

18 June 2026**HRK warns against plans to cut the EU budget for research and development**

Today, EU heads of state and government are beginning their deliberations in Brussels on the European Union's next financial framework for the years 2028 to 2034. The current draft allocates fewer funds to research and innovation than the European Parliament and the European Commission have proposed to date. At the same time, the European Commission is already planning significant cuts to the Horizon Europe funding programme for the 2027 budget.

Commenting on this, the President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal, said today in Berlin:

"Europe faces the challenge of strengthening its capacity for innovation, competitiveness, technological sovereignty and societal resilience in an environment increasingly characterised by geopolitical tensions. Joint European investment in research and development is key to this.

It therefore sends the wrong signal when the European Commission allocates less funding to Horizon Europe in its draft budget for 2027 than in the previous year. And it is extremely problematic that the current Cyprus Presidency of the European Council is proposing a mere €148.6 billion for research and development funding under the next EU financial framework, which is due to come into effect in 2028. As a result, the EU Council of national governments is likely to fall well short of the €175 billion deemed necessary by the European Commission as recently as April, or the European Parliament's call for €200 billion.

Particularly at a time when budgetary resources are becoming increasingly scarce overall, European cooperation in research and innovation must be a priority. No single Member State can, on its own, deliver the scientific breakthroughs and technological capabilities that Europe needs for competitiveness, security and societal resilience.

I call on the German federal government and the Members of the European Parliament to make a strong case, in the forthcoming budget negotiations, for reversing this trend and for significantly increasing European investment in research and development."

Note (22 June 2026):

The figures given are accurate, but are based on differing calculation methods, which means that their relative proportions appear exaggerated when compared directly.

The amount of 148.6 billion euros proposed by the Council Presidency is based on the cost structure for the year 2025 (so-called constant prices). By contrast, the funding proposals from the European Commission and the European Parliament set out in the press release are based on so-called current prices, which already take into account the expected rise in prices (inflation). We regret any misunderstanding that this may cause.

To ensure that the figures can be easily compared, the following comparison is clearer:

a) Calculated on the basis of constant prices:

€148.6 billion (EU Council's proposal) compared with €154.9 billion (EU Commission's request) compared with €177.0 billion (European Parliament's request)

b) Calculated on the basis of current prices (taking inflation into account):

€167.9 billion (EU Council's proposal) compared with €175.0 billion (EU Commission's demand) compared with €200.0 billion (EU Parliament's demand)