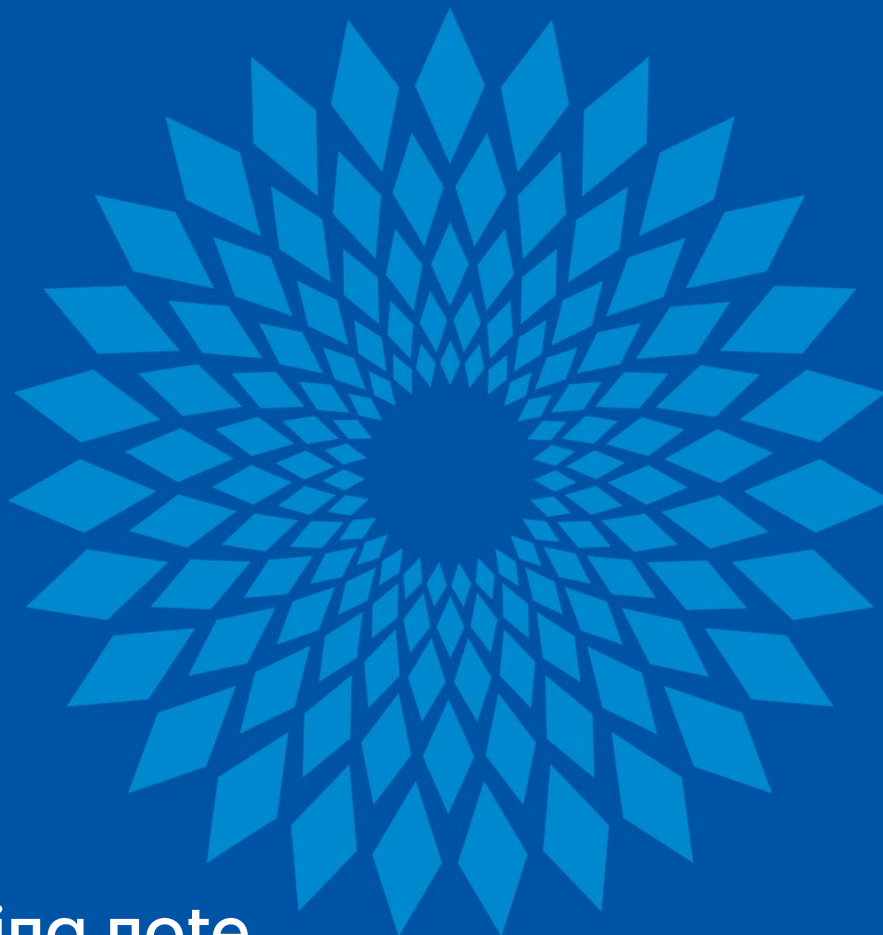


# EU2022.CZ

Czech Presidency of the Council  
of the European Union



## **Briefing note** **EU Cohesion Policy Funds**

Conference on Synergies  
in the Research and Innovation  
Funding in Europe

Prague, Czech Republic  
7 – 8 July 2022

## Briefing note for the parallel break-out session EU Cohesion Policy Funds

**The EU Cohesion Policy Funds represent an important element in the EU budget to finance research and innovation.** Although their primary mission is to reduce the regional disparities within the EU, they also play an important role in achieving the EU's wider policy objectives as they strengthen investments aimed at the social cohesion, job creation, economic growth and international competitiveness. Their benefits and impacts in the field of science and technology development are unquestionable and thus the EU Cohesion Policy Funds have to be viewed as an instrument to implement the European research and innovation policy, side by side with the instruments primarily oriented in these sectorial areas.

The optimisation of the added value of investments in research and innovation made entirely or partly through the EU budget has brought the concept of synergies to the policy agenda in the programming period 2014–2020. Since then, synergies have been sought intensely whilst respecting distinct goals and objectives of different EU policies' implementation instruments. **The Horizon 2020 EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014–2020) and the European Structural and Investment Funds were the pilots in this regard, which pioneered the EU's synergy approach to the research and innovation funding.**

**The European Commission's *Guidance for Policy-Makers and Implementing Bodies: Enabling Synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other Research, Innovation and Competitiveness-Related Union Programmes* introduced a number of possibilities of synergies,** mainly between the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme and the European Structural and Investment Funds and opened up possibilities for policy-makers and funders to consider synergies in a strategic way and include them in the planning of programmes, instruments and calls.

**Specific actions have been put in place to facilitate and smooth synergies** – e.g., awarding of the Seal of Excellence label to the project proposals, which have been

assessed under an EU funding instrument and duly comply with the quality requirements, but could not be funded due to budgetary constraints; possibility to co-fund the European research and innovation Partnerships from the European Structural and Investment Funds; modification of the State Aid Rules; or focus on the synergic approach through the Partnership Agreement, etc.

**Efforts have been made on the side of the European Commission, Member State national or regional authorities and beneficiaries to make synergies happen.** Each stakeholder have a different experience with synergies. Be it a good one or a bad one, both the good and bad practice examples are extremely useful as lessons learned to progress and eliminate barriers that still prevent from harvesting the full potential of synergies. All in all, European stakeholders shall aspire to make synergies a smooth process and the complementary use of financial instruments, including both the EU and national/regional ones, shall not be jeopardised by bureaucratic measures or different regulatory and financial regulations.