Open letter in support of EU’s research budget by European associations for Artificial Intelligence

Written by the Confederation of Laboratories of Artificial Intelligence in Europe (CLAIRE), the European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems (ELLIS), and the European Association for Artificial Intelligence (EurAI).

The challenges that Europe is facing today are substantial. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are heading for an unprecedented economic recession. Europe needs to maintain a necessary level of social welfare, professional opportunities, food safety, energy independence, social cohesion, and technological sovereignty. It also needs to address the consequences of climate change, ageing populations, the environmental impact caused by human activities, and shifts in economic and geopolitical balances.

To bring back growth into the economy and to address the challenges our continent is facing, Europe needs to ambitiously invest in excellence in science and innovation at the regional, national, and European levels.

In light of this, we profoundly regret that the research budget at the European level is under threat. We call upon the members of the European Parliament and the European Council to ensure that HORIZON EUROPE, the next EU programme for science and innovation, is not only adopted rapidly but also with the budget required to allow Europe to address the challenges we are facing. We call upon our national governments to give this their full support. Cutting funding for excellence in science and innovation in the EU’s next long-term budget is a failure to protect our future and that of the generations to come.

Under the new programme, all successful research funding mechanisms, notably including the European Research Council programs that have been instrumental in identifying and supporting excellent research in Europe, should be reinforced, as a way to strengthen Europe's position in frontier research, alongside collaborative research programmes. This is particularly important in fields such as Artificial Intelligence, which is at the core of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that we are immersed in, and is poised to produce general-purpose technologies that are major drivers of innovation, future growth and competitiveness, with long-term profound impact across all sectors of economy and society.

We strongly oppose any potential cut on the research budget for the next funding period. It would be a mistake that we cannot afford to make.

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