

Embargo until 15:00 pm

Leading research and innovation organisations urge Europe to increase investments in knowledge capital

Europe, 2 October 2024 — At the [Brussels-based high-level event](#) organised by leading R&I organisations and representatives of European industry, attention was drawn to the urgent need for increased investment in research and development in Europe.

In recent years, North America and Asia have massively ramped up their investments, leaving Europe behind. To remain competitive and advance the economic, ecological and societal transitions, European countries and the EU must boost their research and innovation funding.

In its [2024 European Semester Spring Package](#), published in June, the European Commission provides policy guidance intended to shape the debate on research, innovation, and education policy at both the EU and national levels. The Commission highlights a slowdown in productivity growth since the early 2000s, attributing this trend, among other factors, to "a lack of investment in research and innovation and persistent skills shortages".

The recently published [Draghi Report](#) on "The future of European competitiveness" recommends doubling the next EU budget for R&I to 200 billion euros.

Science is a crucial factor to address and develop solutions for the complex challenges facing our societies: climate change, AI, cybersecurity, environmental and energy crises, threats to democracy and security, pandemics, among others. Developing and enhancing excellent research and innovation with a long-term, multidisciplinary, and cross-sectoral perspective is key to our future.

This autumn, the newly elected European Parliament will begin developing their positions, and the candidates for the future European Commission will have to be confirmed. These leaders will play a crucial role in shaping Europe's future through the development and adoption of the next long-term EU budget.

At the event in Brussels **Enrico Letta**, former Italian Prime Minister and author of the recently published report "Much more than a market" on the future of the single market, will present his view on European R&I, the need to create a "fifth freedom" dedicated to research, innovation, knowledge and education and why it is necessary to radically step up the investments in the EU's next budget.

Maria Leptin, President of the European Research Council (ERC), will showcase the benefits of frontier research and innovation for our societies and **Christian Ehler**, Member of the European Parliament, will talk about the importance of R&I investments at national and EU levels, in particular for the 10th framework programme for research and innovation, FP10.

The view of the industry will be presented by **Pascal Metivier**, Head of Research and Innovation at Syensqo, a Belgian multinational materials company founded in 2023 as a spin-off from Solvay.

Quotes from the speakers and partner organisations:

"I am excited to participate in the Research Matters event, as I believe it is crucial to establish a strong foundation for European research and innovation that paves the way for a competitive and socially cohesive Europe."

Enrico Letta, former Italian Prime Minister and President of the Jacques Delors Institute (keynote speaker of the event)

"Europe must do more to maintain its competitive edge in science and technology as we are facing increased global competition. To keep pace, it is vital to double the spending on research and innovation in the next EU Framework Programme, not least on curiosity-driven frontier research. We must give our best creative researchers the freedom to cut new ground. The ERC Scientific Council therefore applauds this concerted effort of the wider research community and industry in Europe to speak up for an ambitious future R&I budget."

Maria Leptin, President of the European Research Council (speaker of the event)

"Europe's business model is founded on values and technological progress in a highly competitive global environment. Our industries build their success on scientific leadership and – vice-versa – to stay at the forefront, Europe's scientists need a strong industrial base. For this reason, the EU's next research and innovation programme should be significant and smart. It will be a key part of the jigsaw that enables Europe's scientists, industries and start-ups to deliver global solutions together."

Dr Ilham Kadri, CEO of Syensqo and Chair of ERT's Committee on Competitiveness & Innovation

"European leadership in science and technology is part of the backbone supporting our welfare, environment, and freedom. To truly uphold this foundation, the EU must offer bold, visionary funding and support for the research and innovation that sustain it."

Orla Feely, President of CESAER and President of University College Dublin

"The momentum and support to double the budget of the framework programme and the European Research Council is plain and simple. LERU expects that also the Heitor Group will fully confirm that. Then it's on the EU institutions to act accordingly. Neither less nor more." **Prof. Kurt Deketelaere**, Secretary-General, LERU- League of European Research Universities

"This event marks an important moment for the European research and innovation community. It presents a unique opportunity to emphasise to policymakers the need for robust investment in research and innovation, especially as Europe prepares for its next long-term budget and shapes the course for its future. The Research Matters campaign is a powerful call for action about ensuring that research remains at the heart of Europe's strategy, driving solutions to the pressing challenges we face today."

Dag Rune Olsen, YERUN President & Rector of UiT - The Arctic University of Norway

"Europe has no future without bold investment in R&I now. Our peace, our defence, our health, our economies and our societies would not be what they are today without years of fundamental research across the whole spectrum of disciplines. Everybody tends to forget this when it comes to voting the budget or making budget cuts. But the alarm bells are now ringing. It is time for our governments and EU leaders to act and take the right budget decisions at national and European level. That includes doubling the budget for the next EU Framework Programme."

Ludovic Thilly, Coimbra Group Executive Board Chair (present at the event)

"Europe's future depends on a strong commitment to research and innovation. The Research Matters event is part of a crucial call to action for increasing investment in these areas, to ensure that our scientific community has the resources to drive breakthroughs that benefit society. At EU-LIFE, we advocate for a robust, well-funded research ecosystem to address global challenges and secure Europe's leadership in scientific excellence and innovation."

Marta Agostinho, EU-LIFE Executive Director (present at the event)

"This event will address a central question for Europe's future: how can research and innovation strengthen the EU's economy at a time of intense global competition? As the European Commission prepares for the future, it is critical to ensure the future-readiness of the EU through research and innovation, and this event will consider how best to articulate such a vision compellingly and practically."

Prof. Anders Hagfeldt, Vice-Chancellor of Uppsala University and Chair of The Guild

“Research in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) is essential to address complex challenges facing the EU, such as social inequality, migration, digital transformation, and climate change. SSH disciplines provide critical insights into human behaviour, societal dynamics, and cultural contexts, helping to shape effective policies that foster social cohesion, democracy, and innovation. Investing in this research ensures that technological advances align with ethical values and that diverse voices are included in decision-making processes. This way we can build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Europe. We need an ambitious funding programme for the SSH to maintain Europe's leadership in fostering knowledge-driven, people-centred development.”

Silvana Colella, President, European Alliance of SSH (EASSH)

“It is crucial that the research sector actively engages in budget discussions. Increased investment in research, especially for the ERC and the EU's upcoming framework programme, will be vital for Europe's ability to address the major societal challenges we face.”

Margareth Hagen, Rector of the University of Bergen

“Mario Draghi has made a thorough analysis of the state of Europe's competitiveness. This analysis shows that it is not five, but two to twelve. Also Draghi's recommendations are crystal clear: priority number one is to invest in innovation and talent. After all, knowledge is Europe's most valuable resource since it generates jobs, economic green growth and prosperity. EU Member States and Presidents of Europe's institutions, we call upon you to take action now. There is no time to waste! “

Robert-Jan Smits, TU/e President and Chair of EuroTech Universities Alliance

“Research and innovation are the key to prosperity and well-being. Without groundbreaking science and new technologies, we will not be able to address the challenges facing our economy, our health, our environment, and our way of life. Providing the necessary investments today means laying the groundwork for tomorrow's solutions.”

Tatiana Panteli, Head of Brussels Office, EuroTech Universities Alliance

“This event brings together key voices from research, innovation, and industry, all aligned on a clear message: Our ability to remain competitive globally and address the common challenges we face depends on strong research and innovation ecosystems. This joint effort is a pivotal moment to urge policymakers to make bold and sustainable funding commitments in the upcoming EU budget for R&I, to ensure our long-term competitiveness and shape a future which safeguards our social, economic and environmental well-being.”

Lidia Borrell-Damián, Secretary-General, Science Europe

“It is impressive to see how many international organisations have joined forces to carry out the Research Matters campaign. Not only education and research stakeholders are involved, but also representatives from industry and business. This shows how important investment in research and innovation is to everyone. Only with an effort will Europe be able to play an important economic role in the future and maintain its prosperity.”

Gian-Andri Casutt, President, EUPRIO

About the #ResearchMatters Campaign:

The #ResearchMatters campaign is a concerted effort by leading research and innovation organisations to advocate for increased investments in research and innovation in Europe. The campaign emphasises the importance of knowledge creation and research-driven innovation in addressing the continent's most pressing challenges and securing a prosperous future for all Europeans.

Contact us

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