

PRESS RELEASE

Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) welcomes the announcement of the Expert group on the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe

Brussels-Strasbourg, December 5, 2023

The [Initiative for Science in Europe](#) welcomes the nomination of the members of the **expert group on the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe**, and congratulates **Manuel Heitor** on his appointment as Chair of this group. The fact that the EC has entrusted the presidency to an academic and a former minister for research is a very positive sign for the scientific community in Europe, given his in-depth knowledge of research, of the framework programmes and of the European and international S&T landscape. He brings an exceptional understanding of the state of play of R&I in the Member States and of the challenges ahead.

The group consists in fifteen women and men from all over Europe, from the academic sector and industry, with a wide range of expertise. Overall, the group members possess the required competences to measure the progress and drawbacks of Horizon Europe and indicate the possibilities which can be implemented within the time frame left. It bodes well for the challenging task that they are entrusted to achieve: evaluate Horizon Europe after its third year of implementation, and make substantial recommendations for the future. We wish them the best!

Most importantly, the HLG should provide strategic but realistic recommendations for the next three years, and beyond, to improve the internal and external coherence of Horizon Europe and put forward tailored approaches towards optimising its articulation and synergies with other EU programmes and with the Member States R&I strategies and programmes.

ISE highlights the critical need for a major investment for researchers' careers, a necessary condition for Europe to be really competitive in the World arena. There, the Union can provide decisive leadership. A better balance within the framework programme's funding between curiosity-driven research on one hand, and challenge-oriented research and close-to-market technological development on the other hand, presently skewed in favour of the latter, must be achieved. Pillar 1 budget be shielded from any cut during the remaining years of Horizon Europe and be increased in the upcoming framework programme. To help complete the research and innovation cycle, ISE recommends making collaborative basic research an intrinsic component of R&I Actions. Last but not least, appropriate decisions are needed to transform the small, overly complicated and exclusive "widening participation and spreading excellence" actions into an ambitious set of inclusive measures providing access to the whole framework programme to every outstanding researcher in Europe. A fair and competitive European Research Area is an ethical and political priority.

Overall, Europe is faced with tremendous challenges, with an ongoing war in its Eastern part, great economic difficulties, competition from abroad, and the urgent need to make real progress on climate change and the sixteen other Sustainable Development goals. In such a situation, bold policies are a necessity. We count on the High-Level Group to provide the required leadership. ISE ambitions to be a source of inspiration.

Contact: Monica Dietl, Research Director, Executive Coordinator

monica.dietl@initiative-se.eu



Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) is an independent platform bringing together learned societies and European scientific research organisations, operating throughout all disciplines and across all sectors, which played a decisive role in the creation of the European Research Council (ERC).

ISE has since then successfully advocated for a greater role for science in Europe, and effectively supports common causes essential for European scientific research communities, shaping European science policies and stimulating the involvement of European researchers in the design and implementation of European Research Area.

You can find more about ISE [here](#).