

# Factual summary of the public consultation on the EU long-term budget in the area of investments, research and innovation, SMEs and Single Market

## Introduction

The EU's long-term budget currently runs until the end of 2020. In May and June 2018, the Commission adopted its proposals for the post-2020 long-term budget and the next generation of programmes and funds. These programmes/funds will provide support to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries such as regions, towns, NGOs, businesses, farmers, students, scientists, and many others, as well as ensure the functioning of concrete operations in plenty of areas like border management, humanitarian aid, the single market, to name a few.

The Commission's proposals were designed to make it possible for the EU to deliver on the things that matter most, in areas where it can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. What should the priorities be for future policies and programmes/funds? And how can they be designed to best deliver results on the ground?

As an integral part of this process and following on from the [Reflection Paper on the Future of EU Finances](#), the Commission has conducted a series of public consultations covering major spending areas to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget. These areas are:

- Investments, research and innovation, SMEs and Single Market
- Strategic infrastructure (transport, energy, digital, space)
- Cohesion
- Migration
- Security, defence and crisis/emergency response
- European values and mobility
- Natural resources
- External policy

See more on the main programmes under each policy area on the Commission [website](#) for the EU's long-term budget.

Replies to the public consultations fed into designing comprehensive proposals for the post-2020 EU long-term budget and for the next generation of financial programmes.

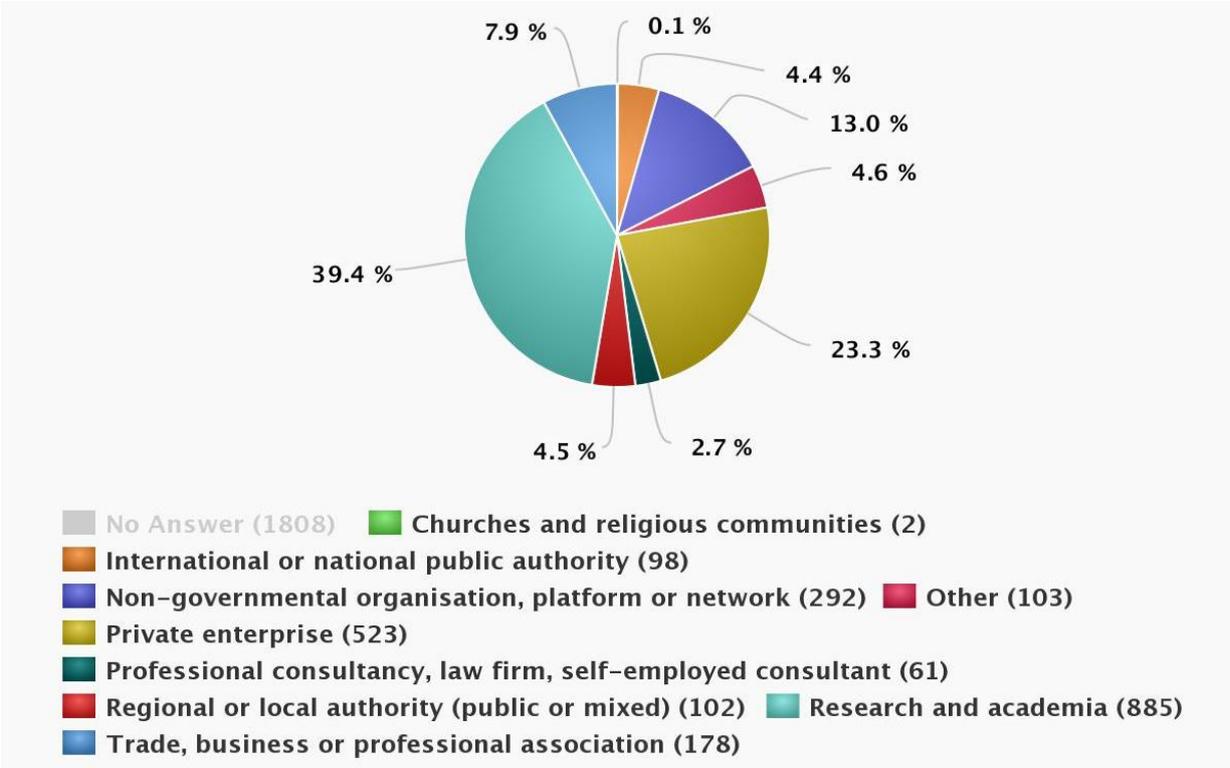
This document summarises the replies to the public consultation in the area of **investments, research and innovation, SMEs and Single Market** that was carried out from 10 January 2018 to 9 March 2018. More in-depth analysis of replies (including textual inputs) supported the impact assessments prepared for individual programmes.

### Who replied to this public consultation?

In total, the public consultation on investments, research and innovation, SMEs and Single Market received **4052 replies**; **2244 from organisations** and **1808 from individuals**. Contributions were mainly provided by organisations based in Germany (278), Belgium (255), Italy (231), France (225), and Spain (221), while the individuals that took part in the consultation are mainly Spanish (269), Italian (204) and German (199) citizens.

In terms of **type of organisations**, the majority are research and academia (39.4%) followed by private enterprises (23.3%), non-governmental organisations, platforms or networks (13.0%) and trade, business or professional associations (7.9%) (see figure 1 below for details on the types of organisations).

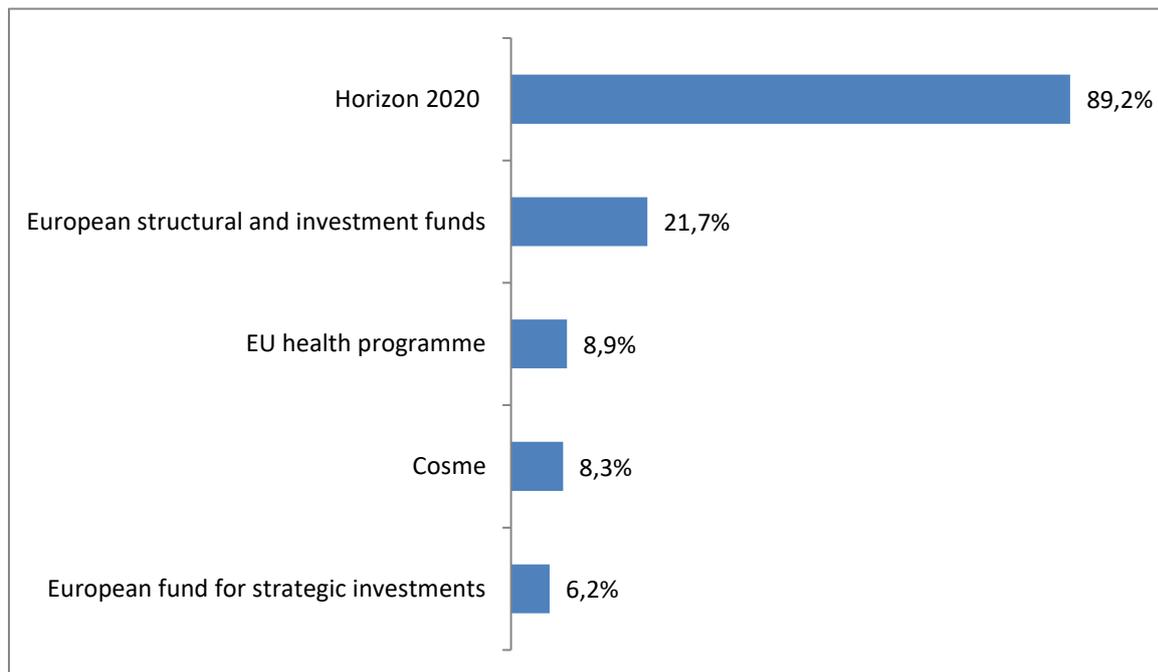
Figure 1: distribution of the type of organisations participating in the public consultation



In the figure above, the "No Answer" category is left out as it represents the respondents that are citizens and for which this question is thus not relevant.

Respondents were asked to indicate their experience with one or more funds or programmes (see figure 2 below). Respondents seem to be most familiar with Horizon 2020 (89.2%) and the European structural and investment funds (21.4%).

Figure 2: Experience of respondents with programmes/funds (top 5 of a total of 22 funds and programmes listed)



## What are the views of respondents who replied to the public consultation?

### Importance of policy challenges

The questionnaire preliminarily identified a number of policy challenges which programmes/funds under this policy area could address. Respondents were asked how important they considered these policy challenges to be.

According to respondents, the **most important policy challenges** which the programmes/funds under this policy area could address are:

1. “Foster research and innovation across the EU” (considered very important by 81.1% of respondents)
2. “Support education, skills and training” (considered very important by 62.9% of respondents)
3. “Ensure a clean, healthy environment and the protection of natural resources” (considered very important by 58.9% of respondents).

“Supporting capital flows and investments” is considered the least important of the challenges identified by the Commission (considered very or rather important by 43.7% of respondents) (see more details in table 1 below).

### Success of the current programmes/funds

The questionnaire asked respondents to what extent they consider the previously mentioned policy challenges to be successfully addressed by the current programmes/funds.

“Fostering research and innovation across the EU”, which was the challenge that was identified as the most important, is also the one considered to be the **most successfully met by the current programmes/funds**; 58.5% of respondents consider it as being at least fairly well addressed.

The challenges that are considered the least well addressed by the current programmes/funds (of those identified by the Commission) are “reducing unemployment and social disparities” and “improving quality of public institutions” (including digitalisation).

Table 1 below combines the two previous questions: which challenge(s) respondents consider important and how successful the current programmes/funds are at addressing these challenges.

*Table 1: Importance of policy challenges and how well current programmes/funds address them*

Challenge	Respondents considering the challenge important or rather important (%)	Respondents considering the challenge fully or fairly well addressed (%)
Foster research and innovation across the EU	94.9	58.5
Support education, skills and training	90.0	46.1
Ensure a clean and healthy environment and the protection of natural resources	89.5	31.9
Facilitate transition to low carbon and circular economy and resilience to climate change, support security of supply	84.1	32.8
Promote and protect public health	80.4	35.4
Reduce unemployment and social disparities	74.5	15.1
Facilitate digital transition of the economy, industry, services and society	73.3	35.4
Promote a safe and sustainable food chain	72.9	32.7
Ensure safe, sustainable transport and mobility	69.7	31.0
Support industrial development	68.7	43.5
Improve quality of public institutions (including digitalisation)	67.8	23.5
Ensure fair conditions of competition in the EU	66.5	34.7
Support social investment and social innovation	66.0	24.4
Promote security of citizens	64.1	35.1
Ensure that existing rules are applied and enforced consistently across the EU	60.9	31.6
Promote financial stability	59.9	31.8
Support labour mobility	58.5	42.2
Facilitate access to finance, in particular to SMEs	58.5	30.7
Ensure a high level of consumer protection and effective redress	55.3	31.8
Provide reliable and comparable statistics	53.2	37.8
Ensure smooth circulation of goods both within EU and at EU borders	49.9	46.4
Support capital flows and investment	43.7	37.5

## EU added value of the current programmes/funds

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they consider the **current programmes/funds to add value** compared to what Member States could achieve at a national, regional and/or local level.

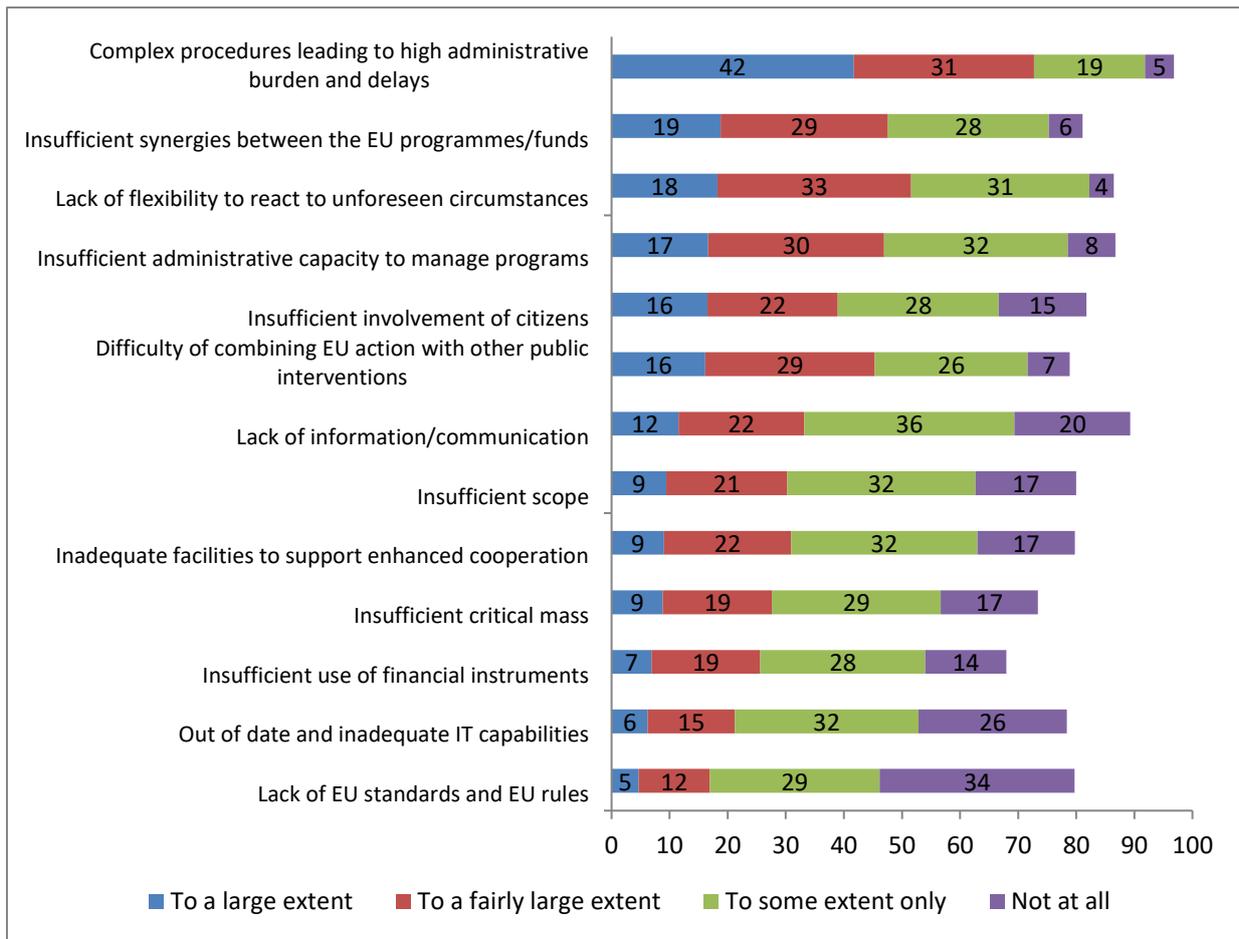
77.9% of respondents believe that the programmes/funds do add value to a large or fairly large extent compared to what Member States could achieve on their own. Indeed, 1554 respondent (38.4%) consider that current programmes/funds add value to a large extent and 1602 respondents (39.5%) consider that they do so to a fairly large extent. 741 respondents (18.3%) consider that current programmes/funds add value to some extent only and 30 respondents (0.7%) consider them not to do so at all.

## Obstacles preventing the current programmes/funds from being successful

The Commission preliminarily identified certain obstacles to the current programmes/funds. Respondents were asked to identify those that represent the biggest obstacles.

“Complex procedures leading to a high administrative burden and delays” is considered the most important **obstacle preventing current programmes/funds from successfully achieving their objectives** with 72.7% of respondents considering this a challenge to a large or fairly large extent. This is followed by lack of flexibility to react to unforeseen circumstances which 51.6% of respondents consider a challenge to a large or fairly large extent (see details in figure 3 below).

*Figure 3: Extent to which the following obstacles prevent the current programmes/funds from meeting their objectives (%)*



### Simplifying and reducing administrative burdens

In the questionnaire, the Commission preliminarily identified certain steps that could help further simplify and reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries under the current programmes/funds.

According to stakeholders, the **steps most likely to help further simplify and reduce administrative burdens** under current programmes/funds are “fewer, clearer and simpler rules” (85.1% of respondents considering this at least to a fairly large extent) as well as “alignment of rules between EU funds” (69.8% of respondents considering this at least to a fairly large extent) (see figure 4 below for details).

Figure 4: Extent to which the following steps would help further simplify or reduce administrative burdens for beneficiaries under the current programmes/funds (%)

