



Innovative and skilled Europe 2030

The European Union has turned its ambitious climate and biodiversity goals into a driver of new sustainable economic growth. The goals have been achieved cost-effectively and market-based, supporting the adoption, development, and commercialization of new clean solutions. European businesses have seized the opportunities of the green transition and the data economy. Europe invests in research and development and is involved in world-class research. The strategic value of skills, and continuous learning, is recognized in all companies. Business success is supported by digital public services and based on low-emission circular economy solutions. Clean, affordable, and secure energy is available and the transition away from fossil fuels is ongoing. Europe's attractiveness for international investments and talent has increased and citizens support the green transition with their choices. Europe has become a leader in climate-neutral economy and green growth. The strategic competitiveness of Europe is secured.

Means to achieve the desired outcome:

1. Ensure the EU's position among innovation leaders by improving the impact of RD&I and closing the gap in funding, especially compared to China and the USA .
2. Establish an "internal skills market" by supporting the mobility of professionals and improving the relevance of skills to meet the needs of businesses.

EK's proposals in details

- The next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10) should have a stronger and more balanced budget, as well as a clear and functional program structure, especially to ensure diverse participation from businesses.
- The evaluation processes, criteria, and other administrative actions related to funding instruments must be clearer than currently, to ensure balanced participation from companies of all sizes and from all sectors, as well as from researchers, in the activities of the framework program.
- The criteria for EU-level R&D funding must always support achieving EU added value. "Excellence" and "expected impact" criteria should be defined for every instrument and adhered to.
- Improve the attractiveness of the EU and its member states as investment and work areas by developing a common labor market area where foreign researchers, experts, and students can move more flexibly than currently.
- As the importance of skills continues to rise in the global economy, the Erasmus+ programme will be extended and strengthened. The programme enables businesses to acquire more relevant skills and knowledge about the skills needed in different sectors. In addition to existing functions, the programme will be expanded with pilots for attracting professionals from third countries, identifying skills and skill needs, and providing continuous learning
- Build a European digital vision for higher education based on the example of Finland (<https://digivisio2030.fi/en/frontpage/>) and support the sharing of learning content among higher education institutions using digital platforms and technical tools such as artificial intelligence as part of Erasmus+ initiatives.

EK's key messages

The EU must be among the innovation leaders – the goal for RD&I investments must be 3%/GDP. Funding and good instruments must be available.

Skills need to be updated to meet the needs of innovative green and digital growth in Europe.

Education policy will remain the responsibility of Member States. Member States must ensure good basic education and lifelong learning for all.

EU's actions in skills development must encourage Member States to strengthen cooperation between companies, universities, and educational institutions.

EU's skills-related programs should support solutions to the shortage of professionals, for example, through various pilot trials.

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