

Statement by the President of Science Europe  
**on European Support for Research-based Innovation**  
(Brussels, 29 April 2016)

**As President of Science Europe I believe that it is crucial to take an active part in the European debate on how to best support the innovation potential of the European society and economy.**

European competitiveness and well-being depend on its knowledge (research) ecosystem and on a culture of innovation. The cornerstone of any European strategy to strengthen innovation should aim to overcome the gap between research and innovation.

I support an approach to innovation that lives up to our ambitions and aims to create and sustain a research-based ecosystem capable of delivering radical innovation. In order to do that it must be built on a correct understanding of the role of research in a successful culture of innovation.

Sensible public policies for research and innovation help ensure a steady and long-term supply of the most essential public good any policy maker can hope to provide: a robust knowledge ecosystem that allows societies to produce and employ a wide variety of knowledge (and scientific excellence) leading to all sorts of, often unexpected, impact and value.

Research-based innovation can happen when this ecosystem is able to rely on a circular process of interactions between scientific breakthroughs and new ideas about putting them to use for society. The support we provide to research and innovation at European and national level should, as its main objective, bring together innovators from different sectors such as research, industry, government and civil society to work together in 'innovation communities' with a shared goal.

In contrast to incremental innovation, radical innovation fundamentally transforms how society responds to a need and even how we co-exist in society. Radical innovation is strongly associated with interdisciplinary research. Support to innovation should be strengthened to take into account tangible as well as intangible innovation, technological as well as non-technological innovation, and innovation outside of narrowly-defined criteria of economic return.

At Science Europe we believe that a thorough re-think of how to best support innovation based on excellence as one of Europe's strengths, can help bring to European innovation a dynamism and enthusiasm similar to that brought to research by the introduction of the European Research Council.

Science Europe, the association of leading research funding and performing organisations in Europe, offers an ideal platform to carry out serious reflection about this issue and about how the creation of an European Innovation Council – currently being debated – can help.

Professor Michael Matlosz,  
President of Science 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](http://www.scienceeurope.org).*

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