

Competitiveness Council: Chambers demand a ‘do not touch Horizon 2020’ message from ministers

EUROCHAMBRES has called on Competitiveness Council ministers this week to deliver an unequivocal ‘do not touch’ message on Horizon 2020 in the run up to November’s extraordinary European Council that will discuss the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *“The proposed new research and innovation programme could prove a crucial lever for growth and its budget must be safeguarded.”*

SME Instrument

Chambers attach particular importance to the new SME Instrument within the Horizon 2020 package and continue to argue that it should receive more than the envisaged 15% of the programme budget.

Stimulating innovation is not a matter of pumping money into established research channels; it’s about helping a wide range of smaller companies to access tailored research that will help them exploit specific market opportunities. EUROCHAMBRES applauds that the Horizon 2020 SME Instrument embraces this demand-driven approach and urges Competitiveness Council ministers to send a strong message to their heads of state that the programme must be safeguarded during the MFF negotiations.

MFF horse trading

Amid circulating rumours that the whole 2014-20 draft EU Budget could be slashed, EUROCHAMBRES is gravely concerned that those programmes such as Horizon 2020 offering the greatest potential to deliver growth may be sacrificed during the member states’ final negotiations.

“We know that the EU Budget is ultimately the result of member states’ horse trading and that, regrettably, national interests typically prevail over broader European added value. Ministers must convince Heads of State and MFF negotiators that effective innovation support for SMEs is to the benefit of all EU members and to addressing Europe’s growth targets,” concluded Mr Abruzzini.

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