

Spain supports a strong and autonomous FP10 focused on excellence and closely coordinated with the ECF

The Spanish Ministry of Research, Innovation and Universities presented the Spanish priorities for the future European Research and Innovation Framework Programme and its relationship with the European Competitiveness Fund.

Spain consolidate its position as the third-largest beneficiary and ranks first in the level of coordination of collaborative projects during the first five years of Horizon Europe.

The European Commission called for stronger European investment in research and innovation and stressed the relevance of using public investment to steer priorities, mobilise private capital and strengthen the European research and innovation ecosystem.

Brussels, 5 November 2026 – The international forum **Spain Science & Innovation 2026** brought together key Spanish and other European stakeholders to discuss the future of European research and innovation policies for 2028-2034 and the role of the next Framework Programme (FP10) in supporting Europe's competitiveness, scientific leadership and strategic autonomy.

The event, held at the **Spanish House of Science and Innovation in Brussels**, was organised by the Research State Agency of Spain (AEI), the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology and Innovation (CDTI), the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT).

In her keynote address, **Teresa Riesgo**, Secretary General for Innovation at the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, stressed that Europe is entering a defining moment, against a backdrop of growing global competition, rapid technological disruption and increasing geopolitical uncertainty. She then presented Spain's vision for FP10 and outlined the importance of ensuring a strong and autonomous research and innovation programme, closely coordinated with the future European Competitiveness Fund.

She argued that excellence must remain the cornerstone of a strong and autonomous FP10, while preserving transnational collaboration as one of the programme's defining features. She also underscored the need for a user-centred simplification agenda that reduces administrative burden without compromising transparency, evaluation quality or scientific excellence.

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During her intervention, Teresa Riesgo highlighted Spain's strong performance in the first five years of Horizon. In the period 2021-2025, Spanish entities secured more than **€5.1 billion**, consolidating Spain's position as the **third-largest beneficiary country**.

Spain also ranks **first in the coordination of collaborative projects**, with Spanish organisations leading nearly **16% of all funded collaborative projects**. In addition, Spanish companies have demonstrated a particularly strong performance, accounting for **more than 30% of the funding**, underscoring the country's capacity to translate research excellence into innovation and economic impact.

Finally, Teresa Riesgo further called for a timely institutional agreement on the next Framework Programme to provide legal certainty, predictability and continuity for Europe's research and innovation community, enabling FP10 to start on **1 January 2028** without delays.

Joanna Drake, Deputy Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, stressed that Europe's challenge is not only to invest more in research and innovation, but also to invest more strategically. Public funding, she argued, should be used to steer priorities, mobilise private capital and strengthen Europe's research and innovation ecosystem as a whole.

She highlighted the role of European Partnerships as a cornerstone of the future Framework Programme, noting their ability to bring together public and private stakeholders around shared objectives, pool resources and create long-term investment platforms and innovation ecosystems. She also underlined the importance of public procurement as a policy instrument and stressed the need for Europe to place its economic and security interests at the centre of its strategic decisions.

According to figures presented during her intervention, every euro invested through the current Horizon Europe programme is expected to generate approximately **€11 in GDP** and **€6 in benefits for European citizens by 2045**. At the same time, she noted that around **70% of proposals evaluated as excellent cannot currently be funded**, underlining the need to reinforce Europe's research and innovation investment capacity.

In this context, Joanna Drake highlighted the European Commission's proposal for an autonomous, simplified and strengthened FP10 with a budget of **€175 billion for the period 2028-2034**.

In her concluding remarks, she emphasised the strategic role that the future European Competitiveness Fund should play in accelerating the market uptake of research and innovation results. The objective, she noted, is to create a seamless pathway from scientific knowledge to innovation, from innovation to investment, and ultimately from investment to sustainable competitive advantage for Europe.

Isabel Martínez, Vice-President for International Relations at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), highlighted the growing importance of European research and innovation programmes for the organisation's scientific activity and international strategy.

She also underlined the need to further strengthen CSIC's presence, influence and leadership within future European programmes, ensuring that its researchers continue to play a prominent role in shaping European research agendas and addressing major societal, scientific and technological challenges.

José Moisés Martín, Director General of the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology and Innovation (CDTI), highlighted the European values embedded in successive Framework Programmes and their contribution to building a shared European research and innovation ecosystem. He presented the role played by CDTI over more than three decades, combining Spain's representation in Programme Committees with its responsibilities as National Contact Point, thereby linking participation in European policy discussions with specialised support for Spanish entities throughout the entire project lifecycle.

He underlined how this integrated approach has contributed to the development of one of Europe's largest communities of European project support professionals, with a network of more than 2,000 European project managers helping Spanish organisations access and successfully participate in EU programmes.

Particular attention was given to support for innovative companies. CDTI has provided tailored assistance to Spanish applicants to the European Innovation Council (EIC) Accelerator, including 235 individual mock interviews to help finalists prepare for the highly competitive evaluation process. As a result, 95% of Spanish companies ultimately awarded EIC Accelerator funding had received prior support from CDTI.

Finally, José Moisés Martín highlighted CDTI's role in implementing co-funded European Partnerships, which help align European and national innovation priorities while leveraging additional investment. Looking ahead to FP10, he argued for maintaining a dedicated instrument for innovative SMEs, building on the success of the current partnership in supporting Europe's most dynamic and growth-oriented companies.

Izaskun Lacunza, Director General of the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT), highlighted Spain's strong performance in successive EU Framework Programmes and emphasised the important contribution of national support structures in achieving these results. In particular, she pointed to the role played by FECYT's European Office and the network of National Contact Points in expanding participation across the country, strengthening support services for applicants and helping a growing number of organisations successfully engage in European research and innovation programmes.

Looking ahead to FP10, she advocated for a balanced approach that combines Europe's competitiveness objectives with continued support for scientific excellence and ambitious research. She stressed the importance of preserving sufficient space for investigator-driven research and bottom-up funding opportunities, noting that some of the Framework

Programme's most transformative breakthroughs have originated from open, excellence-based competition.

Against a backdrop of increasing geopolitical uncertainty, Izaskun Lacunza also underlined the strategic value of the Framework Programme as a cornerstone of European integration, scientific cooperation and science diplomacy. She argued that FP10 should continue to foster collaboration across borders, strengthen links between research communities and serve as a bridge between Europe and international partners, reinforcing both Europe's scientific leadership and its capacity to address global challenges collectively.

José Manuel Fernández de Labastida, Director General of the Research State Agency of Spain (AEI), stressed the importance of combining excellence-based funding, institutional capacity-building and support for research talent to strengthen Spain's position and leadership within European research and innovation programmes.

He highlighted AEI's growing efforts to reinforce capacity and preparedness to EU and International project support offices, centers of excellence and research management capacities across Spanish research organisations, helping them to compete and led more effectively at European level. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening institutional capabilities that enable researchers to access, coordinate and successfully implement European projects.

José Manuel Fernández de Labastida also underlined the importance of investing in research careers and supporting the next generation of scientific leaders. Through targeted funding instruments and capacity-building initiatives, AEI aims to create conditions for researchers and institutions alike to play a leading role in shaping the future of European science and innovation.

The event concluded with a **high-level discussion held under the Chatham House Rule, brought together representatives of the European Commission and the co-legislators to exchange views on the future of Europe's research and innovation framework**.

The discussion revealed broad convergence around the need to preserve scientific excellence while strengthening Europe's capacity to translate research results into competitiveness, growth and societal impact.

Participants agreed that excellence must remain the fundamental principle underpinning European research and innovation funding, while ensuring stronger links with the European Union's competitiveness agenda. A recurring theme was the need to better connect Europe's world-class scientific base with industrial deployment, scale-up and market uptake, reinforcing the pathway from scientific discovery to economic and societal impact.

The debate also highlighted the importance of providing researchers, innovators and investors with long-term stability and predictability, while preserving sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging technological opportunities, geopolitical developments and evolving societal needs.

While different views were expressed regarding the overall level of investment for the next programme, there was broad agreement that programme architecture, governance and implementation mechanisms will be just as important as funding levels in maximising its impact.

The discussion further underscored the importance of governance arrangements that combine strategic vision, expert input, transparency and democratic accountability.

Participants further stressed that priority setting of FP10 and ECF should provide sufficient predictability and planning time to enable Member States and regions to strategically align and leverage national and regional investments, including resources mobilised through the NRRP funds. Such long-term visibility would contribute to strengthening national research and innovation capacities and maximise complementarities between European, national and regional funding instruments.

In this context, European Partnerships were widely recognised as valuable instruments for aligning priorities, pooling resources and accelerating the translation of research excellence into industrial competitiveness and societal benefits. Participants also underlined the importance of developing the right instrument for preserving a coherent, and feasible user-oriented programme architecture in FP10, ensuring that beneficiaries can navigate funding opportunities more effectively while fostering synergies between instruments and policy objectives.

As negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework and the future Framework Programme advance, participants emphasised the importance of maintaining excellence, fostering collaboration and ensuring that European research and innovation remain key drivers of competitiveness and prosperity for Europe.

The discussions held during **Spain Science & Innovation 2026** demonstrated the strong commitment of both the Spanish Government and the rest of research and innovation stakeholders to contributing actively to the design of FP10 and the future European innovation landscape.