

To: *Mr Johan Van Overtveldt*, Chair of the BUDG Committee, European Parliament;
Mr Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Chair of the ITRE Committee, European Parliament;
Mr Dan Nica, Member of the ITRE Committee, European Parliament;
Mr Christian Ehler, Member of the ITRE Committee, European Parliament;
Mr Michael Vorländer, Head of Division, Education and Research, German Permanent representation to the EU.

CC: *Mr Frans Timmermans*, First Vice-President, Executive Vice-President-designate for the Green Deal, European Commission;
Ms Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, European Commission;
Mr Johannes Hahn, Commissioner Budget and Administration, European Commission.

Brussels, 10 September 2020

Horizon Europe: Budget cuts jeopardize achievement of top EU political objectives

EU cannot fall short of EC latest proposal for a Horizon Europe budget of €94.4 billion and of keeping a strong focus on climate and energy action by maintaining the dedicated budget untouched. This investment is required to reach the EU target of climate neutrality by 2050. It is a cornerstone to achieve the recovery, resilience and green leadership promises of the Next Generation EU.

The European Energy Research Alliance (EERA)¹, together with the cosignatories of this letter, expresses their deep concern about the proposed cuts in the Horizon Europe (HEU). Although EU leaders agreed on a historic budget deal on the MFF and the Next Generation EU budgets, it was done in part at the expense of research and innovation funding, with the HEU budget being reduced by 15%, to a mere €80.9 billion (€75.9 billion from the EU Budget and €5 billion through the one-time fund, Next Generation EU)².

We praise the efforts made by the European Parliament to increase the European R&I budget and firmly call for:

- **Maintaining the HEU budget to the same level of the 27 May 2020 EC proposal at €94.4 billion, already significantly falling short of the €120 billion budget supported by the European Parliament.**
- **Maintaining the budget earmarked to climate and energy action (e.g. Cluster on ‘Climate, Energy and Mobility’) in Horizon Europe to the level of the EC proposal, irrespective of the overall HEU budget.**

¹ The European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) is the largest low carbon energy research community in Europe and worldwide. It coordinates research activities from about 250 prominent research institutions and universities, representing about 50.000 experts across 30 countries in Europe.

² EERA (2020) *EU heads of state's agreement shrinks Horizon Europe budget* [Online] available at <https://www.eera-set.eu/news-resources/2083-eu-heads-of-state-s-agreement-shrinks-horizon-europe-budget.html>



During her Parliamentary hearing, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen outlined a vision for Europe to be the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050; she stressed that investing **“record amounts in cutting-edge research and innovation was key to achieving this objective”**³.

In line with the conclusion of the **“Lab-Fab-App” report** (aka **“Lamy Report”**)⁴ suggesting a doubling of the European research budget, and **supporting the proposal of the European Parliament, EERA and the R&I community at large called for an increase of the HEU budget to at least €120 billion**⁵.

Therefore, we consider that **these severe cuts are inconsistent with EU broadly stated political priorities**, which are also the foundations of the political programme of the von der Leyen's Commission⁶. They may **jeopardize EU long-term objectives of advancing the green and digital transition in Europe** and its ambitions of becoming worldwide leader in a new green and sustainable economy. **With already the lowest R&D expenditure as percentage of GDP compared to its competitors**⁷, further decreasing EU's R&I powerhouse capacity will prevent Europe from achieving global leadership.

We believe now is the time to **effectively align concrete action with political discourse**. It is time to acknowledge established and unchallenged evidences: **European R&I is hugely beneficial for the European economy and constitutes a pre-requisite for building a thriving and sustainable Europe**. It is time to walk the talk.

In the view of protecting current and future generations of European citizens, we call EU political leaders to reconcile the mobilized resources with the stated political targets.

We urge EU political leaders to guarantee the conditions that will enable the EU green recovery, by keeping EC proposed HEU budget to at least €94.4 billion and, in particular, its share dedicated to energy and climate action.



Adel El Gammal
EERA Secretary General



 SINTEF Nils Røkke
EERA President

³ European Commission (2019) *A Union that strives for more* [Online] available at

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf

⁴ European Commission (2017) *LAB – FAB – APP Investing in the European future we want* [Online] available at

http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations/pdf/archive/other_reports_studies_and_documents/hlg_2017_report.pdf

⁵ EARTO et al. (2019) *Joint Statement for an Ambitious Horizon Europe Programme* [Online] available at

<https://www.earto.eu/wp-content/uploads/Joint-Statement-for-an-Ambitious-Horizon-Europe-Programme.pdf>

⁶ European Commission (2019) *A Union that strives for more*

⁷ European Commission (2017) *LAB – FAB – APP Investing in the European future we want*



The European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) coordinates research activities from about 250 prominent research institutions and universities, representing about 50.000 experts across 30 countries in Europe (<https://www.eera-set.eu/about-us/members.html>).

EERA's Executive Committee is constituted by the following organisations:



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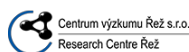
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