

Please reply to
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General Secretary
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Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission

Brussels, 5 February 2015

Subject: Transfer of funds from Horizon 2020 to the new European Fund for Strategic Investments

Dear President Juncker,

The proposal to increase the European Fund for Strategic Investments will be welcomed in many quarters since it should bring much needed employment opportunities and better facilities to the regions of Europe.

However, the proposal that this increase should be funded by reducing the budget of Horizon 2020 and especially that of the ERC seems especially short-sighted. We understand that the current proposals would lead to the loss of approximately 150 ERC grants and about 1000 employment possibilities for young researchers over the next five years, severely damaging the science base and the individual career progression of many of our most talented young researchers.

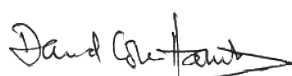
The EU relies very heavily on science, technology and innovation for its economic health. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the balance of trade surplus of the EU is provided by the chemical industry and > 3.5 million jobs depend directly on chemistry.


Because of labour costs, Europe can only compete internationally through being innovative and nimble in exploitation of these innovative results. Over the last few years, the Commission has developed a process, which encourages and funds innovation through the ERC and allows the development of new processes, discovered using ERC funding, through Horizon 2020. This excellent arrangement is allowing many new processes to be developed for use in the existing technology sector, but also in new start-up companies, thus continually refreshing the competitiveness of and employment in this crucial sector of EU wealth creation. The balance between funding for innovation and exploitation of research has been finely tuned over the years and reductions in any part of the system risk a serious breakdown of the innovation – exploitation process, which could very seriously impede Europe's ability to continue to compete internationally.


Of course, any damage to the profitable science and technology sector of the EU will reduce exports and impoverish the community way beyond any saving that may be made by cutting the research and development budget for the science based industries.

EuCheMS, an overarching body for all the chemical societies in Europe, representing >150, 000 chemists through its > 40 member societies and supporting members, urges the Commission through you, Mr. President, to protect the funds going into Horizon 2020 and the ERC and to seek alternative sources for increasing the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

Yours sincerely,


David Cole-Hamilton
President


Nineta H. Majcen
General Secretary


Ulrich Schubert
Vice-President