

Science Europe Position Statement



On the Budget for Horizon 2020

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Shaping the future of research

Horizon 2020 Budget: Time for Europe to Commit to a Knowledge-based Economy

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As European leaders meet to decide on the budget of the EU for the next seven years, the 50 major Research Performing and Research Funding Organisations that constitute Science Europe would like to stress the importance of adequate funding for research and innovation at the European level.

The Europe 2020 strategy is the primary EU-level plan to strengthen growth and competitiveness, by producing clear European added value through investment in education, research and innovation. A well-funded and functional research environment is the basis for generating solutions to meet future societal and economic challenges in Europe, with a long term perspective. Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, needs an appropriate budget; the European knowledge economy and Europe's ability to tackle major societal challenges are at stake.

A Widened Scope Requires Increased Funding

Horizon 2020 will bring together all EU-level instruments to support research and innovation, and consequently its scope and objectives have been broadened in comparison with its predecessor, the Seventh Framework Programme. The new holistic approach is necessary, but requires a significant level of funding if it is to succeed. The €80 billion proposed by the European Commission for Horizon 2020 is a carefully calculated budget that ensures excellent value for money; as such it is the minimum acceptable budget if the programme is to reach its goals: financing both research and innovation, creating investments for the future and laying the path for growth and competitiveness in Europe.

Horizon 2020 has the ambition to achieve both short-term and long-term results. It is an invaluable mechanism for encouraging collaboration between excellent researchers both within Europe and internationally, achieving critical mass, driving cutting edge innovation and scientific breakthroughs, and tackling major societal challenges. European-level collaboration as enabled by Horizon 2020 leads to better science, by complementing and enhancing the impact of research and innovation funding at national level. It strengthens excellence as well as building capacity, and it leverages additional investment from the private sector.

The Whole is Greater Than the Sum of its Parts

National and EU-level funding for research and innovation are complementary. Adequate public funding for research and innovation is also good for the economy of Europe: public spending for research today will make Europe more resilient to future crises. National systems which increased public research spending in the past are better prepared to deal with the current period of financial uncertainty¹. A decreased budget for the Research and Innovation Framework Programme at EU-level would send the wrong signal and would negatively affect the impact of both national-level funding and of Horizon 2020. At a time when national budgets are under threat, it is even more important that the EU budget is sufficient.

Supporting Research and Innovation is an Investment in Europe's Future

Supporting research and innovation is a vital and indispensable investment in the future. The Framework Programme has an important leverage effect, with each €1 of funding leading to an increase in industry added value of between €7 and €14². The estimated long-term impact of the Seventh Framework Programme is that it will generate an additional 0.96% of GDP, create 900,000 jobs and increase exports by 1.57%³. Such investments represent the only way for the EU to remain competitive worldwide. Excellent fundamental, applied and collaborative research are the main sources of knowledge for tomorrow. A coherent policy of adequate research funding will build on Europe's traditional strengths and help shape an innovation system for the future, ensuring a leading role in responding to current and future challenges.

In Summary

The benefits of research to society are manifold and manifest, and in a world increasingly dependent on knowledge as a prime resource for innovation, economic growth and societal wellbeing, Europe has to make the right choices if it wants to lead in shaping the future.

The 50 Science Europe member organisations call on Europe's leaders to safeguard Europe's future by protecting the EU research and innovation budget.

Science Europe is a Brussels-based association of 50 European national research organisations. 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. More information is available at www.scienceeurope.org

¹ Correlation of R&D investment and GDP growth; data by OECD and Eurostat.

² European Commission: SEC(2011) 867 Final, Staff Working Paper Accompanying the Communication from the Commission on A Budget for Europe 2020 (COM(2011) 500 Final).

³ Ibid.