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EU 2015 Budget negotiations: EUA warns against making cuts to research payments

In July, the Council of the EU's Permanent Representatives Committee agreed its position on the EU draft budget for 2015, which is set to be [negotiated in the next months with the other EU institutions](#) (European Commission and Parliament).

EUA understands the Council position* on the European Commission's draft budget proposal recommends making considerable cuts to the EC's proposed 2015 payments for research and innovation, which include the framework programme, Horizon 2020.

EUA believes that the proposed cuts to research are not in line with the EU's objective to create a competitive European knowledge society. Both research and education have consistently been highlighted by EU policymakers as being crucial for Europe's future – and were prioritised as key areas for increased investment in the EU's long-term budget (multiannual financial framework) for 2014-2020.

A [European parliament press release](#) relating to a debate on EU budget matters in July highlights MEPs "dismay at the Council's habit in recent years of cutting payment budgets, even though payments are needed to meet its own previous commitments". It also outlines the problems posed by rolling over "unpaid bills" from one year to the next which also mean some beneficiaries of EU funding are likely to have to wait for money they have worked for. For universities, for example, this could potentially create a variety of different problems in terms of their research activities (for example – in some cases beneficiaries could have to pre-finance activities, sometimes at market rates).

EUA is concerned about this trend, particularly as its work has highlighted that EU funding has become an increasingly important income source for many European universities, especially in the context of [reduced national spending on higher education and research in many European countries](#). The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) also recently highlighted its concerns about the proposed cuts to research and innovation payments in [a press release](#).

EUA Secretary General Lesley Wilson notes: "At a time when the European Commission has highlighted a sharp increase in the level of competition in the Horizon 2020 funding calls, it is crucial that cuts are not made to the proposed research and innovation budgets. The frequently stated political rhetoric which places emphasis on the central role of research and education in Europe's future competitiveness must be backed up by commitment and action from the EU institutions."

More details on the Council proposal can be seen here:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2011778%202014%20INIT>

Ends.

*EUA understands the Council of the EU is due to formally adopt its position in September.

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The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.