



EU Council keeps undercutting its own commitments to growth by research and innovation

The political agreement which the European Council and the European Parliament reached late June 2013 on the Multiannual Financial Framework, which would fund Horizon 2020 with some 70 billion over 2014-2020, is now threatened with a further blow by the Council in the first test - the budget for 2014. In early September 2013 the Council proposed significant cuts in the Commission's proposal for the 2014 commitments and payments. Unfortunately, it is hardly surprising in light of the Council's continuous renegeing on its own strong statements in favour of growth by research and innovation. Again, it is Horizon 2020, the programme for supporting SMEs and ERASMUS for all that are in the front lines of the cuts. €426 million are to be slashed from the Commission's plan, reducing even further spending on Horizon 2020 compared to 2013.

The strategy of the Council seems clear and disturbing given the battles over how to pay for past commitments: building up every year more monies not spent and then saying again that the EC has to pay for its past legally correct commitments from the budget of the next MFF.

It is now up to the European Parliament to defend the Horizon 2020 budget.

EuroScience calls upon members of the EP to stand up to this strategy, and demand to go back to the original Commission proposal. Beginning October the Budget Committee of the EP will establish its position, followed later in October by the full Parliament. If there is no agreement a 3-week conciliation procedure between Council and Parliament follows.

European Heads of Government have consistently stated their support for European research and innovation in order to maintain the competitiveness of the Union and have also consistently restricted and cut back on the funding being made available to support these aims.

EuroScience hopes that European Heads of Government and ministers responsible for research, education and innovation come to see the glaring gap between what they rightly expect educators, scientists, technologists and innovators to contribute to society for the public money they get, and the resources and facilities (or rather the lack thereof) the European Council is prepared to create.

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