



European Brain Council



12%... 10%... 8%... Counting down to zero

Towards a future with underfunded health research?

We, as representatives of the undersigned organisations, welcome the current European Commission's proposal for a new Framework Programme for Research & Innovation, "Horizon Europe". We acknowledge the budget increase — in spite of the currently challenging financial context — and applaud the many important improvements introduced based on the thorough analysis of the Horizon 2020 Programme.

Nevertheless, we firmly believe that the proposed budget as it stands is well below what would be necessary to tackle Europe's challenges head on, secure global competitiveness, maintain technological and industrial leadership, as well as safeguard economic growth and societal progress. The current proposal also fails to address the historically low success rate seen in the current Framework Programme, which is a major bottleneck for fostering research excellence.

Ensuring increased European leadership undeniably requires bolder decisions. The EU's investment into research currently amounts to between 5% and 10% of all R&D investments across Europe, whilst in the United States, federal funding of R&D represents more than 50%.

To this end, we would like to join the voices within the European Parliament, Pascal Lamy's High Level group recommendations and many other stakeholders to **call on the European Commission, European Parliament, and the Council of the EU to increase the future budget of "Horizon Europe" to a minimum of €120 billion.**

We are highly concerned about the budget of €7.7 billion provisionally allocated to the "health" cluster under Pillar II. This amount is not commensurate with the total budget increase and will clearly be insufficient to effectively address the societal challenges associated with health research.

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Moreover, this budget confirms a steady decrease of funding over time and across Framework Programmes, as health was previously allocated 12% under the 7th Framework Programme, 10% under Horizon 2020 and now 8% in the Horizon Europe proposal. For continued success in European research, we find it imperative that this downward trend is stopped and reverted.

EU health research, which is often too complex to be exclusively managed by individual member states, has an inestimable value for the lives of European citizens. Furthermore, the health challenges that we face are enormous and the sustainability of healthcare systems across Europe is under serious threat. The World Economic Forum and the Harvard School of Public Health predict that noncommunicable diseases alone will result in a cumulative loss in global economic output of \$47 trillion, or 5% of GDP, by 2030, principally through heart disease, stroke, alcohol misuse and depression in high and upper-middle income countries.

To ensure continued improvement in the lives of all EU citizens, **it is essential that a much higher proportion of the research budget is allocated to the “health” cluster.** This would contribute to continued support to basic and clinical research and empower EU governments to respond to pressing health-related problems.

We believe that the “Horizon Europe” proposal, upon appropriate planning and execution, holds the promise of having a real and lasting impact on European society. We offer our support to making this a reality, in turn working toward reinforcing the trust of European citizens in EU projects.

Prof. François Mauguère

President of the French Brain Council