

Prime Minister/President,

We European Laureates of the Nobel and other international Prizes are dismayed that the European Commission is proposing to reduce support for the EU's flagship scientific research programme Horizon 2020.

The Commission appears to be ignoring the concerns expressed by many voices in the science community and beyond, and pushing through plans to raid the agreed funding of Horizon 2020 and in particular the European Research Council to fund the European Fund for Strategic Investment, meant to fix the difficulties of the European economy.

Horizon 2020 and the European Research Council are an indispensable long term investment in Europe's future. They are key tools for generating knowledge that drives our economic wellbeing and improvements in our health and the quality of our lives. Europe's long term sustainable economic future can only be built on continued research and innovation – a point well recognised by European industry. If we do not get smarter we will get poorer.

Europe urgently needs jobs and growth but they must be long term jobs and sustainable growth. Why is the European Commission proposing to eat the seed corn rather than to plant it?

The European Research Council is a real flagship programme for the EU.

It is seen as a beacon that not only supports the best of European scientists but also attracts the best researchers from the rest of the world to Europe.

By cutting this funding the European Union will send a message that Europe is not the place to do high level science, and the ideas that we need to really flourish will instead go to other parts of the world.

Protecting Horizon 2020 and particularly the European Research Council's programmes from cuts are not prohibitively expensive in cash terms. Carrying on with the proposal harming them will send a message that the European Union lacks a long term vision. We urge you, along with other national leaders, to call on the Commission to reverse this misguided and short sighted policy.

Best wishes,
Paul Nurse
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2001

Jules Hoffmann
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2011

Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1995

Tim Hunt
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2001

Christopher Pissarides
Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences 2010

Claude Cohen-Tannoudji
Nobel Prize in Physics 1997

François Englert
Nobel Prize in Physics 2013

John E Walker
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1997

Venkatraman Ramakrishnan
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2009

James A Mirrlees
Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences 1996

John Sulston
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2002

Paul Crutzen
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1995

Kurt Wüthrich
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2002

Richard R Ernst
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1991

Robert Huber
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1988

Jean-Marie Lehn
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1987

Serge Haroche
Nobel Prize in Physics 2012

Andre Geim
Nobel Prize in Physics 2010

Kostya Novoselov
Nobel Prize in Physics 2010

Gerhard Ertl
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2007

Jean Tirole
Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences 2014

Ada Yonath
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2009

John O'Keefe
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2014

May-Britt Moser
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2014

Edvard Ingjald Moser
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2014

Klaus von Klitzing
Nobel Prize in Physics 1985

John Gurdon
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2012

Aaron Ciechanover
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2004
Michael Atiyah
Fields Medal 1966/Abel Prize 2004

Timothy Gowers
Fields Medal 1998

Alain Connes
Fields Medal 1983

Simon Donaldson
Fields Medal 1986

Jean-Christophe Yoccoz
Fields Medal 1994

Cédric Villani
Fields Medal 2010

Maxim Kontsevich
Fields Medal 1998

Martin Hairer
Fields Medal 2014

Artur Avila
Fields Medal 2014

László Lovász
Wolf Prize 1999

Endre Szemerédi
Abel Prize 2012

Wendelin Werner
Fields Medal 2006

Alain Aspect
Wolf Prize 2010

