

## Amendments

### Helsinki-Uusimaa Region on the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)

May 2026

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region welcomes the proposed European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) as a major instrument to close Europe's innovation and investment gap and to strengthen strategic sectors such as clean technologies, digital leadership, bioeconomy, circular economy, health, and dual-use capabilities.

For Helsinki-Uusimaa, Finland's leading innovation region and a major European hub for research, talent, startups, and deep-tech ecosystems, the ECF represents a concrete opportunity to translate European excellence into European leadership.

To succeed, however, the fund needs to reflect how competitiveness is built in practice: through interconnected, place-based ecosystems where cities, regions, universities, companies, and public authorities jointly enable innovation, investment, and adoption. A model that relies heavily on centralised or large industrial actors risks missing this reality and with it, Europe's ability to scale innovation.

## Our key messages and proposed amendments

### 1. Recognise Regions and Cities together with Universities, Universities of Applied Science and Research Institutes as strategic partners in industrial competitiveness

Europe's competitiveness is built in regional and urban ecosystems where research, skills, infrastructure and markets converge. Regions and cities and their subsidiaries play a structural role in translating research excellence into globally competitive companies, notably in deep-tech sectors where long development cycles and high capital intensity require sustained public support and coordination.

The Regulation should explicitly recognise regional and local authorities together with universities, universities of applied science and research institutes as key actors in innovation ecosystems and industrial competitiveness. This includes their role in facilitating collaboration across stakeholders (Recital 5), their structural contribution to scaling innovation (new Recital 81a), and their participation in governance structures such as the Strategic Stakeholder Board (Article 14).

In addition, the ECF should support the interconnection of innovation ecosystems across Europe, including through value chain development and cooperation between regional ecosystems (Article 16). University Alliances create added European value to the regional innovation ecosystems (Recital 21).



## **2. Strengthen Smart Specialisation as a delivery mechanism for European competitiveness**

Europe's industrial and technological capabilities are territorially embedded. Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) provide a tested and scalable framework to align EU priorities with regional strengths and to enable interregional cooperation based on complementarity.

The introduction of a new recital on S3 (Recital 6a) would ensure that the ECF builds on existing place-based capacities and supports the integration of regional ecosystems into European value chains, bridging EU-level priorities with bottom-up innovation dynamics.

## **3. Establish a clear pathway from research to deployment and scale-up**

Europe's long-term competitiveness depends on its ability to move from research to real-world application.

The ECF should create a clear and operational link with Horizon Europe, particularly from collaborative research under Pillar II, enabling projects to progress to demonstration, deployment and market uptake. Cumulative funding should be made workable in practice, allowing successful projects to continue along the innovation chain without disruption. This requires making cumulative funding workable in practice, without double financing (Article 6).

At the same time, governance and programming must remain clearly separated to preserve the autonomy and excellence-based logic of the Framework Programme.

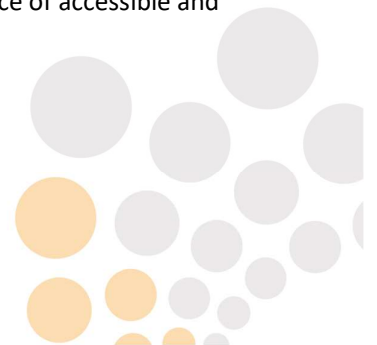
## **4. Ensure accessible, coherent and competitive implementation**

The effectiveness of the ECF will ultimately depend on whether it is usable for high-quality projects across Europe.

Funding should be allocated through open competition, based on clear criteria such as impact, quality and relevance for European competitiveness (Article 15). Complex, fragmented governance and reporting rules risk excluding the best projects and innovation. At the same time, alignment of rules across the ECF, Horizon Europe and NRPPs is essential to reduce fragmentation and administrative burden.

National co-funding will be a determining factor. Experience from the Regional Innovation Valleys (RIVs) shows that insufficient or uneven national co-funding has limited participation from otherwise strong regions, including Helsinki-Uusimaa, despite clear demand and competitive proposals. This weakens both participation and overall European impact.

Access for SMEs, startups and scaleups should build on existing regional structures, such as the Enterprise Europe Network and local innovation hubs. In Finland, SMEs account for approximately 98% of enterprises, many of them located in Helsinki-Uusimaa, underlining the importance of accessible and regionally anchored support.



## 5. Strengthen skills and talent as a core pillar of competitiveness

Competitiveness ultimately depends on people and the availability of relevant skills.

The ECF should support the development of talent ecosystems that connect education, research, innovation and industry at regional level. This includes strengthening cooperation between universities, vocational education and training providers, applied research organisations, and businesses, as well as supporting talent attraction and mobility in strategic sectors, particularly in sectors central to the Fund's policy windows, including energy, digitalisation, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, transport and infrastructure (Article 30)

## 6. Strengthen resilience, infrastructure and health as enabling conditions

Competitiveness is increasingly linked to resilience, preparedness and the capacity to manage systemic risks.

Cities and regions are at the forefront of investments in civil protection, cyber resilience, energy systems, logistics and transport connectivity. The ECF should recognise the role of regions and cities in delivering the clean transition and supporting infrastructure deployment, including through dedicated support for demonstration and deployment actions (Article 3(2)(a)). It should also adopt a broader, whole-of-society approach to security and resilience, including the preparedness capacities of public authorities and essential service providers (Article 3(2)(b)(4)).

In addition, strengthening the health dimension of the Fund, including through support for a resilient European Health Union (Article 3(2)(b) new), and integrating environmental and climate objectives across sectors such as bioeconomy and agriculture (Articles 3 and 37), would ensure that competitiveness is built on sustainable and resilient foundations.

## 7. Ensure continuity and visibility of environmental and climate action

The ECF should preserve and build on the added value of existing instruments supporting environmental and climate objectives.

The integration of a LIFE-type approach within the Fund, including a dedicated, sufficient allocation (5.4 billion in 2021-2027) and explicit recognition of biodiversity, circular economy, environmental protection and climate adaptation and mitigation objectives (Article 3 and new provisions), would ensure continuity, visibility and effectiveness of Union action in these areas.



## Proposed amendments to the Regulation on establishing the ECF (2025/0555)

### Amendment 1

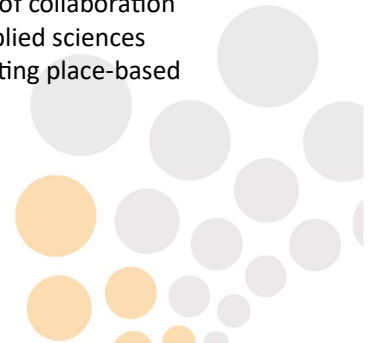
#### Proposal for a regulation

#### Recital 5

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	Text proposed by the ITRE draft report	<i>Amendment</i>
(5) This also requires that Union funding facilitates the creation and expansion of innovative and industrial ecosystems, where different actors interact in a synergetic way. Successful ecosystems feature intensive and agile interactions and collaboration between small and large companies, universities, research institutions, infrastructure providers, investors as well as public authorities. Without such collaborations within and between individual innovation and industrial ecosystems, innovation potential stays unexploited.	-	(5) This also requires that Union funding facilitates the creation and expansion of innovative and industrial ecosystems, where different actors interact in a synergetic way. Successful ecosystems feature intensive and agile interactions and collaboration between small and large companies, universities research institutions, infrastructure providers, investors as well as <b><i>national, regional and local</i></b> public authorities. Without such collaborations within and between individual innovation and industrial ecosystems <b><i>across Europe, supported by European University Alliances</i></b> , innovation potential stays unexploited. <b><i>Following pilot activities under the European Innovation Ecosystems action in Horizon Europe, support will be provided on deployment and scaling up of connections between place-based ecosystems across value chains and common challenges.</i></b>

#### *Justification*

Regional and local authorities should be explicitly recognised as central facilitators of collaboration within innovation ecosystems, which bring together universities, universities of applied sciences research organisations, SMEs, investors and citizens. Dedicated support for connecting place-based



innovation ecosystems across value chains and common challenges should be introduced following the learnings from the Regional Innovation Valleys. Higher Education Institutions and particularly European University alliances should be recognised as central facilitators of collaboration within innovation ecosystems, bringing together research organisations, SMEs, investors, public authorities and citizens.

## Amendment 2

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Recital 7

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	Text proposed by the ITRE draft report	<i>Amendment</i>
(7) Therefore, the purpose of the ECF is to establish an investment capacity to support European competitiveness in strategic technologies, infrastructures, products and services and sectors, providing for a more seamless investment journey. It will promote the creation, collaboration, and expansion of innovation, private finance and industrial ecosystems.	(7) Therefore, the purpose of the ECF is to establish an investment capacity to support European competitiveness <b>through activities that have a Union added value</b> in strategic technologies, infrastructures <b>(including research and technology infrastructures)</b> , products, services and sectors. It will promote the creation, collaboration, and expansion of innovation, private finance and industrial ecosystems.	<b>(7)</b> Therefore, the purpose of the ECF is to establish an investment capacity to support European competitiveness <b>through activities that have a Union added value</b> in strategic technologies, infrastructures <b>(including research and technology infrastructures)</b> , products, services and sectors. It will promote the creation, collaboration, and expansion of innovation, private finance and <b>innovation</b> ecosystems. <b>Competitiveness should be understood as the Union's capacity to generate sustainable growth, resilience and strategic autonomy through technological, social and societal transformation. This requires strengthening territorial innovation ecosystems where local and regional authorities, knowledge institutions – including universities of applied sciences and vocational education and training providers – businesses, investors and citizens co-create, test and</b>

		<p><b><i>deploy innovative solutions. To strengthen the Union's competitiveness, support under the European Competitiveness Fund should contribute to the deployment, scaling up and market uptake of challenge-driven solutions, in complementarity with the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.</i></b></p>
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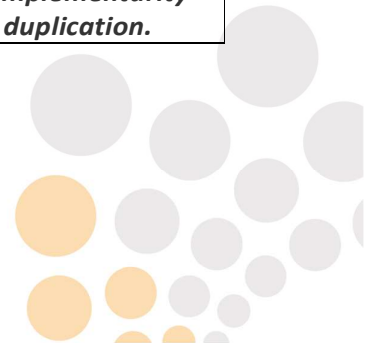
*Justification*

The ECF can complement FP10 (Horizon Europe) by focusing on deployment, scale-up and market uptake of challenge-driven solutions, ensuring continuity from research to implementation and territorial impact.

**Amendment 3**

**Proposal for a regulation  
Recital 6a (new)**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	Text proposed by the ITRE draft report	<i>Amendment</i>
-	-	<p><b><i>Industrial and technological capabilities, which are key to Europe's competitiveness, are territorially embedded, and Europe's strength lies in the coordination of its diverse regional specialisations. Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) provide the only EU-wide methodology capable of aligning regional strengths with EU strategic priorities, supporting diversification into related technologies, and enabling structured interregional cooperation based on complementarity rather than duplication.</i></b></p>



		<b><i>S3 priorities should be systematically recognised and used across EU funding instruments to bridge top-down EU strategic goals with bottom-up regional innovation, integrating local strengths into Europe's industrial value chains.</i></b>
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*Justification*

This amendment addresses Europe's core competitiveness gap: not the generation of ideas, but their conversion into globally competitive businesses. Regions and cities fill this gap by providing infrastructure, ecosystem coordination, regulatory support, and pathways to market. Recognising this role within the ECF would enable regions like Uusimaa to support the scaling of research-driven companies, ensuring that European innovations develop into competitive firms rather than remaining at pilot stage.

**Amendment 4**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Recital (new)**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	Text proposed by the ITRE draft report	<i>Amendment</i>
-	-	<b>The LIFE Programme has demonstrated significant Union added value by supporting innovative, locally driven solutions for environmental and climate objectives and by facilitating the implementation of Union legislation. Its core characteristics should be preserved within the Fund.</b>

*Justification*

The amendment provides political and legal justification aligned with Better Regulation logic. The integration of a LIFE-type approach within the Fund, including a dedicated, sufficient allocation (5.4 billion in 2021-2027) and explicit recognition of biodiversity, circular economy, environmental protection and climate adaptation and mitigation objectives (Article 3 and new provisions), would ensure continuity, visibility and effectiveness of Union action in these areas.



## Amendment 5

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Recital 21

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
<p>[21] The competitive strength of the Union lies in its people. The Competitiveness Compass identifies promoting skills and quality jobs as a horizontal enabler. The European Council Conclusions highlight that “following the Commission communication of 5 March 2025 on a Union of Skills, further efforts should be made to enhance the acquisition, recognition and retention of skills across the EU, from the building of basic skills to engaging in life-long learning, reskilling and upskilling, in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan”. A strong dialogue is part of this. Human capital is key to the prosperity of the Union, its economic resilience and unique social market economy. It is essential to foster prosperity, including high quality jobs, by boosting productivity growth, making Union industries more competitive and innovative, attracting additional investments, and supporting a dynamic single market and enhanced economic security. The ECF should contribute to the Union of Skills by supporting the development of a skilled workforce equipped with the specific skills needed in the strategic investment areas of the Fund, through life-long learning, education,</p>	<p>(21) The competitive strength of the Union lies in its people. The Competitiveness Compass identifies promoting skills and quality jobs as a horizontal enabler. The European Council Conclusions highlight that “following the Commission communication of 5 March 2025 on a Union of Skills, further efforts should be made to enhance the acquisition, recognition and retention of skills across the EU, from the building of basic skills to engaging in life-long learning, reskilling and upskilling, in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan”. A strong dialogue is part of this. Human capital is key to the prosperity of the Union, its economic resilience and unique social market economy. It is essential to foster prosperity, including high quality jobs, by boosting productivity growth, making Union industries more competitive and innovative, attracting additional investments, and supporting a dynamic single market and enhanced economic security. The ECF should contribute to supporting the development of a skilled workforce equipped with the specific skills needed in the strategic</p>	<p>(21) The competitive strength of the Union lies in its people. The Competitiveness Compass identifies promoting skills and quality jobs as a horizontal enabler. The European Council Conclusions highlight that “following the Commission communication of 5 March 2025 on a Union of Skills, further efforts should be made to enhance the acquisition, recognition and retention of skills across the EU, from the building of basic skills to engaging in life-long learning, reskilling and upskilling, in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan”. A strong dialogue is part of this. Human capital is key to the prosperity of the Union, its economic resilience and unique social market economy. It is essential to foster prosperity, including high quality jobs, by boosting productivity growth, making Union industries more competitive and innovative, attracting additional investments, and supporting a dynamic single market and enhanced economic security. The ECF should contribute to the Union of Skills by supporting the development of a skilled workforce equipped with the specific skills needed in the strategic investment areas of the Fund, through life-long learning, education,</p>

<p>training projects and apprenticeships, and the creation of attractive quality jobs accessible to all and by accompanying ECF investments with skills investment to alleviate skills shortages in the given strategic sector of the ECF and indicate when it is included. This includes a Skills Guarantee that should enable workers in sectors undergoing restructuring to upskill and reskill, in line with relevant national, regional and/or sectoral transition strategies. The ECF should support skills intelligence, upskilling and reskilling, and foster public-private partnerships between universities, VET providers, businesses, in particular SMEs, social partners and applied research institutes. The ECF could also support activities of University Alliances, also in cooperation with employers, to improve their delivery on innovation and the development of skills and talent.</p>	<p>investment areas of the Fund, through life-long learning, education, training projects and apprenticeships, and the creation of attractive quality jobs and by accompanying ECF investments with skills investment <i>where</i> relevant.</p>	<p>training projects and apprenticeships, and the creation of attractive quality jobs accessible to all and by accompanying ECF investments with skills investment to alleviate skills shortages in the given strategic sector of the ECF and indicate when it is included. This includes a Skills Guarantee that should enable workers in sectors undergoing restructuring to upskill and reskill, in line with relevant national, regional and/or sectoral transition strategies. The ECF should support skills intelligence, upskilling and reskilling, and foster public-private partnerships between universities, VET providers, businesses, in particular SMEs, social partners and applied research institutes. The ECF <b>should</b> support activities of European University Alliances, also in cooperation with employers, to improve their delivery on innovation and the development of skills and talent. <b><i>This would accelerate the upscaling of innovation and learning across Europe based on a systemic and structural long-term collaboration model of European University alliances with their regional stakeholders across Europe.</i></b></p>
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#### Justification

The recital highlights the importance of the Union of skills, skills guarantee, skills intelligence as well as upskilling and reskilling actions, all with great relevance to the European competitiveness. It should also highlight the benefits and impact of the ECF support towards the European University alliances. They have established necessary collaborative structures to spread knowledge and innovation across Europe, between universities, businesses, investors, public sector and citizens.



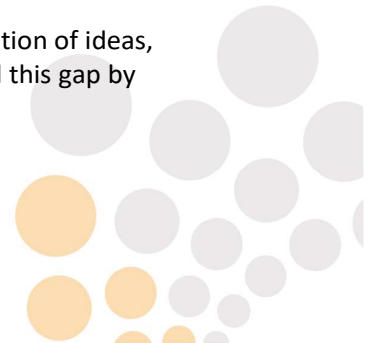
## Amendment 6

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 81a (new)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
		<p><b>81a) Regions and cities and their subsidiaries are pivotal actors in Europe’s innovation ecosystems and indispensable drivers of industrial competitiveness. They provide the institutional conditions and public services required to turn research excellence into viable companies. This role is particularly critical in the case of deep tech, where long development cycles, high capital intensity and regulatory complexity exceed the remit of university innovation services and private accelerators. By operating across mandates, mobilising local demand and supporting companies through the “valley of death” towards EU and private funding instruments, regions and cities enable breakthrough technologies to reach market readiness and commercial success at scale. Regions and cities are strategic partners in building Europe’s sustainable industrial competitiveness and resilience.</b></p>

#### *Justification*

This amendment addresses Europe’s core competitiveness gap: not the generation of ideas, but their conversion into globally competitive businesses. Regions and cities fill this gap by



providing infrastructure, ecosystem coordination, regulatory support, and pathways to market. Recognising this role within the ECF would enable regions like Helsinki-Uusimaa to support the scaling of researchdriven companies, ensuring that European innovations develop into competitive firms rather than remaining at pilot stage.

#### Amendment 7

##### Proposal for a regulation

##### Article 3 – Paragraph 1 – Point k

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
(k) ensuring a just transition to a sustainable, decarbonised and digital economy that is fair and supporting workers and communities.”	(k) ensuring a just transition to a sustainable, decarbonised and digital economy that is fair and <b>supports</b> workers and communities.	(k) ensuring a just transition to a sustainable, decarbonised and digital economy that is fair and supporting workers and communities, <b>including environmental protection, biodiversity conservation and restoration, and climate adaptation, through a dedicated approach building.</b>

#### Amendment 8

##### Proposal for a regulation

##### Article 3 – Paragraph 2 – Point a

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
(a) For support to Clean Transition and Industrial Decarbonisation, the specific objectives of support to decarbonisation of European industry, including SMEs and energy intensive industries, clean tech manufacturing and its supply chains, and contributing to the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy-, water- and resource-efficient, climate-neutral and resilient economy. This includes the uptake by industries of	(a) For support to <b>Energy Infrastructure</b> , Industrial Decarbonisation <b>and Clean Technology</b> , the specific objectives of: - <b>the development, integration, resilience, protection, security and digitalisation of the energy infrastructures and systems;</b> - the decarbonisation of energy supply, the promotion of energy efficiency, the uptake of renewable and clean energy solutions, the	(a) For support to Clean Transition and Industrial Decarbonisation, the specific objectives of support to decarbonisation of European industry, including SMEs and energy intensive industries, clean tech manufacturing and its supply chains, and contributing to the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy-, water- and resource-efficient, climate-neutral and resilient economy. This includes the uptake by

<p>decarbonisation technologies and other solutions for their industrial processes and activities, as well as the decarbonisation of energy supply, promotion of energy efficiency, the uptake of renewable and clean energy solutions, the development of energy system flexibility, the uptake of lead markets for clean products , the development, resilience, integration and digitalisation of the energy and transport infrastructures and systems, boosting smart mobility and sustainable alternative fuels, as well as boosting the sustainable blue economy, the development of innovative nature-based business models and demand side solutions for clean and decarbonised buildings, transport and industry, and production ramp up contributing to Europe’s strategic autonomy.</p>	<p>development of energy system flexibility;  <b>- support to the decarbonisation of European industry, including SMEs and energy intensive industries, by taking a technology-neutral approach;</b>  <b>- support to clean technology manufacturing and its supply chains</b> as well as <b>deployment thereof.</b></p>	<p>industries of decarbonisation technologies and other solutions for their industrial processes and activities, as well as the decarbonisation of energy supply, promotion of energy efficiency, the uptake of renewable and clean energy solutions, the development of energy system flexibility, the uptake of lead markets for clean products , the development, resilience, integration and digitalisation of the energy and transport infrastructures and systems, boosting smart mobility and sustainable alternative fuels, as well as boosting the sustainable blue economy, the development of innovative nature-based business models and demand side solutions for clean and decarbonised buildings, transport and industry, and production ramp up contributing to Europe’s strategic autonomy. <b>Actions under this point shall include a dedicated component supporting pilot, demonstration and best practice projects with high replicability, particularly in the fields of biodiversity and nature restoration. This shall include support for the scale-up and deployment of solutions enabling regions and cities to act as testbeds for clean technologies and systematic decarbonisation approaches.</b></p>
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Justification



The ECF should preserve and build on the added value of existing instruments supporting environmental and climate objectives. The integration of a LIFE-type approach within the Fund, including a dedicated, sufficient allocation and explicit recognition of biodiversity, circular economy, environmental protection and climate adaptation and mitigation objectives (Article 3 and new provisions), would ensure continuity, visibility and effectiveness of Union action in these areas.

## Amendment 9

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 3 – Paragraph 2 – Point b – introductory part

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
(b) For support to Health, Biotechnology, Agriculture and Bioeconomy:	<b>(b)</b> For support to Health, Biotechnology <b>and Sustainable Prosperity</b> :	(b) For support to Health, Biotechnology, Agriculture and Bioeconomy.

#### *Justification*

Agriculture should be included, as it is fundamental basis for European crisis-resilience and potential for new business and innovations. Bioeconomy is a motor for European competitiveness and strategic autonomy. It covers the whole value chain from raw materials to industry and to the consumers. Sustainable prosperity is a wage concept, if EU wants to boost its competitiveness in targeted areas. EU Bioeconomy strategy was just launched, and now it is neglected totally, although Europe could build the future innovations, scaled up business potentials on bioeconomy. Health should include wide understanding of health like, OneHealth or even Planetary Health having animals, ecosystems included. Biotechnology should cover technologies widely (eg gene technology, biorefining and manufacturing).

## Amendment 10

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 3 – Paragraph 2 – Point b – point 1

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
(1) For support to health, the specific objectives of fostering innovation and competitiveness of the health sector while ensuring supply security and the industrial capacity and capability to manage future serious cross-border threats to health;	<b>(1)</b> For support to health, the specific objectives of fostering competitiveness <b>and digitalisation</b> of the health sector, <b>and</b> strengthening innovation and resilience of health systems.	(1) For support to health, the specific objectives of fostering innovation and competitiveness of the health sector while ensuring supply security and the industrial capacity and capability to manage future serious cross-border threats to health;

<p>improving and protecting public and population health, by prioritising health promotion and disease prevention across the life span through a health-in-all and One Health policies approach, and by strengthening innovation and resilience of health systems.</p>		<p>improving and protecting public and population health, by prioritising health promotion and disease prevention across the life span through a health-in-all and One Health policies approach, and by strengthening innovation and resilience of health systems. <b><i>To support the development of a resilient European Health Union by fostering innovations that address unmet medical needs, disease prevention and health promotion and improved health system sustainability:</i></b></p>
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*Justification*

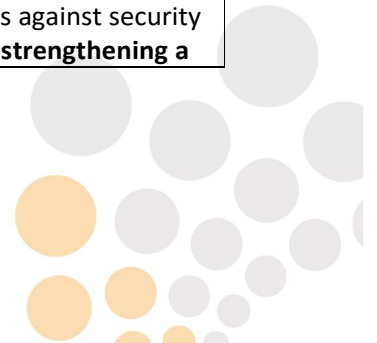
This amendment emphasizes the need to address unmet medical needs, disease prevention, health promotion and improved health system sustainability in order to achieve a resilient European Health Union and simultaneously strengthen overall resilience and competitiveness.

**Amendment 11**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 3 – Paragraph 2 – Point (b) (4)**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
<p>Supporting the development and manufacturing of critical technologies and their supply chains in the areas of defence and space, as well as civil industrial security, including the protection of critical infrastructure, border and maritime security, customs security and civil preparedness against security threats.</p>		<p>Supporting the development and manufacturing of critical technologies and their supply chains in the areas of defence and space, as well as civil industrial security, including the protection of critical infrastructure, border and maritime security, customs security and civil preparedness against security threats, <b>and strengthening a</b></p>



		<b>whole-of-society approach to resilience and security, including the preparedness and response capacities of public authorities, essential service providers and local authorities.</b>
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*Justification*

The amendment strengthens the ECF by recognising that security and resilience cannot be ensured through industrial capacity alone. By introducing a whole-of-society approach, the amendment aligns the ECF with evolving EU security thinking and recent geopolitical developments. It ensures that investments support not only technologies and infrastructure, but also their effective deployment and use across society.

### Amendment 12

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 3 – Paragraph 1 – Point k (new)**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
		<b><i>A specific share of the financial envelope shall be allocated to the LIFE component. This allocation shall ensure continuity, visibility and effectiveness of Union support for environment and climate action.</i></b>

*Justification*

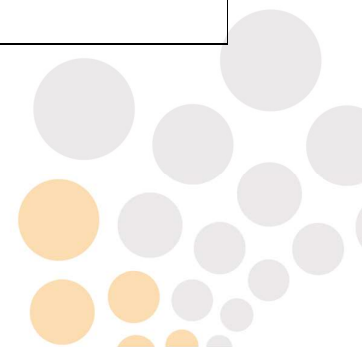
Introduces de facto ring-fencing without breaking overall fund flexibility.

### Amendment 13

**Proposal for a regulation**

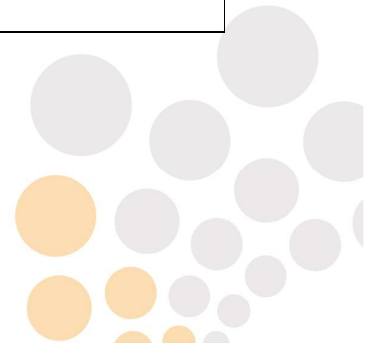
**Article 6 – Paragraph 1**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>



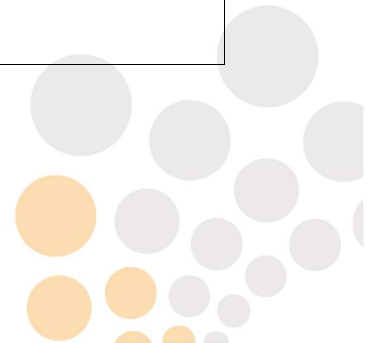


<p>The ECF shall be implemented in synergy with other Union programmes. An action that has received a Union contribution from another programme may also receive another contribution under the ECF. [..]</p>	<p><b>deleted</b></p>	<p>The ECF shall be implemented in synergy with other Union programmes. An action that has received a Union contribution from another programme may also receive another contribution under the ECF. <b>Actions that have received support under the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation may receive support under the European Competitiveness Fund for activities related to demonstration, deployment, scale-up, infrastructure roll-out, skills development and market uptake, including through cumulative funding where appropriate and without double financing.</b> [..]</p>
	<p><b>Article 14d (new)</b> <b>Horizon Europe Pathway actions</b> <b>In order to create dedicated pathways from innovation to competitiveness, the ECF Policy Windows shall, through calls in a dedicated part of the Work Programmes, offer support to Horizon Europe Pathway actions.</b> <b>2. Horizon Europe Pathway actions shall provide support for the deployment, commercialisation, scaling, licensing, standardisation or other forms of translation into real-world use of results from projects funded under [Horizon Europe Regulation] or any of the preceding European Framework</b></p>	





	<p><b><i>Programmes which contribute to the achievement of one or more of the objectives set out in Article 3(2) of this Regulation. This may also include support for the establishment or upgrading of technology infrastructures.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>3. The Work Programmes shall specify which ECF objective(s) are pursued by each dedicated call. The Work Programme shall also specify for each call which market failure or failures are preventing the deployment, commercialisation, scaling, licensing, standardisation and/or other forms of translation into real-world use of the targeted results from the Framework Programme projects as well as how the intervention of the call addresses that market failure(s). For the identification of high potential Horizon Europe results to be targeted by the calls for Horizon Europe Pathway actions, the Commission shall consult the Council for European Competitiveness Research established by [Horizon Europe Regulation].</i></b></p> <p><b><i>4. The Horizon Europe Pathway actions may be implemented through any form of Union support allowed under Article 12 of this Regulation. Actions for which a significant participation from not-forprofit research organisations is expected</i></b></p>	
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	<i>shall be implemented through grants, except in duly justified cases.</i>	
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*Justification*

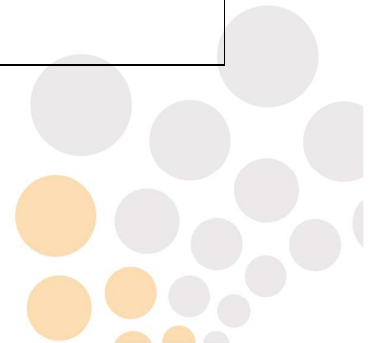
This amendment establishes a clear, operational pathway for Horizon Europe results to move from research to implementation at scale. It strengthens EU competitiveness by reducing the “valley of death” between demonstration and market deployment and ensures a seamless innovation journey across EU instruments. The Horizon Europe Pathway actions the ITRE draft report suggests are limited to the policy windows and to specific market failure challenges. It should be ensured that this kind of funding provides continuance for Horizon Europe projects and funding for societal and (local) administrative needs, as well.

**Amendment 14**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 14 – Paragraph 2**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
The members of the ECF Strategic Stakeholders Board shall be appointed by the Commission, following an open call for nominations or for expressions of interest, or both, whichever the Commission finds more appropriate, and taking into account the need for balance in sector, organisation type, including private investors, and size, expertise, gender, age and geographical distribution. [...]	<b>Article 14b Stakeholder Group</b> <b>1. A Stakeholder Group shall be established.</b> <b>2. The task of the Stakeholder Group shall be to support the Commission in the preparation and design of calls for proposals under this Regulation. It shall provide non-binding advice to the Commission at an early stage of call preparation, with a view to ensuring that funding conditions, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and administrative procedures are proportionate, clear, and aligned with market realities.</b> <b>3. The Stakeholder Group shall comprise representatives of relevant industry sectors, small and medium-sized enterprises, financial institutions,</b>	The members of the ECF Strategic Stakeholders Board shall be appointed by the Commission, following an open call for nominations or for expressions of interest, or both, whichever the Commission finds more appropriate, and taking into account the need for balance in sector, organisation type, including private investors, <b>regional and local public authorities and innovation ecosystem actors like universities and research organisations</b> and size, expertise, gender, age and geographical distribution. [...]





	<p><b><i>investors, research and technology organisations, social partners, representatives of regional and local authorities, and other relevant market actors, selected on the basis of expertise, balance, and transparency.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>4. The Commission shall ensure that the consultation of the Stakeholder Group contributes to simplifying participation, enhancing business uptake, and strengthening the impact and effectiveness of actions supported under this Regulation.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>5. The Stakeholder Group may meet in sub-configurations relevant to the policy windows.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>6. For the purposes of this Regulation, the Council for European Competitiveness Research established by Horizon Europe Regulation shall be considered a subconfiguration of the Stakeholder Group. It shall provide advice to the Commission on the calls for proposals related to Horizon Europe Pathway actions.</i></b></p>	
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*Justification*

Should the parliament change its position expressed in the ITRE draft report it is extremely important to ensure that regions and cities and other innovation ecosystem actors should be represented on the Strategy Board of the European Competitiveness Fund. As key actors and hubs where jobs, companies and investments concentrate, regions and cities possess first-hand knowledge of investment needs, market gaps, and policy priorities, and play a crucial role in creating attractive conditions for businesses and investors, on top of being public buyers, thereby strengthening the overall competitiveness of the economy.

In addition to the Strategic Advisory Board, regional and local authorities as well as research



institutes should, whenever possible, be included in the various official governance structures developed.

#### Amendment 15

##### Proposal for a regulation

##### Article 15 – Paragraph 1 – new point (ca)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
		<b>(ca) The ECF funding shall be based on open competition. The main award criteria should be defined based on impact, quality as well as high relevance for European competitiveness.</b>

#### *Justification*

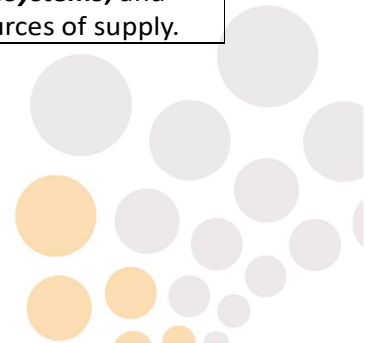
Funding awarded by the Competitiveness Fund should be based on competitive calls, and the award criteria should be clearly defined and based on impact and quality.

#### Amendment 16

##### Proposal for a regulation

##### Article 16 – Paragraph 2

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
In order to foster resilient Union value chains, the work programmes may include dedicated value- chains scale up calls which shall support both project preparation and crowding in of additional public and private capital to integrate suppliers, manufacturers, and innovators from different Member States and diversify sources of supply.	<b>deleted</b>	In order to foster resilient Union value chains, the work programmes may include dedicated value- chains scale up calls which shall support both project preparation, <b>connection between innovation ecosystems</b> , and crowding in of additional public and private capital <b>with the objective to</b> integratesuppliers, manufacturers, and innovators from different Member States' <b>regional and national ecosystems</b> , and diversify sources of supply.



*Justification*

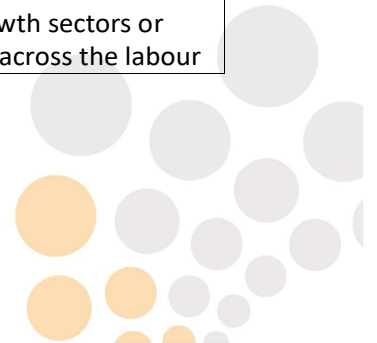
An ecosystem approach is crucial to integrate all relevant stakeholders. Interconnections between ecosystems should be fostered to build stronger and more resilient value chains throughout Europe.

**Amendment 17**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 30 – Paragraph 1**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
The ECF shall finance activities in support of skills development, in particular in the strategic sectors, building strong links between higher education, vocational education and training providers, applied research and businesses for an agile, innovative and competitive economy. This shall include support for a European Skills Guarantee to support value chain transitions in favour of strategic growth sectors or occupations across the labour market through upskilling and reskilling of the workforce and Vocational Education and Training (VET) partnerships to strengthen cooperation between VET providers and businesses, especially SMEs and connecting them with regional industrial ecosystems.	<b>Deleted</b>	The ECF shall finance activities in support of skills development, in particular in the strategic sectors, building strong links between higher education, vocational education and training providers, applied research and businesses for an agile, innovative and competitive economy. <b><i>It shall also support excellence in higher education and research (including social sciences and humanities as a lever for innovation), promote cooperation between universities, industry, regions and cities, and facilitate the attraction and mobility of highly skilled professionals from EU and third countries in strategic sectors. Particular attention shall be given to talent ecosystems that connect education, innovation, and entrepreneurship at regional and local level.</i></b> This shall include support for a European Skills Guarantee to support value chain transitions in favour of strategic growth sectors or occupations across the labour



		market through upskilling, <b>and</b> reskilling <b>and integration</b> of the workforce and Vocational Education and Training (VET) partnerships to strengthen cooperation between VET providers and businesses, especially SMEs and connecting them with regional industrial ecosystems.
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*Justification*

Europe's ability to build world-class industrial champions depends on access to globally competitive skills and talent. The Draghi Report and the Competitiveness Compass both highlight that Europe does not lack ideas – it lacks the capacity to turn them into globally scaling firms. Frontier innovation in deep tech, AI, semiconductors and clean industries requires doctoral-level expertise, interdisciplinary research capacity and specialised engineering talent that cannot be generated fast enough solely within national labour markets. [Empirical evidence](#) from Finland confirms this: the more innovative and rapidly growing a company is, the higher the share of foreign-born employees in its workforce.

**Amendment 18**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 37 – Paragraph 1 – Point c**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
Fostering the development, production capacity, manufacturing and industrial deployment of health and bioeconomy technologies, to increase the competitiveness of the sector, and ensure availability of Union medicinal products, medical devices, digital solutions and medical countermeasures relevant for preparedness and response to cross-border threats to health, as well as the competitiveness and resilience of the sectors by ensuring that such products are innovative, safe, accessible, available, and affordable,	(c) Fostering the development, <b>trailing</b> , production capacity, manufacturing and industrial deployment of health and <b>pharmaceutical and</b> products.	Fostering the development, production capacity, manufacturing and industrial deployment of health and bioeconomy technologies, to increase the competitiveness of the sector, and ensure availability of Union medicinal products, medical devices, digital solutions and medical countermeasures relevant for preparedness and response to cross-border threats to health <b>and environment</b> , as well as the competitiveness and resilience of the sectors by ensuring that such products are innovative, safe, accessible, available, and



thereby promoting equitable access across the Union.		affordable, thereby promoting equitable access across the Union.
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*Justification*

Ensure environment aspect is considered.

**Amendment 19**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 37 – Paragraph 1 – Point g**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>Text proposed by the ITRE draft report</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
Fostering the competitiveness, the sustainability, the resilience and fairness of agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, forestry sectors and rural and coastal areas, and contribute to long term food security in the Union.	<b>Deleted</b>	Fostering the competitiveness, the sustainability, the resilience and fairness of agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, forestry sectors and <b>urban and</b> rural and coastal areas, <b>including their capacity to adapt to climate change and extreme weather events</b> , and contribute to long term food security in the Union, <b>while promoting climate-smart practices and enhancing ecosystem services to support adaptation and mitigation efforts.</b>

*Justification*

The proposed additions explicitly integrate climate change adaptation into the objectives of the agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry sectors. Highlighting climate-smart practices and ecosystem-based approaches ensures that resilience measures are not only reactive but also proactive, supporting both long-term food security and the sustainability of urban and rural and coastal areas. This alignment strengthens the EU's commitment to a climate-resilient bioeconomy, ensuring that competitiveness and fairness are achieved in tandem with environmental stewardship.

