

Guild Presidents call on Horizon Europe and Erasmus to strengthen Europe's global position in science, education, and innovation

We welcome the European Commission's proposals for establishing Horizon Europe and Erasmus for 2021-2027. We fully support the Commission's plans to double the budget for Erasmus to strengthen the mobility, employability and European identity of students and further boost the international competitiveness of universities. We also welcome Horizon Europe's ambition to stimulate the excellence-based competition of ideas across borders, bring together the best researchers to contribute to Europe's ability to face global challenges and address its most pressing societal needs.

Research, education and innovation must be at the core of the EU's future vision. Hence, we welcome Horizon Europe's new approaches including: aligning the Global Challenges pillar with the Sustainable Development Goals and increasing the budget for 'sharing' excellence to overcome the research and innovation divide between different parts of Europe. As research-intensive universities we also welcome the European Innovation Council's support in bridging the gap between research and innovation.

However, Europe's global position in science and innovation requires a much higher level of ambition in the following areas:

- Europe must invest in proven success. We call for the European Research Council's (ERC) share to increase to at least 25% of the overall budget of Horizon Europe, and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions to at least 12%. This will give Europe the necessary boost to sustain its leadership in global science, as no other research council worldwide has higher scientific impact than the ERC. Ambitious investments in frontier-led science will also reinforce the goals of the European Innovation Council as demonstrated by previous Framework Programmes. For instance, in FP7 17% of the budget spent on the ERC led to 29% of all patent applications generated by the programme.
- Fostering world-class scientific excellence must remain both the fundamental goal and the guiding principle of Horizon Europe, especially in the Open Science and Global Challenges pillars. This should also be reflected in the selection of evaluators, scientific panels, and advisory groups.
- Horizon Europe's Global Challenges pillar must be based on strong support for research collaboration, focusing on low Technology-Readiness Levels (TRL).
- To maximise its impact on citizens' lives, it is crucial that Horizon Europe fosters collaborative research in all disciplines in the Global Challenges pillar. This requires active steps to ensure and monitor the effective integration

of the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities across the thematic clusters.

Universities are unique in their mission of generating new knowledge, educating the next generation of citizens, and in engaging with businesses, the public sector and civil society. Therefore, we underline the importance of decisionmakers' support for the realisation of both the European Research

Area and the European Education Area. European science, education and innovation must be globally competitive to address our most profound medical, social, or environmental challenges that know no boundaries. We call on the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission to realise the high levels of ambition by substantially increasing the investment in frontier-led research.

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