



BRITISH
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Dear Prime Minister,

I write to you prior to the European Council meeting on 18-19 December in Brussels, which will focus on further efforts to foster growth, jobs and competitiveness, and will discuss the European Commission's proposed European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).

My colleague, Professor Günter Stock, President of the All European Academies (ALLEA) and the Union of German Academies, has already written persuasively to President Juncker about this initiative on behalf of academies across Europe, including the British Academy, the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Society. I attach a copy of his letter for you.

I wish to emphasise my complete agreement with ALLEA's President. He highlights the absolute importance of Horizon 2020 in fuelling sustainable growth and prosperity. His letter highlights the key importance of the European Research Council and the humanities and social sciences. The current proposal that the EFSI should take away €2.7 billion from Horizon 2020's budget is counter-productive. If we all agree that the European Union and its Member States need to stimulate sustainable growth and prosperity, then we cannot use the funds already set aside for this purpose. This would be a significant blow to the ambitious programme that was agreed by the Government and other Member States in 2013. I hope you would also consider this a step back in the UK's long-term efforts to calibrate the European Union's budget towards competitiveness and innovation.

The UK is a top performer in European research funding. Our success rates through the European Research Council, the EU's premier research initiative, are second to none and are particularly impressive in the humanities and the social sciences. Our success in gaining European research funding is a key indicator in benchmarking our excellence both in the European Union and the wider world. The excellence it stimulates is critical in maintaining the UK as a global centre for research where the best of the best still wish to work, and will drive us in what you have described as the global race. If we wish to continue to compete globally as both a research leader and a prosperous and growing economy and society we need the fundamental research that the Horizon 2020 programme provides.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Dame Helen Wallace DBE CMG FBA
Foreign Secretary & Vice-President

Attachment

cc: The Rt. Hon. George Osborne MP, The Rt. Hon Dr Vince Cable MP, The Rt. Hon. Danny Alexander MP, The Rt. Hon Greg Clark MP