



The views of Europaforum Northern Sweden on Horizon 2020 for the period 2014-2016

2013-03-15

Europaforum Northern Sweden (EFNS) is a partnership and network for councillors at local and regional level covering the four northernmost regions in Sweden: Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Västernorrland and Jämtland. The objective is to increase knowledge and awareness of policies at EU level – above all to increase involvement in shaping EU policies on matters regarding northern Sweden.

Our views represent the positions of elected officials in the four northernmost regions in Sweden and the comments have been formed in close cooperation between the regions.

On 30 March 2012, EFNS adopted a Position Paper on H2020, and position papers have subsequently been adopted in different areas where the region has specifically strong research and business areas of strategic significance to NSPA (Northern Sparsely Populated Areas in northern Europe), and to Europe in a wider perspective.

In the opinion of EFNS, the priorities that the Commission now proposes in “THE HORIZON 2020 STRATEGIC PROGRAMME FOR THE 2014-2016 WORK PROGRAMMES” (28.01.2013) constitute a fundamental change from the priorities proposed earlier in H2020 (COM 811 final, 2011/042).

The point of departure for the new proposal is that “*the foremost priority for Europe and for the start of Horizon 2020 is exiting the current economic crisis*”, instead of H2020 focusing on and investing in Europe's long-term strength in the areas of research and innovation within Industrial Leadership and the societal and global challenges as in earlier proposals, and European growth and international competitiveness. The proposal to transfer resources from research and innovation to short-term crisis management instead brings the risk of deepening the crisis and leading to a long-term decline in the European economy and European competitiveness.

The views of EFNS on some of the proposed new focus zones include:

Personalising health and care for quality of life

The EFNS region has participated in European research and innovation programmes within e.g. e-health since the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5) and within the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), and today has well implemented solutions which can contribute to utilising and commercialising earlier research findings and innovations and to knowledge sharing with other regions in Europe, for example within the scope of programmes similar to the earlier Regions of Knowledge in FP7 and the Structural Funds. EFNS considers that e-health can be kept as a priority, now in order to make use of the results from earlier programming periods through implementation and commercialisation. From the very first years of H2020, the focus should instead be on excellence in research and innovation within the societal challenge “Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing” in H2020, with focus on



global health challenges such as cancer and diabetes and the demographic challenge for the whole of Europe. The EFNS region has for example a unique population-based bio bank with very long follow-up periods and repeated tests. There is nothing similar covering the population of an entire region either in Europe or internationally.

Blue growth: unlocking the potential of the oceans.

Blue growth has little relevance to EFNS or to most regions in Europe, nor to “the foremost priority for Europe, exiting the current economic crisis”. Areas such as “deep-sea minerals extraction” could instead be incorporated in ERC/Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) in H2020. The focus zone for the first years of H2020 should instead be the EU raw material strategy and needs – in earlier proposals within Industrial Leadership and Societal Challenges – and thereby research, innovation and sustainable processing of the raw material resources Europe has today and which contribute to Europe's international competitiveness, e.g. iron ore, where the EFNS region today meets 90 per cent of Europe's needs. Raw materials therefore – such as minerals and forest – should be retained from the very first calls, and should constitute a separate focus zone.

Smart cities technologies

For EFNS and NSPA and other sparsely-populated regions in Europe and globally, the challenges instead concern smart sparsely-populated regions/technologies. Most of the region is sparsely-populated, with a need for smart and inclusive services and products for citizens, communities and companies to create sustainable development with robust growth. Similarly, the Digital Agenda for Europe must include the sparsely-populated areas of Europe as a crucial condition for the competitiveness and growth of both Europe and its sparsely-populated regions. The EFNS therefore considers that this focus zone should be broadened, and that calls with relevance to sparsely-populated regions in Europe should to the same extent be in place among the very first calls within H2020. An initiative for e-services in both community services and for industrial purposes strengthens quality of life and competitiveness in these regions, at the same time as it contributes towards reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through a reduced need for travel.

Competitive Low-Carbon Energy and Energy Efficiency

Based on the EU goals to reduce greenhouse gases by 20 per cent up to the year 2020 and to increase the proportion of renewable energy by 20 per cent and increase energy efficiency by 20 per cent, the EFNS region is already in a good position today, for example with its surplus of pure energy such as hydropower and sustainable forest-based bioenergy and its efficient energy systems such as extensive networks of district heating and climate-smart construction, as well as a process industry, within the EFNS region including forestry, mining, steel and the bioenergy industry, which is successfully reducing emissions, for example as a result of participation in European framework projects. The EFNS region can thereby contribute towards solutions for the whole of Europe and the international process industry. Calls in line with earlier proposals, with focus on e.g. “the development of integrated biorefineries,



utilising biomass from primary production, biowaste and bio-based industrial by-products, and opening new markets through supporting standardisation, regulatory and demonstration/field trial activities and others, while taking into account the implication of the bioeconomy to energy and land use” – should therefore be included in the very first calls within H2020.

Waste: a resource to recycle and reuse and Water Innovation: boosting its value for Europe

The EFNS region already has well implemented solutions, as have many countries and regions in Europe and the world, for commercially viable recycling of for example Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment. the EFNS region (and other regions in Europe) can therefore contribute towards knowledge transfer in Europe and internationally, for example within the framework of programmes similar to the earlier Regions of Knowledge in FP7 and the Structural Funds, and thereby utilise the results of prior research and innovation within the EU, national programmes and the Structural Funds. These areas are thereby not a priority for the EFNS or Europe in the first calls within H2020 nor are they a “foremost priority for Europe, exiting the current economic crisis”.

EFNS proposal

- That the industrial leadership and societal challenges of Europe, in accordance with earlier proposals, shall be in focus in the first work programmes and calls within H2020 for the period 2014-2016, including the areas where the EFNS region can contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of Europe and can deal with societal challenges.
- That parts of the new proposal be referred to national programmes and the Structural Funds.

Annex. Examples with relevance to H2020 from earlier position papers adopted by EFNS.



Examples with relevance to H2020 from earlier position papers adopted by EFNS

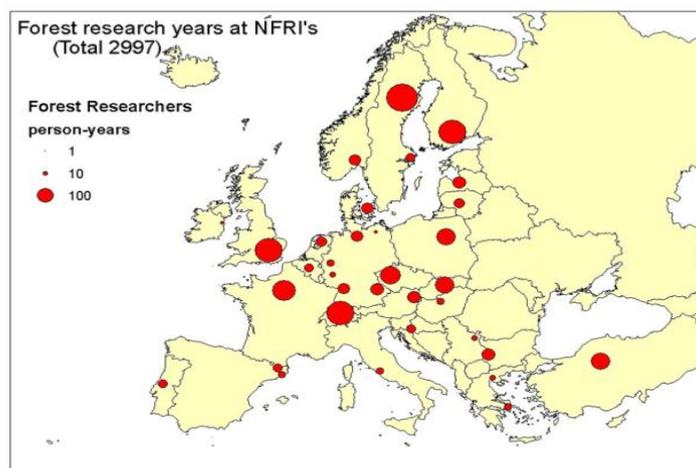
Biobanks. One focus zone relevant to Europe is research and innovation in biobanks, where the counties in the EFNS region also cooperate closely on concrete research projects and the results can be implemented through the collaboration of the county councils.

Health promoting initiatives – both from the community and citizens – are a crucial factor in health and quality of life. Access to findings from epidemiological research is crucial as a basis for preventive work. The EFNS region is leading exemplar both nationally and internationally and a region possessing a world-leading research infrastructure and collaborates on both the European and the international arenas.

Within the framework of earlier proposals in H2020 – primarily within societal challenges dealing with “Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing” – the EFNS region can thereby offer a strong European environment for research and innovation. The region can additionally provide a demonstration and pilot environment in fields such as healthcare, public health, demographic development, wellbeing and food.

Forestry and biochemistry are European EFNS priorities, where e.g. Sweden and Finland are Europe’s biggest exporters of paper, pulp and wood (number one in the world is Canada, followed by Sweden, the USA and Finland) and a sustainable bioenergy industry is being built up, based on by-products from forestry.

Forestry is strong also in other parts of Europe, and so is therefore the need for European and international collaboration in research and innovation, where the forests are an asset in the development of new internationally competitive materials, such as textiles and “intelligent” paper.



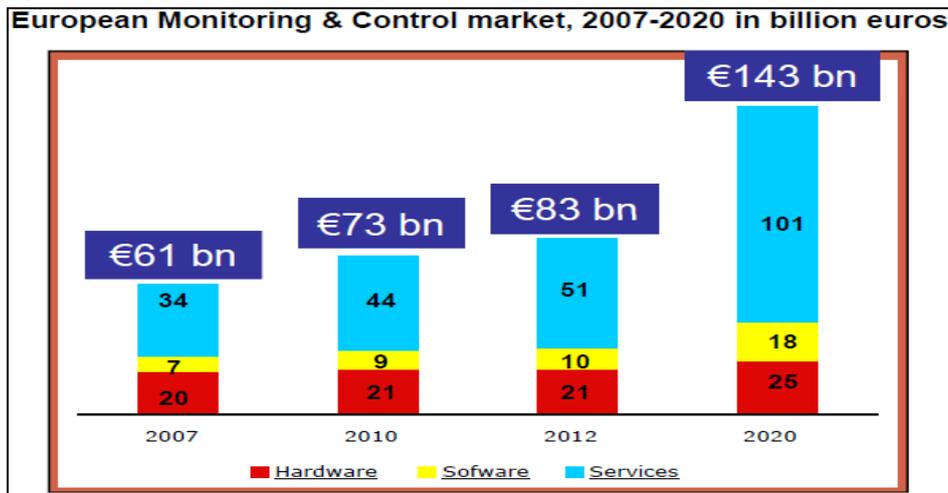


Within “Societal Challenges”, the forestry industry in H2020 for example can make contributions such as:

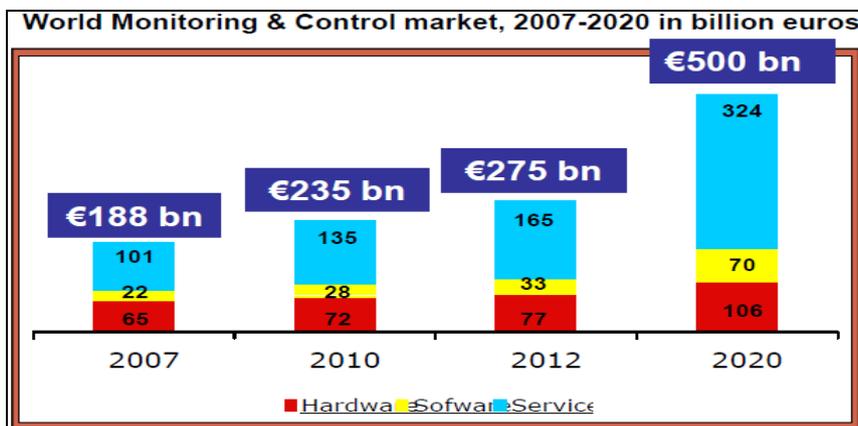
- *European bioeconomy (replacing the fossil-based economy)*
- *Secure, clean and efficient energy;*
- *Smart, green and integrated transport;*
- *Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials;*

Process industrial automation in the EFNS region denotes for example forestry and the mining, metallurgy, bioenergy and hydropower industries. In Europe as a whole and globally this also includes e.g. the oil and gas industry, chemicals and the pharmaceutical and the food industry.

The European market potential of Monitoring and Control alone is estimated for 2020 at 143 billion euros.



Worldwide, the market is estimated at 500 billion euros by 2020.





Focusing on process industrial automation in Industrial Management within H2020 is therefore crucial to Europe's international competitiveness.

Within Societal Challenges in H2020, process industrial automation makes contributions such as:

- *Secure, clean and efficient energy;*
- *Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials;*

Smart sparsely-populated regions constitute a strong priority in an H2020 Position Paper from EFNS. The new H2020 proposal focuses solely on Smart Cities, and thereby continued urbanisation = big towns. *“It is against the background of urbanisation the European Commission has launched an innovation partnership aiming to produce new smart technologies that can solve many of the problems that arise when towns grow bigger.”*

The towns in the EFNS (like the NSPA) region are few and small. Most of the region is sparsely-populated, with a need for smart and inclusive services and products for citizens, communities and companies, to create sustainable growth – including in-migration – and lasting growth. There are sparsely-populated regions in other parts of Europe, as there are in other parts of the world, for example in the Arctic including the Barents Region (northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia), Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America - and they have the same need for enabling ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to support regional development and growth. Enabling ICT products and services can then also provide a base for commercialisation and business relations with a large international market to benefit competitiveness in the region and Europe.

EU2020 points out the direction for EU growth work, and can be summarised in the watchwords *smart growth*, *sustainable growth* and *inclusive growth*. The OECD recommends that regional growth strategies be given a bigger role with a clear focus on implementation. Smart Regions then constitutes an opportunity for *smart growth*, *sustainable growth* and *inclusive growth* also in sparsely-populated regions. Also the Digital Agenda for Europe should – similarly – include the sparsely-populated regions of Europe, as a watershed prerequisite for the competitiveness and growth of both Europe and the sparsely-populated regions.

Therefore, in this Position Paper - Smart Regions - the EFNS proposes:

that a European innovation partnership be established for the sparsely-populated regions of Europe (similar to that for cities), with focus on smart technologies, services and products, and inclusiveness in the e-community. This can then contribute to creating conditions for increased in-migration into and thereby growth and competitiveness in the sparsely-populated regions, both in Europe and internationally.