



HORIZON EUROPE

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

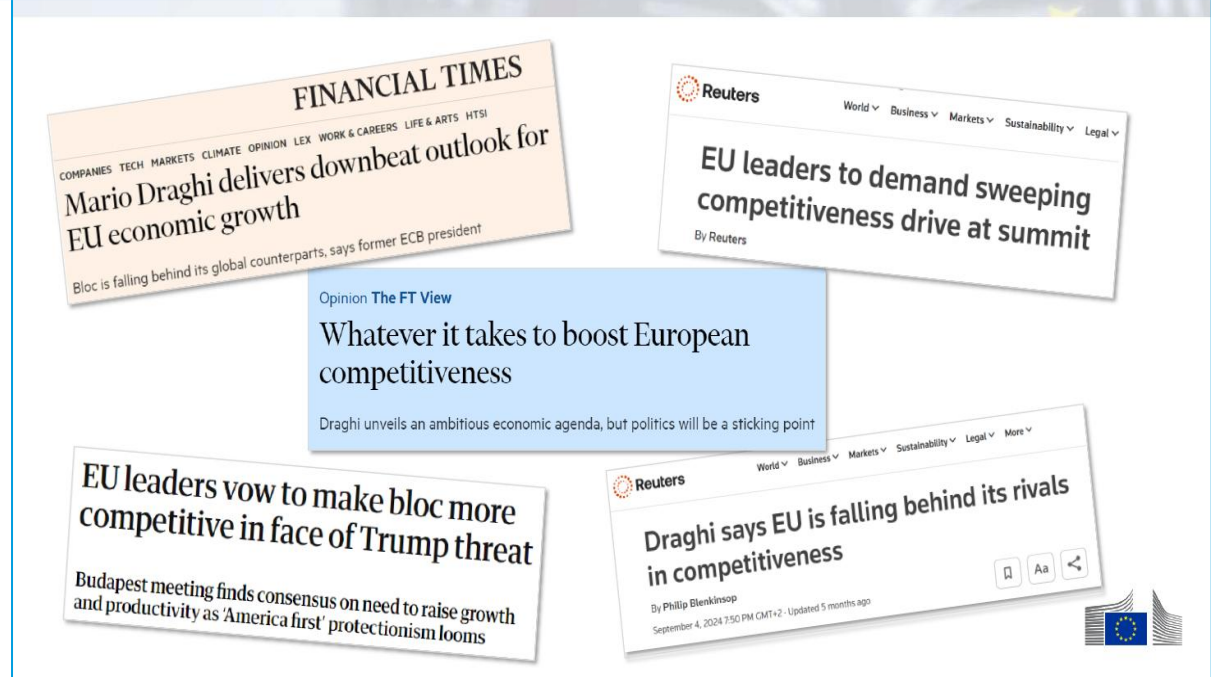
Work Programme 2026-27
& Proposal for Horizon Europe 2028-34

19 February 2026

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European Commission DG R&I

Competitiveness at the core of the EU policy agenda



● European Council

Informal EU leaders' retreat, 12 February 2026

Main results

EU leaders met for an informal retreat at Alden Biesen to discuss how to **deepen the single market**, **reduce economic dependencies** and **boost competitiveness**.

“ We have a clear priority – to strengthen economic growth in Europe. This is essential for our prosperity, to create quality jobs, and to sustain our economic social model.

— President Costa



EU leaders stand together for a family photo

A Competitiveness Compass for the EU

Flagship Actions for innovation

- ✓ Startup & Scale-up Strategy
- 28th regime
- European Innovation Act
- ERA Act
- ✓ AI factories, Apply AI, AI in Science, Data Union
- ✓ European Biotech Act (first Act)
- ✓ European Bioeconomy Strategy
- ✓ European Life Sciences Strategy
- Advanced Materials Act
- EU Cloud and AI Development Act
- ✓ EU Quantum Strategy and a Quantum Act
- Space Act
- Review of the Horizontal Merger Control Guidelines
- Digital Networks Act



Key EU policies with a strong R&I dimension

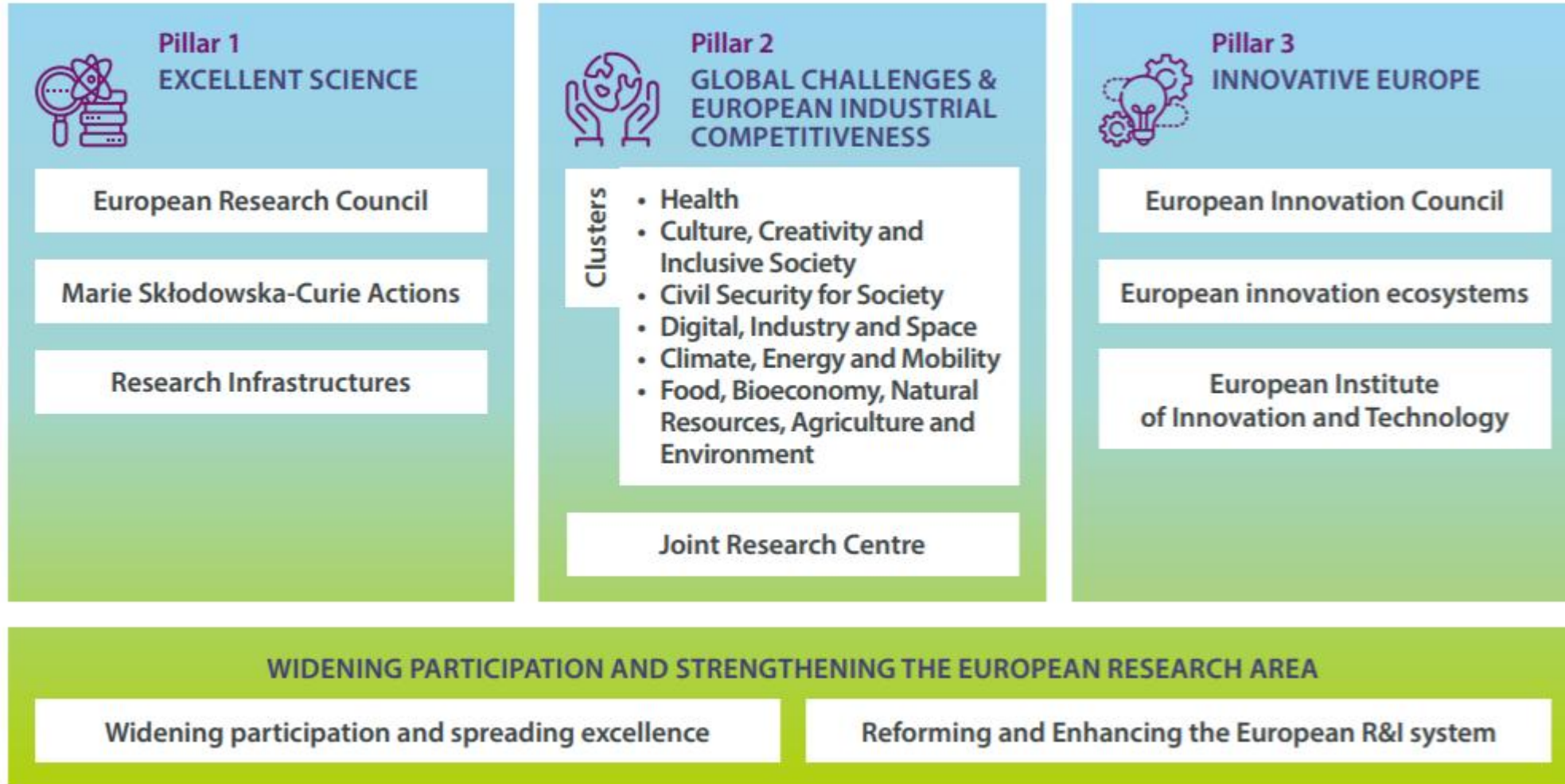
- Clean Industrial Deal, February 2025:
 - investment in infrastructure and industry to support industrial decarbonisation, growth and competitiveness goals, with clear business incentives
 - lead markets to boost supply and demand in clean tech
- Industrial action plan for the European automotive sector, March 2025
- European Research and Technology Infrastructure Strategy, September 2025
- AI in Science Strategy, October 2025
- Existing Acts: Chips Act, Net-zero Industry Act, Critical Raw Materials Act
- *Advanced Materials Communication and future Advanced Materials Act planned for 2026;*
- *Future Circular Economy Act planned for 2026*

Main messages from independent interim evaluation

- report published 2024

- 1 The programme is highly relevant and combines **agility and long-term competence building in strategic areas** for the Digital and Industrial Transition (DIT)
- 2 The systemic and “technology neutral” approach enhances the Programme’s capacity to deliver **integrated solutions to complex challenges** related to the DIT
- 3 European Partnerships play an **important role in Cluster 4 policy mix**, but their integration into the Programme should be improved to **avoid silos**
- 4 The programme fosters the **global positioning** of the EU, strengthening resilience and reducing strategic dependencies, while **collaboration with world leaders** can be improved
- 5 The programme results are **expected to have a transformative effect** on strategic sectors linked to the DIT, while impact could be maximised by **fostering market and societal uptake**
- 6 The **internal and external coherence** of Cluster 4 is overall positive, but **synergies can be further exploited** and silos prevented
- 7 The transition between H2020 and HE was efficient, ensuring **proportionality of efforts** throughout the project’s lifecycle, while the **FP monitoring and evaluation system** can be further enhanced

Structure of Horizon Europe



The challenge for WP 2026-27

Following recommendations from high-level reports and new Commission we developed new approaches, as a **bridge to 'FP10'**:

- Better prioritise and coordinate between calls
- Develop fewer and larger topics (same total budget)
 - Less prescriptive
 - WP 2025: 23 mainstream topics on industry side
 - WP 2026-27: 25 topics
 - **Joint topics between partnerships**
- Ensure a substantial and coordinated R&I contribution to the Clean Industrial Deal
- Reinforce synergies and joint activities amongst partnerships towards strategic initiatives

Cluster 4 Industry Calls 2026-27- examples of joint topics

- HORIZON-CL4-2027-01-MAT-PROD-22: Innovative advanced materials and new production processes – reducing dependencies on Critical and Strategic Raw Materials (IA) (IAM4EU, P4P)
- HORIZON-CL4-2026-01-MAT-PROD-04: Optimise the usage of resources in a circular economy (RIA) (P4P, CSP)
- HORIZON-CL4-2026/2027-01-MAT-PROD-05/06: Circular innovative advanced materials: facilitating the transition from design to markets (RIA) (IAM4EU, MiE)

[different application areas: 2026 - mobility and medical devices; 2027- energy and construction]

- HORIZON-CL4-2027-02-MAT-PROD-32-two-stage: Efficient energy input from renewable sources and energy management in the process industries (IA) (P4P, IAM4EU)



Cluster 4 Industry Calls 2026-27- examples of joint topics

- HORIZON-CL4-2026-02-DIGITAL-EMERGING-51-two-stage: AI improved advanced manufacturing and production processes in factories (RIA) (MiE, ADRA)
- HORIZON-CL4-2027-02-DIGITAL-EMERGING-52-two-stage: New approaches for Human/AI collaboration for the workforce of the future (RIA) (MiE, ADRA)
- HORIZON-CL4-2026-02-DIGITAL-EMERGING-53-two-stage: Innovative AI methods and technologies for the process industries (RIA) (P4P, ADRA)

Co-funded with Cluster 5:

- HORIZON-CL5-2026-10-D2-03: Integrated Production and Product Development for Next-Generation Lithium-based Batteries for Mobility (BATT4EU, MiE)

[at least one project in automotive sector and one project in aviation sector]

- HORIZON-CL5-2027-04-Two-Stage-D2-07: Novel approaches towards next-generation battery concepts, leveraging the enabling role of innovative advanced materials (BATT4EU, IAM4EU)



Clean Industrial Deal – Horizontal Call

Horizontal call, **Clusters 4 and 5**, with two topics in each year:

- HORIZON-CID-2026-01-01: R&I in Support of the Clean Industrial Deal: **Decarbonisation of energy intensive industries (IA)** (Processes4Planet and Clean Steel partnerships)
- HORIZON-CID-2026-01-02: ***Clean Technologies for Climate Action***
 - ✓ *Sound business plan and market-readiness strategy to **prepare** and support the **deployment** of the proposed tech solution within/across relevant EU industrial sectors*
 - ✓ ***Leveraging investments for deployment***



**EUROPE'S
BUDGET**
THE POWER
OF TOGETHER

Horizon Europe 2028 - 2034

DG RTD

08/09/2025

The structure of the new Horizon Europe



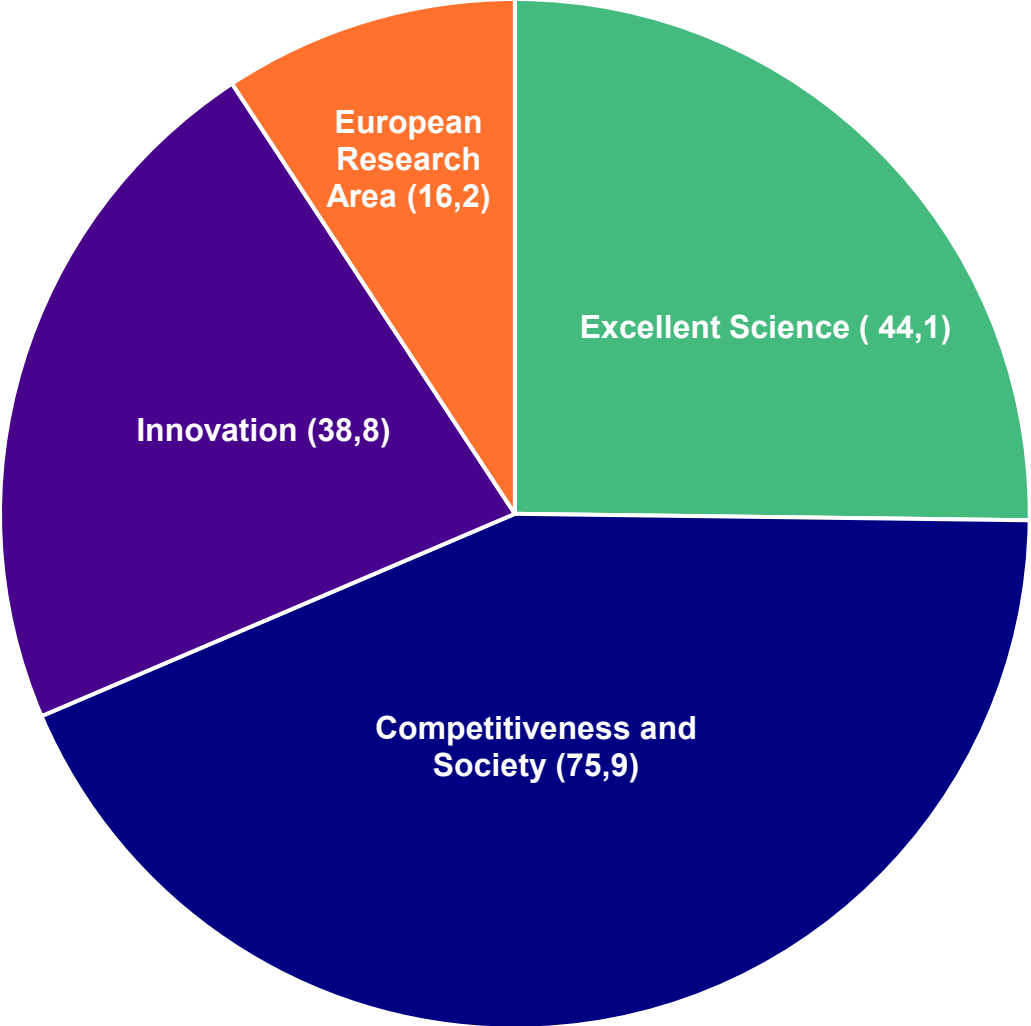
¹ Consistent with activities under the European Competitiveness Fund

Commission proposal of 16 July 2025



The Budget

Horizon Europe total budget EUR 175 billion (current prices)
Figures all in EUR billion



Pillar I – Excellent Science

Pillar I aims to strengthen the EU's scientific base, attract top talents and promote excellent research in Europe.

Indicative budget: **EUR 44.1 billion**



Pillar II – Competitiveness and Society

Pillar II aims to support collaborative research and innovation in areas of high societal impact.

Indicative budget : **EUR 75.9 billion**, of which:

- EUR 68.3 billion for ‘Competitiveness’:
 - EUR 25.3 billion for ‘Clean Transition and Industrial Decarbonisation’
 - EUR 19.7 billion for ‘Health, Biotech, Agriculture and Bioeconomy’
 - EUR 16.9 billion for ‘Digital Leadership’
 - EUR 6.4 billion for ‘Resilience and Security, Defence Industry and Space’
- EUR 7.6 billion for ‘Society’



Pillar III - Innovation

Pillar III aims to support innovation in Europe, with a focus on promoting the development of new products, services and business models. The EIC will be expanded to fund high-risk disruptive projects in stages and will introduce a strong focus for defence and dual-use startups.

Indicative budget : **EUR 38.8 billion**



Pillar IV - European Research Area (ERA)

Pillar IV aims to support the development of a unified ERA with a focus on promoting excellence, inclusiveness and impact. It also supports the development and operation of research and technology infrastructures.

Indicative budget: **EUR 16.2 billion**, of which

- EUR 5.4 billion for 'Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence'



Novelties

**Further
Simplification**

**European
Partnerships**

EIC

**Research and
Technology
Infrastructures**

Widening

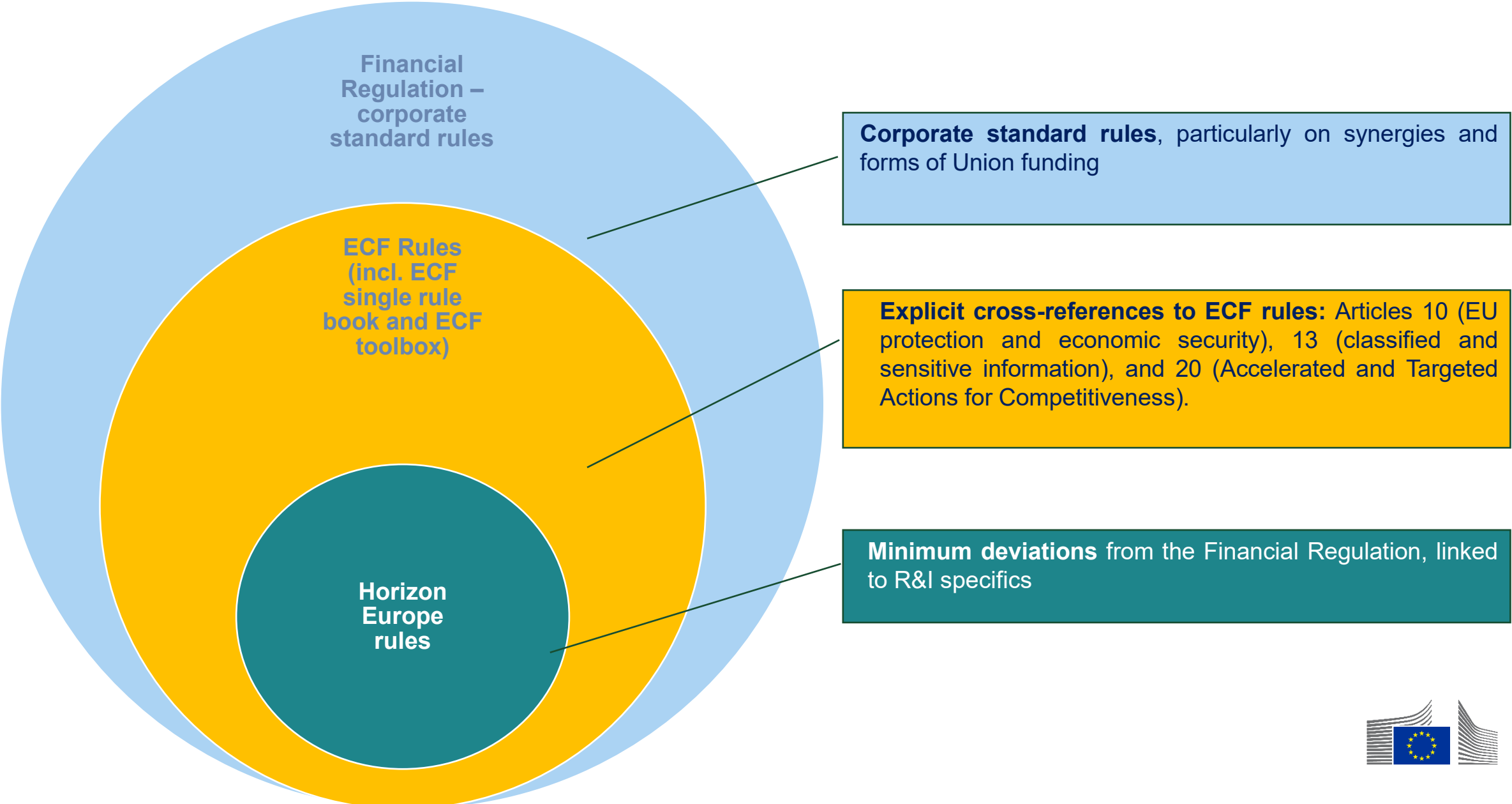
**Dual-use
research**

Links with the European Competitiveness Fund

- **Four policy windows defined in the ECF Regulation:**
- ‘Clean Transition and Industrial Decarbonisation’
- ‘Health, Biotech, Agriculture and Bioeconomy’
- ‘Digital Leadership’
- ‘Resilience and Security, Defence Industry and Space’

- **Work programmes, ECF Regulation:** ‘The work programmes under this Regulation shall integrate in a **specific dedicated part collaborative research and innovation activities and their dedicated budget.**’
- Work programmes under ECF will be covered by the **ECF comitology** (ECF Regulation).
- **Budget** for collaborative research is under the ‘Competitiveness’ **part of Horizon Europe.**

Horizon Europe – Rules based on Single Rulebook



European Innovation Council

- The European Innovation Council (EIC) has already developed into the biggest European deep tech venture capital fund.
- The EIC will support innovative start-ups SMEs, with a focus on promoting disruptive innovation and entrepreneurship.
- To further improve its integrated model, the EIC will include:

more “**ARPA**” elements,
supporting high risk
projects assessed by
Programme Managers.

a “**DARPA**” approach
supporting defence and
dual use startups.



Research and Technology Infrastructures

Research Infrastructures

- Construction, development and integration of research infrastructures of European Union interest
- Developing, consolidating and streamlining the Union landscape of research infrastructures
- Reinforcing transnational access
- Making research infrastructures more resilient and sustainable
- Reinforcing European research infrastructure policy and international cooperation

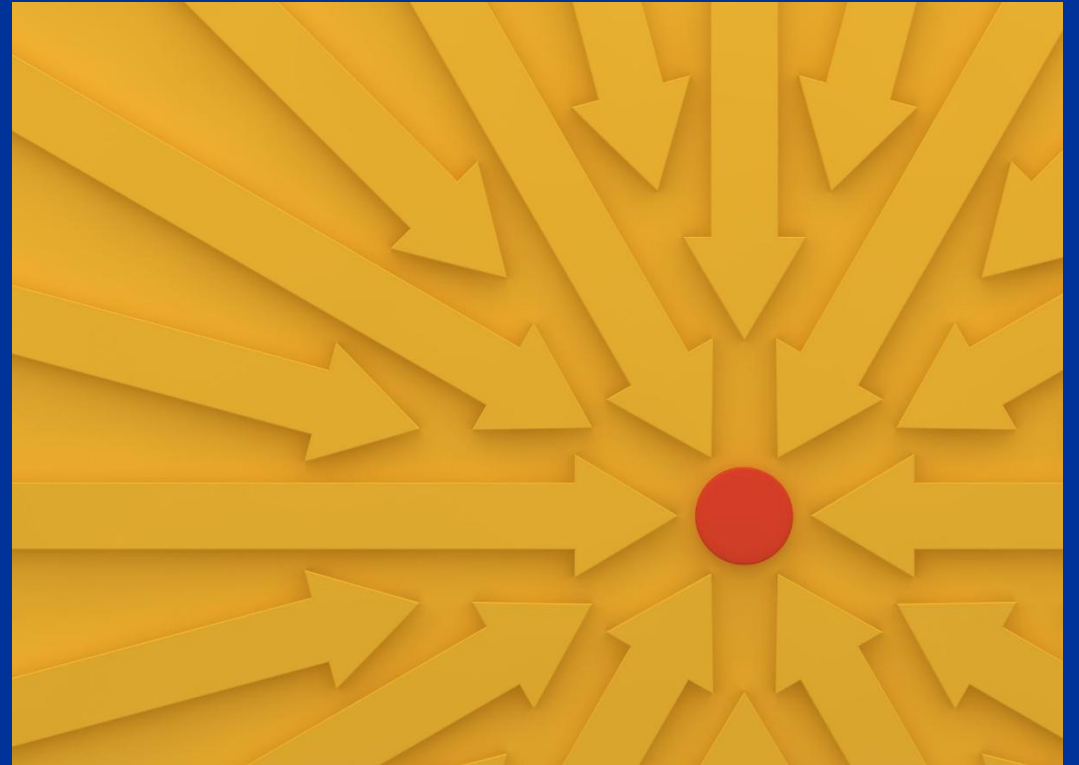
Technology Infrastructures

- Improving the visibility and uptake of technology infrastructure services;
- Access programme for SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups across the Union
- Collaboration and networking among the infrastructures, training and upskilling of their staff
- Reinforcing the European technology infrastructure policy.



Dual Use Research

- Like the ECF, Horizon Europe may support dual-use actions.
- Defence activities, both in the area of research and deployment, will be covered under the ECF.
- Moreover, the European Innovation Council can also support defence applications.



International Cooperation - Association

Approach to 3rd country association similar to Horizon Europe.

Main novelties:

- Association may be “full or partial” and consistent with the objectives of Horizon Europe
- Scope of association to consider not only benefit but also risk to the Union
- Association also extended to European Micro-States



What is maintained:

- Association open to EEA/EFTA Countries; Acceding, candidate and potential candidate countries; ENP countries; other third countries – conditional to specific rules of Horizon Europe
- Reciprocity
- Automatic Correction Mechanism
- **For defence activities under EIC** – eligibility for funding limited to entities from ECF Associated Countries to defence activities

Thank you



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