

Statement of the Board of trustees of the Academia Europaea – February 2015

SUBJECT: Commission proposal to the European Parliament for the funding of the EFSI - The European Fund for Strategic Investment

The Board of the Academia Europaea is concerned to see the further financial proposals of the new European Commission, this time seeking approval of the European Parliament for a transfer of 2.7 billion Euros from the Horizon 2020 budget.

The AE viewed the outcome of the political process that approved H2020, as the minimum necessary to provide for medium term stability and a safeguarding of our collective European research capacity development. Given the serious impacts of economic instability, such an investment programme must be seen as essential for sustainable, longer-term European recovery and future global competitiveness. The nature of the proposed work of the EFSI should in our view be financed from other pillars, including a consideration of other statutory financial instruments available for risk funding.

The Academia Europaea is especially concerned at the proposal to remove some funds from the instruments of the European Research Council.

The ultimate bases of all significant innovations are the outputs of blue skies, novel and risk led research, driven by researcher curiosity and formulated in an environment of excellence. The future successes from the ERC toolkit (which also currently supports “applied” aspects through Frontier science) will be dependent on provision of structural and financial stability and upon the commitment of world class individuals and the investments by institutions in these people to provide the infrastructures, support and the environments where major innovations in science and knowledge can emerge and also be exploited. Short-termism especially when driven by political expedient is too often the destroyer of such cumulative successes.

The Academia Europaea supports the recent statement published by EUROSCIENCE and also many of the sentiments expressed by members of the Young Academy of Europe in relation to the inextricable linkages between all strands of the sciences. We are of the view that in the current climate, there is no justification for any action that puts at risk the vital support for research excellence and for young individual scholars – critical to our long-term success. The Academia Europaea therefore urges the Parliament and the member states, to see the ERC investments as a jewel in the crown of European excellence and to resist any cuts to the already agreed budgetary structure for research.

Academia Europaea, London February 06, 2015

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