

# Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Research: Together we advance Europe**

## NARRATIVE

Welcome to the presentation of the **Austrian EU Council Presidency in the field of research**. This presentation gives an overview of what Austria is planning to do during the second half of 2018.

The Council Presidency of the EU is sometimes compared to someone conducting an orchestra. But the music played by the orchestra is not decided by the conductor, not by Austria: We decide it together.

**Let's advance Europe. Together.**

The crucial question is this: How do all our Presidency activities in the fields of research, technology, innovation and higher education contribute to Europe making the most of its future opportunities, and to hearing less discord and more harmony in Europe?

The Austrian Presidency responds to these questions in the field of research by setting three objectives:

Our **first objective** is dedicated to the negotiations on the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the EU. The EU Framework Programme is the largest research funding programme in the world. If we put the right conditions in place in this context, Europe's higher education institutions, enterprises and research institutions will benefit for seven years.

What is even more, with the results from the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, Europe will open up new markets, and they will help to deal with many challenges of our society.

Austria is allowed to conduct Europe for the third time already. This is our **third Council Presidency** after 1998 and 2006.

In 1998, our focus was on the negotiations on the 5<sup>th</sup> EU Framework Programme. In 2006, our Presidency took place at the time of the negotiations on the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. After Framework Programme 5 and 7, we are now pleased to be able to negotiate the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

Our **second Presidency objective** deals with the European Research Area. ERA wants to create an internal market of knowledge in Europe, where researchers with their new knowledge find a home without frontiers, and where technologies for a common market are developed.

At the heart of ERA are the reforms carried out by each Member State. Through targeted reforms, every country should increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its innovation system, and strengthen transnational cooperation at all levels.

Some say that the structural reforms in the Member States are more important in the long term than short-term funding within the Framework Programme. From the Austrian Presidency's perspective, we need both: a strong Framework Programme and strong national RTI systems. Research and innovation are playing an ever more important role in many other policy areas.

As its **third objective**, the Austrian Presidency will support these sectoral policies. We believe that the challenges of our time need modern governance, that is, more cooperation between all policy areas.

We call this a "**whole-of-government**" approach. In order for you to be better able to envisage this, we have created a brochure where you can see examples of the role of science, technology and innovation for the policy areas of all Austrian federal ministries.

[Link where you can download the brochure.](#)

Let's take a **closer look at the three objectives of the Austrian Council Presidency** in the field of **research**:

For the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, the European Commission has played the prelude. The Commission's proposal for the new Framework Programme called **HORIZON EURO-**

**PE** has given the cue for the negotiations between the Member States in Council, and for the European Parliament.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme is a package with all the important objectives of HORIZON EUROPE, the Specific Programme for all the details, as well as the Rules for Participation, and comparable documents for the field of research under the EURATOM Treaty. The objective of the Austrian Presidency is to negotiate the Regulation on the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme between all Member States, and to reach as much agreement as possible on its content by the end of the year.

**HORIZON EUROPE** is being negotiated in Brussels, while at the same time a dozen expert conferences are taking place, all associated with the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. Between July and November 2018, the attachés of the 28 Member States are negotiating the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme at the **Research Working Group in Brussels**. Around 30 rounds of negotiations are scheduled for a period of less than four months.

At the ambassadors' level, the so-called "Committee of Permanent Representatives" will probably deal with the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme four times, in order to negotiate any controversial issues on which the Research Working Group has failed to reach agreement. The ambassadors at their meetings prepare the negotiations at political level. At the Council of Ministers in its "Competitiveness" formation, the ministers together with the EU Commissioner responsible for research will hopefully bring the most important and the most politically controversial negotiation issues to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Council of Ministers is chaired by **Federal Minister Heinz FASSMANN**. He is, if you like, acting as the conductor of the research orchestra during the second half of 2018.

The research ministers are negotiating three times – in July, in September and in November – at the Council Competitiveness. On 30 November 2018, they should succeed in reaching broad agreement on the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

In addition, other events during the Austrian Council Presidency are going to invite participants to discuss issues regarding the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme: These range from Marie Skłodowska Curie to Industrial Technologies, from Innovative Enterprise Week to the "Imagine Digital – Connect Europe" conference.

The outcome of the events dedicated to the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme is going to be carefully documented and made available to the team preparing and driving the negotia-

tions in Brussels. Thus the RTI events in Austria are going to support the search for suitable solutions in the negotiations in Brussels, without, however, directly interfering in these negotiations.

The Framework Programme is only successful to the degree to which the research policy environment in each of the 28 Member States is designed efficiently and effectively. This environment depends, for example, on how efficient the research institutions in the Member States are, which opportunities and incentives for researchers there are on the labour market, or how the exchange of knowledge is designed in the digital age.

At the Council Competitiveness, the Austrian Presidency will draw conclusions from the developments in the European Research Area so far.

The reform agenda of the Member States supplements research funding under the Framework Programme. Europe set itself **content-related priorities for the ERA reforms** three years ago. The Member States are proceeding with reforms along six priorities, each of which is supported by a separate dedicated working group at EU level. The reform agenda ranges from joint research programmes of the Member States via gender equality to better international cooperation of the Member States. This interaction between the reform agenda, that is, the ERA priorities, and the corresponding advisory groups is called **“ERA Advisory Structure”**.

The Austrian Presidency is going to focus on **three issues in the ERA Conclusions**: **First**, we will **review** the **“ERA Advisory Structure”**, that is, the interaction between the reform priorities and the groups responsible for them.

**Second**, we will investigate whether Europe can draw any **lessons from important studies of the year 2018**, such as for instance the “European Innovation Scoreboard” or the “OECD STI-Outlook”.

**Third**, we will **highlight recent progress made in implementing the ERA reform agenda** as milestones of ERA policy, for instance in the field of research infrastructures, or of the Open Science agenda.

As with the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, also with regard to ERA, numerous events in Austria are going to supplement the negotiations on the ERA Conclusions at EU level.

ERAC, ESFRI, Open Science, Joint Programming and many other fora and topics are going to ensure that everyone will be talking about ERA during the Austrian Council Presidency.

A special field which is also – but not only – linked to ERA is higher education. With a grand total of five events at the interface between higher education and research, the Austrian Presidency underlines the willingness to cooperate better between these policy fields under the reform agenda.

The third objective of the Austrian Presidency in the field of RTI undertakes to support sectoral policies by means of RTI, and to take care of interactions being as effective as possible. The Austrian Presidency takes a “whole-of-government” approach. All policy fields potentially deal with research and innovation, they are influenced by RTI, and they, in turn, influence our world of the 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme and ERA.

The **most important sectoral policies** for us are those

- where the “Sustainable Development Goals” of the United Nations play a role for the future of Europe;
- where a separate research programme for defence is being initiated;
- where the United Kingdom’s exit from the EU has to be brought to a contractual conclusion in October 2018;
- where research contributes substantially to dealing with health policy issues;
- where economic and technological growth paths are developed, in particular in connection with the digitisation of society, or the exploration of space;
- where education policy enables a new generation of mobility programmes in Europe;
- where the focus is on the interaction between research and responsible citizens;
- where the change of energy systems is of great importance for the future of Europe.

During the Austrian Presidency, we are going to offer events which will support the pertinent specialist discourse in many of these policy fields.

The first of these is going to be the High Level Group on Education and Training, shortly before the start of the Presidency, followed by the WIRE Conference in the field of Structural Funds in early July in Innsbruck. The last of these events is going to be the informal meeting of the Education Committee in December in Vienna. A total of 14 **expert con-**

**ferences** within six months underline the interrelation between higher education, research, technological development, innovation, and all other policy areas of life.

### **But what is all this effort actually for?**

The possible effect of the Austrian Presidency is currently covering a number of activities which should be implemented by the end of the year:

- The Member States welcome the proposal on the 9th Framework Programme and have reached broad consensus on major elements;
- The negotiations on the new Defence Research Programme are well on track;
- The reform agenda in the European Research Area has been made fit for the future, and has been sealed by means of Council Conclusions;
- The EU and the United Kingdom separate with mutual respect and safeguarding their joint interests in the field of research;
- The Quantum Technology Flagship has set course;
- Better coordination between Research Area and Higher Education – as requested by many Member States – has been set in motion in an exemplary manner;
- The “Bologna Process” has received new momentum through the meeting of ministers responsible for higher education in Paris, and this momentum has been translated into concrete action by the Presidency;
- The ESFRI Roadmap has been brought up to date;
- The European Open Science Cloud is beginning to materialise, in cooperation between the European Commission and the Member States;
- Last but not least, several awards put outstanding achievements into the European limelight:
  - in the field of innovative enterprises
  - in the field of outstanding young scientists in Austria, or
  - in the field of excellent researchers in Austria

If you ask at the end whether the Austrian Presidency will actually be able to achieve so much positive impact, our answer is: **this depends on all of us!**

During the six months when Austria is going to be Europe’s conductor, an expected amount of 400 hours of negotiations are waiting for us, during which we will have to work through more than 500 pages of negotiation text, and will have to consider the interests of more than 800 negotiation partners in three institutions, not to mention the numerous sta-

keholders in science, the business sector and society. By intelligent interaction between negotiations in Brussels and events in Austria, we hope that “together we will advance Europe”.

If you have any further questions, we will be pleased to help you. [You can find all our presidency team's contact details at this address.](#)

Thank you for your interest in this presentation, and all the best!