



**Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament**

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RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (R&D) AND INNOVATION: PAVING THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE!

In the 21st century, the challenges of European society have been compounded by those arising from the fight against climate change and the recent financial crisis.

The S&D Group has called for these challenges to be addressed through a **new social pact**, based on sustainable development. One of its key instruments will be an ambitious and coherent programme of investment in Research and Development (R&D), in order to enable Europe to promote green employment, sustainable job creation and foster economic growth. We believe that R&D must address the concerns of ordinary citizens. It should present solutions to help make life better and easier for all of us. Innovation should be 'citizen-oriented'; the focus of innovative companies should be to solve those problems that affect us all.

Research and innovation are two important elements of our pact, as they can:

- improve the quality of life of EU citizens (for example through the use of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs))
- create jobs
- help overcome the current crisis by modernising the existing system of production
- stimulate economic growth
- make Europe more competitive
- make society greener and more sustainable
- address big social challenges (inequalities, ageing of the population, immigration, food security and food supply chain)

R&D policies must provide solutions to society's problems and allow Europe to become a competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economy, where jobs correspond to the new reality.

In this context, the Horizon 2020 (the EU's framework programme for Research and Technological Development), which sets out the objectives and guidelines for EU R&D activities from 2014 to 2020, has a crucial role to play.

S&D Group MEPs were extremely active in designing this programme, and took the leading role in defining the EP's position on the major political priorities of the programme. The S&Ds have also been closely monitoring both the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7) and Horizon 2020 - and are now at the forefront of current preparations to

revise the latter, having been allocated the responsibility to draft the implementing report on FP7 and the mid-term review of Horizon 2020.

Priorities for action

Among the key issues for S&D MEPs in the current European Parliament are:

1. Strengthen and simplify Horizon 2020

The S&D Group wants to strengthen and simplify Horizon 2020 and to increase the money allocated to the future FP9. Community programmes must not be so complicated that researchers cannot get the necessary financing for their projects and essential research is not done!

2. Get the European Institute of Innovation and Technology working effectively

We are strong believers in the role of innovation to help in paving the way for the future; the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is key to this. We intend to make sure it works at full steam and to the best of its potential.

3. Boost competitiveness through more industry-orientated policies

Throughout this legislature, the S&D Group will work to boost the competitiveness of European industries through edging the EU towards a more industry-orientated applied R&D policy, in order to bring onto the market new top-range products and future-oriented, environmentally-friendly energy technologies.

Nevertheless, research carried out by universities cannot be put aside. Universities are the pillar for basic research, just as industry is the main conductor for innovation. Transfer and connection between them are necessary. University activities should be linked to industry through the development of actions and provision of infrastructures to intensify research in the intermediate range of TRL (4 to 7). This would further and better connect research in universities with the end of the R&D+Innovation chain and with SMEs and industry. There are successful models in third countries to be analysed.

The S&D Group fully supports more activities that drive research towards innovation.

4. Help build up research and innovation at national and regional level

We shall push for an EU policy framework that helps member states and regions to develop strategies to develop their capacities - both material and human - in research and innovation, for example through:

- the upgrade and supply of research infrastructures
- financial support for increased mobility for researchers
- local initiatives to attract researchers, the removal of legal, administrative and language barriers, staff exchanges
- guaranteed access for all, especially female and young researchers

In this regard, the S&D Group defends that an assessment of the Regional Innovation Strategies and the control of the specialisations made by regions should be done. This would allow to better adapt the future FP9 to the real needs of R&D and innovation, and for better connection and synergies among regional policy and Horizon 2020.

On the other hand, it is necessary to look for, and develop, new tools and make an effort to support less developed regions in terms of R&D capabilities, infrastructure and the rate of return on investments to improve access to Horizon 2020 calls for proposals.

5. Promote a single European research community

The S&D Group believes that European R&D needs to be more integrated to be efficient. We will push for measures to promote a single market for researchers and ensure their mobility. The EU should have an all-encompassing strategy for researchers, increase the number of European researchers, thus avoiding a "brain drain".

For that purpose, our Group:

- emphasises the importance of preventing the further outflow of competent European researchers
- calls for measures to retain researchers in the EU and to bring them back to the EU, with better career prospects and attractive working conditions, for both men and women

Thanks to the efforts and staunch support of the S&D Group, the European Research Area (ERA) saw the light of day - supported by the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7). ERA is a unified area all across Europe, integrating researchers' activities in order to help share, teach, value and use knowledge effectively for social, business and policy purposes.

6. Create a European Area of Higher Education and a European Innovation Area

S&Ds are also pressing for the establishment of a European Area of Higher Education and a European Innovation Area, thus completing the three sides of the so-called "knowledge triangle" (education, research and innovation).

Europe must bring together these three pillars of knowledge: education, research and innovation. The links between research and enterprises must be strengthened to transform knowledge and innovation into practical application. Interaction between research and industry is essential.

7. Create equality of opportunity in research

The imbalance between men and women in the research community is obvious; actions and measures to encourage women to become researchers are therefore crucial.

The S&D Group also calls for real gender equality in researchers' mobility, asking for incentives to promote gender balance in research mobility.

8. Give SMEs full access to research and innovation

SMEs have a key role to play in research and innovation, but they sometimes lack adequate means. This is why the S&D Group defends the need to encourage and facilitate SME participation in research and innovation (namely, through tax relief or simplification of administrative procedures, etc).

9. Strengthen synergies between Horizon 2020 and cohesion policy and other EU policies

The S&D Group believes in the need to strengthen the links between Horizon 2020 and cohesion policy and other EU policies and initiatives (Connecting Europe Facility, rural development, the digital single market, the energy union).

We believe that all these instruments and objectives, including the urban agenda, the territorial agenda, investment in SMEs, smart growth and smart specialisation strategies, should be put to use for contributing to the strengthening of the single market and achieving Europe 2020 strategy targets.

10. Defend open access to research data

Open access is key in terms of economic development and European competition through knowledge.

On the other hand, open access also allows for controlling the impact of projects after implementation, which should be done to measure the effectiveness of public funding.

11. Internationalisation of R&D

The S&D Group deeply believes that improving competitiveness of the EU and its industry must go hand in hand with a strong policy for the internationalisation of EU research. In the run-up to the future FP9, our Group strongly encourages the reinforcement of international cooperation calls.