



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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Subject: Letter to EC President Ursula von der Leyen

Dear Ms Gomez Recio, Dear Mr. Deketelaere,

President Ursula Von der Leyen has asked me to reply to your joint letter dated 29 October 2024.

On behalf of the President of European Commission, I would like to thank you for your timely considerations in regard of the next multiannual financial Framework (MFF) and the successor of Horizon Europe.

The Political Guidelines of President von Leyen, as well as the Letta, Draghi and Heitor reports put a strong emphasis on research and innovation as top cross-cutting priorities to build a more competitive Europe.

President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines announced a new European Competitiveness Fund as part of a modern and reinforced policy-based budget in the next multiannual financial framework. The overall aim is to propose a 'simpler' and 'more impactful' and 'more focused' next EU long-term budget.

The idea of the European Competitiveness Fund is to provide the investment capacity to support strategic sectors critical to the EU's competitiveness. It will be targeted towards the needs of our economy and companies, aligning efforts at all levels, starting with our

small and medium enterprises, thereby contributing to addressing issues identified in the Draghi Report. To unleash the full potential of R&I and bring out Europe's full strengths as an innovation powerhouse, we need to invest more resources, more strategically and in a more coordinated way.

Our commitment to Research and Innovation (R&I) remains unwavering. As emphasised in the Political Guidelines and reiterated by Commissioner Zaharieva during her hearing, R&I will be a top priority in the upcoming multiannual financial framework and Framework Programme, driving innovation and boosting our competitiveness.

This is clearly demonstrated in the Political Guidelines, which announce that we will put research and innovation, science and technology, at the centre of our economy. We will increase spending for research via an expansion of both the European Research Council and the European Innovation Council. These efforts will focus more on strategic priorities, on groundbreaking fundamental research and disruptive innovation, and on scientific excellence.

While it is too early to be concrete on how the Competitiveness Fund will be formed, we count on your input for designing a strong framework for R&I. Both Commissioner Serafin and Commissioner Zaharieva have committed to exchanging broadly with all stakeholders ahead of the Commission's proposal on the next multiannual financial framework, and the future Framework Programme for research and innovation.

Yours sincerely,

Joanna DRAKE

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