

SCIENCE EUROPE PRESS RELEASE (11 December 2014)

Protect the EU Research Budget

Science Europe calls on the institutions and Member States of the European Union to safeguard Horizon 2020, the EU's programme for research and innovation.

Horizon 2020 has recently been under threat due to the negotiations over the 2014 and 2015 EU budget. It now faces a new threat, in the form of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's proposal to create a European Fund for Strategic Investment, likely to be financed by moving money from existing programmes, including Horizon 2020.

Whilst Science Europe recognises the importance of high-risk investment and the need to stimulate innovation and economic growth, any diversion of funding away from Horizon 2020 would be damaging to exactly these objectives. Research funding supports the knowledge base; the capacity to innovate, and therefore to ensure economic growth and societal well-being, is dependent on this knowledge. It does not make sense to leverage investment from the private sector by depriving that same sector of an equally, if not more vital, resource in the long term.

Horizon 2020 is a crucial mechanism for fostering scientific breakthroughs, driving cutting-edge innovation and tackling major societal challenges. Within its 'Excellence' pillar, the European Research Council supports excellent frontier research, leading to invention and discovery that is the foundation for applied science and innovation. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions foster the next generation of European research talent. The Research Infrastructures programme helps Europe to maintain and use cutting-edge scientific facilities. The 'Societal Challenges' pillar of the programme facilitates scientific collaborations that seek to find solutions to major global problems. These efforts cannot and should not be compromised, and these critical pillars should not be reduced.

The damage caused by reducing funding for research, including basic research, will have a severe negative impact on future development, and private investment cannot compensate for this. In contrast, spending on research now will help to make Europe globally competitive and resilient to crises. Investment in fundamental research is a vital and indispensable investment in the future of Europe, and it is counter-productive to reduce funding for this.

Science Europe therefore strongly advocates the protection of the budget for Horizon 2020, for the growth and prosperity of Europe.

About Science Europe:

Science Europe is an association of major European research funding and research performing organisations in 27 countries, established in 2011 to promote the collective interest of its members and to foster collaboration between them. For more information, see www.scienceeurope.org.

For further information please contact:

Belinda Whitehead, Science Europe Communications Manager

communications@scienceeurope.org

Tel: +32 (0)2-226-03-06/+32 (0)471-651737