

## ***Euroregion positioning on the future***

### ***Horizon Europe Programme (FP9)***

- A) The Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean was founded in 2004, becoming an EGTC, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation in 2009. Its current members are the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya), the Government of the Balearic Islands and the Occitania Region. It represents a territory of more than 15 million inhabitants and an aggregate GDP of 423.700 million euros in 2017. The presidency of the Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean functions on an 18-month rotating presidency principle. Currently it is the Government of Catalonia who exercises the presidency until December 2018.
- B) The Euroregion is willing to contribute to the integration process of Europe and represents a critical mass with a high-level transformational capacity, as it comprises leading entities and institutions in the generation of knowledge and innovation. The members of the Euroregion are leading territories in R + D + I and home to the headquarters of leading International and European research infrastructures such as the European Marine Biological Resource Centre (Banyuls); the European Space Agency (ESA); the Alba Synchrotron; the MareNostrum Supercomputer; the ITER Coordination Centre; the Balearic Islands Coastal Observing and Forecasting System (SOCIB), etc.
- C) The territories of the Euroregion have 500.000 university students and 70.000 teachers. The entities of the R + D + I sector employ 100.000 people and have already been allocated 1.100M EUR from the European framework programme H2020. The Smart Specialisation strategies of these territories are based on cutting-edge technologies from the areas of ICT, nanotechnologies, photonics, biotechnology, microelectronics and advanced materials, applied to emerging sectors such as health and bio-economics, food, environment, water, space, energy, mobility, cultural and creative industries and Smart Systems, all critical sectors for the competitive strategy of the European Union.



- D) In the Euroregion roadmap "Towards a creative, sustainable and solidary Euroregion on the 2020 horizon", adopted by the presidents of the three member governments, it was established on the 23rd June 2017 that the key principles which should guide the actions of the Euroregion are: 1) to work with and for the territory; 2) to contribute to responding to the common European challenges; and 3) to play an active role in the Mediterranean.
- E) In another case, in terms of the strategic areas of action of the Euroregion, these are defined in the Roadmap as: 1) to develop a competitive Euroregional eco-system of research, knowledge and innovation; 2) to contribute to the sustainable development of the territory; and 3) to foster the euroregional identity.
- F) Following its principles and strategic action areas, the Euroregion strongly believes in the importance of positioning itself in accordance with European programmes to stimulate and foster research and innovation, given the essential role of the framework programme to strengthen European competitiveness and face global challenges.
- G) There is a fundamental will in the Euroregion to coordinate our policies based on a euroregional innovation strategy focused on key areas for the three members, such as water; sustainability of marine resources; health; agro-food issues; tourism; the environment and climate change. It works towards facilitating conditions for a circular economy and strengthened cooperation between the different social, economic, academic and scientific players in the three territories. To this aim, the Euroregion has established its own Commission for Higher Education and Research to foster and implement this strengthened cooperation in the area of research and innovation.
- H) There is a clear willingness of the three members of the Euroregion to participate in the European financial instruments as qualitatively as possible. This has been proven by the fact that in the last programming period, the three members of the Euroregion have promoted projects and investments in the field of research, technological development and innovation with European funds, which guarantee the excellence of the eco-system and competitiveness of SME's, responding to the main social, economic and environmental challenges of the territories. These funds have had an impact on the economic transformation of territories giving rise to innovation and the collaboration between Quadruple Helix agents with the creation of new jobs, products and services, as well as the in the creation of new companies.
- I) In this sense, with regard to the forthcoming Horizon Europe Programme (FP9) the Euroregion proposes the following:
1. The importance of the regional and euroregional dimension should be taken into account and sufficient resources and instruments should be established to support it. It is the agents and regional institutions closest to the territory who are in the best position to guarantee consistent actions of players in line with European research and innovation policy and who may acquire a more transformational role of the regions. Cooperation

between regions should be strengthened including some of the instruments which already exist such as for example, "Spreading excellence and widening participation".

2. International collaboration should be fostered with the aim of tackling global challenges, taking advantage of existing regional programmes (such as INTERREG-EUROPE / SUDOE / MED / POCTEFA; IEV CT MED or PRIMA) to open up more cooperation possibilities with third countries. The Mediterranean and its Southern coast should continue to be a strategic area for Europe not only due to its geographic proximity, but also because many European challenges (environmental, migratory, etc.) may only be successfully tackled by working together with all the countries of the Mediterranean Arc. Also, the Mediterranean is an enclosed sea, with limited resources thus it is even more important to foster scientific collaboration between its regions.

3. The strategic value of the territorial distribution of the large research infrastructures should be strengthened, from a regional point of view, bearing in mind the existence of territorial collaboration frameworks such as the Euroregions which are key clusters. We believe it is necessary to enhance the value of existing infrastructures in the Euroregion, bearing in mind its critical mass and capacity as a competitive European hub.

4. Adequate funding should be ensured. The Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean congratulates itself for the proposed increase in funding for the new programming period, However, despite this increase, we consider that 100.000 million euros is insufficient to achieve the ambitious challenges set by the new Programme. This budget is inadequate if we want the new missions of the European Council of Innovation or its creation to be effective and to provide added value in Europe as well as consolidating and strengthening the rest of the Programme, especially the Excellent Science component. The low success rates of H2020 prove that excellent projects with huge research and innovation potential remain unfunded, with the consequent loss of knowledge and competitiveness on an international scale.

5. Curiosity-based research and open science should be promoted with additional investments, thus increasing opportunities for scientific creativity. It is essential to strike a balance between basic research and more applied research which is closer to the market and avoid an overly high volume of projects focused on the highest levels of technological preparation (TRL).

6. Pilar I of "Open Science" should be strengthened and promoted with a special emphasis on mobility, training, attraction and consolidation of human capital, essential elements to reach competitive and leading world research systems. We propose a budget increase in the programmes aimed exclusively at human resources, such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme (MSCA).

7. Procedures based on simple and transparent decisions should be included in the new European Council of Innovation. It is necessary for all research and innovation players to access the programmes and actions of the European Council of Innovation without focusing exclusively on the more industrial sectors. Academia are one of the main players

generating the most ground-breaking innovation and they should be taken into account from the beginning.

8. Access of SME's to the funds should be encouraged, through financial and instrumental measures in favour of inter-sectorial ones, as was the case during the current H2020. Instruments which allow for the consolidation of SME alliances as regional research players through their participation in the Framework Programme should be fostered.

9. The task should be aimed at creating a true strategy of synergies between European policies and funds (FEDER, FSE, Horizon Europe, etc.) to finance projects throughout its lifecycle. An approach based simply on looking for funding complementarity would fall below the set challenges. Also, FEDER funds cannot be considered a budget adjustment variable when framework programme funds become insufficient. These are key synergies to boosting productivity, growth and the creation of employment in Europe, thus an ambitious conception of this goal is necessary.

With this positioning on the forthcoming Horizon Europe programme, the Euroregion Pyrenees Mediterranean aims to underline the importance of the Euroregions as key players in the building process of Europe. This positioning reflects the strategies and capabilities of the Euroregion territories to respond to the three strategic pillars of the future Horizon Europe Programme. In striving towards the challenges faced by Europe in the forthcoming period it is necessary to focus on excellent cross-border research and innovation, the promotion of international talent, knowledge transfer between academia and industry and access to internationally recognised research infrastructures. The Euroregion believes these should be the cornerstones of EU funding.

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