

A European partnership on the science that “measures the world”

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The European Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement on the Metrology Partnership. Focusing on a wide range of measurement instruments, this public-public partnership is of enormous importance for all data qualification, verification and validation processes in the European Union.

Metrology plays a critical role in making our world work. For example, it has been of key importance to the development and testing of ventilators and to the accuracy of common swab tests during the fight against COVID-19. It is essential to study the Earth and climate. It will be a driver of the industrial transition. The agreement reached last night ensures that the EU will be better prepared to address these and other challenges in the years to come.

“This was a very good negotiation, on a very important subject, in which the European Parliament managed to see its position entirely validated”, says MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho, rapporteur of this partnership. “We managed to secure key principles in terms of academic independence and transparency and conflicts of interest. Equally important was the fact that all political groups share the adopted position”.

For Carvalho, “it is very important that there is a market uptake of metrology innovation, especially within the European territory”. “Metrology is an essential tool that allows measuring our world. It is at the service of every field of knowledge. It makes science work. It makes technology work. It makes societies evolve. It allows us to know where we stand, whether we are addressing a pandemic or implementing disruptive changes, such as the Green and Digital transitions,” she says.

“This metrology partnership should be accessible to all types of stakeholders and newcomers. In our views, simplification and reduction of the administrative burden are also of high priority, especially if the partnership wants to ensure that qualified specialists in universities, research centres and in the private sector are involved. The market uptake of metrology innovation, especially within European territory, is a fundamental dimension that the partnership should address. Links with fundamental science should be reinforced and all decisions should have a solid scientific support also through the inclusion in the steering group of experts chosen in an independent way”.

“In the mandate report, we have also stressed the need to make serious efforts to increase visibility of metrology activities, in particular among the general population. The green and digital transitions compel us to establish synergies and complementarities with the other Union initiatives, policies and programmes,” MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho concluded.

BACKGROUND

After the adoption of the Horizon Europe Programme and its €95.5bn for research and innovation, the European Commission proposed, in February 2021, ten institutionalised partnerships, one of which is the partnership on metrology. It was proposed together with the other 9 partnerships which are covered in the so-called Single Basic Act. The proposed

new metrology partnership is based on science that benefits all fields of knowledge and affects the society and the economy as a whole. It builds on the successes of the European metrology research programme and the European metrology programme on innovation and research, but it raises the stakes, with the objective of helping tackle all our key challenges, from green and digital transition to the economy that works for the people.