

To the European Heads of State:

The International Consortium of Research Staff Associations (ICoRSA) expresses concern about the future of European research funding. ICoRSA is a consortium uniting research staff associations worldwide. Mobility, community, and research career pathways are at the core of ICoRSA activities.

ICoRSA supports the [open letter](#) petition written last October by 44 European Nobel Laureates and 6 Fields Medallists on preserving the European research budget. The letter expressed their concerns about the likely reduction of the proposed European budget allocated to research for 2014-2020. This letter, promoted by the Initiative for Science in Europe (www.no-cuts-on-research.eu), was addressed to the Heads of State or Government of EU Countries and to the Presidents of EU Institutions.

The European research budget has successfully provided core and essential research funding in the past, instrumental in Europe's strong research excellence. Key decisions on this research budget will be finalised in early 2013. The initial proposal, which allocates around 80 billion to the Horizon 2020 Programme for 2014-2020, is insufficient to sustain the current standards of EU research. The proposal represents only a marginal increase over the budget of the 2007-2013 Seventh Framework Programme. Moreover, there is a significant risk that the budget of the Eight Framework Programme (Horizon 2020) could be reduced. ICoRSA strongly opposes a reduction in the proposed budget and requests a debate on the matter taking into account the required support for sustainable research careers.

In their letter, the Nobel Laureates stated that “science can help us find answers to many of the pressing problems facing us at this time”, and that “transforming this knowledge into innovative new products, services and industries is the only way to provide Europe with a competitive edge in today's rapidly changing global landscape and to ensure Europe’s long-term future prosperity.” ICoRSA supports these ideas and believes that the creation of a knowledge society is critical to lift Europe out from the current financial crisis.

Human capital should be leveraged to build up a knowledge-based economy. The Lisbon Agenda adopted by EU Heads of State and Government in 2000 set the objective of making the European Union ‘the world’s most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy and society’: this objective should be reinforced and not downgraded in the midst of an economic crisis of unprecedented severity. In this respect, improving research career pathways will promote the potential of researchers while retaining the best and brightest minds in Europe. In particular, ICoRSA emphasises the need for an increased budget for the European programs that support researcher careers and their ideas, whilst also recommending more efficient use of this valuable funding resource. Associations which are crucial beneficiaries of this funding include Marie Curie Actions and European Research Council. Marie Curie Actions promote excellence and mobility, foster effective transfer of knowledge through Europe, and promote a common European cultural identity. The European Research Council supports the development of creative, independent scientists. It would be unfortunate to European scientific and economic interests if researchers were to lose the support of such organisations.

ICoRSA endorses the work done under the HR Excellence in Research Award process and endorses the ESF recommendations to the EC to create a common European Framework for Researcher Development. However, ICoRSA believes that sustainable research careers will be impossible to achieve in the absence of sustained governmental support for the research community. In order to

promote a knowledge society, particularly through sustaining a flourishing innovation system and building upon a track record of high quality research , ICoRSA calls upon Heads of State and Government and Members of the European Parliament to work against proposed cuts to the European research budget.

International Consortium of Research Staff Associations participants signing this letter:

- Ireland - IRSA Irish Research Staff Association
- UK - UKRSA UK Research Staff Association
- France - ANDes French National Association of PhD Holders
- USA - NPA National Postdoctoral Association
- Portugal - ANICT Portuguese Association of Researchers in Science Technology
- Spain - API-CSIC Association of Research Staff of CSIC
- South Africa - SARSA South African Research Staff Association
- Australia - UWARA University of Western Australia Researchers'
- Canada - CAPS Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars
- WAYS World Association Young Scientists
- EMBL European Molecular Biology Laboratory Staff Association

