



European Parliament ITRE Committee vote paves the way for the inclusion of musculoskeletal diseases in the future EU Research Framework Programme, Horizon 2020

On 28 November 2012, the European Parliament ITRE Committee (Committee for Industry, Transport and Energy), voted by large consensus six draft laws related to the EU's framework research programme Horizon 2020. The programme, which still has to be voted in plenary, and agreed by the Council, will determine EU funding in Research for the next 7 years, under the new long-term budget for 2014 to 2020.

For the overall programme, the Commission proposes €80 billion and the European Parliament €100 billion. The European Parliament position is to have 10.2 % of the overall Horizon 2020 budget allocated to 'Health, demographic change and wellbeing'..

The Parliament voted on its position without being clear what funding will be available for Horizon 2020, after heads of state failed to reach agreement on the overall budget for 2014 -2020. The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have based their amendments on percentages, rather than actual numbers, making it possible to reach an agreement on Horizon 2020 without a firm budget in place.

For EFORT and the orthopaedic community the ITRE Committee vote on compromised amendments in the area of health is excellent news, which recognises and stresses the burden of musculoskeletal conditions in the European Union. This is a first positive step forward, particularly as the European Commission had made no mention of musculoskeletal conditions in its initial proposal. With this explicit recognition in the text, research calls under Horizon 2020 would include calls on musculoskeletal conditions, once the EU multi-financial framework is adopted and the text reach final agreement with the Council of Ministers.

EFORT has been closely following the debate on Horizon 2020 over the last year, urging the MEPS to include musculoskeletal conditions in the text of Horizon 2020. More recently, EFORT organised with EULAR (The European League Against Rheumatism) a workshop on research in rheumatic and musculoskeletal conditions, opening the way for the creation of a consensus and a EU roadmap on research priorities for the next decade. The workshop was attended by EU officials, Members of European Parliament and the Cypriot Presidency representatives.

EFORT will continue closely monitoring the developments in this area and engaging with policy makers to secure specific calls under Horizon 2020.

More information on the recent ITRE Committee vote on Horizon 2020 at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/itre/subject-files.html?id=20120214CDT38091#menuzone>



EFORT info box

The Horizon 2020 programme

The Horizon 2020 constitutes the EU framework programme for Research and Innovation in the period 2014-2020 and a core part of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Horizon 2020 brings together three stand-alone initiatives (the Research Framework Programmes, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the EU contribution to the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)). It aims at coupling research with innovation by turning scientific breakthroughs into innovative products, addressing the challenges posed by the globalisation (e.g. climate, environment, energy, transport etc.), and meeting the need of companies, universities and institutes for a rapid and simplified access to financial support.

To achieve these goals, the programme identifies three priorities: excellent science, industrial leadership and societal challenges, respectively divided into definite objectives and activities.

"The Horizon 2020 is an opportunity for Europe to invest in its future and to help us get out of the crisis", said the industry committee chair, Mrs. Amalia Sartori, warning as well against possible budget cuts in research and innovation.

"Horizon 2020 aims to make the EU a world-leading economy and a society based on knowledge and innovation. The Union budget should mirror this ambitious goal and this should be clearly visible in a considerable increase in research and innovation funding compared to the funding level of 2013", states the ITRE Committee in the resolution drawn up by MEP Mrs. Teresa Riera Madurell.

Lawmakers should start negotiating informally on Horizon 2020 with the Council of Ministers, led by the Irish Presidency in January 2013. It is expected that the Irish Presidency will push for a deal with MEPs ahead of a meeting of research ministers in May 2013.

More information on Horizon 2020 is available on the European Commission website at:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm



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The European Parliament ITRE Committee (Committee for Industry, Transport and Energy)

The European Commission ITRE Committee is responsible for:

- the Union's industrial policy and the application of new technologies, including measures relating to SMEs;
- the Union's research policy, including the dissemination and exploitation of research findings;
- space policy;
- the activities of the Joint Research Centre and the Central Office for Nuclear Measurements, as well as JET, ITER and other projects in the same area;
- Community measures relating to energy policy in general, the security of energy supply and energy efficiency including the establishment and development of trans-European networks in the energy infrastructure sector;
- the Euratom Treaty and Euratom Supply Agency; nuclear safety, decommissioning and waste disposal in the nuclear sector;
- the information society and information technology, including the establishment and development of trans-European networks in the telecommunication infrastructure sector.

More information on the ITRE Committee is available on the European Parliament website at:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/itre/home.html>