

# Resolution

## Research and innovation: supporting fundamental research for resilient societies

Submitted for Adoption by SNCS-FSU and SNESUP-FSU (France) to the ETUCE Conference, the Regional Conference of Education International, adopted on 26-27 November 2024

1. Scientific knowledge works to benefit each and every one of us. Public research can only help build a better future for humanity and develop in the interests of society as a whole if academic freedom is guaranteed by publicly funded institutions.
2. For research to remain free, we need to ensure freedom of initiative and the freedom to carry out research programmes, as well as the independence of researchers and academic staff (whether they are permanent or working on contract), who must be protected against any kind of pressure being imposed on them. To this end, and to ensure they are truly independent, the job security of researchers and academic staff has to be guaranteed to the fullest possible extent.
3. Acting alongside the ETUCE, the Permanent Committee for Higher Education and Research supports the sector's demands for permanent jobs to combat employment insecurity and encourage satisfactory working conditions, a socially fair ecological transition and open access to knowledge.
4. This is in line with the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers adopted by UNESCO in 2017, which put forward a vision for science that goes beyond growth and productivity and places human well-being and inclusion as its focal point, with this recommendation being backed up in 2024 by a scheme aimed at increasing scientific freedom and the safety of scientists.
5. In recent years, the political discourse on support for public research has shifted in most European countries and in the European Union through its Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe research programmes. Citing the importance of research in tackling the many challenges facing society today, politicians have decided to steer research funding towards technological innovation. This type of innovation is said to be the only solution for resolving socio-economic, environmental and health crises through growth in business and consumption.

- 34 6. Faced with so many problems in a changing world, including climate change, this approach  
35 and general mindset have also grown in the environmental sciences, in particular through  
36 the idea of ‘transformative sciences’. As a result, research programmes tend to be  
37 standardised and used as blunt, increasingly solutions-based tools that do not have a great  
38 deal of scope for investigative freedom.
- 39 7. By confusing innovation and research, politics tends to forget that although innovation is  
40 based on the results of research, it is not research in and of itself. Research does not always  
41 lead to innovation - despite all of us being familiar with discoveries that have found  
42 applications after the fact, often in another field of research.
- 43 8. This instruction to innovate that lies at the heart of political discourse is leading to a policy  
44 that restricts the role of fundamental research, whether in the natural sciences, the formal  
45 sciences or the humanities and social sciences. Researchers find themselves caught up in a  
46 bureaucracy that ends up stifling their creativity and leads them to develop research  
47 programmes focused on innovation - often short-sighted innovation.
- 48 9. The neoliberal economic model based on extractivism cannot continue in a changing world:  
49 climate change, collapse of biodiversity, destruction of all the planet's ecosystems (water,  
50 soil, etc.), multiple forms of pollution, growing inequalities, etc.
- 51 10. Research should not be guided solely towards satisfying the needs created by an economic  
52 system based on extractivism, productivism and consumer growth. It is delusional to believe  
53 that genuine innovation can be developed without massive investment in basic research,  
54 with the primary aim of increasing knowledge across all areas of expertise.
- 55 11. We are calling on ETUCE and its member organisations to draw up European campaigns on  
56 the importance of developing fundamental research in a context of academic freedom, and  
57 of considering innovation - be it social, technological, economic, ecological or environmental  
58 - not as the driving force behind research but as its potential outcome, capable of providing  
59 the urgent solutions we need for a socially fair ecological transition. To this end, we need to  
60 develop the potential of public research, while not forgetting that private companies have  
61 their own part to play in innovation and R&D.