

AOB - Proposal for a European Research & Innovation Partnership for pandemic preparedness under HorizonEurope

Information from the Commission

Disasters, whether natural or man-made, call for better preparation to prevent and reduce the loss of life, harm to health and the environment and economic and material damage. As part of the Covid-19 pandemic lesson-learning, a Research & Innovation Pandemic Preparedness Partnership is proposed under the HorizonEurope Programme in order to:

- improve the EU's preparedness to prevent, predict and respond to emerging infectious health threats
- develop a Strategic Research and Innovation pandemic preparedness agenda with the Member States
- build a coherent European Research Area (ERA) in pandemic preparedness to quickly mobilise R&I in emergency situations

These objectives will steer the Partnership to focus on the following activities:

1. Generate new scientific knowledge to better understand the pathogens (virus, bacteria, etc.), their characteristics and transmission, and their interaction with hosts and the environment;
2. Design and develop countermeasures, such as vaccines, diagnostics or therapeutics, personal protective equipment
3. Inform public health policy decisions as well as new strategies for a more agile public health response with scientific evidence, thus improving their quality and increasing trust. This would include developing tools & digital solutions to better monitor the spread of outbreaks and better model the impact of public health measures;
4. Support for setting up EU-wide infrastructures for improved data collection, timely translation of research findings into emergency response actions and increasing operational readiness of clinical trial sites across Europe.

This partnership responds to the request for better coordination, as expressed in the context of the ERAvsCorona Action Plan¹ and as recommended in the scientific opinion on 'Improving pandemic preparedness and management'².

The partnership is planned as a co-programmed partnership, but can be further developed into a co-funded one, provided there is support from the Member States. A Coordination and Support Action to prepare the partnership will be included in the Work Programme 2021 of Horizon Europe. Preparatory work is ongoing and provides an opportunity for Member States to take an active leadership role.

The partnership will work in synergy with the proposed new EU Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), and in close collaboration with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and European Medicines Agency (EMA), and other relevant actors. It could ensure the medium and long-term sustainability of actions of the current Covid-19 response and the HERA incubator, in particular on common data portals, EU-wide Vaccine & Therapeutic trial networks and establishing the safety and efficacy of pharmaceuticals.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation/research_by_area/documents/ec_rtd_era-vs-corona_0.pdf

² <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a1016d77-2562-11eb-9d7e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-171481573>