



Advocating for 3A as EU determines new R&I Framework Programme and partnerships

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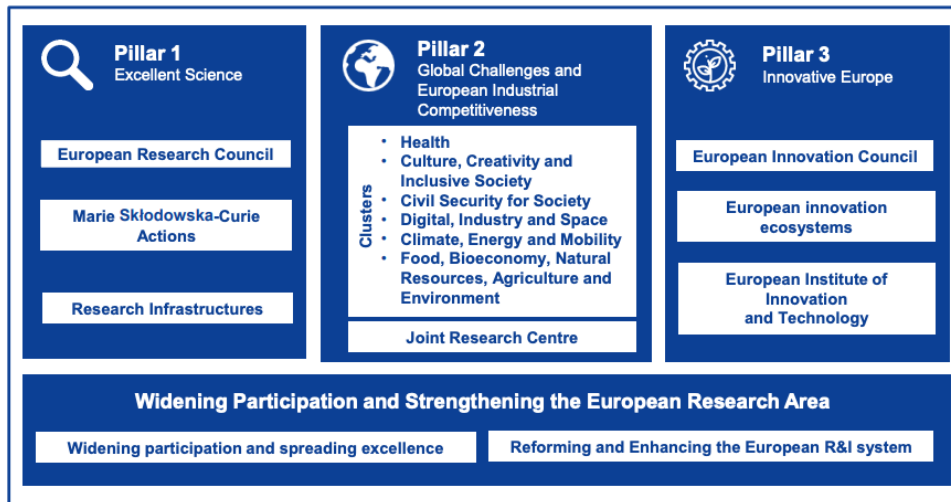
2017: 3A sets out initial ideas for new JU

In 2017, AENEAS, ARTEMIS-IA and EPoSS created an informal working group, called the '3A team', joining forces to align both strategy and operations on subjects of common interest. This working group, composed of 3 representatives of each association, is chaired by AENEAS Director General, Caroline Bedran, with my support. At the end of 2017, the 3A released a joint [position paper](#) outlining preliminary ideas for the new Joint Undertaking (JU). It served as the basis for interactions with the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament and EU Member States in the crucial period of preparations for the Commission's proposal for [Horizon Europe](#) as the new Framework Programme for 2020-2027, and subsequent negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. In the process of these interinstitutional negotiations, the 3A managed – together with other industry associations preparing for new Joint Undertakings – to get some amendments adopted to improve the conditions that the Commission had proposed for the new European Partnerships.



2018: European Commission puts forward its proposals for Horizon Europe and its partnerships

Horizon Europe: Preliminary structure



Although at first sight, the three-pillar structure of Horizon Europe may look very similar to Horizon 2020, in fact, the contents of the pillars have changed. Most relevant for the ECS community is Pillar 2 on Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, more or less combining the pillars on Industrial Competitiveness and Societal Challenges of Horizon 2020. Whereas Pillar 1 is again focusing on Excellent Science, Pillar 3 on Innovative Europe is largely new, with the [European Innovation Council](#) supporting breakthrough innovation as the key novelty. Another new feature of Horizon Europe are the five [Missions](#) aiming to deliver solutions to global challenges.

New approach to European Partnerships

Furthermore, Horizon Europe has a new approach to [European Partnerships](#). With Horizon 2020 counting well over 100 partnerships of at least seven different types, there was a need for streamlining the partnership landscape into only three types:

- i. Co-programmed European Partnerships between the Commission and private and/or public partners, based on memoranda of understanding and/or contractual arrangements;
- ii. Co-funded European Partnerships involving EU countries, with research funders and other public authorities at the core of the consortium;
- iii. Institutionalised European Partnerships requiring legislative proposals from the Commission to set up dedicated implementation structures, such as Joint Undertakings (JUs).

At the moment, there are 49 candidate partnerships in the pipeline, including 11 Joint Undertakings, in particular the JU on Key Digital Technologies (KDT) as the successor to ECSEL.



2019-2020: 3A active contributors to EU consultations

After the EU institutions reached a provisional agreement on the structure and the scope of Horizon Europe and its rules for participation in the Spring of 2019, the Commission began a strategic planning process to prepare the detailed content in the Work Programmes and calls for proposal for the first four years of Horizon Europe. Partly in that context, the 3A jointly contributed to twelve public consultations in 2019-2020, the most recent submission being on the draft [Strategic Plan](#). The Commission is expected to adopt its Strategic Plan by the end of the year, and the Work Programme 2021-2022 by the end of the first quarter of 2021. This should allow for launching the first calls for proposals under Pillar 2 of Horizon 2020 by the end of March 2021, including on a wide range of digital technologies in Cluster 4 (Digital, Industry and Space).

2020: Horizon Europe budget

In 2018, the Commission proposed a Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) with €83.5 billion for Horizon Europe. In a [Joint Statement](#) the 3A, together with 90 other associations representing key European stakeholders in research and innovation (R&I) advocated a more ambitious Horizon Europe programme with a larger budget. Negotiations between the 27 heads of state and government in the European Council of July 2020 finally reached an [agreement](#) on the MFF with a meagre €75.9 billion for Horizon Europe and a disappointing top-up of €5 billion from [Next Generation EU](#), the new temporary recovery fund. As a result, Horizon Europe will have a total budget of €80.9 billion, which is only 21% larger than the budget of Horizon 2020 on a comparable basis (2018 prices, excluding the UK). As the European Parliament has threatened to withhold its consent to the agreement, negotiations are not finalised but as time is pressing, there is little room for manoeuvring.

3A call for an efficient approach to private contributions

For the new JUs under Horizon Europe, the Commission has proposed a new approach, entailing open calls, lower funding rates, simplified reporting, additional activities outside the JU work programme, and administrative costs shared between the partners. Private partners will have to match public funding by means of in-kind contributions in R&I projects and additional activities. The 3A have voiced their concerns to the Commission (DG CNECT and DG RTD) in meetings and in writing. At this stage it is not clear yet what the funding rates will be and whether the 3A will have to match 100% of public funding with in-kind contributions, or only 70%, as is the case in ECSEL. The 3A are aiming at an efficient approach, with each member of the industry associations contributing its fair share to the collective commitment, while keeping any necessary participation by non-members manageable.

Single Basic Act – determining Council Regulation

Currently, the Commission is internally preparing the “Single Basic Act” (SBA), its legislative proposal for a Council Regulation covering ten JUs, including KDT. Once adopted by the Commission in November, it will be submitted to the Council. Negotiations within the Council and with the European



Parliament, which will have to give its opinion, are expected to last until the second quarter of 2021. A key issue will be the central financial management that the Commission is likely to propose for the funding from the participating states in the KDT JU. While such a single source of funding (instead of two in ECSEL) would be attractive to beneficiaries, it may make many countries reluctant to participate, as they fear losing control of their national co-funding. Once the Council adopts the Regulation, the JUs can be established and launch their first calls for proposals, probably in the second half of 2021.

3A speaking with one voice

At the same time, the KDT partnership proposal still needs to be finalised. First, the Commission will have to bring the latest version from May in line with its internal impact assessment, which has been approved only very recently by the EC Regulatory Scrutiny Board. Then the 3A and the Member States will have to agree on the version that will be published on the [partnership website](#). In his [speech](#) at the Hannover Messe Digital Days, Commissioner Breton, declared autonomous European capacity on microelectronics as key for the technological sovereignty in digital technologies that is so high on the political agenda. Nevertheless, the disappointing 21% increase in the Horizon Europe budget compared to Horizon 2020 may not allow for the doubling of the budget for KDT (compared to ECSEL) that the 3A have asked for.

Jan van den Biesen's curriculum:



Having retired from Philips after a career of nearly 34 years in industrial research and government relations, in 2017 Jan van den Biesen set up his own consultancy called [EUROPOLARIS](#) (European Policy Advice and Research & Innovation Strategies). His role as strategic advisor to AENEAS began at the first ECSEL Symposium in 2017, when in Malta, he signed a contract to support the association with advice. Soon after this, he signed similar contracts with ARTEMIS-IA and EPoSS, all with a common objective: to help the three industry associations (3A) prepare for the successors to the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme and the ECSEL Joint Undertaking after 2020.