

**Science Europe Press Release: *for immediate release***

**Funding for Research: a Call on European Leaders to Maintain their Commitments**

(Brussels, 31 October 2014) *“It is a matter of grave concern to us that at a time when leaders in Europe speak of investing in knowledge, science and innovation as means to spur growth and prosperity for our economies and societies, once again research budgets at national and EU level are facing the prospect of cuts or stagnation”*. This is the start of an open letter that Science Europe Governing Board members have just published to remind European leaders of the importance of maintaining their commitments to research funding at both national and European levels.

In its position on the draft budget for 2015 of 24 July, the European Council foresees a substantial decrease in the available budget for payments to projects funded by Horizon 2020, the EU research programme running from 2014 to 2020. As part of the ‘conciliation process’, the European Parliament and the EU Member States have until 17 November to reach a compromise on the EU’s budget for next year, which will have to be put to a final plenary vote at the end of this month.

Members of the European Parliament have recently expressed grave concerns on the proposed cuts to the budget of Horizon 2020. Last month the outgoing European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Maire Geoghegan-Quinn said that *“it would seriously put into question the reputation of the EU as a reliable funder of research”*.

*“Implementing cuts in 2015 would weaken European research in the short term, but could also have a detrimental effect in the long term, by potentially reducing break-through discoveries which could lead to major innovations in the future”*, said Amanda Crowfoot, Director of Science Europe.

Pressure on research budgets is also experienced at national level and can affect the capacity to perform research in several European countries, with potential dire consequences for the competitiveness of Europe. What at is stake is Europe’s capacity to produce the new knowledge, without which there is no innovation. *“There is a real global science race taking place”*, emphasises the Science Europe Governing Board in its letter. *“National governments considering cutting their science budgets would essentially be opting to drop out of this race”*.

The letter ends by urging European national authorities, as well as the EU Institutions, *“to safeguard Europe’s future and to ensure the appropriate funding of their science systems.”*

*Science Europe comprises 52 Research Funding and Research Performing Organisations from 27 countries, representing around €30 billion per annum. It was founded in October 2011 with the aim of promoting the collective interests of members and providing them with a platform to collaborate at both policy and activity level.*

***For any further information, please contact:***

***Elena Torta, Communications Manager at Science Europe***

***[elena.torta@scienceeurope.org](mailto:elena.torta@scienceeurope.org)***

***Tel. +32 (0)475 84 01 12***