

Research, Innovation, and Industry all have their Role to Play in Addressing the EU's Challenges

Science Europe Reaction to the 2020 State of the European Union Address

Brussels, 16 September 2020

Science Europe welcomes the European Commission's ambition to strengthen Europe, as emphasised today by President Von der Leyen in her 2020 State of the European Union address. Its efforts towards digital transformation and a Green Deal, and against the COVID-19 crisis and its social and economic consequences, are deeply interlinked. They are essential for a strong future EU. The current pandemic situation should be used as an opportunity to radically reform the way Europe approaches our most pressing challenges.

However, these ambitions are not going to be achieved without the contribution of a strong European research and innovation (R&I) sector, alongside that of business and industry. Fundamental research lies at the core of all innovation. To be able to contribute effectively, a well-funded Horizon Europe Framework Programme is of crucial importance. The currently proposed budget for R&I in the next Multiannual Financial Framework is both grossly insufficient and sends an entirely wrong signal on the role of research in society and economy. A significantly higher budget for Horizon Europe is needed: Science Europe echoes the European Parliament's call for a budget of €120bn. In addition, a higher proportion of R&I should be included in other strategic EU programmes to ensure that modernisation based on R&I reaches all corners of society. Policy coherence and optimal synergy between these different programmes are a must.