(English version)

Question for written answer E-004265/25
to the Commission
Sofie Eriksson (S&D)
(30 October 2025)

Subject: The future of the EU's framework programme for research and innovation

So far, Horizon Europe has served as a central platform for scientific and industrial cooperation between the EU and like-minded countries such as the UK, Canada and Japan. This openness has been crucial for the quality, cost-effectiveness and innovation capacity of European research and development.

However, the Commission's proposal for a 10th framework programme could well create uncertainty, push up administrative costs and delay projects thanks to new requirements for screening, due diligence and judicial review. It might also disrupt cooperation, mean that projects have to be renegotiated, and lead to the emergence of parallel research schemes outside the EU framework — which in turn drives up costs and reduces the leverage effect on public funds.

Furthermore, the exclusion of associated and third countries might result in the EU losing access to top stakeholders, test beds and specialised suppliers, thereby weakening the technology base and ultimately curbing Europe's strategic autonomy.

1.How does the Commission intend to ensure that the inclusion of defence research in Horizon Europe does not lead to increased costs, more complex and time-consuming processes or weakened international cooperation with like-minded countries?

2.How does the Commission intend to maintain the possibility of continued cooperation with partner countries such as the UK, Canada and Japan — countries that have historically been crucial for the EU's research quality, innovation capacity and technological competitiveness — while strengthening the European security dimension?

Submitted: 30.10.2025

Answer given by Ms Zaharieva on behalf of the European Commission
(10 December 2025)

As spelled out in its Article 1(3), the proposed Regulation establishing Horizon Europe 2028-2034 ([1]) does not apply to the Specific Programme on defence research. The activities of the latter and rules on association are laid down in the proposed Regulation establishing the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) ([2]).

Under the future Horizon Europe Programme, only the European Innovation Council could support innovation in critical technologies with focus on defence applications. For such activities, entities established in third countries would be eligible for funding provided that their country is associated with the ECF for defence activities.

International cooperation would remain a cornerstone of the EU's research and innovation policy, reflecting the EU's commitment to promote cooperation with third countries and international organisations in this field, as mandated by the Treaties ([3]). Carefully designed research security provisions would apply where justified.

1 Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing Horizon Europe, the framework Programme for Research and Innovation, for the period 2028-2034 laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/695, COM(2025) 543 final, 16.07.2025.

2 Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on establishing the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), including the specific programme for defence research and innovation activities, repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/522, (EU) 2021/694, (EU) 2021/697, (EU) 2021/783, repealing provisions of Regulations (EU) 2021/696, (EU) 2023/588, and amending Regulation (EU) [EDIP], COM(2025) 555 final, 16.07.2025.

3 See Article 180, point (b) in conjunction with Article 186 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU.