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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER

**State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI**
The State Secretary

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Bern, 23 October 2020

Swiss participation in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and other related programmes and initiatives – an information for actors in the Swiss research and innovation landscape

Dear Sir or Madam

The EU and Switzerland have a long and successful history of cooperation in research and innovation (R&I). Since 2004, Switzerland has participated as an associated country in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. A new generation of EU programmes, including Horizon Europe, in the continuation of Horizon 2020, will start in 2021. With this in mind, I would like to inform you about the state of play in this important dossier.

The Federal Council and Parliament are committed to assuring the participation of Swiss players in EU funding programmes for research and innovation

At the end of May, the Federal Council paved the way for Switzerland's uninterrupted participation in the EU programmes for research and innovation with its dispatch on the Horizon 2021-2027 package, which covers Switzerland's association to Horizon Europe, the Euratom programme and the Digital Europe programme, as well as participation in the ITER infrastructure. The financing decision of the dispatch was adopted by the Council of States in the autumn session of Parliament and will be debated by the National Council in the winter session. Approval of the funding by Parliament is a prerequisite for Swiss R&I players to participate in calls for proposals issued by the relevant EU programmes. The dispatch also allows Switzerland to participate as a partially associated state or as a third country. This would apply in the event that a delayed, incomplete or no association agreement was reached with the EU. In principle, Swiss researchers can participate in all collaborative projects under the Horizon package, as they are directly funded by SERI in the event of third-country status, provided that their project proposals are positively evaluated for funding by the European Commission or by the agency appointed by it for this purpose. We will promptly inform the network of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EU Member States about the funding of Swiss researchers in collaborative projects in order to eliminate any uncertainties among your international partners.

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State of play on the EU side

The current state of the EU's preparatory work on the Horizon package does not yet allow a final prediction to be made about the formal conditions for participation by non-EU countries, and thus about the form of participation that will be available for Switzerland. Only after the EU has adopted the legal basis (in terms of conditions of participation and budget) can formal negotiations between Switzerland and the EU on an agreement on the Horizon package take place, in which the exact scope and mode of Swiss participation will be defined. Negotiations between Switzerland and the EU are expected to start in early 2021. An agreement on Switzerland's participation will therefore not be ready before the start of the programme. However, this was also the case for the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) and Horizon 2020.

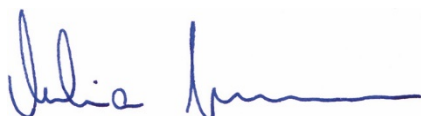
Preparation for the first calls for proposals

Even during FP7 and Horizon 2020, the rule was that the association agreements would come into force retroactively and that researchers in Switzerland could apply before they were concluded. This applies both to participation in collaborative projects and to individual projects, including, for example, the European Research Council (ERC) funding fellowships and the EIC Accelerator introduced for Horizon Europe. I would therefore recommend that researchers and innovators in Switzerland, as participants from an associated country, should apply for the first calls for proposals in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives.

Further information can be found on the [SERI website](#) where you will find an [information sheet](#) on the latest developments in Switzerland and the EU, as well as a [compilation of answers to frequently asked questions](#) about Swiss participation in Horizon Europe and related programmes and initiatives. These documents are regularly updated to reflect the latest developments.

Yours faithfully

State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI



Martina Hirayama
State Secretary