

24 July 2020

DAAD, DFG and HRK call for improvements to new EU budget: Stronger emphasis on education and research essential

The funding earmarked for education and research in the new seven-year EU financial framework and the "Next Generation EU" coronavirus recovery plan have thus far failed to meet expectations and future requirements in the view of the DAAD, DFG and HRK. The three science organisations therefore welcome the EU Parliament's cross-party call for improvements to ensure more innovation and successful crisis management. DFG President Prof Dr Katja Becker, HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt and DAAD President Prof Dr Joybrato Mukherjee urge that the programmes "Horizon Europe" and "Erasmus+" should be given a better financial structure in order to secure and strengthen Europe as a research location in the long term.

Prof Dr Peter-André Alt, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK):

"We welcome the fact that the European heads of government have reached an agreement and the EU gives a joint response to the coronavirus crisis. However, the unique package comprising a recovery plan and a multi-annual financial framework is still not sufficiently geared to the future. A stronger emphasis on education and knowledge-driven research is indispensable. These are the foundations for innovation and successful crisis management, which fortunately are also viewed as such across the political groups in the EU Parliament. A targeted increase in funding for European science is required, particularly a balanced 'Horizon Europe' programme. I appeal to the German government to support the initiative of the European Parliament in keeping with the goal of its Presidency for a more sustainable and innovative Europe."

President of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation), Prof Dr Katja Becker:

"The EU Commission and in particular the German Presidency have set themselves ambitious goals for coping with different dimensions of crises in the EU with the notion of resilience. This ranges from the current pandemic and economic challenges to issues of rule of law and sovereignty. These dimensions in particular reveal the importance of independent and curiosity-driven research. Suitable responses to current urgent issues related to the EU can only be developed on the basis of a broad pool of knowledge, and it is precisely because of this understanding that foresight in research funding is now required. A lack of investments in research would weaken Europe at the systemic level in the long term. The objectives of the European Union can therefore only be achieved with a healthy research budget that draws on the breadth of research approaches and adequately funds basic research, which has already been weakened by the low level of allocation provided by the Next Generation Recovery Fund."

Prof Dr Joybrato Mukherjee, President of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD):
"We need well-trained, multilingual young people with intercultural experience to ensure the future viability and innovative capability of Europe. It is therefore disappointing and unreasonable that the agreed budget for Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe falls short of the necessary and already estimated increases. The DAAD supports the European Parliament's call for the planned budget for these two programmes to be increased. The doubling of the budget, as set out in the original plans, is key to creating a digital Erasmus+ programme that is more inclusive and sustainable. In this context, we are particularly concerned about the threat to new initiatives such as the European Universities Initiative. This initiative, successfully launched within the Erasmus+ programme, is already underfunded."

Press contacts:

Marco Finetti, Press Officer of the DFG; +49 228 885-2230; Marco.Finetti@dfg.de

Cordula Luckassen, Dep. Head of Press Relations / Spokesperson DAAD; +49 228 882-308;
presse@daad.de

Dr Christoph Hilgert, Press and Public Relations Officer of the HRK; +49 228 887-151; hilgert@hrk.de