



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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## **Building human capital for innovation in Horizon 2020**

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Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Launch of Horizon 2020/Paris  
**16 December 2013**

Madame la Ministre

Messieurs les Ministres

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Je tenais tout d'abord à vous remercier pour cette invitation à lancer, en France, à vos côtés le nouveau programme "Horizon 2020".

A un moment où l'Europe est sérieusement menacée d'une croissance faible, il est plus que jamais important que nous trouvions et supportions les voies d'accès vers une recherche dynamique et d'excellence ainsi que vers une capacité d'innovation forte.

Avec Horizon 2020, l'Europe investit précisément dans sa ressource première: ses chercheurs mais aussi ses entrepreneurs, ses industriels, ses étudiants. C'est un message positif que je crois nous devons tous porter, notamment à l'approche des élections européennes.

Les débats, notamment budgétaires, n'ont pas toujours été faciles, mais avec près de **80 Milliards d'euros** sur les 7 prochaines années, Horizon 2020 peut clairement être un moteur de la reprise économique en Europe. Il faut maintenant que chacun des acteurs - que ce soient les chercheurs, les entreprises petites ou grandes, les universités, les autorités nationales et régionales - saisissent ensemble les opportunités qu'offrent ce nouveau programme. C'est le sens de cet événement aujourd'hui et je remercie Mme Fioraso pour son organisation.

Je voudrais maintenant, si vous le permettez, continuer en Anglais.

Horizon 2020 will expand two successful initiatives under my portfolio: the Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions and the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT).

By increasing the budgets for both the Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions and the EIT, Europe is sending a strong signal: we are making it clear that the EU is intent on reinforcing European support for multi-national partnerships that bring together academia and other organisations such as businesses. Because we know that these partnerships can stimulate economic growth, offering the innovative higher education that employers are looking for in today's graduates.

In the case of the Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions, the European Union will continue offering researchers exciting opportunities to work abroad for their career development.

Researchers at any stage of their career will be able to gain experience at leading centres in another country. The programme will also strongly encourage researchers to move between sectors to further develop their innovation skills and employability both inside and outside academia. In other words, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions will build on the great progress we have already made.

The EU Member States and the European Parliament have agreed to allocate 8% of the Horizon 2020 budget to the Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions –over **EUR 6 billion euros** in funding. Thanks to this higher budget – 30% more compared to the current programme - the EU will be able to support around **65 000 researchers** over the next seven years.

France has been the third largest beneficiary of the current Marie Curie Actions and will continue to benefit largely from the new programme.

Since 2007, when the Seventh Framework Programme began, France has been awarded nearly 400 million euros in funding for the Marie Curie Actions. This has benefited 1 500 French researchers who have been able to gain valuable skills and experience abroad; and over 3 000 foreign researchers have received a Marie Curie grant to do research in France.

But the extra funding is, of course, not just good news for France. It is positive for all countries. This bigger budget will make the Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions the main EU programme for doctoral training, for around 25 000 candidates. They will support industrial doctorates - where researchers must spend half of their time in companies - but also joint doctorates, and other innovative forms of research training that will provide researchers with experience outside academia.

There will also be a new feature - the **co-funding** of regional, national and international doctoral programmes.

This will enable Europe to support even further national or regional mobility schemes, already existing or newly created. Such co-funding will reinforce the impact of the Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions on the conditions for researchers across Europe, helping to keep and to attract the best talent here – one of the goals of the strategy I presented to EU Education Ministers this summer on 'European Higher Education in the World'.

The Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions, by bringing together the European Research and Higher Education Areas, will enable us to promote quality, employability and mobility as benchmarks for doctoral training. And in doing so, the EU will help to prepare European researchers for the world of today and tomorrow, while making Europe an attractive place to do research.

**The European Institute for Innovation and Technology** – the EIT - will also be playing an important role. With the new Horizon 2020 programme – and a budget of €2.7b- it is our ambition to see the EIT grow into a fully-fledged innovation institute at the service of Europe. We want the EIT to have what it takes to boost the innovation capacity of the Union and its Member States through highly integrated partnerships between higher education, research and business the so called Knowledge and Innovation Communities or KICs.

Already since its creation in 2008, the EIT and its KICs have trained more than 1000 students and supported more than 100 start-ups, with these companies launching more than 89 products and services. And the potential is important since more than 400 business ideas are currently being incubated.

So the EIT – and its first KICs – have shown that the concept is worth investing in. We are changing the way we approach innovation in Europe, the way we understand it, by building on already existing clusters of excellence and by bridging the gap from research to business model reaching the markets. With the EIT, we create the entrepreneurs of tomorrow in Europe.

Many of you here today have been working closely within the existing KICs, be it in Climate KIC, KIC InnoEnergy or EIT ICT Labs. And I would like to thank you for this. It is your mobilisation and your commitment which contributed to the success of the EIT in its early phase and which helped to secure a bright future for the EIT. I was in particular

glad to meet with you and hear your views at the EIT seminar organised in Paris in November last year with Minister Fioraso.

For those of you who have not yet been involved in the EIT, I welcome you to a new way of doing things. And it is now the right timing to get organised for the future KICs.

In February 2014, the selection process of two new KICs in **healthy living and active ageing** and in **raw materials** will be launched. The EIT intends also to publish guidelines to take account of the past experience when building a KIC whose degree of integration requires strong thinking and deep commitments from partners.

Knowing the French expertise in these fields and the current high participation, I look forward to seeing the EIT's presence further reinforced in France.

The process will continue in 2016 and 2018 when new KICs join the EIT community in areas such as food4future, added value manufacturing or urban mobility.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions and the EIT are designed to trigger the type of innovative thinking that can benefit European society at large. They foster smart and sustainable economic growth at a time when it matters most. And they tap into the talent of the individuals behind research and innovation who are key to Europe's future.

Marie Skłodowska- Curie, a woman whom I admire for her drive and passion once said: "*Dans la vie, rien n'est à craindre, tout est à comprendre. Il est maintenant temps de mieux comprendre afin de craindre moins*".

I think this summarizes perfectly our objectives to make sure that the future of Research and Innovation in Europe remains bright.

Thank you.