

European Excellence Initiative

How FP10 can support long-term large-scale bottom-up and researcher-driven R&I collaborations to boost the EU leadership in science?

22 September 2026 – 9.30 - 11.30

Représentation permanente de la France auprès de l'Union européenne
14 Place de Louvain, 1000 Bruxelles

Rationale

At a time of intensifying global competition in science and technology, Europe needs to strengthen its capacity not only to fund excellent research, but also to sustain and connect scientific excellence at scale. Recent debates on European competitiveness, including Mario Draghi's report, have highlighted the importance of building critical mass, reducing fragmentation and creating research environments capable of attracting and retaining leading talent.

It was Draghi to remind that the fragmentation of Europe's scientific and research ecosystem weakens innovation, commercialization, and global competitiveness, and above all - prevents the Union to transform its scientific strengths into scientific leadership.

The current EU research funding architecture successfully supports individual scientific excellence as well as collaborative projects and partnerships. Yet a gap remains for the long-term development of high-performing R&I communities working across institutions and national borders around a common scientific agenda. FP10 therefore offers an opportunity to consider a dedicated approach to supporting this "missing middle": long-term, bottom-up, large-scale and researcher-driven collaborative initiatives capable of connecting complementary centers of excellence across Europe and anchoring them in enduring scientific ecosystems.

Building on experience from national excellence initiatives, a **European Excellence Initiative** could support transnational networks pursuing ambitious common R&I initiatives with sufficient critical mass, scientific autonomy and long-term visibility. Its added value and complementarity with existing EU instruments would derive in particular from four characteristics: **bottom-up, large-scale, researcher-driven and transnationally collaborative**, combined with a **long-term funding perspective**.

The workshop is intended to test this proposition collectively and explore its possible parameters within Pillar II of FP10: its scientific rationale, scale and duration, potential beneficiaries, place in the programme architecture, and complementarity with existing instruments. The discussion should help identify the common elements on which a genuinely European approach to long-term collaborative excellence could be built.



REPRÉSENTATION PERMANENTE
DE LA FRANCE AUPRÈS DE
L'UNION EUROPÉENNE

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Stale Przedstawicielstwo
Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej
przy Unii Europejskiej
w Brukseli

Programme

22 September 2026 | Permanent Representation of France to the EU

8h45

Door opening

Welcome breakfast

9h30

Welcome

Cyril Piquemal, Deputy permanent Representative, France

Arkadiusz Pluciński, Deputy permanent Representative, Poland

9h45

Keynote

Arthur Guillouzouic, CNRS researcher at the Aix-Marseille School of Economics and the co-head of the "Firms" division at the Institut des Politiques Publiques

10h00

Views from Researchers - best practices at national level

Aleksandra Pękowska, Dioscuri centre at the Nencki Institute of the Experimental Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw

Cyril Renassia, project manager of the Labex IBEID – Integrative Biology of Emerging Infectious Diseases

10h20

Round Table - How FP10 can contribute to scale-up science?

Nils Wörner, Head of Brussels Office, German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

René Repasi, Member of the European Parliament and Rapporteur on FP10 specific programme

Krzysztof Pyrc, President of the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP) and Professor at the Jagiellonian University

Fabrice Lemoine, Vice President in charge of European strategy, University of Lorraine

Moderator: Muriel dal Pont, Vice-President Nice-Côte d'Azur University

11h20

Concluding remarks

Manuel Aleixo, Member of the Cabinet, Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, European Commission (TBC)

11h30

End of the seminar