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**ETUCE – European Trade Union Committee for Education**  
Education International - European Region

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To:

Ms Ekaterina Zaharieva

Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation

Brussels,  
9 May, 2025

Subject: A standalone FP10 - Preserving Research for democratic and resilient societies

Dear Commissioner Zaharieva,

On behalf of the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), representing trade unions of researchers and academics across Europe, we are writing to share our key concerns and expectations regarding the future of Framework Programme 10 (FP10).

As a longstanding partner in advocating for democratic values, quality education and research, scientific progress, and freedom of knowledge, we urge the European Commission to uphold the legacy of a standalone and dedicated framework programme for research and innovation. This is essential to ensure that the EU research system remains socially responsible, globally competitive, and resilient in the long term. More specifically, we call for research funding to remain distinct and separate from EU competitiveness funding.

We support the [Warsaw Declaration of the EU Ministers for Research](#) as well as the [recommendations of the European Parliament](#), both of which call for the establishment of a dedicated EU research fund and framework programme. In line with the concerns outlined by organisations of [universities](#) and [research institutes](#), we believe that integrating FP10 into a broader Competitiveness Fund would undermine the framework's core mission. We consider it essential to strengthen the European Research Area (ERA) and to support scientific excellence across disciplines and Member States.

ETUCE is firmly committed to the principle that EU research policy must serve the society, not only the economy. While innovation and economic development are important, they must not overshadow the need to support basic research and research for the public good. Merging research funding with competitiveness tools risks narrowing the scope of research and undermining academic freedom and the



intellectual independence of researchers. The integrity of FP10 needs to be safeguarded in order to harness the excellent, ground-breaking ideas of our researchers. Research communities should be allowed to take risks within a stable and predictable research system.

ETUCE is increasingly concerned by the tendency to open up the Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ funds for use by private businesses, including their R&D activities. We reiterate our belief that EU programmes and incentives for research and education, being publicly funded, must serve the public interest and ensure that society-wide benefits of research are maintained and strengthened.

Furthermore, we call on the Commission to ensure that the European Research Council (ERC) continues to receive adequate and predictable funding under the future FP10, and that the bottom-up nature and autonomy of the ERC are maintained. The ERC plays a critical role in funding frontier research and supporting researchers' careers, particularly at a time when academic freedom is under pressure and research staff face growing precarity.

While we acknowledge and are open to the proposal to increase the FP10 budget, potentially even doubling it, we underline that such an increase must not come at the expense of national research budgets. Any increase must apply at both the European and national levels. Moreover, we can only support such an increase if there are clear guarantees that the additional resources are primarily targeted towards basic, independent research and not business-related innovation.

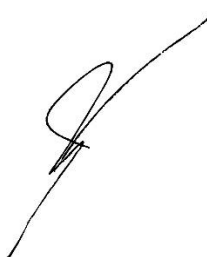
To uphold democracy and the freedom of education and science, it is essential that EU research policy maintains its distinctive mission within the European Research Area. As trade unions of researchers and educators, we are ready to support a vision of FP10 that empowers researchers, strengthens public research institutions, and fosters open knowledge.

We look forward to your continued commitment to ensuring that research in Europe remains a public good, safeguarded through independent, dedicated funding. We also look forward to continuing the dialogue with you and your team, and to further exchanging views on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



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ETUCE President



Jelmer Evers  
ETUCE Director



Jorunn Dahl Norgård  
Chair of ETUCE Higher  
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