

6 December 2010

Innovation Union

**Frequently Asked Questions
regarding European Innovation Partnerships under Europe 2020**

Summary: *A European Innovation Partnership, as proposed in the Europe 2020 flagship Innovation Union, provides a framework that aims to break down “silo’s”, bringing together all relevant stakeholders across policies, across sectors and across borders to speed up innovations that address a major societal challenge, and gain competitive advantages for growth and job creation in Europe. In this way, partnerships should also contribute to the maintenance of a strong and sustainable manufacturing base in the EU. They will be organised around concrete and ambitious targets, agreed at political level, in areas of societal challenges that command broad public and political support. The achievement of these targets will require mobilising and linking up stakeholders, facilitating new ways of working together, making best use of the instruments that exist, aligning and pooling resources and filling gaps where necessary, addressing bottlenecks and obstacles (e.g. outdated regulation, lack of standards) and leveraging the demand-side (e.g. public procurement) across the whole value chain from research to market. The partnerships are thus a means of focusing resources and political energies on the key political priorities and bringing the benefits of innovation to people more quickly. They will be politically-driven. Their success will depend on strong commitment and ownership on the part of the co-legislators/budgetary authorities, as well as political endorsement from the Heads of State and Government.*

Purpose of the paper

In its Innovation Union Communication of 6 October 2010, the Commission has put forward a proposal to launch European innovation partnerships, briefly describing their rationale and setting out in general terms how these could be set up and operated. It proposed to test the concept by means of a pilot partnership in the area of active and healthy ageing, whilst setting out a process for the possible launch of further partnerships before the end of 2011.

The innovation partnership concept has generated much interest and received broad support in the Council and in the European Parliament as well as amongst key stakeholders. Discussions in Council and Parliament showed that there is a need to provide more information as to how partnerships could best be set up and operate, and what they are expected to deliver, and also to clarify what partnerships are not about. This paper seeks to meet this request by providing responses to the most frequently asked questions. On this basis, the Commission will continue discussions with Council, Member States, Parliament and stakeholders. The aim is to flesh out the concept and governance arrangements further, starting with the pilot partnership on active and healthy ageing, and ensure that it can deliver on its objectives.

1. What are the objectives behind European innovation partnerships?

The objectives of the European innovation partnership (EIP) are twofold: addressing **societal challenges** and, in so doing, enhancing Europe's **competitiveness**, against the background of **globalisation** and current **fiscal constraints**. The concept provides for a **strategic approach** to innovation which has its origins in the **Europe 2020** strategy.

Their unique strength is that they will address the weaknesses in the European research and innovation system, as described in Innovation Union (notably, under-investment in knowledge generation and diffusion, framework conditions which are not sufficiently innovation-friendly, and fragmentation and duplication of efforts, low involvement of users

and insufficient alignment of public actions) which considerably complicate the discovery or exploitation of knowledge and, in many cases, ultimately prevent the entry of innovations into the market place.

Such innovations will be critical in addressing the societal challenges we currently face, including: ensuring active and healthy ageing, mitigating the causes and effects of climate change, using energy and natural resources more efficiently, ensuring raw materials supply and promoting food security as well as efficient use of water, and making transport more efficient and sustainable. Our ability to meet these challenges will determine the nature of the world in 2020 and beyond.

Because of the scale of these challenges, collective action, building on Europe's strengths and tackling weaknesses, is our best route to solutions. These solutions will offer new opportunities for growth as global markets develop and expand, and for retaining and attracting fresh investments in Europe. In other words, major benefits can result if Europe succeeds in becoming a “first-mover”.

2. What concrete benefits can be expected from working together as part of European innovation partnerships?

European Innovation Partnerships will bring together all actors from those conducting basic research, all the way to the final users, including every step between. The partnership provides these actors with a forum in which they can – united around a common goal (in the case of the partnership on active and healthy ageing, an increase in healthy and active life years by 2 years) – identify, develop and test innovative solutions and ensure the smoothest possible transition from conception to implementation. In particular, the partnerships will:

- **Define a common vision and mobilise resources to achieve breakthroughs more rapidly.** Partnerships should be organised to achieve ambitious, realistic (common) European targets which resonate with citizens and enthuse and obtain commitment from stakeholders. The partnerships should also promote new ways of working, using modern means of communication, and breaking down silo's which too often prevent key players in innovation to work together across policy areas and disciplines. Commitment will mean pooling efforts, aligning instruments, removing obstacles and achieving critical mass. It will be important to define intermediate steps/deliverables to achieve early results and maintain the momentum.
- **Considerably reduce time-to-market of research and innovation breakthroughs.** This should be achieved by promoting better co-ordination of public and private actions, by anticipating regulatory and other needs for the different stages of the innovation cycle and by ensuring the involvement of those representing the demand side along the whole innovation chain. This means that the regulatory environment needs to be appropriate, including the removal of unnecessary or redundant requirements, demonstration projects need to be organised so results can be immediately taken up and further tested, and/or procurement used to foster rapid uptake. Partnerships would work on all these aspects simultaneously from the outset. This will help to significantly speed up the process from idea to market, so that solutions can be deployed, operational processes can be improved and market opportunities seized more rapidly (rather than being lost to other, quicker and better organised competitors).

- **Make it easier for all to achieve scalable results by overcoming fragmentation of efforts and by reducing complexity.** Over time, Europe's research and innovation landscape has become rather dense with a large number of instruments having been created for specific purposes, including at EU level. Partnerships could be an effective framework to better co-ordinate and streamline these instruments and optimise the links between them so that they better support the objectives of the partnership. Further complexity arises from different approaches to development and testing; diverging national market regulations which lead to unnecessary obstacles, as well as to fragmented public markets for new products and services within and between Member States. It is these bottlenecks that often prevent the EU from reaching the necessary critical mass that the development and successful deployment of breakthrough innovations require. The lack of a genuine single market for innovative products and services combined with limited access to finance, in particular, explains also why only few of our SMEs grow and develop into bigger companies that operate trans-nationally and/or even on a global scale.

3. Why has the Commission proposed to launch a pilot partnership and why did it choose to dedicate this pilot to active and healthy ageing?

The Commission has proposed to launch a pilot partnership to test the concept and assess how it can best be implemented. It has chosen 'Active and Healthy Ageing' because it clearly meets the conditions set out in the Innovation Union Communication. Indeed, health and active participation in economy and society in relation to ageing presents a common challenge for all Member States – and for all citizens in the European Union. Due to the demographic change, health and social care systems will come under increasing pressure and without new solutions and more effective health care provision costs will rise exponentially beyond our capacity to finance them and available human resources will be insufficient to meet the future care needs. Age-related diseases will increase in the next decade and beyond, so finding treatments and enabling people to live longer independently will be essential to promote quality of life for citizens and patients. Health independent living and active ageing will also provide important new business opportunities not only within the EU but globally, which European industry is well placed to benefit from. Community- and home based solutions to providing care, using smart technologies, will help reduce costs and improve the quality of life of the elderly. So the active and healthy ageing partnership has the potential for a triple win, thorough concerted effort by all the stakeholders.

In addition, much work is already ongoing in the area of active and healthy ageing, both at national and at EU level, so we are not starting from scratch. There is an active stakeholder community. Different EU instruments are already addressing this topic (e.g. Framework Programme, Competitiveness & Innovation Programme, Public Health Programme, Joint Programming Initiative on Alzheimer and Neurodegenerative Diseases, Article 185 initiative on Ambient Assisted Living with 23 countries and the EU, a proposed Joint Programming Initiative on demographic change, lead market on e-health, infrastructure projects such as the ongoing application for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium ERIC-SHARE 'Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe' and several ESFRI projects in the biomedical field) and there is no doubt scope for improving synergies between them. In addition multiple initiatives on innovation in ageing care have been launched at Member State and regional levels. Moreover, important work has already been done to map out the obstacles which prevent – or delay – time-to-market and scaling up of solutions across the EU. There is therefore a solid basis to build on.

Preparations for the launch of the partnership have started. A first major stakeholder conference has been held on 26 November 2010 in Brussels, bringing together key stakeholders (Member States, regions, representatives from the medical, pharmaceutical and ICT industries, European medicine agency, universities and medical research organisations, hospitals and care organisations, health insurers, standard-setters, elderly people and patient organisations etc.) to discuss bottlenecks, start building consensus around the problem analysis and ways to tackle them, identify key areas on which to concentrate. A wider public consultation to collect input on the contents of the partnership is underway. A website will be launched shortly to provide information and invite feedback.

4. How will future innovation partnerships be selected?

As far as the selection of further partnerships is concerned, the Commission has committed itself to drawing up before the end of 2010 robust selection criteria and a transparent process for their identification which will serve as a basis for discussion in Parliament and Council.

Building on the conditions for success, set out in the Innovation Union Communication, the Commission considers that partnerships should meet the following criteria:

1. The partnership (and its research and innovation contents) can be expected to make a significant contribution to solving a major societal challenge as defined in Europe 2020.
2. Successful delivery of the partnership will result in significant positive impacts on competitiveness, growth and employment in support of Europe 2020.
3. It must combine a strong research & innovation dimension with "demand-side" measures across policy areas to shorten time-to-market and ensure an organised pull and roll-out of innovation, both at EU and national level (i.e. reviewing regulations and/or proposing new rules, accelerating product approvals, fast-tracking standard-setting and deploying public procurement strategically).
4. There is clear EU added value. In other words, breakthroughs would not be achieved at all, or lack the necessary speed, scale and sustainability without action at EU level. This could be, for example, because there is a need for achieving critical mass and for pooling efforts and/or because policy instruments are only available at EU level.
5. EU added value should *a priori* mean that there is already strong interest from Member States, industry and other stakeholders to launch a European innovation partnership.
6. The expected outcomes of the partnership can be clearly defined by means of a concrete and compelling target. Such target must have strong political and public appeal and be easily communicated.
7. There is an important role for governments and the public sector in the partnership as regulators, market participants and/or procurers. In other words, Member States have to deploy their instruments to help achieve the objectives of the partnership.
8. There is potentially strong and sustained engagement by the private sector, and industry sees major business opportunities. This engagement can be translated into concrete commitments to invest time and resources into the partnership.

9. The partnership should contribute to genuine simplification and streamlining and should add value compared to the current situation, by filling gaps, integrating instruments, improving co-ordination between EU and national instruments and by removing duplication and overlap.
10. The proposal should be well developed and define realistic and convincing building-blocks, with clear milestones, for achieving the target, and which address the most relevant innovation bottlenecks. The proposal identifies the key stakeholders that need to be involved.

As set out in the Innovation Union Communication, the Commission will present the proposals for partnerships which have met the criteria to the other institutions, during 2011, from February onwards, as part of the roll-out of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

5. What governance structure is proposed?

It is important to make a distinction between the political decision-making and the organisation of the work in a specific partnership.

Politically, the Commission will seek the Parliament's and Council's support for the choice of future partnerships, preceded by a presentation and political discussion. It will submit the proposed strategic implementation plan which the steering group of the partnership has developed together with stakeholders (see below and question 7) to Parliament and Council for political endorsement in order to make a success of the implementation of the partnership. It should be noted that any proposals for which the EU level is responsible will be dealt with according to existing rules and procedures. In other words, suggestions or proposals formulated by the partnership which fall within the remit of EU Institutions or decision-making procedures (for ex. in the regulatory sphere, or adjustments to EU research priorities) will have to be decided upon by those EU Institutions; partnerships must not and will not induce a shift in decision-making powers. The same is obviously also true for proposals for action in areas which belong to national or regional competences.

As far as the organisation of work is concerned, the co-ordination structure of the partnership itself will need to be light, flexible and result-oriented and must derive from the need to: (i) bring together different players that would not normally join forces, be it across sectors, geographical borders, or areas of competence and responsibility and (ii) combine R&D and innovation with users needs and market deployment and the adaptation of innovative production processes (e.g. researchers, regulators, standard-setters, procurers) and (iii) obtain high-level commitments to mobilise instruments, adapt policies and ensure deployment. Reflecting these needs, the Commission has proposed that a steering group be set up to undertake the work as set out in question 6 and develop – in close co-operation with key stakeholders – the strategic implementation plan, containing specific actions and initiatives at different levels which must be taken to achieve the agreed objectives. There is no one-size-fits all: the exact composition of the steering group should of course be adapted to the specificities of each European innovation partnership.

The steering group should actively seek views and input from stakeholders which are not themselves represented in the steering group, but who can make a contribution to the achievement of the objectives. It should do so using modern means of communication, for example virtual meetings and social networks. It should also fully explore the scope for social innovation. The process of identifying bottlenecks, defining priorities and detailing the

specific commitments, therefore, needs to be as open as possible. The steering group could, if necessary, be supported by 'operational groups' focusing on specific activity areas. Alternatively, it could draw on inputs from existing relevant fora such as the European Technology Platforms or Member States platforms, thereby avoiding a proliferation of new structures. Its key deliverable in a first phase will be the development of a strategic implementation plan (see also question 7) setting out what needs to be done – and by whom and how - to achieve the objectives of the partnership and the commonly agreed target(s).

Whilst it is important to have all major players on board, it is equally important to keep the steering group manageable and 'light', ensuring that it can work as efficiently as possible and avoiding unnecessary overhead and administrative burdens. For efficiency sake, the steering group should therefore have an upper limit as regards the number of members. It will therefore be important to ensure that each of the categories of actors, as set out above, is adequately represented.

6. What is envisaged for the governance of Active and Healthy Ageing?

There are different options for the composition of the European innovation partnerships according to the specific needs of each of them and the width of the stakeholder community. It is important that the steering group has a direct link to the political level through the presence of senior politicians. It is also important that stakeholder representation is balanced and that industry representation covers not just established players, but also small and recently created businesses. Participation in the active and healthy ageing partnership could, for example, be envisaged on the following basis (although there could be variations):

Public authorities:

- Member States (at political level): (Member States on the board could be nominated by the Health and Competitiveness Council or be represented by the Troika)
- European Parliament: (The Parliament could nominate its representatives, for example a rapporteur, Chairpersons/members of relevant Committees)
- European Commission: the lead Commissioners
- Regions (representatives could be nominated by the Committee of Regions or another representative body)
- High level representatives of contributing Joint Programming and other key initiatives

Private sector:

- CEOs from ICT, pharma and medical equipment companies and of care service providers, including SME representation (these could be self-appointed or proposed by industry federations)

Others:

- High level representatives of older people and patients' organisations, the hospital and care sectors and their professionals, community services.
- High level representatives from public and private health insurance providers
- Top researchers and academics in the field covered by the partnership

The Healthy Aging Partnership steering group should have no more than 20-25 members. As set out above, it will have to draw on the input and expertise of all relevant stakeholders. The Commission envisages that the main stakeholder groups would propose their own representative(s) to take part in the steering group based on an appropriate balance that reflects the wider stakeholder community. In the early phase of the partnership (the first six months) as it prepares the strategic implementation plan, the steering group would probably meet two to three times. The steering group will be supported by a secretariat, which prepares the meetings, organises stakeholder input and assists the board in delivering on its tasks.

Once the strategic implementation plan is finalised, and the milestones defined, and implementation of the plan starts, the role of the steering group will switch to monitoring and reviewing progress made.

7. What should be the focus of the partnerships, how should they work and what will be the specific deliverables?

Societal challenges, such as health and ageing, climate change and energy are by nature very wide-ranging. In order to address these wider challenges through concrete and actionable measures, it will be important that a clear target be defined around which the partnership will be organised. Subsequently, the societal challenge should be broken down into well-defined 'work packages' or 'activity areas' so that its activities can be focused on clear and specific areas that can make a substantive contribution to the achievement of this target, and for which concrete measures can be defined and implemented to remove persistent obstacles (and for which a coordinated approach at EU level provides added value).

Partnerships must be result-oriented (i.e. organised to achieve commonly agreed objectives), 'light' in terms of governance and aimed at overcoming barriers resulting from a traditional 'division of labour', be it across geographical borders or areas of competence. In broad terms, they should identify from the outset (from the stage of R&D) the various conditions that need to be met to optimise and leverage R&D efforts and promote their commercial development; mapping existing instruments, programmes and policies to assess whether they are adequate to achieve the target as well as identifying missing links/bottlenecks and defining further commitments needed to reorient tools, as necessary, address the bottlenecks and remove obstacles.

In practice, partnerships must perform a number of tasks and present a series of 'deliverables.' A clear deadline should be set for the delivery of each of these, since the Partnerships aim above all at speeding up progress:

- *As a first step*, the steering group is formed. The steering group of the partnership should identify bottlenecks to be overcome (e.g. gaps in research, modifications to the regulatory framework, speeding up standardisation and ensuring interoperability, specific skills needs, strategic use of procurement, etc.) to reach the agreed target(s) of the partnership (aligned to the EU2020 and innovation flagship targets). **In other words, there must be a shared 'problem analysis'**;

- *Next*, the partnership needs to undertake a **mapping of the measures needed to overcome the bottlenecks**, and define opportunities for research and innovation, which could take the form of a roadmap or strategic implementation plan. This strategic plan, which should be a fairly concise, non-technical document and which should be made available within a reasonable time-frame, should set out a clear vision and direction of work, discussing competences, resources, responsibilities, activities and timelines, and placing special emphasis on ways to overcome fragmentation by working together. The mapping must include an analysis of how the different existing policies, instruments and programmes can contribute to tackling those bottlenecks. But it also needs to look into possible overlap, whether they need to be adapted or adjusted, and also what instruments or policies may be lacking ('missing links').
- *Drawing on the mapping exercise*, the partnership should identify **commitments** of all key stakeholders – each acting in its own sphere and employing its own relevant instruments and resources – to work together to overcome the bottlenecks and implement the strategic implementation plan. The required commitments should be sufficiently detailed in terms of what is needed, who needs to take action, and justifying why this is the most effective way of overcoming the bottleneck. Where appropriate, the strategic plan could be fleshed out for specific areas covered by the partnership with the help of stakeholders (e.g. for active and healthy ageing, specific standards for e-health applications and/or commitments to undertake joined procurements could be defined, or in the case of new treatments or diagnostics, the need for fast-tracking specific procedures and/or ensure reimbursements could be specified).
- *Finally*, the partnership needs to identify **clear and concrete milestones in the short-, medium and longer term to enable effective monitoring and reporting**.

8. Are partnerships a new instrument and what are the links with existing instruments?

First of all, innovation partnerships are NOT a new instrument (nor an instrument in the sense of a programme), or yet another layer coming on top of what already exists. On the contrary, the aim is to simplify, looking at ways to optimise and streamline the use of existing instruments and synergies between them, and to fill the gaps. For the EU level, the partnerships should, in particular, examine how the different instruments such as Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs), the Article 185 Joint Programmes, European Technology Platforms (ETPs), Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs), the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), and Lead Markets Initiatives (LMI) can contribute to reaching the stated objective and to overcome the bottlenecks to achieving it. For example, the partnership could add value to an existing Joint Programming Initiative, by identifying specific actions such as in the area of standardisation or procurement, so as to maximise the overall positive impacts.

The Partnerships should also consider how better use can be made of EU funding, including the FP7 and CIP work programmes and programmes co-funded by the Structural funds or EIB investment support. The partnership could also formulate suggestions on how access to EU and national programmes could be simplified or optimised and their leverage effect on private sector contributions enhanced.

However important the issue of better aligning the existing instruments will be the partnerships' objectives are broader. The novelty lies in looking not only at the R&D

component (on which many of the current programmes and instruments, such as JTIs, ETPs or JPIs tend to focus) but also at the policy tools available or needed to tackle the ‘demand-side’ such as pooling of demand or a social innovation approach to involve stakeholders.

In the case of active and healthy ageing, for example, the partnership will need to look into how to maximise the contribution of existing instruments, such as the Framework and CIP Programmes, the relevant technology platforms, the Joint Programming initiative on Alzheimer’s disease, the Public Health Programme, the Article 185 initiative Joint Programme on Ambient Assisted Living (AAL), the Commission’s lead market initiative on e-health, and support for market replication projects under the CIP as well as similar initiatives at national or regional level. But it will also need to look at the need for possible modifications to the regulatory framework and fast-tracking of legislative proposals, the need for a targeted standardisation programme, scope for joint procurements and commitments from health insurance systems to reimburse new treatments.

9. Are partnerships meant to become a decision making body or a new funding source?

No, partnerships cannot take decisions in areas for which the EU and/or Member States are competent; they can make recommendations as to the decisions which are needed to achieve the agreed target. Moreover, partnerships will not themselves receive, or attract financial contributions nor will they manage funds. They provide a platform for the definition and monitoring of action (see question 7).

The partnership can establish particular funding needs, not only from EU funding sources such as the Framework Programme (or the EIB) but also from Member States (e.g. from national and regional funding schemes, including the European Regional Development Fund, structural funds and/or the private sector e.g. through Public Private Partnerships). However, the necessary commitments and implementation will need to take place in accordance with the rules in force.

But again, the partnership’s aims reach well beyond the R&D component and its funding. There key aim is to address the whole RDI chain – from R&D all the way to market deployment – in one single, coherent framework.

10. Are there national/regional examples of partnerships which the Commission has considered when developing the European innovation partnership concept?

In many Member States (e.g. in the UK, DE, NL, FI, BE) and also at regional level, structures with similar features as innovation partnerships already exist. In developing the concept of innovation partnerships, the Commission has carefully examined these practices. Some of these initiatives appear more focused on strategic technology development, whilst others emphasise more the research-side but all have the aim of bringing stakeholders together behind a strategic agenda, having them agree amongst themselves on common objectives and direction and on (re-)orientating instruments and policies to achieve them across the entire chain from R&D all the way to market deployment. In further developing the partnership concept, including governance questions, the Commission will take due account of the experience gained with these national/regional initiatives.

11. Is there not a risk that partnerships will be driven ‘top-down’ and lead to "picking winners"?

The objective of a partnership is clearly not one whereby public authorities 'pick winners' or impose technological choices or scientific priorities, but rather - by bringing all relevant actors together - to enable them to better cooperate and better align instruments and policies to remove obstacles to getting good ideas to market. Ultimately, to be successful and meet their objectives, partnerships must ensure that bright ideas have the best opportunity to compete on the market.

12. Are all Member States expected to participate in innovation partnerships?

Key criteria for partnerships are that they attract strong interest, and will generate major benefits, across all Member States. For partnerships to deliver on their objectives it is critical that they enjoy broad political support as the challenges are such that they can only be met by combining our forces at EU level; and as the full benefits in terms of reinforced competitiveness and job creation will only materialise if we exploit the full scale of the single market. Many of the actions, particularly those to be taken forward at EU level (e.g. modifications to EU rules, development of EU standards) will in any event require the full involvement of Member States through decisions in Council or in dedicated European bodies.

That said, in the effective implementation of the partnership, there will need to be room for differentiation; in specific areas such as the setting up of joint programming, identifying common specifications and/or implementing joint procurement schemes, it may well be that not all Member States will choose to participate. In all cases, it should be clear that 'commitments' will be made on a voluntary basis, following which they will of course need to be relied upon.

13. What will be the role of the European Parliament and Council in the innovation partnerships?

Strong support and active involvement of both Parliament and Council will be essential to the success of partnerships. The Commission is looking forward to continuing the dialogue with Parliament and Council on the concept and its implementation.

It intends to consult Parliament and Council on further candidates for partnerships, and seek their support before launching them. The Commission will of course share its assessment of the pilot partnership on active and healthy ageing, particularly on governance, and draw the necessary lessons for discussion with both Institutions. By the end of 2011, the Commission will evaluate the experience gained with partnerships so far, and on this basis recommend to Parliament and Council whether or not to continue with them.

Following the preparatory work undertaken by the respective partnerships, including the identification of actions and commitments that are needed to achieve its objectives, the Commission will submit a "strategic implementation plan" for political endorsement to Parliament and Council to ensure strong ownership and support and make a success of the implementation of the partnership.

At the implementation stage, as far as action at EU-level is concerned, the Commission will take its responsibility and, as appropriate, make the necessary proposals, whether legislative, financial or other, to Parliament and Council. Given the priority attached to partnerships, and the broad political support which they are expected to enjoy, the Commission trusts that such proposals will be acted upon speedily and with the necessary ambition.

14. What will be the role of the Commission?

The Commission intends to play an active role in promoting the success of innovation partnerships. It sees its role principally as that of an initiator, catalyst, and facilitator. It will bring the different parties together, provide support in the formulation of the problem analysis and possible solutions, and deploy funding, instruments and policies under its responsibility to contribute to the success of the partnership. Once implementation is underway, it will ensure effective monitoring of progress.

In its institutional capacity, the Commission will assume the following responsibilities, in particular:

- consult Parliament and Council on possible candidate partnerships – and seek their political agreement before they are launched;
- invite discussions in the relevant advisory bodies and committees, including the European Research Advisory Council (ERAC), the Enterprise Policy Group (EPG) and relevant thematic committees;
- facilitate the work done in the partnership, provide support to the steering group for the development of the proposal for a strategic implementation plan and submit this to the Parliament and Council for political endorsement in order to make a success of the implementation of the partnership;
- following this, to take the necessary initiatives set out in the implementation plan which fall within its responsibility, such as reviewing its funding instruments, preparing and submitting proposals to amend regulation, drawing up mandates for European standards, etc;
- report regularly to Parliament and Council on progress achieved.
