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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

EU Missions two years on: assessment of progress and way forward

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EU Missions two years on: assessment of progress and way forward

1. A NOVEL INSTRUMENT IN HORIZON EUROPE

The EU is facing unprecedented challenges, in a context of rapid change and multiplying threats but also opportunities. There is a pressing need for innovative solutions to these challenges, which include the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, climate change impacts, environmental degradation, health emergencies, demographic pressures, and growing inequalities. The EU's ability to address them will shape our collective future, but also perceptions of the effectiveness of our democratic system and its values.

Mission-based public policy is a novel and promising approach to tackling societal challenges. It involves setting ambitious and specific yet attainable goals and directing public and private resources, research and innovation (R&I) efforts, and public engagement towards meeting them within a specified timeframe. The approach was pioneered in Horizon Europe¹, the EU's funding programme for research and innovation (R&I), as part of its expanded toolbox of instruments.

EU Missions complement and build on conventional R&I in several unique ways. They aim to achieve concrete and tangible societal outcomes, whereas most other instruments are aimed at scientific and/or economic impacts. In addition to providing R&I financial support, they also coordinate with relevant regulatory and policy aspects. They have longer-term, decadal time horizons that are nevertheless fixed. This focuses efforts and triggers a rush to the finish. They focus strongly on the engagement of citizens and stakeholders from the start, making technology acceptance and inclusiveness an integral part of the model. Although rooted in R&I, they transcend basic and applied research to take a broad approach to innovation (including social and organisational) and valorise existing knowledge, tying together the full range of activities of Horizon Europe. Missions do not prescribe the means to reach their objectives, which makes them cross-disciplinary by design, requiring a portfolio approach that engenders synergies and complementarities in the development and deployment of solutions.

Horizon Europe identified five Mission Areas where challenges could be effectively addressed in a mission-based approach. These Areas are: Adaptation to Climate Change, including Societal Transformation; Cancer; Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters; Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities; and Soil Health and Food. The Commission has so

¹ See Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe, Recital 2.

far launched five EU Missions², based on reports from dedicated Mission Boards that assessed the maturity of technological and social innovation in these areas. For each Mission, detailed Mission Implementation Plans were drafted, using the Mission criteria of the Horizon Europe legal base as starting point.

The Horizon Europe Regulation³ requires an assessment of EU Missions no later than in 2023. This assessment is as much one of the individual Missions as of the Missions instrument as such, and a review of the Mission Areas. The Staff Working Document (SWD) accompanying this Communication presents the results of this assessment and provides ‘self-assessments’ for each Mission organised around the following criteria:

- An ambitious yet realistic Mission goal;
- Added value;
- R&I content;
- Ensuring implementation is feasible, measurable, and time-bound;
- Securing buy-in;
- Budget;
- Citizens and stakeholder engagement;
- Progress, achievements and milestones.

The assessment of the selection process also identified gaps and triggered reflections on the possibility of launching additional Missions across the five Areas. This Communication sets out the main findings of a thorough assessment of EU Missions and sketches the way forward for this instrument.

2. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS THUS FAR

Less than two years into implementation, the current five EU Missions have individually and collectively proven their potential. This section provides an overview of the main achievements identified in the assessment for each of the five current Missions, as well as an overall assessment of the positive lessons learnt. The next section focuses on the limitations identified and proposes actions to address them and further develop and improve the Missions instrument in the next years.

2.1. Adaptation to Climate Change

The Mission aims at **supporting at least 150 European regions to become climate resilient by 2030.** The Mission was developed in parallel with the EU Adaptation Strategy⁴ and ties in with the Strategy’s goal of a climate resilient Europe by 2050. It is designed to help accelerate adaptation to climate change and instigate transformational change in Europe,

2 COM(2021) 609 final.

3 Articles 8 (5) and 11 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013, OJ L 170, 12.5.2021.

4 COM(2021) 82 final.

contributing to more systemic policymaking based on the latest knowledge, technologies and data generated by R&I.

More specifically, it is helping regions and local authorities by providing direct support and by facilitating access to knowledge in three areas: 1) to better understand the **climate risks** they are and will be exposed to; 2) to define **pathways to climate resilience for at least 150 regions** by experimenting with different futures; and 3) to build **resilience with at least 75 large scale demonstration projects**.

Since the Mission's launch in September 2021, **308 regional and local authorities** have signed the **Mission Charter**, demonstrating a clear political commitment to work towards the Mission's objectives. In January 2023 the **Mission Implementation Platform**, which provides technical assistance to regions, and the **Mission's community of practice** were launched. Together with the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Mission started to reach out to regions to **identify a pipeline of bankable adaptation projects**. In collaboration with DG JRC and the EIT Climate KIC, **adaptation innovation pathways** are being developed, building on smart specialisation and the partnerships for regional innovation.

The **first Horizon Europe Mission projects** are helping regional and local authorities to carry out climate risk and vulnerability assessments, demonstrate **innovative solutions** (such as **flood-proof buildings**, more **drought resistant crops**, and innovative **insurance products**) or support them with tools to engage their citizens in a participatory way. For the demonstration projects that meet the selection criteria but cannot be prioritised, a **Seal of Excellence** is awarded to facilitate their uptake by other funding programmes.

2.2. Cancer

The Cancer Mission has set the overall goal of **improving the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030**, through prevention, cure and for those affected by cancer including their families, to live longer and better. The Mission focuses on four specific objectives: (1) provide a better understanding of cancer, (2) increase prevention, including by screening and early detection, (3) improve diagnosis and treatment, and (4) increase the quality of life for patients and their families.

The Mission on Cancer is a major component of the EU's investment in cancer research and innovation is key for a successful delivery of the Cancer Plan and many of its key actions, as part of a strong European Health Union. To facilitate integration of R&I and health policies, the Cancer Mission and **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**⁵ were co-developed from the start. Their objectives are aligned, complementary flagship initiatives were agreed, and a joint governance was established.

At EU level, the Cancer Mission and the Cancer Plan have fostered a **new dialogue with Member States** on cancer and brought together health and research ministries to work together in a **joint cancer subgroup** of the Expert Group on Public Health⁶. This is creating

5 COM/2021/44 final

6 https://health.ec.europa.eu/latest-updates/commission-expert-group-public-health-2022-12-08_en

the right environment for research evidence to systematically inform policy development. The Cancer Mission facilitated the early involvement of the Expert Group on Public Health which helped shaping the updated **Council Recommendation on cancer screening**⁷, extending screening to prostate, lung, and gastric cancer beyond breast, colorectal and cervical cancer. By replicating this integrated approach to health and research policies, the recently launched **National Cancer Mission Hubs** will foster cross-policy dialogues with national stakeholders on cancer prevention and control.

The Mission is playing a key role in enabling the development of the **UNCAN.eu, a European data hub on cancer**, to help researchers analyse combined research, health and other relevant data at an unprecedented scale, boosting the robustness of data and creating new research opportunities. The Mission is also enabling **other EU initiatives**: it supports the **European Cancer Patient Digital Centre**, which will enable patients to share their data and better ‘navigate’ the health systems, translate the future European Health Data Space into tangible benefits for researchers and citizens. In addition, a **dialogue with young cancer survivors** has been launched, giving them a space to share their experience, express their specific needs, and co-create initiatives that will help address them.

2.3. Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030

The Mission’s goal is to **reconcile the protection and restoration of marine and freshwater ecosystems with the increasing pressures on aquatic resources**. The Mission directly contributes to making the EU a front-runner in the transition to a sustainable and circular blue economy and to drive the new wave of innovations this transition requires.

As an inclusive, systemic and transformative initiative that bundles existing efforts at EU, national and regional levels, the Mission contributes to **overcoming fragmented governance frameworks** and supports **key EU legislation and policies**⁸ in marine, maritime and freshwater domains as well as related fields.

The Mission has set up four **Mission ‘lighthouses’**⁹ in major European sea and river basins as sites to **pilot, demonstrate and deploy at scale** the needed solutions, making them available to over 100 European associated regions. More than 480 actions were pledged under the Mission’s Charter, mobilising a total of EUR 3.72 billion¹⁰. By endorsing the Charter, Member States, regions, local authorities, international partners¹¹ and many different stakeholders are **expressing strong political support, taking concrete measures and**

7 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/09/council-updates-its-recommendation-to-screen-for-cancer/>

8 Such as the Nature Restoration Law proposal, the Outermost Regions Strategy, the Arctic strategy, the Algae Strategy, the EU Action Plan to protect and restore marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries.

9 These are: the Atlantic and Arctic basin lighthouse; the Baltic and North Sea basin lighthouse; the Mediterranean Sea basin lighthouse and the Danube River basin lighthouse.

10 Mission Ocean and Waters Charter is a simple, inclusive and inspirational framework, calling for concrete actions to enhance cooperation to deliver on Mission objectives. It is open to any public or private interested parties. Mission actions cover R&I, knowledge and data, citizen engagement, upscaling/deployment of solutions, education and training.

11 Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Declaration, June 2022.

mobilising bottom-up actions and resources. Key **communities of actors** (e.g. ports, fleet owners, coastal cities, islands, fishing and conservation communities) are being established under the Mission lighthouses to bring together coastal cities, islands, fishing and conservation communities, ports, and fleet owners. An **Implementation Platform** has been launched to provide support to the stakeholders committed to implement the Mission.

One way of reaching out to stakeholders is the **European Digital Twin of the Ocean** that will be operational in 2024. It makes ocean knowledge readily available to citizens, entrepreneurs, scientists, and policymakers, thus allowing predictions and informed decisions. The Mission is also implementing participatory approaches and citizen engagement such as citizen science and ocean literacy actions, community-led ventures for ocean farming and responsible sea-product consumption campaigns.

The Mission is acting as a **catalyst for synergies and complementarities** across different EU, national and regional programmes, already pooling funds beyond R&I namely EMFAF¹² national plans, BlueInvest with EUR 1.5 billion in risk finance, Recovery and Resilience Funds, Interreg and Copernicus.

2.4. 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030

The Mission's two goals are to achieve **100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030** and to ensure that these cities also act as experimentation and innovation hubs to put **all European cities in a position to become climate-neutral by 2050**. Interest in the Mission has been strong from the start with more than 377 cities applying to join the Mission.

The Mission has created a **community of ambitious cities**.¹³ Supported by the **Mission Platform**, participating cities have access to an online portal that allows them to work in groups, exchange experience and access a knowledge repository to accelerating climate-neutral solutions. Currently, the portal has more than 1400 active users.

The Mission is **inclusive** engaging all EU Member States and eight associated countries. Member States are being engaged systematically via country visits and the CapaCITIES project¹⁴, which supports national networks and connects them with each other. All cities have started to co-create their **Climate City Contract (CCC)** with the local community and citizens, supported by dedicated **City Advisors**.

The **EIB** supports Mission actions including targeted awareness raising for cities and a contribution to the CCC review process. **53 pilot cities**¹⁵ were selected to receive grants (between 0.5 and 1.5 million EUR) to develop innovative solutions to address the challenges of climate transition. Another 50 cities will soon benefit from the work done in the pilot projects through exchange of experience and mentoring with the pilot cities.

12 European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

13 100 cities from Member States and 12 cities from countries associated to Horizon 2020.

14 <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101056927>

15 <https://netzerocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Pilot-Cities-Announcement-Press-Release-Mar-2023-Final.pdf>

Urban regeneration is at the core of a joint Horizon Europe call organised between the Cities Mission and the Climate Change Adaptation Mission. A dedicated Horizon Europe action is also making it possible for Ukrainian cities be associated to the Mission. **Synergies have been established with EU programmes and initiatives**, including the European Innovation Council (EIC), the Connecting Europe Facility, the LIFE Strategic Integrated Projects and the Urban Innovative Actions¹⁶.

Many Member States or regions are referring to the Cities Mission in their regional operational programmes and dedicated funding streams at national level have been identified for example in Greece and Spain. The Mission has also a joint call in the Horizon Europe work programme 2023-2024 with the Partnerships for zero emission mobility (2Zero) and for Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility (CCAM) with a combined budget of EUR 50 million. An **Urban Transitions Centre**,¹⁷ supports the Cities Mission’s international outreach activities and links to the global Urban Transitions Mission of Mission Innovation.

2.5. A Soil Deal for Europe

With its goal of establishing **100 Living Labs and Lighthouses by 2030**, the Mission aims to deliver solutions for the sustainable management and restoration of soils in rural and urban areas. About **60% of EU soils are considered unhealthy**¹⁸, i.e. are losing their capacity to support food production, biodiversity and the regulation of water, nutrient and carbon cycles. Together with the Soil Strategy for 2030, the proposal for a Directive on Soil Monitoring and Resilience, and the EU Soil Observatory, the Mission forms part of a solid framework for soil protection and restoration, as also acknowledged by the European Parliament¹⁹.

A dozen **EU Green Deal strategies, communications and action plans have identified the Mission as a tool** to deliver on their policy ambitions²⁰. **The Mission receives support from sources** such as the LIFE programme and the Circular Bioeconomy Europe Joint Undertaking²¹, PRIMA²² and the EIC. By promoting soil education, the Mission is supporting the **European Year of Skills**. To leverage additional financial resources, **the EIB** is developing a pipeline for large-scale soil investments in connection with InvestEU.

Overall, Member States have reported more than 200 complementary activities in support of the Mission’s objectives. **The Mission is integrated in 18 out of 28 Member State**

16 <https://www.urban-initiative.eu/innovative-actions-greening-cities>

17 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/local-action-global-impact-urban-transitions-mission-centre-starts-its-activities-2022-12-13_en

18 <https://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/esdacviewer/euso-dashboard/>

19 European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2021 on soil protection (2021/2548(RSP)).

20 Farm to Fork Strategy; Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change; Forest Strategy for 2030; Zero Pollution Action Plan for air, water and soil; Action plan for the development of organic production in the EU; A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas; EU Soil Strategy for 2030; Communication on sustainable carbon cycles; Communication “Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems”; Communication “Ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers”; Legislative Framework for a Union Sustainable Food System (FSFS); Communication on the European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) “Save bees and farmers! Towards a bee-friendly agriculture for a healthy environment”.

21 <https://www.cbe.europa.eu/>

22 <https://prima-med.org/>

Strategic Plans under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)²³, thereby creating links between innovations in soil management, farming practices and the allocation of CAP funds. These synergies will allow to deploy and replicate solutions developed under the Mission in more than **1,000 additional testing sites**. Under the Mission, regional and local authorities are developing **Territorial Soil Management Agreements for soil health**. A Mission Soil Platform²⁴ acts as a one-stop shop for information and engagement in Mission activities.

The Mission is advancing harmonised soil monitoring in the EU and is developing **strategies for soil decontamination and regeneration** as well as **new business models** for soil friendly and climate neutral value chains. Through its **support to carbon farming**, the Soil Mission promotes cost-competitive monitoring, reporting, and verification tools for soil carbon removals.

The **first Living Labs under the Mission will start in 2024** and will result in more than 200 testing sites for local experimentation in urban and rural areas. The Mission is reaching out to various audiences in novel ways, e.g. by involving cultural and creative industries and promoting the Mission Manifesto²⁵. Looking beyond Europe, the Mission has become a **major flagship for international cooperation** with the Global Soil Partnership²⁶, the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate initiative²⁷, or with international R&I partners such as Japan, U.S., Canada and African countries.

2.6. Overall assessment of EU Missions

This sub-section summarises the assessment from the perspective of the Mission instrument as such, drawing some horizontal conclusions across the five Missions on the aspects required by the legal base: selection process, governance, budget, focus and progress to date. Since their inception, EU Missions have demonstrated a clear potential to accelerate change. With the help of Horizon Europe funding, EU Missions have connected and supported policies and programmes across the EU with local public engagement and implementation. The assessment confirms that Missions are timely and inspirational initiatives that provide new impetus to important EU policy priorities and help align EU, national, regional and local policy efforts towards shared goals.

Selection process: The assessment finds that the year-long Mission development process offered valuable opportunities to leading experts and a wide range of stakeholders to participate in the co-creation of Missions, for instance through their involvement in the Mission Boards and citizen panels. It also confirmed the continued relevance of the Mission Areas and of the EU Missions themselves.

Governance: Each Mission includes EU-level governance mechanisms. Governance is particularly important for a new instrument, and more so for one of this complexity, which is

23 https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans_en

24 <https://mission-soil-platform.ec.europa.eu/>

25 By mid-June 2023 the Manifesto had over 1400 signatories, including 100 public and private institutions.

26 <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/en/>

27 <https://www.aimforclimate.org/>

meant to bring together different constituencies, levels of government, scientific disciplines, and funding sources. These mechanisms include dedicated cross-sectoral steering and coordination bodies that enable new forms of collaboration across Commission services and across levels of government. Mission Managers and Deputy Mission Managers were appointed to steer each Mission with the support of Mission secretariats. Two waves of Mission Boards were selected to provide strategic advice and expertise (one for the design phase and one for implementation). There has also been important progress on governance at national level: several Member States established inter-ministerial taskforces and national mirror groups to better liaise with the Commission on national implementation. Member States have also mobilised EU programmes under shared management in support of the Missions. The assessment also found that the Mission governance is breaking organisational silos and bringing different organisations closer together in pursuit of the shared, timebound goals.

Budget: Important investments have been made under the Horizon Europe programme to enable the development of knowledge and innovative solutions to help meet the goals set by the EU Missions. So far, the European Commission has made available a total of EUR 1.8 billion in two subsequent work programmes (WPs 2021-2022 and WP 2023-2024), corresponding to 10% of the Horizon Europe Pillar 2 budget for the years 2021-23. All Missions have managed to get some level of interest and commitments from sources of funding beyond Horizon Europe, including the private sector (mostly via the EIB).

Focus and progress to date: The high number of citizen engagement initiatives organised during the preparatory design phase of the Missions helped to build societal ownership and encourage broad engagement of relevant stakeholder communities. The assessment suggests that through a strict focus on, and close alignment with, EU policies and strategies, the Missions are contributing to them in a worthwhile way. Beyond the EU level, EU Missions have managed to gather large stakeholder communities, including by building and engaging communities at the regional and local levels. In addition, the assessment suggests that the Missions are overall progressing in line with their implementation plans and appear to be on track to achieve their 2030 targets.

3. OUTSTANDING CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENTS

As a novel instrument, Missions need political support as well as continuity and predictability, but also genuine evaluation and improvement. The assessment acknowledges these limitations, and the Commission is committed to addressing them, given that the initial promise of the Missions instrument has remained strong, and the five Missions show signs of working well. The recommendations in this section are the result of a reflection among Commission services, Mission Board Chairs and Mission Managers.

In addition to the encouraging early achievements outlined above, EU Missions are also facing a number of important challenges. There are several areas in which improvements can be made, including the sometimes-cumbersome governance setup, the rather limited leverage so far of funding beyond Horizon Europe, the suboptimal synergies with other EU instruments, the low involvement of the private sector, and communication efforts and

outreach to stakeholders and citizens. All Missions have taken steps to address these issues, but additional effort – also on a horizontal level – are necessary. Addressing these challenges will only grow more important as Mission implementation moves along and the focus increasingly shifts to deployment and impact.

3.1. Improve the governance and political steer

EU Missions need sound steering and a strong governance system to be effective. While the assessment has shown that the system set up for EU Missions is promoting links across policy domains and across organisations, a number of other governance functions can be improved. The governance system is perceived by many stakeholders as being cumbersome, complex and lacking transparency. In addition, the governance system has not yet arrived at a coherent, consistent monitoring system for the Missions, both individually and as an instrument. The governance system is strongly focused on implementation and currently lacks a space for analysis and reflection on (lack of) progress and further instrument and policy development. The governance system also lacks sufficient room for high-level political discussions on progress and for re-orientation where needed.

A strengthened and better coordinated administrative governance is necessary to enable Missions to be effective. This type of ambitious, whole-of-government initiatives like EU Missions require the development of large-scale and cross-policy synergies over long periods and across the EU, national, regional and local levels in order to succeed. For example, coordination mechanisms between EU-level Mission representatives and national, regional and local level authorities should be reinforced to ensure Missions' efforts are deployed as close as possible to EU citizens. It is also clear that strengthened political leadership should act as a clear signal to facilitate access to resources (including funding) and actions to progress towards the Mission objectives. The steering of EU Missions should therefore be further strengthened at the administrative level.

The Commission will:

- *Invite all political actors involved, including the Member States, to nominate high level representatives to join the Commissioners responsible for the respective EU Missions in promoting Missions to citizens, mobilising national funds etc.*
- *Intensify discussions, notably with Member States, on how to streamline EU Mission governance to make it more efficient, inclusive, and effective.*
- *Significantly invest in strengthening joint support functions ('back office') for all current and future EU Missions and to address the limitations identified in this Communication.*
- *Initiate a yearly debate on the implementation of the EU Missions in the thematic Council formations and European Parliament committees relevant for each EU Mission.*

3.2. Secure more and better co-investment, including from the private sector

A broader portfolio of instruments needs to be mobilised, with the Horizon Europe calls serving only as seed funding and orchestrators rather than the main instruments of deployment. The integrated approach to Missions requires strong co-ownership across the Commission and the Union, involving all relevant actors and stakeholders, including in the use of their funding instruments, as Missions need to cover the full innovation chain from lab to deployment at scale. The interdisciplinary nature of the governance mechanisms offers ample opportunities for building synergies between the EU Missions and other parts of Horizon Europe, the EU Missions and other EU instruments and the EU Missions and national, regional and local policies and funding programmes. The evidence gathered in this assessment shows that these opportunities have not yet been fully exploited.

Member States' programming of EU funding needs to be aligned more closely with the EU Missions. This is an integral element of synergy building, for instance by making more systematic use of Cohesion policy for the EU Missions. Diversifying funding and financing sources to support a pipeline of activities from research to deployment is therefore another key challenge. For this purpose, very close contacts between the Commission services and the Member States' managing and implementing authorities should be established.

EU Missions' implementation is so far primarily funded by Horizon Europe and other sources of public funding. Yet, to achieve full impact by 2030 these funds need to be complemented by significant investments from the private sector and philanthropic organisations to ensure the deployment and replication of solutions at scale. While efforts are being made in this direction, the level of investment and involvement of these actors should be boosted.

Increased cooperation with the EIB is crucial to achieving the EU Missions' goals. Throughout their preparatory and implementation stages, EU Missions have been working closely with the EIB, which has provided advisory services to support the development of the investment agendas of the Missions Implementation Plans. This collaboration should be scaled up, particularly considering the strong alignment of several Missions' goals and the EIB's objectives.

More effort is needed to raise the interest of the private sector in the EU Missions' activities. The use of innovative instruments designed for the private sector, such as public procurement of innovation, has not been fully explored. Moreover, experience has shown that engaging with the European Partnerships, and in particular those with strong industry involvement, are effective ways to raise industry's interest in EU policy priorities and how they can contribute to them. Joint calls between EU Missions and some of the co-programmed European Partnerships have already been launched. The launch of Mission-oriented and Mission-linked calls within the framework of existing and future European Partnerships would open more opportunities for engagement with industry. This will be complemented by a structured dialogue with main interest groupings of both industry and philanthropic organisations.

The Commission will:

- *Intensify the work on EU Mission portfolio building and management to provide the Mission Managers with intelligent monitoring and intervention tools.*
- *Mobilise a broader portfolio of instruments, including public-private partnerships and the public procurement of innovation.*
- *Intensify discussions on alignment of Member States' programming of EU funding with the EU Missions.*
- *Invite recommendations and advice on how to increase private sector involvement in, and contribution to, the EU Missions.*

3.3. Enhance citizen and stakeholder engagement

Achieving the goals of individual EU Missions (and in general the ambitions of the EU) will ultimately hinge on the broad public support and acceptance of the necessary green and digital transitions. While the involvement of stakeholders directly engaged in the Missions has been quite effective, there is still scope for further incentivising broader awareness across the general public and direct engagement of civil society organisations and social partners, thereby living up to the promise and potential of Missions. Additional efforts are needed to raise awareness on Mission goals and impact, to strengthen stakeholder feedback mechanisms and to increase the visibility of the Missions and their concrete actions on the ground. To this end, communication efforts need to be significantly stepped-up towards relevant stakeholder groups and individual citizens.

There is still a lack of awareness on the benefits and potential of EU Missions as an instrument in the public. This is in spite of the relative success of individual EU Missions, who have been active in communication and awareness raising and in engaging affected stakeholder communities. Brand visibility for Missions as an instrument facilitates engagement of individual ones. The active and continued involvement of the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of Regions is also critical to increase public awareness and mobilise citizens.

The Commission will step up the use of targeted actions to jointly support Missions, including on awareness raising and communication. It will also strengthen the monitoring system for assessing progress in EU Mission implementation in a more quantitative and easier to comprehend manner. It will also prepare policy advice on the future of EU Missions, including on transition strategies towards the next EU long term budget. The experience of the current assessment, de facto very early in the lifetime of Missions, has shown the importance of a continuous overview of implementation parameters. The Commission commits to producing a further assessment report on the implementation of EU Missions in 2025 to take stock of progress, assess the adequacy of funding, identify achievements for future dissemination and replicate of innovative solutions coming from Missions.

The Commission will:

- *Further engage with communication professionals as regards a strategy for a more citizen-based approach to EU Missions.*

- *Undertake targeted actions to support local and national communication efforts to boost citizen engagement and raise public awareness of EU Missions.*
- *Publish a new report on the implementation of EU Missions in 2025.*
- *Organise a public debate on the implementation reports. to draw lessons, discuss progress, and communicate achievements of the EU Missions.*

4. RENEWED IMPETUS

The current five EU Missions have achieved substantial reach on the ground and will work further to consolidate and tackle remaining challenges. However, the assessment has also highlighted the opportunity to expand the Missions portfolio, and the need to reaffirm political and financial support for the instrument.

4.1. Launching a new EU Mission on New European Bauhaus

More than two years after its launch, the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative²⁸ has made significant progress on its goal of connecting the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences. It has its own Community of over 1,000 members active across Europe and beyond, an advisory group made up of esteemed figures in the worlds of architecture, culture, design, and sustainability. And it is inspiring bottom-up projects and initiatives that test and demonstrate NEB ideas and actions.

The New European Bauhaus already shares several characteristics with the EU Missions. The current assessment exercise and the challenges it identified, as well as reflections in the NEB community and calls from the European Parliament²⁹ indicate that it is now opportune for the NEB initiative to consolidate its progress, to consolidate its focus and rooting in R&I, and to gain focus in the form of a new dedicated EU Mission.

The launch of a dedicated NEB Mission will follow the same process as the first five. This includes the appointment of a Mission Board, and the drafting of a Mission Implementation Plan, both of which will help define the exact targets and milestones of the Mission, as was the case for the first five. This would consider the achievements and potential of the New European Bauhaus initiative so far, as well as the assessment of the EU Missions.

The new Mission would complement and advance the work of the existing Missions. For example, the Missions on Adaptation to Climate Change and on Climate-neutral and Smart Cities would see potential for further synergies across different funding instruments and private sector investment. It could also complement these two Missions by taking a holistic and more in-depth approach to the built environment. For instance, by exploring, through R&I, how neighbourhoods could become carbon sinks, integrate them in a circular ecosystem, make them more resilient to climate change, and allow them to give resources back to nature through regenerative design. The NEB also has a strong social innovation

28 https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

29 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0213_EN.html

dimension, as it fosters the development of innovative governance and policymaking approaches to increase the flexibility, speed and circularity of decision-making flows when compared to classical processes. In its scope, the New European Bauhaus Mission would ensure complementarities synergies with relevant initiatives such as the Built4People Partnership. The NEB Mission would engage with people to build greater social acceptance for Green Deal policies, promoting social ownership of green solutions and encouraging behavioural changes needed to meet Green Deal targets. This would be done by focusing on sustainability alongside other criteria, including accessibility, affordability and quality of experience provided.

The New European Bauhaus has already developed synergies between R&I investments, other funding instruments³⁰ and private sector investment. All 27 Member States have committed to the New European Bauhaus in over 220 cohesion policy programmes. It now has considerable potential for further scaling up and deploying innovative solutions at local and regional level. The European Investment Bank is also engaged with the aim of developing New European Bauhaus investment guidelines to help start-ups and project promoters. In 2023, two European Innovation Council challenges are contributing to the delivery of the NEB. Since 2021, the European Institute for Innovation and Technology is mobilising five Knowledge and Innovation Communities and their respective networks across business, education, and research through the initiative EIT Community New European Bauhaus. An EU Mission is an appropriate tool to reinforce such synergies, build scale and ensure maximum impact.

The Commission will:

- *Propose a new EU Mission dedicated to the New European Bauhaus.*
- *Start the preparations for its scale up, including the establishment of a Mission Board and the drafting of a Mission Implementation Plan.*

4.2. Reaffirming political and financial support

Given their ambition, EU Missions require a sustained and continuously coordinated effort across a period of more than a decade. While still at an early stage of implementation, EU Missions have received significant attention and support from EU Institutions, Member States, regional and local authorities, and a broad range of stakeholders. This momentum needs to be further supported to ensure the EU Missions reach their goals in the long-term.

For EU Missions to fully deliver on their promise, they need a clear commitment regarding continued financial support in Horizon Europe during the current EU long term budget. Accordingly, the Commission considers that Horizon Europe support for the

30 Horizon Europe, European Regional Development Fund, Just Transition Fund, LIFE, Digital Europe, Single Market Programme, COSME, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, European Solidarity Corps.

EU Missions for after 2023 should be set at a level of 11% of Pillar 2³¹. This funding will guarantee continuity and help to keep the pace of implementation in the existing Missions. At the same time, it will incentivise them to leverage funding sources beyond Horizon Europe, while also accommodating for the launch of a new Mission.

The Commission will:

- *Reaffirm its political commitment and support to the EU Missions.*
- *Maintain EU Missions as flagships of implementation of Horizon Europe and other Union instruments.*
- *Propose a Horizon Europe budget for EU Missions of 11% of Pillar 2 until 2027.*

5. CONCLUSION

Experience with two years of implementation of five EU Missions has confirmed that the mission-based approach as an instrument of Horizon Europe incentivises the engagement of broad and enthusiastic communities of stakeholders. Through its ability to promote experimentation, coordination and scaling of deployment, the EU Mission instrument can play a pivotal role in necessary societal transitions across multiple domains.

Based on the assessment and analysis of the EU Missions detailed in the Staff Working Document, this Communication concludes that implementation of the current five Missions should be continued, and support should be increased, both politically and financially. A new Mission on the NEB will complement and strengthen the current Missions, opening new possibilities to bring tangible R&I benefits for Europe.

Nevertheless, experience has also shown that to fully deliver on its potential, the Mission instrument needs to address a few remaining challenges, notably regarding public awareness, governance and its ability to leverage other sources of funding, including private funding. The actions formulated in this Communication aim to address the challenges still faced by EU Missions, in co-creation with all EU Institutions, Member States and stakeholders from across the EU, to make this transformative tool a true success.

³¹ The distribution of the contribution among the different clusters of Pillar 2 will be differentiated across clusters, reflecting the objectives of the Missions and their link to the given cluster. It will not undermine support for the uptake and scaling up of the development and manufacturing of strategic technologies in the Union, as established in the EU's industrial policy and the Commission's proposal for a review of the Multiannual Financial Framework.