



Open letter to ITRE Committee members on priorities for research and innovation

Dear Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy,

As a network of nineteen of the most distinguished research-intensive universities in Europe, we congratulate you on your election and thank you for choosing to contribute to the work of the ITRE Committee.

Universities educate large parts of the European population and act as powerhouses of the knowledge economy, which makes them instrumental in setting a direction for the future of Europe. **Knowledge produced through scientific research is a precondition for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and tackling challenges such as climate change and food security, whilst enabling citizens to live healthy lives in inclusive and peaceful societies.

The European Union plays a unique role in fostering transnational collaboration in research and innovation (R&I) on a scale that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. To help strengthen Europe's resilience in the face of socio-political, economic and cultural changes brought about by climate change and quantum leaps in technology, **we must secure robust funding for the EU's framework programmes for research and innovation, Horizon 2020 and its successor Horizon Europe.** As a matter of urgency, we ask you to join universities and other R&I actors in defending Horizon 2020 from budget cuts and convincing European leaders to invest further in research and innovation, both at European and national levels.

We call on you to ensure the centrality of knowledge production in the R&I policy of the EU – it provides the basis for our human capital and the well-being of our societies, whilst enabling innovation that strengthens our competitiveness. Only research and innovation policy built on the full empowerment of the two will deliver on the needs of Europeans and our economy. Failing to recognise the value of science and knowledge through a narrow focus on innovation would damage the competitiveness of Europe, endanger high-skilled jobs, and eventually weaken the cohesion of our societies. **We join the President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli, in asking for 'research' to be added to the name of the Commissioner's portfolio** to reflect its importance for the role and for Europe at large.

In your work at the ITRE Committee The Guild universities call on you to:

- **Defend an ambitious budget for Horizon Europe of at least €120bn and continue fostering excellence-based collaboration in R&I**, which constitutes the distinctive character of the

programme. Continue strengthening collaboration across different parts of Europe through excellence-based competition that sets the standards for European and global research and innovation.

- Ensure a **balance in investments for fundamental research and innovation**. Discoveries that have changed our lives (e.g., the DNA sequence, the discovery of antibiotics, etc.) have only been possible because of unexpected, bottom-up discoveries. In the framework of challenge-driven R&I, research collaboration requires more support in Horizon Europe to address the SDGs and enable groundbreaking innovations based on the latest knowledge.
- **Introduce new structures for scientists and experts to take part in the development of R&I policy and advice on the implementation of Horizon Europe**. We appreciate the signal that the new Commission aims to work more openly with stakeholders, and emphasise the importance of using leading scientists in shaping the direction of Horizon Europe and ERA.
- **Provide support for incremental innovation** as well as breakthrough innovation through the European Innovation Council, as both are needed to improve the quality of life of citizens. Strengthening the links between knowledge production and innovation, and supporting innovation stemming from all fields of research, is essential for Europe.
- **Be ambitious about international collaboration and reach close association with the UK and Switzerland** to enable a full collaboration within ERA and the European Education Area.

We hope that you will be able to support these principles in the legislative work and policy development related to Horizon Europe, and take them into account in the preparation of the hearing of Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner-designate for Innovation and Youth.

The Guild looks forward to working with you during the next five years and remains at your disposal for collaboration and advice in the fields of research and innovation.

Sincerely,



Jan Palmowski
Secretary-General