



Urgent request to the European Parliament to reconsider the allocation of research funding

To: David Maria Sassoli, President European Parliament
All European Parliament members & working groups

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With the Covid-19 pandemics, Europe and the whole world are dealing with possibly the worst emergency since the end of the Second World War. The health emergency has turned into a serious economic and social crisis and should have taught the importance of scientific research in the field of biomedical sciences and disruptive high technologies. The countries that are following science recommendation have indeed emerged earlier and better from the first pandemic wave and are dealing with success with the second wave.

In spite of all that however, for the first time in the history of Europe, the funding proposed by the European Parliament and the Commission for the 2021-2027 framework program is drastically cut by the European Council with a reduction of 13.5 billion euros, about 25% of the total. This historic cut in research funding set Europe back to the levels of the previous work-program established in 2014. It is important that we Europeans are aware that a decrease in research funding in 2021 and 2022 compared to the 2020 level puts our future at risk. This fact has been highlighted also by the League of European Research Universities (LERU). The LERU gathers and represents basic research at European universities.

According to initial estimates, the consequences of these cuts are equivalent to the elimination of support for 22,500 researchers, a loss of 400 patents for 110 inventions and a loss of 220 clinical tests. All that in a context where Europe spends only 2.2% of GDP against 2.8% of the USA, 3.2% of Japan, 4.3% of Korea.

The message for the new European generations, the hardest hit by the consequences of the crisis, both socially and economically, is devastating: Europe does not intend to invest in their future. Without research and innovation, we Europeans are condemned to be marginal in the world scenario without the chance of supporting the development of our societies. The cut in research funding will make it impossible to have a sustainable development according to the Green New Deal, to develop skills in Artificial Intelligence, also in order to build-up an innovative public health response to a pandemic, to produce clean energy, to have more efficient buildings and means of transport, to fight dangerous and even more devastating diseases than Covid-19, and finally it will make it impossible to encourage the development of businesses.

This key points are also highlighted by the LERU in their newsletter entitled “**Horizon Europe: If we mess this up we put our future at stake!**”, which endorses the statement of Christian Ehler (Member of the European Parliament, EPP). In this newsletter, the LERU clearly states, at the

points 5&6, that this undue cut in research funding will “hamper European’s ability to combat the negative impact of this and future pandemics, because the development of vaccines depends on properly financed research and development”. Furthermore, the LERU states this policy will “mean an EU meltdown when it comes to fundamental and applied research, development and innovation, especially when stronger EU countries already started raising their Research & Development budget beyond 3% of GDP.”

Unfortunately, in the discussion at the European Council, none of the Member States defended Research and Innovation, nobody thought about health, the environment, the creation of wealth, everyone forgot about the new challenges of the digital agenda, so as to induce at the beginning of November Secretary General of LERU to write a new Letter entitled: **”They couldn’t care less.** Lettera150 urges the European Parliament to reconsider the allocation of research funding, likewise described in the original proposal and endorsed by the LERU. We must be aware of the fact that, without research a future of prosperity and well-being is not possible for the European Countries.

Lettera150

Lettera150 is a legal association that spontaneously formed in Italy during the worst period of the Covid-19 pandemics to advocate a rational approach to the emergency. During the pandemics, Lettera 150, which brings together 250 academical key opinion leaders belonging to all kind of academic sectors -scientists, jurists, historians, medical doctors, economists etc., and judges, has made several proposals recognizing the need for a competence and knowledge based reform of the Italian governance and economic and healthcare system. Those proposals have been largely acknowledged in the major Italian newspapers and media platforms.

See the full updated list of the Lettera150 members at: <https://www.lettera150.it/comitato-dei-sottoscrittori-di-lettera-150/>

References:

- <https://mailchi.mpleru/horizon-europe-if-we-mess-this-up-we-put-our-future-at-stake?e=70526a29cd>
- <https://mailchi.mpleru/nobody-in-the-european-council-champions-research-innovation?e=70526a29cd>

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