

Tuesday, 8 September 2015

Attention: Newsdesks / Science / Education correspondents

For immediate release

EUA calls on European Parliament to defend research in upcoming EU budget

As the EU Council presents its position on the 2016 budget to the European Parliament today, the European University Association welcomes the widespread support in the Parliament for the Horizon 2020 programme from a series of committees, including the leading Committee on Budgets as well as the Committees on Industry, Research and Energy and Economic and Monetary Affairs.

The negotiations between the EU Council and Parliament are entering a decisive phase with the release of the official Council position on the Commission-proposed Draft Budget 2016. Compared to the 2015 budget, the Commission proposed a cut to Horizon 2020 in commitments but a needed increase in payments for 2016, notably with a view to reducing the ongoing payment gap. This backlog in payments is a critical issue for EU programme beneficiaries, who are not receiving payments in time.

The Council has adopted a position including further cuts to Horizon 2020 commitments and bringing down the increase in payments. Compared to the 2015 budget, this would mean a cut of 105 million Euros in commitments. With regard to payments, the Council limits the increase to 840 million Euros instead of 1,05 billion Euros proposed by the Commission.

EUA believes that cutting down even further in Europe's leading research programme is unacceptable, in particular after it has been heavily tapped into to set up the financial basis of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). EUA recalls the EU institutions' pledge to minimise the impact of these cuts on the programme, and a commitment by the Commission to exploit margins available in the budget to do so.

EUA fears that using these margins to re-allocate funds to Horizon 2020 may prove increasingly challenging in the context of large-scale, cross-cutting emergencies and crises that the EU is already faced with. EU programmes must be allocated sustainable funding and cannot simply be used as reserve funds for other initiatives.

EUA Secretary General Lesley Wilson said, "*EUA calls on the European Parliament to remain faithful to its statements in favour of protecting European research and to use its prerogative as final budget authority to ensure a positive outcome for Europe's future*".

ENDS

Note

1. [EUA statement on EFSI adoption](#) – 25 June 2015

Contact

For more information, please contact Ulrike Reimann (Tel: +32 2 743 1159, Mobile: +32 473 748 785, email: Ulrike.reimann@eua.be) or Isabel Silva (Isabel.silva@eua.be)



The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.