



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 11.7.2018
C(2018) 4217 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication on the Horizon 2020 interim evaluation: maximising the impact of EU research and innovation {COM(2018) 2 final}.

The key message of the Communication is that Europe must step up investments in research and innovation and maximise impact. The interim evaluation proved that Horizon 2020 has so far been a success story, with a high European added value and a real impact on the economy and benefits for citizens.

The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's support for a number of the key recommendations in the Communication. The Bundesrat's input was highly valuable for the preparation of Horizon Europe, the post-2020 European Union programme for research and innovation, which addressed many of the issues highlighted in the Opinion.

Taking into account the lessons learned from Horizon 2020, the valuable feedback received from stakeholders and partners, and the indications for the future already outlined in the Communication, the Commission has come forward with the legal proposals for the Union's post-2020 research and innovation programme in June 2018.

The Commission highly appreciates the Bundesrat's strong emphasis on the need for adequate funding in order to support projects and activities that have a strong Union added value. Equally, this will also be vital for maintaining an acceptable success rate for the proposals. The call for 'evolution not revolution' guided the approach towards the whole Programme, leading to strong overall continuity and optimisation, for instance, in the current Excellent Science pillar of Horizon 2020, in the important role played by industry for tackling global challenges, or in the effective integration of social sciences and humanities. Moreover, ensuring full accessibility and relevance to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises has remained a high priority.

The Commission also strived for an effective articulation with the other European Union funding Programmes in the design phase in order to pave the way for full synergy during

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implementation. As regards the relationship of future Defence Programme with the Horizon Europe, the Commission considered various options, while being fully aware of the specificities of defence research. Already in the Communication on launching the European Defence Fund, the Commission had expressed its intention to ensure budget separation between defence research and civilian research.

The Commission hopes that these comments address the issues raised by the Bundesrat and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Carlos Moedas
Member of the Commission*