

26 April 2018**EU budget: Rectors call for significant boost to investment in the knowledge triangle**

This coming Wednesday (2 May), the European Commission will present its proposal for the new financial framework of the EU. That framework will establish EU budget lines for seven years, from 2021 to 2028. This is a decisive moment, one which will determine EU policy priorities for the coming decade.

As the German (HRK), French (CPU) and Polish (CRASP) rectors' conferences, we jointly call on the European Commission, our governments and the European Parliament to use this chance to prepare Europe for the future by increasing their investments in education, research and innovation. We support the call by the [European University Association \(EUA\)](#) to invest in Europe's competitiveness and long-term viability.

Hence the rectors' conferences emphatically support recent statements by European institutions and member states on increasing their investments in the knowledge triangle to at least 200 billion euros. The EU should double its funding for research and innovation from 80 billion euros to 160 billion euros. And funding for the Erasmus+ programme, which has enabled over nine million people to spend time in another EU country, should in fact be tripled, to 44 billion euros.

HRK President Horst Hippler said,

"At first glance, our demands may seem ambitious, but taken in the context of another figure they make perfect sense – currently the EU invests only nine per cent of its total budget in education, research and innovation. Both of the EU's flagship programmes, Erasmus+ for student exchange and Horizon 2020 for research and innovation collaboration, are still relatively small items in the EU's total budget, despite their excellent reputation. The education of bright minds and the creation of new knowledge, creative ideas and economic and social solutions are our most important resources in Europe. They are the key to creating new jobs, services and products.

In an era of increasing populism and growing euroscepticism, we urgently need to provide stronger financial support to those European policy areas that form the foundation of our economic and political resilience and our cultural richness."

CRASP President Jan Szmidski said,

"The HRK, CPU and CRASP unequivocally support the 'European University Networks' initiative launched by EU governments last December. This new instrument has the potential to bridge the gap between the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area. Universities from different countries throughout Europe can collaborate strategically, create shared research and innovation focuses, establish integrated courses of study and improve their

international profile. We should connect the European funding for education and research in order to bring this ambitious project to fruition. The European Commission, member states, regions, states and universities should work together to create strong European higher education networks with this tripartite funding.

It is vital that universities receive the necessary European funding so that they can contribute to solving global challenges. A European financial framework that advances education, research and innovation will also make the necessary resources available for carrying out research commissioned in areas such as artificial intelligence, health, environment, energy and climate change.”

CPU President Gilles Roussel said,

“Europe is standing at the crossroads. Along with the global instability on our doorstep, the EU must confront many challenges and find solutions to them. Crises, whether they be political, socio-economic or cultural, also reveal an identity crisis of the European project. Only education, research and innovation can ultimately provide an answer to this.

European funding enables universities in France, Germany, Poland and all other EU countries to strengthen cooperation with each other, and with society, business and industry. This is how we can improve young peoples’ opportunities in the employment market and contribute to transferring knowledge to society. Universities promote cultural understanding and mutual respect for diversity and guide young people in their endeavours to develop their identity as a citizen, which is indispensable for successful participation in society.

The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation should strengthen those projects that also advance innovation ecosystems and our regions by bringing together all the stakeholders such as industry, researchers, students and local authorities. For this purpose we have developed a special funding programme entitled ‘Territorial Connections’.”