



EUROTECH UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE

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Mr. Manuel Heitor
Minister of Science, Technology and Higher
Education, Portuguese Republic

Munich, 22 March 2021

EuroTech Universities concerned about the possible exclusion of longstanding partners from parts of Horizon Europe and Digital Europe

Dear Minister Heitor,

As current president of the EuroTech Universities Alliance, I would like to reach out to you on the matter of international cooperation within the new European Framework Programme for Research & Innovation (Horizon Europe).

We very much welcome the European Commission's ambitious plan on research and innovation for the next seven years to develop key digital, enabling and emerging technologies, sectors and value chains for the benefit of Europe. A key to make Europe more digital, more resilient, more inclusive, climate-neutral and more sustainable and increase its global competitiveness is also to strengthen its autonomy via international cooperation.

We praise the European Commission's effort in boosting international cooperation to tackle global challenges. European values are much needed at a global scale and the principle of science without borders, that the European Commission promotes and which we, at the EuroTech Universities, also advocate for, should be applied not only to the international partners, but also to the aligned countries.

It is positive that the EU demonstrates openness towards international partners within the new Framework Programme stating that 'Horizon Europe will significantly strengthen international cooperation which is crucial to ensure access to talent, knowledge, know-how, facilities and markets worldwide, to effectively tackle global challenges and to implement global commitments.' However, opening the scientific borders for the countries outside of the European Union should go hand in hand with strengthening collaboration with our closest partners and not undermine it.

Cooperation with the aligned countries is vital for the competitiveness of the European Union's economy. The latest proposal by the European Commission to exclude longstanding and trustful partner countries like Switzerland, Israel and the United Kingdom from parts of the research programme is not in the interest of Europe's research community nor the wider society and could be damaging for the international cooperation.



We are deeply concerned that the exclusion of aligned European countries with a long record of cooperation and excellence in research and innovation from parts of the programme will have negative impacts on European institutions and their capability to develop key digital, enabling, and emerging technologies.

Horizon 2020 and previous Framework Programmes have demonstrated excellent collaboration with aligned nations with respect to European values. We would like to see the same if not a greater level of participation of the associated countries in Horizon Europe.

We call on the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union to adopt an inclusive approach to work with all European countries for an innovative and prosperous future of Europe.

Warm regards



Thomas F. Hofmann

President of the EuroTech Universities Alliance

President of the Technical University of Munich

On behalf of

Martin Vetterli, President of École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)

Uri Shivan, President of Technion Israel Institute of Technology

Anders Bjarklev, President of the Technical University of Denmark (DTU)

Eric Labaye, President of École Polytechnique (L'X)

Robert-Jan Smits, President of the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e)

EuroTech Universities Alliance

The six EuroTech Universities – Technical University of Denmark (DTU), École Polytechnique (L'X), Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e), Technical University of Munich (TUM) as well as Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Technion Israel Institute of Technology – are at the forefront of developing solutions to the grand challenges of society, spanning from health (the fight against COVID-19 and cancer) over digitalisation (tapping the full potential of artificial intelligence), industrial competitiveness (additive manufacturing, including automation, simulation and new materials) to the numerous challenges of creating a truly sustainable society. Contributing to making the European Green Deal a success is a core part of our activities. As universities of science and technology, we connect the dots, bring together all stakeholders, and deliver the integrated approach necessary to leave no one behind.