



Brussels, 21 September 2022

The 2023 European annual R&I budget proposal of the Council raises serious concerns within the Netherlands' knowledge community, represented by the Netherlands house for Education and Research - Neth-ER. The proposal foresees extensive budget cuts to the European R&I programmes most needed to secure a competitive, prosperous, autonomous and healthy future for the EU on both the short and the long term. Neth-ER highly appreciated the European Parliament's position in the 2022 budget negotiations and urges the Parliament to stand up for European R&I once again. In this respect, Neth-ER welcomes the Committee on Budgets' working document on the Draft Budget 2023 by Rapporteur Mr Nicolae Ștefănuță.

Horizon Europe is the programme hardest hit in the budget proposal of the Council. In addition, substantial cuts are also foreseen for InvestEU, Digital Europe and EU4Health. By reducing the available budget for research and innovation, the likelihood of attaining the political priorities of the EU – the twin transition and boosting EU strategic autonomy – declines significantly. For these priorities to succeed, the EU urgently needs a wide range of ground breaking research projects, a fresh impetus to industrial, sustainable innovation, more attention to digital skills and increased health resilience. Ultimately, research, innovation and education are essential to tackle the multitude of challenges the EU is currently facing.

The Council refers to the need to create sufficient margin to respond to uncertainties in the annual budget. The war in Ukraine has indeed shown the necessity to create such margin. However, sacrificing successful programmes such as Horizon Europe, that have well proven their worth and moreover possess excellent absorption capacity, would be harmful. Sustaining the proposed cuts to Horizon Europe would further increase the tight budgetary constraints. The financial outlook of the programme has already been deteriorating due to the emerging negative tendency to finance new political initiatives outside the direct scope of the programme. Although this tendency underscores the vital function research & innovation indeed fulfil in boosting EU competitiveness, Neth-ER welcomes the Rapporteur's call that fresh initiatives require fresh resources.

The approach taken by the Council would threaten the Horizon budget, as well as the budgets for InvestEU, Digital Europe and EU4Health, and would deprive researchers and innovators across the continent of the stability they need to contribute to the EU's strategic objectives. Delay on the green, digital, industrial, health and strategic autonomy agendas is the least the EU currently needs. We call upon you to make sure that the research, innovation and education sector gets the attention, investment and support that it needs and deserves. We therefore ask you to vote against the Council's budget proposal and negotiate a budget for knowledge that is at least the amount as proposed by the Commission.