



## **ADOPTION OF THE INITIATIVE AGAINST MASS IMMIGRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SWISS PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON 2020**

**Information as of 26 February 2014**

### **Current information**

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) will post regular updates on the status of Horizon 2020:

- **On 25 February 2014, the European Commission informed SERI that, effective 26 February 2014, Switzerland will be handled as a third country in calls for project proposals.**
- **This means that researchers in Switzerland may continue to take part in partnership projects (incl. as coordinators).**
- **However, Switzerland is no longer able to take part in individual projects due to its third country status.**
- **The European Commission has stated that researchers in Switzerland may immediately and once again fully take part in all calls for project proposals (including for individual projects) if certain EU policy requirements are met.**
- **Based on the new situation, SERI has formulated new recommendations to researchers at Swiss institutions. These can be found at the end of this document.**
- **As far as education and research are concerned, the Federal Council wishes emphasise the fact that Switzerland holds a leading position in Europe. Switzerland contributes substantially to the positioning of European research as a whole. It would be counterproductive to limit Swiss cooperation in this area. The Federal Council is continuing to coordinate efforts, also in its contacts with the EU, to implement the decision of the Swiss electorate in a manner that serves the interests of Swiss and other European nationals affected by the agreement.**

### **A. FACTS:**

#### FP7

- The bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the EU regarding Switzerland's participation as an associated country in the EU's 7th Framework Programme (FP) remains unconditionally valid until all projects under FP7 have run their course.
- The funding by the European Commission of Swiss project holders in FP7 is assured until the end of the research project.
- This applies in particular for the FET flagship Human Brain Project, which is being funded in the ramp-up phase until spring 2016 from the FP7 budget.

#### "Horizon 2020"

- Negotiations with the EU with regards to association, which were at an advanced stage, are currently suspended following adoption of the initiative against mass immigration; the EU cites the principle of the free movement of persons as a key element of the bilateral agreements and is waiting to see how Switzerland proceeds in terms of extending the freedom of movement to Croatia.

- In the meantime, various discussions have taken place in which Switzerland made clear that it is not the Federal Council's intention to discriminate against the citizens of Croatia.
- Protocol III deals with the extension of the free movement of persons to Croatia. The new constitutional provisions prohibit the signing of new agreements which are not compatible with quotas for immigrants. This provision can be applied directly and need not be implemented in a federal act. The Federal Council is therefore not in a position to sign Protocol III in its current version.
- The Federal Council will work closely with the EU to find ways of avoiding any discrimination against Croatia. Discussions will also be held to find solutions to other unresolved issues.
- The fact that a bilateral agreement on association with Horizon 2020 has not (yet) been initialled or signed, is not only due to the recent popular vote, but also to normal timetabling factors: calls for FP7 were also open to Swiss researchers before a bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the EU had been signed. A retroactive association is also normal for other associated countries, and no other associated country currently has a signed association agreement with the European Union.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS:**

### **B.1. Individual projects (namely under grants from the European Research Council or Marie Skłodowska Curie actions):**

- Only institutions in an EU member state or an associated country may take part in calls for project proposals for ERC grants. Therefore, as things currently stand, researchers from Swiss institutions may not apply for ERC grants.
- Since Switzerland is currently working to reach a political solution, SERI recommends that any applications for ERC grants or Marie Curie scholarships that researchers in Switzerland have either finished or have almost finished should be made ready in preparation for immediate submission.
- Researchers who are Swiss nationals and who work within an EU or associated country retain their participation rights.
- Individual Marie Curie scholarships are open to researchers of all nationalities, including applicants from third countries.
- Nevertheless, Swiss institutions now have limited rights to take part in Marie Curie Actions.

### **B.2. Partnership projects:**

- SERI recommends that project partners from Switzerland that belong to an international consortium take part in calls for project proposals.
- Switzerland's third country status should be taken into account in the planning phase as follows:
  - Project proposals must have the required minimum number of consortium partners from three institutions from three different EU member states or associated countries (not including Switzerland).
  - The EU has stated that third countries may also coordinate projects as long as they provide their own funding and cover their own coordination costs. Swiss research institutes can therefore continue to act as project coordinators. Nevertheless it is important that the consortium verify whether another institution from an EU member state or an associated country is willing to take over coordination.
- Project partners should also be actively informed that excellence is the only evaluation criterion under Horizon 2020 and that applications submitted with Swiss project partners will in no way be discriminated against (this would even be explicitly against evaluation rules).

### **B. 3 Information of the European Commission**

– Information as of 26 February 2014:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-hi-swiss-part\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-hi-swiss-part_en.pdf)

### **C. INFORMATION ON FUNDING FOR SWISS PROJECT PARTNERS**

The Federal Council has not yet reached any decision regarding the provision of funding for the participation of Swiss partners in individual projects, as had been the case from 1992 to 2004. The Federal Council is continuing to work towards a comprehensive solution.

In the Federal Parliament's funding decision of 10 September 2013, the following was established:

*Art. 2*

*Should the financial conditions of the future agreement between Switzerland and the European Union on Swiss participation in EU framework programmes in the area of research and innovation come into effect only after 1 January 2014, then the guarantee credit may be used to cover Swiss participation on a project-per-project basis for the period pending commencement of the agreement.*

### **D. CONTACTS AT SERI**

- Bruno H. Moor, Head, International Cooperation in Research and Innovation Division,  
T +41 31 322 96 78; [bruno.moor@sbfi.admin.ch](mailto:bruno.moor@sbfi.admin.ch)
- Philipp Langer, Head, EU Framework Programmes  
T +41 31 322 96 93,  
[philipp.langer@sbfi.admin.ch](mailto:philipp.langer@sbfi.admin.ch)