

Présidence

Open letter to the Minister of Economy, Finance and
Industrial and Digital Sovereignty and to the Minister of
Higher Education and Research

Objet : budget du
programme-cadre de
recherche et innovation
Horizon Europe

Paris, October 7, 2022

Dear Ministers,

Affaire suivie par :
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As an association representing the ten main French research universities, Udice wishes to express its great concern following the proposal of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) of the European Union to significantly reduce - by 663 million euros - the budget allocated to the Horizon Europe research and innovation framework program.

Echoing the efforts of the European Parliament and several organizations representing research and innovation actors in Europe, Udice considers it very regrettable to compromise our research and innovation capacities. Such a decision would have lasting consequences by weakening the attractiveness and competitiveness of the Union.

The presence of a balance on the Horizon Europe budget for 2021 cannot justify these cuts. Experience shows that a period of appropriation of the new programs by researchers and their institutions, because of their complexity, leads to a gradual increase in the consumption of funds, as has already happened for previous European framework programs. If some funds have not been fully consumed, this is also due to the late launch of the first Horizon Europe calls for proposals and to the changes introduced in the rules of participation. In this context, it is also up to the European Commission to improve the readability and attractiveness of Horizon Europe.

On the contrary, in an unstable world, it is fundamental to protect the Horizon Europe framework program and to invest in knowledge. This program is one of the main levers of Europe's influence beyond its borders.

The European Union and France, as expressed in the Council, cannot compromise what makes Europe strong: its capacity to anticipate through investment in research and innovation. It is precisely these investments in the future that have enabled Europe, for example, to be at the forefront of responses to the health crisis. It is these

investments that will enable us to respond to the major challenges and crises of today and tomorrow.

The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which ended a few weeks ago, was an opportunity to express France's ambition and to assert Europe's technological sovereignty by calling for a "European technological awakening". While other countries are massively increasing their investments in research and innovation, this awakening can only take place if European players benefit from stable and secure funding through a multi-annual program that cannot be regularly called into question.

We therefore hope to be able to count on the support of the French government to oppose these budget cuts and to support, on the contrary, an increase in European budgets dedicated to research and innovation, as well as their use by the actors.

Please accept, Madam and Mr. Ministers, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Pr. Michel DENEKEN
President of Udice