PICTURE BY MONA EENDRA

DOUBLE INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND EDUCATION

TO BOOST EUROPE'S COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

As European associations of universities, we call upon the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council, to double the budget for research, innovation and education in the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF).

A doubling of the budget of the 9th EU Framework Programme (FP9) for Research & Innovation to **160 billion euro**, also requested by the Lamy Group, would create an estimated 650.000 jobs by 2040 and add around 0.46% to GDP over the same period. As the European Commission has stated in its Communication on the next MFF, this doubling would enable the EU to emerge as a global leader in areas like future-energy batteries, smart and clean buildings and vehicles, infectious diseases, and the circular economy. At the same time it would stimulate more inclusive and resilient societies, increase sustainable growth and reduce inequality in Europe.

Although **Horizon 2020** is the largest framework programme for research and innovation to date, it is, with less than 80 billion euro for 7 years, underfunded. In some parts of Horizon 2020, the current budget supports less than 1 out of 5 high quality proposals. Equally, even though the success of **Erasmus +** is outstanding in fostering mobility and employability, at 5% European student mobility is far below the 20% Bologna Process target.

However, doubling the FP budget cannot be a substitute for strong support for, and investment in, research, innovation and education at national level. **Sufficient national investment** in research (to the level of 3% of GDP as agreed by the Member States) and education, together with EU funding, is crucial for Europe's competitiveness and for a sustainable European society (in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals). We also urge the European institutions to encourage Member States more forcefully to meet their commitments in the framework of the European Research Area (ERA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Universities are strong and committed partners in the search for solutions to pressing, emerging and future societal challenges, and for boosting EU competitiveness, regional development and sustainability. They do so by performing cutting-edge research that is increasingly challenge-driven, interdisciplinary, multi-actor (working with industry, SMEs and societal/cultural enterprises), and inspired by open science principles. Universities bring research results to the public and the market, valorise these results through start-ups and educate present and future generations of teachers, entrepreneurs, researchers, politicians and citizens in general.

Universities, and the European associations to which they belong, look forward to working with the EU institutions to **make European research, innovation and education programmes an even greater success than they are today**, and to play an important role in **further increasing the relevance, impact and benefits** of those programmes to European citizens.

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