

Stick to Science Initiative

On behalf of Universities UK, EPFL, ETH Zurich, the ETH Board, Wellcome and The Royal Society

Under embargo until 15:00 GMT / 16:00 CET, 8 February 2022

Research and Innovation community urges European leaders to take action on Horizon Europe

A new campaign, launched today, asks EU leaders to place science collaboration before politics, as the UK's and Switzerland's participation in the EU's world-leading research and innovation programme Horizon Europe hangs in the balance.

Call for open collaboration

The campaign, 'Stick to Science', calls for an open and collaborative research and innovation landscape in Europe that is free from political barriers. **The entire European scientific community is invited to sign this initiative as of 8 February under the dedicated website www.stick-to-science.eu.**

It comes as the UK's and Switzerland's participation in the EU's research and innovation programme continues to be stalled by politics. The UK's final association to Horizon Europe, the EU's €95.5 billion (CHF 99.1 bn, £79.4 bn) research and innovation programme, remains tangled up in post-Brexit trade arrangements, while Switzerland also remains locked out of parts of the programme, pending government talks. In both cases, the EU is putting political disputes ahead of science collaboration.

Europe is missing out on scientific opportunities

Switzerland and the UK are two long-standing and academically important partners in the European research and innovation landscape. The current situation means that the work of some of the best minds in Europe's science

and excellent research infrastructures are missing out on the additional scientific knowledge and resources of UK and Swiss institutions. These circumstances prevent Europe's top scientists from working together to tackle global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and food security.

Funding resources

UK and Switzerland, if to be associated, are estimated to add another €18 billion (CHF 18.7 bn, £15 bn)¹ to the Horizon Europe budget of €95.5 billion (CHF 99.1 bn, £79.4 bn) representing a top-up of 18%, and allowing greater collaborative resources for Europe to be put into world-leading research projects.

Support from top scientists

Among the first supporters of the campaign from across the European research and innovation community are among others Nobel Prizes winners, Fields medalists, entrepreneurs and innovators, research funding/performing bodies and umbrella organisations, heads of higher education institutions and research institutes, in total comprising over 200 individuals from the whole Europe who have pledged support for the campaign so far.

Hampering science collaboration across borders risks a long-lasting effect on European society, warn the campaign's supporters.

Voices of the science community

Professor Ludovic Thilly, Chair of the Executive Board, Coimbra Group, representing 41 universities across Europe said:

'We cannot accept any longer that scientific cooperation be held hostage to bilateral politics. A decade of cooperation with our British and Swiss partners is at risk of being jeopardised and this at a period of time when global challenges have never required so much international research cooperation.'

The Coimbra group has long been calling for a swift agreement on the association of both Switzerland and the United Kingdom to Horizon Europe. We now urge the European Union institutions and its member states, the Swiss government and the British government to act responsibly and take a long-term, constructive stance on the situation.'

¹ Source: Gov.uk: [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#); [SERI, Facts and Figures on the Swiss Participation in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation](#) Please see fact sheet for calculations.

Professor Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary General, The League of European Research Universities (LERU), representing 23 leading universities pushing the frontiers of innovative research said:

‘The quick association of Switzerland and the UK to Horizon Europe is vital to continue close collaboration and to tackle the many societal challenges that lay in front of us. A further delay simply for political reasons is unacceptable.’

The campaign is asking the EU, UK, and Switzerland to rapidly conclude the formal process of association to Horizon Europe, so that society, as a whole, can benefit from European-wide scientific collaboration.

Key information resources

1. A key fact sheet about the campaign can be found [here](#).
2. All media queries should be directed to media@stick-to-science.eu
3. The campaign website will go live at 15:00 GMT/ 16:00 CET on 8 February 2022 via www.stick-to-science.eu. The search function under www.stick-to-science.eu/signatories on the website allows you to look by name, country, institution, etc. For institutions please refer to <https://stick-to-science.eu/institution-list/>

About the supporting organisations

Universities UK

Universities UK is the collective voice of 140 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its mission is to create the conditions for UK universities to be the best in the world; maximising their positive impact locally, nationally and globally. Universities UK acts on behalf of universities, represented by their heads of institution. www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

ETH Board

The Board of the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology is the strategic unit appointed by the Swiss Federal Council to manage the ETH Domain. It determines the domain's strategic direction and allocates the funding provided by the Swiss Confederation to the six institutions. Find us online <https://ethrat.ch>

ETH Zurich

Freedom and individual responsibility, entrepreneurial spirit and open-mindedness: ETH Zurich stands on a bedrock of true Swiss values. Our university for science and technology dates back to the year 1855, when the founders of modern-day

Switzerland created it as a centre of innovation and knowledge. At ETH Zurich, students discover an ideal environment for independent thinking, researchers a climate which inspires top performance. Situated in the heart of Europe, yet forging connections all over the world, ETH Zurich is pioneering effective solutions to the global challenges of today and tomorrow. Find us online

<https://ethz.ch>

EPFL

EPFL, one of the two Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology, based in Lausanne, is Europe's most cosmopolitan technical university with students, professors and staff from over 120 nations. A dynamic environment, open to Switzerland and the world, EPFL is centered on its three missions: teaching, research and technology transfer. Find us online

<https://www.epfl.ch>

Wellcome

Wellcome supports science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone. We support discovery research into life, health and wellbeing, and we're taking on three worldwide health challenges: mental health, global heating and infectious diseases. Find us online

<https://wellcome.org/>

The Royal Society

The Royal Society is a self-governing Fellowship of many of the world's most distinguished scientists drawn from all areas of science, engineering, and medicine. The Society's fundamental purpose, as it has been since its foundation in 1660, is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity. Find us online

<https://royalsociety.org/>