

Research Allocated an Insufficient Budget to Meet Unprecedented Challenges

European Parliament: the R&I community's last hope for an ambitious research and innovation budget

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Following a marathon summit (17-21 July 2020), EU leaders reached a deal on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) and on the Next Generation EU plan to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, it comes at a huge cost for the future of Europe. The Research and Innovation (R&I) sector has been sacrificed in these budget negotiations, when it should have been the spearhead of an ambitious, future-oriented, knowledge-based plan for Europe.

To Science Europe's disappointment, the financial envelope proposed for the implementation of the Horizon Europe programme for the period 2021-2027 is €80.9 billion (in 2018 prices). The total figure is far from the €120 billion proposed by the European Parliament and supported by Science Europe. It is also far from the smaller €94.4 billion proposal by the European Commission in May 2020.

Science Europe now calls the European Parliament and the European Commission, as the protectors of European R&I, to continue taking a strong stand in favour of a larger budget for Horizon Europe, and to advocate for more R&I across other EU programmes, including the Next Generation EU plan.

We also call on Member States, the European Parliament, and the European Commission to take steps to ensure that fundamental research is deeply rooted in Horizon Europe. Besides, the whole spectrum of research is crucial to understand the causes and find solutions to the societal and technological challenges that currently endanger Europe and the world: health and socio-economic crisis, climate and environmental crisis, loss of competitiveness and technological leadership.

Investment in R&I is needed now more than ever before. Member States should effectively foster more research collaboration across the European Research Area, and invest more in R&I in order to overcome the current crisis.