



# R&I needs a strong place in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

EU-LIFE's statement in the context of the [EC public consultation](#) about the EU's next long-term budget (MFF)

Europe is setting a new course to strengthen its competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy. The Commission's [Political Guidelines 2024-2029](#) stressed the need to "*put research and innovation at the heart of our economy*", which was echoed by [von der Leyen's mission letter to the Commissioner for Startups, Research & Innovation](#). Recent high-level reports have also placed Research and Innovation (R&I) as a critical element to Europe's response to the current major societal, environmental and geopolitical challenges.

Yet words alone will not secure Europe's future — they must translate into action. The upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF 2028-2034) is the instrument to turn that recognition into reality by: 1) securing a standalone R&I Framework Programme (FP10); 2) allocating it a budget that matches Europe's ambition; and 3) ensuring world-leading discovery-driven research for long-term innovation and industrial robustness.

## A standalone R&I framework programme – to drive Europe's prosperity

A standalone R&I framework programme (FP10) is the structural pre-condition for maintaining Europe's research excellence and turning it into long-term innovation, industrial strength and strategic autonomy. A single, dedicated programme secures the excellence-first principle that is essential for competitiveness, shields the needed long-term funding without diverging it to other short-term priorities, and brings every R&I instrument under one dedicated structure. This focus speeds decisions, decreases red tape and shows investors that EU funding is there to leverage rather than replace their capital. A standalone R&I framework programme is the way R&I will drive Europe's future to a healthy and prosperous one.

## A commensurate budget for R&I - to match Europe's ambition

At a critical moment of geopolitical stress and other societal challenges, rather than mutually exclusive, investments in R&I and European defence are both essential to ensure the sovereignty and prosperity of Europe. Both should be independently prioritised in the MFF. To address the current challenges and achieve Europe's goals, it is essential to allocate a commensurate budget for a standalone R&I framework programme. Otherwise, R&I won't be able to fulfil the expectations. Our vision is aligned with that of high-level expert reports such as [Draghi](#) and [Heitor](#), and the R&I ecosystem: €200 billion is the minimum budget to achieve the intended impacts. At least 15% of the future MFF must be allocated to R&I, namely to FP10.

## A world-leading discovery-driven research - as a basis for long-term innovation and industrial robustness

Fundamental research is the first link in the competitiveness chain, as also flagged in recent high-level reports ([Draghi](#), [Letta](#), [Heitor](#)). Without a robust foundation of discovery-driven research, the innovation cycle will dry up. Yet the European Commission's own key roadmaps, most noticeably "[A Competitiveness Compass for the EU](#)", omit discovery-driven research, jumping straight to scale-ups and regulation. That weakness critically endangers the industrial strength sought: world-leading companies and technologies are

modernised and born from discovery-driven research initiatives whose commercial value is unknowable at the outset. This must be prioritised in the next MFF. What is needed?

- **Double the ERC budget** — to secure Europe’s position at the forefront of frontier research. The narrative that Europe is already world-leading in discovery-driven research and therefore investments in it are not pivotal, is simply not true.
- **Double the investment in EIC Pathfinder and Transition** — so that innovative ideas have a supported bridge from lab to prototype. The current underfunding of these two core instruments of the EIC critically endangers the achievements intended in the coming years and decades.
- **Double MSCA funding** — to attract, train and retain the talent that creates new knowledge and turns discoveries into industrial strength. MSCA is a critical pillar of scientific talent attraction and is not sufficiently considered in the current EU strategy.
- **Enable collaborative, low-TRL research programmes** — so that excellent teams can solve blue-sky questions together without prescriptive constraints that hinder longer-term impact. Europe is lacking adequate support to leading scientific communities across borders. These communities must be conceived around scientific questions – not prescriptive, short-term needs – to become mature and ready to react quickly and deliver innovative solutions when needed. This is not achievable at national or regional level; only European-level programmes can build such multinational, mature, scientifically led communities.

The next MFF is the last opportunity to turn today’s policy rhetoric into tomorrow’s industrial strength. Above we outline the recommendations to create a budget to place R&I firmly at the heart of the economy, boosting Europe’s competitiveness for a prosperous and resilient Europe.

Barcelona, 2 May 2025

This position is part of **EU-LIFE’s reply to the current EC public consultation** on the next MFF. **For detailed information on EU-LIFE’s proposals consult:**

R&I for Competitiveness

- [The future of European research: 5 key actions for a competitive Europe](#)
- [Scientific research is a strategic necessity for resilience and competitiveness in Europe](#)
- [EU-LIFE's 4 elements to strengthen Europe's competitiveness through the European Life Sciences Strategy](#)

Future Framework Programme

- [Towards FP10: EU-LIFE's guiding principles for FP10](#)
- [Towards FP10: EU-LIFE reply to High-Level Group Consultation on HE and FP10](#)
- [Towards FP10: EU-LIFE's vision for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions \(MSCA\)](#)
- [Towards FP10: EU-LIFE's vision for the European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#)

Horizon Europe - strategy and budget

- [EU-LIFE answer to the Public Consultation of EU R&I Programmes 2014 – 2027](#)
- [Reaction of EU-LIFE to the next framework programme budget agreement](#)
- [Europe needs Research & Innovation to address the future: EU-LIFE reaction to the EU Council deal](#)
- [Open letter to the EU Council and the European Parliament to prioritise R&I by committing an appropriate budget for Horizon Europe](#)



#### Research Infrastructures

- [Call for action on small and medium research infrastructures in Europe](#)

#### Pillar II Health Cluster

- [How to ensure health safety in Europe: the vision of EU-LIFE research institutes](#)
- [EU-LIFE calls for impactful collaborative research in European Biomedicine](#)

#### Pillar II Cancer Mission

- [Reaction of EU-LIFE: Cancer Mission work programme 2021-22](#)
- [EU-LIFE recommendations to the Cancer Mission draft](#)

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### **About EU-LIFE**

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