

26 April 2018

Statement on a new EU multiannual financial framework

On May 2, the European Commission will present their proposal for a new EU multiannual financial framework. The European Union establishes this framework for a period of seven years and it is therefore a crucial moment to change the ambitions and political priorities of the EU.

The French (CPU), German (HRK), and Polish (KRASP) Rectors' Conferences urge the European Commission, their governments and the European Parliament to use this chance to prepare Europe for the future by switching towards more investments in education, research and innovation. They fully subscribe to the request of the European University Association (EUA) to invest in Europe's competitiveness and sustainability.¹

The Rectors' Conferences therefore strongly support the recent statements from European institutions and member states to boost their investments in the knowledge triangle to at least 200 billion Euro. The EU needs to double its budget for research and innovation from 80 billion to 160 billion Euro. And the budget of the Erasmus+ programme that has enabled more than nine million people to experience life in another EU country, should even be tripled to 44,1 billion Euro.

CPU President Gilles Roussel:

“Europe is at a crossroads. In addition to the global instability at its doors, it has to face many challenges and find solutions for them. The crises, whether political, socio-economic or cultural, also reveals a crisis of identity and defiance vis-à-vis the European project. Only education, research and innovation can provide a long-term answer.

European funding enables universities in France, Germany, Poland and all other EU countries to cooperate with each other, with society, business and industries. In so doing, we are boosting young people's opportunities on the job market and contributing to the transfer of knowledge to society. Universities are fostering cultural understanding, mutual respect for our diversity and they are guiding young people in their endeavor to shape their personality as citizens, which is vital for successfully engaging in society.

The framework program of research and innovation should strengthen projects that will support the innovation ecosystems in our territories and mobilize all of its stakeholders – industry, academics, students and local authorities. We have specified these proposals in our “*Territorial connections*” programme proposal.”

¹ http://www.eua.be/Libraries/policy-positions/double-investment-in-research-innovation-and-education.pdf?utm_source=webpage&utm_medium=News&utm_name=News-webpage-21-03-2018

HRK President Horst Hippler:

“Even if our demands seem quite ambitious at first sight, another figure puts them into perspective: So far, the EU invests only 9% of its total budget into education, research, and innovation. In stark contrast to their excellent reputation, the two EU flagship programmes Erasmus+ for student exchange and Horizon 2020 for research and innovation cooperation have remained rather small items in the general EU budget. In times of rising populism and EU skepticism, we urgently need to financially boost these policies that are the foundation for our economic and political resilience and cultural wealth.

The education of bright minds as well as the creation of new knowledge, ideas and economic and societal solutions are our primary resources in Europe. They are keys to creating new jobs, services and products.”

KRASP President Jan Szmidt:

“CPU, HRK and KRASP strongly support the European Universities initiative that the EU governments have launched last December. This new tool is the missing link to better integrate the European Research and the European Higher Education Area. Universities from different countries across the whole of Europe can strategically work together, create common research and innovation focal point and set-up integrated courses of studies and improve their international profile. We need to integrate European funds for education and research in order to make this ambitious European project a success. The European Commission, the member states, the regions and universities need to work together in a multi-level policy approach.

It is vital that universities receive the necessary European funding to help solving global challenges. A European financial framework that boost education research and innovation provides the necessary resources to accomplish research missions in areas such as artificial intelligence, health, environment, energy or climate change and issues related to democracy and security of the society”.