union as well as other Union programmes such as Erasmus+;~~

(c) promote work-life balance, diversity, and inclusion, setting high standards for working conditions across the European Research Area.

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[7] COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe (C/2023/1640). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1640/oj/eng

Article 10

Joint Research Centre

1. The activities of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) shall be complementary to indirect actions supporting longer-term policy objectives. To achieve this, the JRC works with international, national, regional, and local stakeholders, including through scientific collaboration agreements.

   The JRC activities shall:

   - be flexible and responsive to ~~evolving~~ policy needs~~.~~**;**

   - ~~ensure synergy~~**contribute to synergies** with other EU investments~~.~~**;**

   - focus on the following areas:

     i. scientific and technical support to Union policy priorities, in particular (but not limited to) those defined within the framework of the European Competitiveness Fund and those defined for parts I, II, III and IV of the Horizon Europe Programme;

     ii. knowledge integration and policy impact;

     iii. territorial development and Member State support;

     iv. scientific excellence and international collaboration;

     v. open science, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Chapter III
Competitiveness and Society

Article 11

Collaborative research and innovation

1. Collaborative research **and innovation** activities referred to in ~~Chapter I~~**Article 15** of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation] shall ~~cover, in particular, the following research and innovation activities~~**be implemented**:

~~(a)~~**(-a)** ~~under~~**for the** 'Competitiveness' **component of Pillar II**, **in a specific dedicated part of the work programme adopted under Article 15(1a) of Regulation [ECF]. These activities shall cover** research and innovation activities of the policy windows described in Chapters IV to VII of the European Competitiveness Fund**, in accordance with the rules of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation]**:

(b) ~~under~~**for the** 'Society'~~,~~ **component of Pillar II in the work programme adopted under Article 4(2). These** research and innovation activities~~, such as~~ **shall be targeted at guiding societal and cultural transformation, as well as supporting evidence-based policy making for future-oriented, resilient societies**:

(i) ~~activities aimed at accomplishing priorities for global societal challenges:~~**understanding the impacts of geopolitical shifts, new technologies, environmental, climate and demographic changes and developing actions needed to ensure a healthy, sustainable and resilient society and territorial management catering for the well-being of citizens;**

(ia) fostering democratic, culturally diverse, inclusive, socially just, secure and peaceful societies and driving democratic governance and innovation in public services;

(ib) sustaining European cultures and cultural heritage and strengthening cultural and creative sectors and industries.

3. Under Pillar II of this Programme, support shall be provided to the research and innovation part of the EU Missions established under Article 8 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695 up to 2030. Support to R&I activities on the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Facility under Horizon Europe shall be accompanied by actions aimed at deployment under other Union programmes.

~~- strengthening democratic values and foundations, civic engagement, the rule of law and fundamental rights, by fostering resilient, pluralistic societies, and the integrity of the information and media space and countering polarisation, disinformation, hate speech, discrimination, and xenophobia, in a rapidly evolving world of geopolitical shifts;~~

~~- promoting social inclusion, social and economic transformations, inclusive societies and social cohesion and tackling inequalities to create opportunities for all, taking into consideration rural areas' specificities, addressing demographic change and intergenerational fairness, including well-managed migration and mobility, supporting mental health and societal well-being, including for young people;~~

~~- fostering a value-based and competitive Europe by advancing future-ready skills, and driving inclusive innovation that empowers people, facilitates societal acceptance of technologies and supports sustainable growth that benefits all.~~

~~(ii) EU Missions: activities supporting EU Missions referred to in Article 15(5) of Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation].~~

~~(iii) activities in the context of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Facility, established with the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025-2027[8], shall deliver on the objectives of the New European Bauhaus, in particular supporting activities to foster the development and scaling up of innovative research solutions for the transformation of neighbourhoods into sustainable, inclusive and beautiful places.~~

Chapter IV
Innovation

Article 12

The European Innovation Council Board

1. The European Innovation Council Board (EIC Board) shall advise the Commission on:

(a) the overall strategy for the EIC component under Part III 'Innovation' of Horizon Europe, taking into account complementarities with the European Competitiveness Fund;

(b) the work programme for the implementation of the EIC actions, including criteria for assessment of proposals and the appropriate balance between the different types of funding support;

(c) the identification of emerging technology trends from EIC's portfolios, and strategic portfolios of projects**, in complementarity and synergy with the Emerging Technology Observatory under the ECF**;

~~8 Commission Implementing Decision C(2024)1741 of 20 March 2024 on adopting the 2025-2027 strategic research and innovation plan under the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.~~

(d) the profile of EIC Programme Managers;

(e) coordination with the Advisory Board on the European Competitiveness Fund Guarantees, Financial Instruments and Blending Operations established under the European Competitiveness Fund.

2. The EIC Board may upon request from the Commission address recommendations to the Commission on:

(a) any matter which, from an innovation perspective, may enhance and foster innovation eco-systems across the Union, the achievements and impact of the objectives of the EIC, and the capacity of innovative firms to roll out their solutions;

(b) identifying in cooperation with relevant Commission services, national and regional authorities and other relevant entities, possible regulatory barriers faced by entrepreneurs, in particular those awarded support under the EIC;

(c) programming in other parts of the Specific Programme.

3. The EIC Board shall act in the interest of achieving the objectives of the EIC. It shall act with integrity and probity and carry out its work efficiently and transparently.

4. The EIC Board shall be composed of 15 to 20 independent high-level individuals drawn from various parts of Europe's innovation ecosystem, including entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, investors, innovation experts and **managers,** innovative researchers and technology transfer experts. The EIC Board shall contribute to outreach actions and its members shall strive to enhance the prestige of the EIC brand.

5. The members of the EIC Board shall be appointed by the Commission, following an open call for nominations or for expressions of interest, and taking into account the need for balance in expertise, gender, age and geographical **and thematic** distribution.

6. Their term of office shall be limited to two years, renewable twice.

7. The EIC Board shall have a President who shall be a high-profile public figure linked to the world of innovation, with a **proven experience and** solid understanding of developing innovations from research to market and scale-up.

8. The EIC Board President shall have the status of an independent special adviser and shall be appointed by the Commission following a transparent recruitment process. The term of office of the EIC Board President shall be limited to a maximum of ~~two~~**four** years, ~~extendable once for up to 2 years~~**renewable once**.

9. The EIC Board President shall chair the EIC Board, prepare its meetings, assign tasks to members and may establish dedicated sub-groups. The EIC Board President shall represent the EIC Board's views in the world of innovation and act as an interlocutor with the Commission.

10. The Commission shall establish a EIC Board code of conduct addressing, in particular, the avoidance of conflicts of interest and breach of confidentiality. The members of the EIC Board shall agree to abide by the code of conduct upon assuming office.

11. The Commission shall provide administrative support to the EIC Board and the EIC Board President.

Article 13

European Innovation Ecosystems

The Specific Programme shall support:

(a) the establishment and support of connected hubs across the Union, **promoting collaboration and** providing **researchers,** innovators, start-ups and scale-ups access to resources, ~~services and~~ partners**, and tailored expertise and services**, including investment opportunities, first buyers of R&I and innovative solutions, corporates, experimentation facilities, research and technology infrastructures, **matchmaking and networking,** entrepreneurial talent, coaching and mentoring;

(b) activities to develop pan-European innovation ecosystems in key thematic areas, ~~support~~**integrating and boosting strengths and potentials, creating and expanding cross-border networks and collaboration, accelerating knowledge and technology uptake, supporting** the development of innovation **and entrepreneurial** skills and early-stage venture building, **and** fostering the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business – across the Union**. Those activities shall include support to the European Institute of Innovation and Technology's (EIT) Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)**;

(c) programmes to support innovative SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups to expand and access international markets through market viability studies, place-based innovation tools, ~~collaborative~~**collaboration in** research and innovation, exchange of talents, tailored mentorship, access to global investor networks, regulatory guidance, localized marketing support, and soft-landing services in target countries**, and to be interlinked with connected hubs and innovation ecosystems**;

(d) other actions to support the development of innovation ecosystems and **their** connectivity including studies, benchmarking, mutual learning between innovation actors and coordination of **national and regional** innovation policies **and strategies, including Smart Specialisation Strategies**.

Chapter V

European Research Area

Article 14

~~Reforming and enhancing the~~ European ~~R & I system~~ Research Area

1. ~~To support~~ The realisation of the European Research Area (ERA), **shall be a shared effort between the Union and its Member States.** The Specific Programme shall assist Member States**, and where relevant stakeholders and third countries associated to the Programme,** in achieving the **jointly agreed** objectives **and priorities** set out in the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe[9], by supporting actions aligned with ERA objectives and priority areas ~~for joint action~~, and by promoting **and** upholding ERA values and principles~~, as established in the Pact~~.

2. **The Policy Support Facility shall provide Member States and, as appropriate, their regions in accordance with their internal distribution of competences in the field of research and innovation, and third countries associated to the Programme with practical expert support to design, implement and evaluate reforms that enhance the quality of their research and innovation investments, policies and systems. It shall contribute to building stronger and more effective national and regional research and innovation systems and a more robust European Research Area.**

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9 Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe, OJ L 431, 2.12.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2021/2122/oj.

Article 15

Widening participation and spreading excellence

Under the Widening participation and spreading excellence component, the Specific Programme shall support a truly integrated and cohesive R&I ecosystem in the Union, addressing ~~especially the third and fourth~~ priority areas of the Pact for R&I, **by** amplifying access to research and innovation excellence across the Union and prioritising **structural** investments and reforms. Disparities between leading and less advanced countries in terms of R&I performance shall be tackled through **a differentiated portfolio of** activities building a solid science base and connecting actors and ecosystems, and that encourage structural policy reforms at national and regional level aimed at, such as, improving the attractiveness of research careers, internationalisation, effectiveness of management and governance of R&I institutions or matching activities with Union initiatives.

Article 16

Research infrastructures

1. The Specific Programme shall support the **design, development,** construction, ~~development~~**major upgrade** and integration of research infrastructures of ~~European~~ Union interest. **It shall facilitate pan-European user access.**

2. Research infrastructures activities shall focus on:

   (a) developing, consolidating and streamlining the Union landscape of research infrastructures, including coordination between the Union and national capacities and contributing up to 20% of the ~~building~~**construction or major upgrade** costs of ~~critical new~~**important** world-class capacities;

   (b) reinforcing transnational access to research infrastructures across domains and sectors~~,~~ and adapting to new emerging user communities**, extending engagement beyond primary research users, including SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups**;

(c) making research infrastructures more resilient and sustainable while keeping pace with rapid **scientific and** technological advancements;

(d) **promoting data sovereignty and further** developing a web of findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable (FAIR) and machine-actionable research data, including through expanding and consolidating the European Open Science Cloud as Europe's research data space**, as well as fostering synergies with the European sector-specific data spaces**;

(da) collaboration and networking among the research infrastructures, training and upskilling of their staff, jointly with technology infrastructures and innovation ecosystems whenever applicable;

(e) reinforcing European research infrastructure policy and international cooperation.

Article 17

Technology infrastructures

1. The Specific Programme shall ~~improve~~**support the design, development, construction, major upgrade, and integration of** technology ~~infrastructure capacities in the Union and facilitate access to the integrated services of such~~ infrastructures ~~for innovative companies, including start-ups and scale-ups~~**of Union interest. It shall facilitate pan-European user access**.

2. Activities shall focus on:

(a) developing, consolidating and streamlining the Union landscape of resilient and sustainable technology infrastructures, including coordination between the Union and national and regional capacities and contributing up to 20% of the construction or major upgrade costs of important world-class capacities;

~~(a)~~**(b)** improving the visibility and ~~uptake~~**use** of technology infrastructure services **across the Union**;

~~(b)~~**(c)** access ~~programme~~ for **researchers, innovators,** SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups to technology infrastructures across the Union **and support for valorisation activities to accelerate market uptake**;

~~(c)~~**(d)** collaboration and networking among the **technology** infrastructures, training and upskilling of their staff~~.~~**, jointly with research infrastructures and innovation ecosystems whenever applicable;**

~~(d)~~**(e)** ~~Reinforcing~~**supporting the development of** the European technology infrastructure policy.

~~Development of new technology infrastructure capacities~~

~~(a) Improving the visibility and uptake of technology infrastructure services;~~

~~(b) Access programme for SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups to technology infrastructures across the Union;~~

~~(c) Collaboration and networking among the infrastructures, training and upskilling of their staff.~~

~~(d) Reinforcing the European technology infrastructure policy.~~

Article 17a

Selection process for supporting the construction or major upgrade of world-class research and technology infrastructures

1. The Specific Programme may support the construction or major upgrade costs for pan-European world-class capacities in key strategic areas in coordination with national and regional programmes maximising European added value. These infrastructures shall be selected following an open, transparent and competitive procedure and have ensured strong political and financial commitment from Member States, taking into account the work of the European Strategic Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) (and any further strategic forum for technology infrastructures).

2. In addition to the requirements set out in Article 18a(2) of Regulation (EU) Regulation XXX [reference to the Horizon Europe Regulation], infrastructure shall comply with the following criteria:

(a) evidence of the proposed new capacities being of key importance and world-class, based on:

(i) Union interest: aligned with the Union's strategic priorities and requiring significant Union and Member States joint investments due to the desired scale and scope and to leverage other sources of funding when needed;

(ii) scientific, technological and/or industrial priorities and policies: significant improvement in the relevant fields at European and international level;

(iii) addressing clearly defined capacity gaps: complementarity to other infrastructures at Union level, align available facilities and services with unaddressed user needs and ensure research and innovation ecosystem coherence and consolidation;

(iv) access policy and services provided: providing effective access and services for the Union's research and innovation community;

(b) effective implementation of the new capacities with regard to:

(i-a) evidence of a funding gap that cannot be addressed by Member States and market mechanisms alone;

(i) governance and management;

(ii) financial feasibility and financial commitment, including from the private sector;

(iii) technical feasibility, sustainability and resource efficiency, as well as a data strategy.

The criteria shall be further specified in the work programme.

Chapter VI
Transitional and final provisions

Article 17b

Strategic advisory role of the Strategic Configuration of the Horizon Europe Programme Committee

1. The strategic configuration of the Horizon Europe Programme Committee defined under Article 18(2), point (a) shall, in addition to its role as a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 2011/182, advise the Commission and provide recommendations on:

(a) the overall strategic direction and priorities for Horizon taking into account the objectives set out in Article 3 of Regulation [Horizon Europe Regulation] and the process set out in paragraph 1a;

(b) the alignment of the Programme with Union policy objectives in the context of the strategic priority-setting process;

(c) the coherence and synergies between the Programme and other Union programmes and instruments, in particular with a view to maximising impact and avoiding overlaps.

The strategic configuration may also exchange information on other issues related to this Programme.

2. At its first meeting in its advisory role, based on a proposal by the Commission, the strategic configuration of the Programme Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure to be followed when this configuration acts in its advisory role.

3. It shall hold ordinary meetings in its advisory role at least once a year and additionally on request of a simple majority of Member States. The Commission shall convene the meetings and prepare the agenda, after consulting the members of the strategic configuration, in accordance with the advisory tasks of the strategic configuration pursuant to this Regulation and with its rules of procedure. Joint meetings shall be organised between the strategic configuration of the Committee under its advisory role and the ECF General Committee under its advisory role, to address issues of common relevance, in particular those relating to the 'competitiveness' component of Pillar II.

4. The Member States shall be involved from an early stage in the strategic priority-setting of HE according to the following process:

(a) The Commission shall provide to the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) relevant analyses, including from the Observatory on Emerging Technologies, foresight reports, as well as evidence-based input by stakeholders, as appropriate.

(b) **ERAC shall then provide strategic input on the overall strategic research and innovation orientations and priorities for Horizon Europe.**

(c) **The advice by ERAC shall feed into the Commission's preparation of the Horizon Europe multiannual strategic document covering the Programme's four pillars, while respecting their specific nature. The part of the Commission's Horizon Europe multiannual strategic document covering the 'competitiveness' component of Pillar II shall be the same as the part of the multiannual strategic document referred to in Article 13b(4)(iii) of the ECF regulation covering the competitiveness component of Pillar II. That part of the multiannual strategic document shall be discussed at the strategic meetings referred to in point (d).**

(d) **Joint strategic meetings shall be organised between the Strategic configuration under its advisory role and the ECF General Committee under Article 13b of Regulation [ECF Regulation] under its advisory role, to address issues of common relevance relating to the collaborative research and innovation activities funded by the 'competitiveness' component of Pillar II.**

(e) **The strategic configuration, taking into account the Horizon Europe multiannual strategic document, shall provide recommendations to the Commission on the overall strategic direction and priorities of HE before the preparation of the work programmes.**

The process under (a) to (e) shall take place before the preparation of the first work programmes and three years after the start of the Programme.

Article 18

Committee procedure

1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee. That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.

2. The committee ~~may~~**shall** convene in the following configurations, having regard to the subject matter to be discussed:

   ~~General~~**Strategic** configuration: **Strategic** overview **and coherence** of the implementation of the Specific Programme **across its individual work programmes, including with European Partnerships**;

   - ERC;
   - MSCA;
   - ~~Global societal challenges, EU Missions, New European Bauhaus Facility~~**Society**;
   - EIC and **European** innovation ecosystems;
   - **European Research Area and widening participation and spreading excellence;**
   - Research and technology infrastructures;
   - ~~Reforming and enhancing the European R&I system and widening participation and spreading excellence.~~

3. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.

4. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.

5. Where the opinion of the committee is to be obtained by written procedure, that procedure shall be terminated without result when, within the time-limit for delivery of the opinion, the chair of the committee so decides or a simple majority of committee members so request.

5a. In the case of the implementing acts to be adopted where the Committee delivers no opinion, the Commission shall not adopt the draft implementing act and the third subparagraph of Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.

5b. The Commission shall regularly and from an early stage inform the Committee of the overall progress of the implementation of the Specific Programme. It shall, in particular, provide information on: individual projects, enabling the monitoring of the entire lifetime of each proposal; the outcome of each call and project implementation; and the execution of the Horizon Europe budget components and sub-components.

6. In accordance with international agreements concluded by the Union, representatives of **associated** third countries or international organisations may be invited as observers in the meetings of the Specific Programme committee under the conditions laid down in its rules of procedure, taking into account security and public order of the Union or its Member States.

Article 19

Repeal

Decision (EU) No 764/2021 is repealed with effect from 1 January 2028.

Article 20

Transitional provisions

1. This Decision shall not affect the continuation or modification of the actions concerned, until their closure, under Decision (EU) 2021/764/EU, which shall continue to apply to those actions until their closure.

2. The financial envelope for the Specific Programme may also cover technical and administrative assistance expenses necessary to ensure the transition between the Specific Programme and the measures adopted under its Decision (EU) 2021/764.

Article 21

Entry into force and application

This Decision shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

It shall apply from 1 January 2028.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council *The President*