

Dear Research Working Party member,

Climate mainstreaming target in Horizon Europe

We hope that within the Council you can speak up in favour of wording suggested by the European Parliament concerning Article 6a (new) point 7 concerning a climate mainstreaming target of at least 35%, and that you push to delete “where appropriate” from the article.

“Shall contribute” not “are expected to contribute”

We strongly prefer the Parliament’s wording (apparently provisionally agreed by the Council on 21/02) to the version developed by the Presidency following the Research Working Party on 21/02.

The Parliament’s wording says, **“As part of the general Union objective of mainstreaming climate actions into EU sectoral policies and EU funds, actions under this Programme shall contribute at least 35% of the expenditure to climate objectives where appropriate.** Climate mainstreaming shall be adequately integrated in research and innovation content and applied at all stages of the research cycle.” The Presidency’s wording, it was reported to us, replaces “shall contribute” with “are expected to contribute”.

The advantage of the European Parliament’s phrasing is that it has greater legal force. We consider that whereas a failure to meet the target would be tolerated under “are expected to contribute”, it would not under “shall contribute”. Concretely, this means that if the Commission finds itself behind schedule on climate-relevant spending, it will redistribute money to those parts of the programme that are climate relevant.

Climate mainstreaming deserves clear and consistent governance. The IPCC has shown we must limit increases in average global temperature to 1.5°C to avoid significant damage to our economy and to preserve our quality of life. The EU is considering setting itself the mission of full decarbonisation by 2050 in response. Innovation policy must help society prepare for this in the next decade, including by supplying new technology to bring down the investment cost of overhauling our energy system.

Climate action creates jobs. The in-depth analysis accompanying the EC’s Communication “Clean Planet for All”¹ containing scenarios for decarbonisation by 2050 said, “Compared to 2008, direct and indirect employments in renewable energy [has] more than doubled, increasing from 660 000 to 1.43 million jobs.” It then showed that in many sectors beyond power generation (mining and extraction excluded) decarbonisation results in more jobs or at least a steady number of jobs.

Finally, climate action boosts international competitiveness. Renewable energy is cheap energy. Investing in renewable energy capacity today brings with it the possibility of clawing back some competitive advantage in manufacturing from nations that unwisely stick with fossil fuels.

For these reasons, firming up the Commission’s tentative interest in spending 35% of Horizon Europe’s budget into a commitment is not something to be feared, but a move that will put Europe on a future-proof, no-regrets path to prosperity.

Deleting “where appropriate”

Simply for the sake of clear law-making, a target, however mildly expressed, must be associated with a clear timeframe. The decision to try to achieve the target by the deadline needs to be made as early as

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/com_2018_733_analysis_in_support_en_0.pdf

possible. The co-legislators must therefore determine now during these trilogues that the target is appropriate and delete these words.

Yours sincerely,

