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Answer given by Ms Zaharieva
on behalf of the European Commission
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Joint Undertakings (JU) align research and innovation (R&I) investments across EU, national and regional level, and between industry and academia, enabling flexible responses to EU challenges and avoiding fragmentation and providing more co-steering role to the industry.

The Horizon Europe Interim Evaluation Report¹ highlights JU's role in advancing EU leadership in semiconductors, health technologies and clean hydrogen, reinforcing value chains and securing a competitive edge for EU companies. Under Pillar II, JUs show also the highest direct leverage factor (0.8).

In 2024, Chips JU², European High Performance Computing JU³ and Clean Aviation JU⁴ faced low operational budget implementation due to respectively delays in procurement agreements, redeployment of resources to the new AI factories pillar and slow implementation of 2023 projects. Intensive use of external service providers is specific to fusion for energy⁵ and it is due to the purpose of the JU to deliver the Euratom contribution to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor. In table 2.4, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) report outlines the actions undertaken in this regard. Moreover, the Commission is closely monitoring the past observations not yet addressed by the JUs towards their implementation by the target date set out by the ECA.

The Horizon Europe 2028-2034⁶ and the European Competitiveness Fund proposals of the Commission⁷ seek to continue to streamline the partnership portfolio, using Treaty-based instruments where their impact is highest.

Budget transparency will be ensured through rigorous monitoring, reporting and audits in line with the applicable rules. Simplification measures (i.e. lump sum funding, personnel unit costs) are underway to reduce administrative burden and increase focus on project results.

¹ Commission Staff Working Document, Interim Evaluation of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021 - 2024) – SWD(2025) 110 final - https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a3aa9b90-15c0-4ea7-b25e-9f4e29cfa740_en?filename=ec_rtd_he-evaluation-swd.pdf.

² <https://www.chips-ju.europa.eu/>.

³ https://www.eurohpc-ju.europa.eu/index_en.

⁴ <https://www.clean-aviation.eu/>.

⁵ <https://fusionforenergy.europa.eu/>.

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0543>.

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0555>.