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# TALLINN CALL FOR ACTION 2017

Seize the opportunity now:  
research and innovation matter  
for the future of Europe

Statement of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU

# Preamble

In the current debate on the future of Europe, we want to convey a positive message and create real momentum for research and innovation (R&I). European research cooperation is a success story, an example of collaboration between countries, people and their ideas, with a clear 'added-value' for Europe and the whole world.

We welcome and endorse recent statements<sup>1</sup>, including that of the High Level Group on Maximizing Impact of EU R&I, to increase investment in research and innovation. The EU remains far from achieving its 3% target on R&I investments that was set already in 2000. There is an urgent need for renewed political commitment towards this ambition. If Europe wants to seize societal and economic development opportunities in a post-2020 world, as well as achieve its political ambitions, there is need to reaffirm R&I investment as a clear priority, also in the budget. R&I make a remarkable contribution to job creation and

boosting European economies, as every € 1 invested under Horizon 2020 is estimated to result in a GDP increase of between € 6 to € 8.5, projected to benefit Europe by up to € 600bn by 2030. The overall impact and value of R&I is much wider, bringing long-term and transformative benefits to society, most notably through educated and competent people and improvements to our everyday lives.

The Tallinn Call for Action 2017 clarifies what is at stake, and makes a case for a significant increase in national as well as EU research and innovation funding. Together with stakeholders<sup>2</sup>, we have identified the immediate key steps to increase public and political support for R&I.

The Tallinn Call for Action 2017 was presented to stakeholder representatives at the high-level conference *European Research Excellence – Impact and Value for Society*, held under the Estonian Presidency of the EU Council on 12 October 2017.

## Why there is a need to act urgently

There are good reasons to act now to ensure broad political commitment for increasing R&I funding, impact of these investments and public trust.

- **R&I gives us a real chance to build a better future.** R&I is critical to achieving the European political vision and values and is vital to realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We need research to deepen our understanding of our changing societies, to increase our ability to master uncertainty and to embrace change.
- **Investing in research and innovation is a necessity for competitiveness, not a luxury.** Intelligence, creativity and the capacity to act are Europe's main strengths and source of wealth. Europe will not become the forerunner in creating excellent ideas and applying new knowledge if public R&I investments are cut or stagnate.
- **Excellent research is the basis for education and future innovation.** There is too much pressure for public funding to focus on R&I activities that produce short-term outcomes, neglecting the many contributions of research to society and the economy, including equipping people with the skills they need to thrive in future jobs.

1 For example, the European Parliament report, the positions of LERU, EUA, EARTO, Coimbra Group, The Guild and the joint statement by CESAR, EUA, LERU and Science Europe.

2 The Tallinn Call for Action 2017 has been drawn up in close cooperation with key EU stakeholders via online consultation and roundtable discussions, overseen by an international Steering Committee.

- **Stronger efforts are needed to make the benefits of R&I visible and understandable by all and to achieve wide citizen involvement.** Increased public trust in scientific knowledge, as well as engaging people in shaping our common future, are the foundations for ensuring greater impact of R&I.
- **R&I is an essential element for uniting Europe.** European research collaboration forges strong links across borders and helps to build trust and tolerance between societies.

## Call for Action

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We call upon all stakeholders involved in R&I to play their part and show commitment to bring about a vital change in policy choices in favour of research and innovation.

### Priority 1:

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#### Ensure investment in research and innovation

##### 1. Make research and innovation a real priority:

###### **Policymakers:**

- Reaffirm research as a critical success factor and prioritize R&I in Europe's future strategy and national strategies.
- Increase budgets for R&I, both at national and EU level. Ringfence and protect R&I funding in the next EU budget. Provide more funding opportunities for collaborative research at low levels of market-readiness.
- Keep working towards the realization and strengthening of the European Research Area. Achieve pan-European impact by encouraging openness and mobilise untapped potential from all regions.
- **Companies:** Acknowledge research-based innovation as the cornerstone of growth and productivity. Engage both with policymakers and the public to explain your needs, especially when seeking public funding.

### Priority 2:

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#### Increase the impact of R&I investments

##### 1. Recognise a broad notion of impact that acknowledges the societal value of research for policy and practice:

- **Policymakers, research funders, academia:** Foster the necessary cultural change to embrace the broad notion of impact. Develop a more sophisticated and dynamic approach to impact assessment.

## 2. Ensure that the right policies and frameworks are in place:

- **Policymakers, research funders, academia:** Ensure the effective use of research results by making a swift and full transition to open access of research results.
- **Policymakers, research funders, research organisations:** Actively promote excellent R&I ecosystems that support co-creation, interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange. Ensure effective support for researchers by encouraging all types of work mobility and career development. Establish a culture of risk-tolerance and creativity.
- **Policymakers:** Maximize the efficiency and use of resources by ensuring complementarity of funding between national and EU funding programmes, as well as streamlining and harmonizing all EU funds supporting R&I.

## 3. Broaden and improve research education:

- **Policymakers, academia:** Ensure sound training for people to strengthen their understanding of research and skills needed for the 21st century labour market. Embrace diversity by increasing opportunities for the young, women, creatives and other talent to get involved in R&I.

## 4. Strengthen the role of research in policymaking:

- **Policymakers:** Establish research-based policymaking at EU and national levels. Make the process of policy development and decision-making more transparent, explaining how decisions are made.
- **Researchers:** Consider potential applications and societal impact of your research. Assume a proactive role in providing scientific advice and offer your expertise and knowledge to inform public debate.
- **Research organisations, policymakers:** Create better engagement opportunities between researchers, innovators and policymakers, e.g. create channels for communication between them, establish advisory organisations and positions.

## Priority 3:

### Build trust between research and society, and within the R&I system

#### 1. Improve the way research is communicated:

- **Academia:** Communicate the impact and results of your work, develop dialogues with the public and policymakers to clarify and facilitate understanding of the issues.
- **Media:** Provide high-quality and engaging communication about research via all media channels. Demonstrate to citizens how much R&I contributes to their quality of life, and helps us to overcome challenges we are facing. Be constructively critical in reporting the process and limitations of scientific research.

#### 2. Engage people in the co-creation of the future:

- **Research funders, research organisations, researchers:** Engage the public and all levels of government with research that affects them. Look for possibilities to co-design and co-implement solutions to societal challenges, based on science and innovation.
- **Academia, research funders:** Follow and promote the principles of integrity and good research practices. Be open and understandable when explaining the work you do.