

Act now to ensure Juncker investment plan does not undermine vital role of research in Europe's health and competitiveness

The health of people living in the European Union, and EU competitiveness, relies on long-term, reliable and adequately funded research. By proposing cuts to Horizon 2020, the EU's long-term research programme, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) threatens to undermine research, limiting the EU research sector's ability to deliver tangible change for health and competitiveness.

The European Commission EFSI proposal foresees that €2.7 billion will be taken from Horizon 2020 to finance the EU guarantee. The budget of the European Research Council (ERC), one of the most important funders of excellent basic research, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions for the support of early-career researchers, as well as researchers' access to research infrastructures across Europe would all be affected. This will have a knock-on effect on the research sector's ability to improve the lives of patients.

We note the European Commission's intention for EFSI to also fund research projects. However, we are concerned that many organisations that conduct research across Europe – for example charities, research funders and universities – would not be eligible to apply for EFSI funding as the Commission proposal stands. In addition, we regret that there is no formal obligation in place to ensure money taken from Horizon 2020 is channelled back into research and innovation projects.

We therefore urge MEPs to support the following proposals:

- A reversal in the cuts to Horizon 2020
- Revised wording to ensure all undertakings, not just companies, are eligible for EFSI funding
- A guarantee that the Investment Committee shall have at least one research expert
- A formal guarantee that any funding taken from Horizon 2020 is channelled directly into research and innovation projects
- A prerequisite that all funding to research and innovation projects will be allocated competitively and on the basis of excellence.

