

Letter to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Addressed by the Universities

Subject: Investing in education research and innovation as a top priority for the European Union's next Multiannual Financial Framework

Dear Minister X, dear Minister Y,

On behalf of our nation's universities, I wish to convey the urgency of stepping up our collective investment in research and education at the European level, in the context of the preparation of the European Union's next Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2028.

Investment in research and education is the most effective, sustainable, and future-oriented commitment that the EU can make towards its citizens. Indeed, investing in education as well as research and innovation at the European level means first and foremost investing in people – in particular, in Europe's youth – and developing human talent and capital. This is the *sine qua non* condition to fulfil any ambition of turning the European Union into a world leader in innovation-driven growth and competitiveness.

It is also about the efficient use of public funds. Research and innovation are a European public good. Investing at this level creates synergies, economies of scale and high value for money for EU taxpayers: Every 1€ invested in R&I generates on average 13€ in value added for business. Pan-EU research competition empowers excellent project ideas with EU-wide and global impact. Simultaneously, EU research funding has a proven track record of high-quality direct and indirect job creation. R&I investment fuels competitive innovation and therefore contributes to all key policy priorities, such as economic growth, energy, climate change, social inclusion, migration, as well as making the EU a global innovation power.

In order to fulfil their missions, universities need sustainable public funding both at the national level and at the European level. As [the European University Association](#) shows, the level of public investment in universities is going down in many countries across Europe since the start of the financial and economic crisis in 2008. To date, the EU target of 3% GDP invested in R&D is being missed. The gap has grown with those few countries that have kept investing, in a challenging demographic context.

*[countries where investment keeps up: another possible argument is the importance of continued national investment to support the universities in the competition for EU funds and national support for larger EU-level investment in the field]*

European funding to research, innovation and education is a top-value investment. It generates unparalleled leverage and supports all other policies, as it builds human capital and increases our capacity to tackle challenges that have reached a worldwide scale.

The negotiations for the next European Union's Multiannual Financial Framework have the potential to unlock EU's future and ensure the global relevance of our country. Minister X, Minister Y, the universities count on you to work towards an ambitious agreement by the end of the year. Investment now will save us time and money.

Yours sincerely,

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