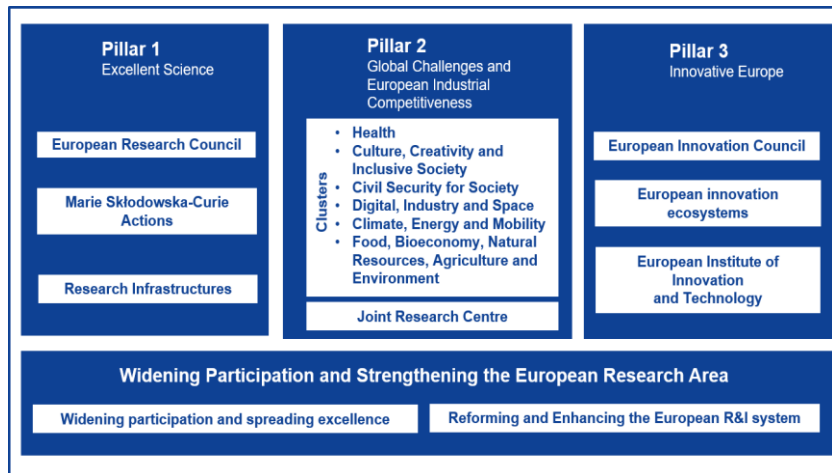## Where to find security topics in Horizon Europe ?

Horizon 2020 has come to an end so maybe it is time to have a first glance at the Horizon Europe programme (2021-2027) which is due to be finalised in the next months. Some calls are still under construction but the structure of the programme is now complete. Where can we then find topics related to security within this new seven year framework programme ?

The new programme (see graph below) is divided in 3 pillars and one cross-over area (widening participation and strengthening ERA). The first pillar focuses on research, the second on how technology and innovation can contribute to improving our society and the final one mainly tries to bridge the gap between R&D and market-ready innovations.



The main focus for security is of course the cluster civil security for society.  As the new European Defence Fund has recently been set up, the calls here will really focus on R&I for civil protection use so military security is out of the equation. This cluster is divided into 6 domains or destinations as they are called in Horizon Europe:

1) Improving the prevention, investigation and mitigation of crime, including new/ emerging modi operandi (e.g. exploiting digitization)
2) We need better management of the external EU borders. The general aim is to make it easier for legitimate travelers to enter the EU but at the same make it harder for illegitimate travelers and goods to cross the border over land, air and sea.
3) Our networks and critical infrastructures can be the subject of a criminal attack, hence the need to invest in better protection of both our physical and digital infrastructures. This way we can make them more resilient.
4) As many things we use in our society are digitally connected we need to focus on increasing the cybersecurity. This domain is linked with other areas in horizon Europe (ICT and Space) and the Digital Europe programme.
5) Disasters have received much exposure in the last years (earthquakes, floodings, pandemics) and many innovations from the past framework programmes have resulted in improvements how to better prevent and deal with them in order to create a more disaster-resilient society. This destination will enhance these efforts from the past.
6) The final destination is more general and focuses on strengthening security research and innovation as a whole.

The purpose of the civil security approach is threefold. The EC wants solutions ready for use in the field. Therefor there is the need to involve security practitioners in most project proposals. A second

objective is to produce our security innovations in the EU so we become less dependent of the USA or Southeast Asia in this sector. Finally they want to develop solutions for complex problems which we will face in about 5 years' time so looking forward to the future is crucial.

In other areas from pillar 2 like ICT and Space, there will also be some cybersecurity related topics related. The best option is to have a look at those as well. The same applies to the European institute of innovation and technology (EIT) of pillar 3 which has a dedicated knowledge and innovation community focusing on developing digital market ready innovations more info via this link

The draft work programme is not published on the internet but it can be consulted and you can also provide remarks to the calls proposed by the European Commission. If you would like to be involved in this process you can contact the Flemish shadow representative for transport by sending a mail to simon.verschaeren@vlaanderen.be

The background of all these initiatives stems from a vision about how innovation in civil security should evolve over the coming years. The must-read documents in this respect are the **Security Union Strategy**, the **Counter-Terrorism Agenda**, the border management and security dimensions of the **New Pact on Migration and Asylum**, **EU Disaster Risk Reduction policies,** the new **EU Climate Adaptation Strategy,** the **EU Maritime Security Strategy** and the **EU Cybersecurity Strategy**.

So what's next ? well, the Commission hopes to adopt the working programmes in early spring and the first calls will open afterwards but the exact launch date is still to be decided. If you want more information regarding the progress, feel free to contact the NCP for civil security pascal.verheye@vlaio.be