

CONNECTS-UK Statement on the European Commission's draft proposal for FP10

London, United Kingdom, September 24, 2025

- **CONNECTS-UK welcomes FP10's ambition and expanded budget**, but stresses the need to **strengthen the UK's association further** to reflect its proven role as a top contributor. **Full and equal UK participation will maximise impact for both sides.**
- We endorse **FP10's focus on collaborative research under Pillar 2**, but urge **inclusive participation with UK researchers fully involved** and scientific societies represented in Programme Committees. **Inclusive governance is key to tackling global challenges.**
- We support **FP10's emphasis on research mobility**, but call for **explicit inclusion of the UK in schemes such as "Choose Europe,"** supported by dedicated funding and accessible procedures. **Embedding mobility will sustain excellence and deepen EU-UK ties.**

CONNECTS-UK is committed to **facilitating and enhancing scientific collaboration between the EU and the UK**, with a particular focus on supporting EU researchers based in the UK and promoting strategies and policies that ensure collaboration is both accessible and sustainable. A recent CONNECTS-UK survey of EU researchers based in the UK revealed that **while almost half of the respondents have been planning to apply or have already applied for a Horizon Europe grant, 40% of them found the application process to be either inaccessible or very inaccessible**¹. The survey's findings also highlighted a key concern that prevents respondents from considering applying for a grant under the programme: **the biggest obstacles cited were uncertainty about eligibility and the lack of institutional support to prepare applications**².

In this sense, we consider **the proposal of the FP10 framework to be of critical importance for the future of research in Europe, the UK, and the wider global landscape**. Our goal is for FP10 to **maximise mutual benefit** by enabling the UK to integrate effectively while making a strong contribution, with CONNECTS-UK positioned to serve as a bridge and highlight the added value the UK's research ecosystem can bring to the programme. The experience of Horizon 2020, which **awarded around €7 billion in research grants to the UK**³, and its **strong performance in Horizon Europe after finally rejoining in 2024**⁴, underlines the value of its involvement, not only for the UK but for the entire European research ecosystem.

¹ CONNECTS-UK. *Provisional Results on Questions Related to Access to EU Funding Programmes and Networks*. September 2025.

<https://connects-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Provisional-results-on-questions-related-to-access-to-EU-funding-programmes-and-networks.pdf>.

² CONNECTS-UK, *Provisional Results*, 2025.

³ UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). "UK Research Office (UKRO)." Accessed September 10, 2025.

<https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/international-funding/our-international-offices/uk-research-office-ukro/>

⁴ Ian Sample. "UK Recovers Position in Horizon Europe Science Research after Brexit." *The Guardian*, August 12, 2025.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/aug/12/uk-recovers-position-horizon-europe-science-research-eu-brexite>.





The European Commission's FP10 proposal contemplates a **near-doubling of the budget to around €175 billion for 2028–2034**⁵, which signals the ambition to reinforce Europe's competitiveness while sustaining excellence in research. The proposal offers a clear and long-term framework for research and innovation, continuing with the current structure of Horizon Europe by organising itself through established themed pillars, while simultaneously increasing its scope and scale by expanding the budget across all categories. From CONNECTS-UK, we welcome the stability and continuity with past iterations of the framework while clearly supporting and enlarging the programme's capacity and potential impact. At the same time, **we see FP10 as an opportunity to improve the terms of the UK's association** in comparison to its current status in Horizon Europe as an "associated country"⁶. We believe that **a stronger association, positioning the UK on equal ground with other EU member states, would reflect the high value the UK offers as a leading scientific hub**, as shown in its successful recovery in Horizon Europe, where it is once again one of the top beneficiaries. Additionally, **most of the respondents to the CONNECTS-UK's survey feel unsure about their satisfaction towards the current level of access to EU research programmes and networks, with nearly 40% asserting not feeling particularly satisfied or unsatisfied**⁷. This adds on to the need for a more certain and equal association.

Furthermore, the FP10 proposal provides **significant funding pools and opportunities for large-scale international collaboration**, evidenced in its **Pillar 2**⁸, which focuses on collaborative research that addresses priorities such as the clean and digital transitions, health and biotechnology, agriculture and the bioeconomy, and defence and space. From CONNECTS-UK we support this and believe that **Pillar 2 should encourage cross-country cooperation, with representation from all participating partners, allowing inclusivity to drive its agenda**. We consider **EU-UK research cooperation and collaboration to be especially beneficial**, as the UK constitutes an organic partner to the rest of Europe, sharing values and a similar approach to strategic global challenges. Moreover, we advocate for **the representation of scientific societies and academies across participants through Programme Committees**, ensuring that the FP10's collaborative branch reflects the needs of the wider research community.

The proposal highlights another critical aspect that is key for CONNECTS-UK policy priorities: **research mobility**. While we support embedding the value of attracting and retaining global talent reflected in FP10's draft through initiatives such as "Choose Europe"⁹, we advocate for **this scheme to explicitly include the UK. Research mobility should be a cornerstone of FP10**, and in our view, **facilitating sustainable mobility of researchers between the EU and the UK would maximise the programme's potential**. Some of the specific measures could be to provide **accessible administrative procedures that guarantee smooth collaboration across borders** or

⁵ European Commission. "Horizon Europe 2028–2034: Twice Bigger, Simpler, Faster and More Impactful." News Release, July 16, 2025.

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/horizon-europe-2028-2034-twice-bigger-simpler-faster-and-more-impactful-2025-07-16_en.

⁶ European Commission. "Press Release: Commission Proposes EU Budget 2028–2034." September 2023.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6327.

⁷ CONNECTS-UK, *Provisional Results*, 2025.

⁸ UK Research Office (UKRO). "European Commission Publishes Budget Proposal 2028–2034." 2025.

<https://www.ukro.ac.uk/news/european-commission-publishes-budget-proposal-2028-2034/>.

⁹ European Commission. "Choose Europe: Research and Innovation in the EU." 2025.

https://commission.europa.eu/topics/research-and-innovation/choose-europe_en.





offer **dedicated funding for mobility programmes to scientific societies**. Additionally, diaspora networks like CONNECTS-UK can provide valuable advisory input in this area, ensuring that **mobility schemes address the realities and needs of researchers**.

In light of these considerations, **CONNECTS-UK calls on policymakers on both sides to construct an FP10 that reflects the reality of the EU and UK as natural research and innovation partners**. The UK and the EU share aligned policy priorities and have closely connected research and higher education systems. For the EU, it remains essential to **recognise and maintain these links, ensuring that collaboration, cooperation, and researcher mobility remain at the core of the framework**. For the UK, it is essential to **begin discussions with the European Commission as early as possible** to guarantee the best possible terms of association and to build on the momentum already achieved since rejoining Horizon Europe. **Full UK participation in FP10 is not only strategically beneficial for both the UK and the EU, but also strengthens the global research landscape**. CONNECTS-UK remains committed to advocating for this shared future, fostering the openness, accessibility, and sustainability that will allow FP10 to deliver lasting impact.

Lastly, **FP10 can only truly achieve its ambition of global excellence and leadership if it is grounded in the fundamental principles that underpin international collaboration**. The European Commission has recently proposed the partial suspension of Israel's association to Horizon Europe¹⁰. This step was taken under Article 2 of the EU–Israel Association Agreement¹¹, which states: 'Relations between the Parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles.' **This provision makes respect for human rights and international law an essential condition for scientific and technological cooperation**. In line with the position of the European Commission, **we firmly advocate that countries which do not respect human rights or international law must not be allowed to associate with FP10**. Scientific cooperation can only flourish in environments that uphold openness, trust, and accountability, all of which are undermined when fundamental rights and international norms are disregarded.

Authors:

The CONNECTS-UK Team

¹⁰ European Commission, "European Commission adopts European Partnership on Artificial Intelligence," *Press Corner*, September 18, 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1921.

¹¹ Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the State of Israel, of the other part, Official Journal of the European Communities, L 147, 21, 2000. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2000:147:TOC>

