

Letter to the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs or Minister of European Affairs, and the Minister of Research

Subject: Education, Research and Innovation top priorities for the European Union's next Multiannual Financial Framework

Dear Ministers,

we wish to draw your attention to the forthcoming finalization of the research and innovation framework "Horizon Europe" (2021-2027) and of its budget within the next European Union Multiannual Financial Framework.

Whereas the European Parliament had proposed a budget of 120 billion EUR in April 2019, the Commission's proposal amounts to only 94.1 billion EUR, as of June 2019. Even though this amount exceeds the budget of the previous Horizon 2020 period, we believe that the budget devoted to academic research must be more ambitious in order to address the societal and innovation challenges facing Europe.

Indeed, supporting excellent fundamental research constitutes a strategic investment, as it amounts to a key factor for future technological developments, for the capacity for innovation and solution of societal challenges, as well as for the overall attractiveness of Europe.

An insufficient investment in fundamental research would seriously compromise the European chances to become a world leader in the knowledge economy and in technological and social innovation-driven growth.

Thus we demand:

(1) secure funding for open science within the three pillars of Horizon Europe, including the ERC and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action at the level of the proposal by the EU parliament, in accordance with the scientific ambitions of the European Union.

(2) Make available funding for fundamental research in pillars 2 and 3.

The future of tens of thousands of aspiring young European scientists, currently completing their PhD or their post-doctoral projects, depends on such crucial financial decisions. Will Europe do its best to keep its talented students and researchers, and offer them the best conditions to become the builders of tomorrow? Or will Europe let them go and see them develop their research in China or North America? Will Europe be the territory of innovation in 2025 and attract gifted students from all over the world, or will it let the other continents and countries acquire an irretrievable advantage in science and technology?

As the decision of the European Council approaches, we, researchers of all disciplines, solemnly **call out for a budget compromise close to the Parliament's proposal**, which will underline the commitment of the European Union to Education, Research, and Innovation.

Yours sincerely,