

Dear

President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen;

European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Ms Mariya Gabriel;

President of the European Council, Mr Charles Michel;

Presidency of the European Union Council, Mr Andrej Plenković;

Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives to the European Union;

President of the European Parliament, Mr David Maria Sassoli;

Chair of the European People's Party Group, Mr Manfred Weber;

Chair of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, Ms Iratxe García Pérez;

Chair of the Renew Europe Group, Mr Dacian Cioloș;

Chair of the Identity and Democracy Group, Mr Marco Zanni;

Co-Chairs of the Greens/European Free Alliance Ms Ska Keller and Mr Philippe Lamberts;

Co-Chairs of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, Mr Ryszard Legutko and Mr Raffaele Fitto;

Co-Chairs of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left, Ms Manon Aubry and Mr Martin Schirdewan;

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On behalf of the different European cities we represent, it gives us great pleasure to share with you our belief in the importance of science and knowledge, a reality that has become even more self-evident during the COVID-19 crisis.

Today's cities play a central political and social role in the European Union, and are home to an ever increasing proportion of the European population. Cities are a diverse reality that, as this pandemic has shown, combine incomparable challenges and opportunities in seeking solutions.

Urban density, pollution, human mobility or an ageing population have proven important risks to global health and are particularly prevalent in cities given their dynamism and attraction for people in choosing them to carry out their life projects. Nonetheless, these same challenges are also part of the reason why cities are centres of cutting-edge scientific research and development, innovation, debate and knowledge exchange and draw talent from around the world.

For all these reasons, it is more necessary than ever for European cities to continue thriving as places of science and knowledge in order to make headway in the major scientific and societal challenges exemplified by the urban environment and, because of this, they are vital for the European Union's future. Protecting global health, fighting pollution and climate change, promoting active and quality-led ageing policies as well as fomenting the democratisation and

exchange of knowledge via new technologies are urban challenges that cannot be achieved more effectively anywhere else than in the cities that deal with these issues. EUROCITIES have issued a statement on June 12<sup>th</sup> about the important role cities should play in the EU plan to recover from the current crisis.

We value positively the commitment to a solid reconstruction plan shown by the European Commission's communication of May 27 that contains various elements for increasing resources on behalf of the scientific and research field. However, we believe that it remains essential to strengthen the central and structural programme for promoting European scientific research, namely the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and, in particular, Horizon Europe.

This urban scientific growth must surely be fostered in a European context, as our citizens live and work in the EU. It is the European Union that has made it possible for us to succeed in becoming a reference point in international science as a consequence of the collaboration and networking between our research centres, universities and cities. We want to highlight the work that the City Science Initiative of the European Commission and different cities have been doing in this sense and we are convinced that this network should keep strengthening its collaboration and activities. We also endorse several initiatives made by universities and research institutions to call for an ambitious Horizon Europe budget that would invest in excellent, cross-border research, education and innovation.

For all these reasons, we request that the European Union promotes science and research with special focus on urban challenges by means of concerted participation and collaboration, joining forces and building synergies between urban governments, research centres, universities, companies and innovative entrepreneurial projects and citizens as a whole.

We also wish to deliver the following requests shared by our cities' scientific sectors and which we believe are indispensable to keep developing cities of science and knowledge in Europe:

1. To guarantee the growth of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation by conferring 120.000 million euros in 2018 prices in line with the budget increase approved by the European Parliament on 17 April 2019.
2. To ensure the uninterrupted continuity of the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe funding programmes, guaranteeing the availability of Horizon Europe grants from 2021 onwards to assure that on-going lines of research are not affected by the COVID-19 crisis.
3. To increase funding for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellowship Programme, offering priority support to women, young people and vulnerable groups.
4. To promote the Erasmus+ programme providing doctoral students European mobility opportunities.

In order to ensure that these requests are met, we hereby make the following petitions:

- That the European Commission upholds its commitment to scientific research and innovation established by the programme and strategic planning process proposal for Horizon Europe which was submitted before the COVID-19 crisis, also shown in *The EU*

*Budget Powering the Recovery Plan for Europe* communication of 27 May 2020, and accepts the budget increase to 120.000 million euros in 2018 prices approved by the European Parliament for the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation within the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

- That the Member States, through the Council, support the approval of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and commit to increasing the budget for the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation to 120.000 million euros in 2018 prices, in line with the proposal approved by the European Parliament. Moreover, we ask that they honour the commitments set out in the provisional agreement with the European Parliament of March 2019 on the regulation of the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe.
- That the parliamentary groups, through the European Parliament, support the approval of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and also commit to granting the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation a budget of 120.000 million euros in 2018 prices, in accordance with the text adopted on 17 April 2019 by the European Parliament regarding the partial agreement with the Council referred to in the previous point, while also adhering to the other commitments established in the provisional agreement.
- That the parliamentary groups of the European Parliament endorse a resolution to support the significance of continuing to develop science and research in European cities based on the recommendations set out in this letter and subscribing to the requests detailed herein.

We hope that you share our conviction of the importance of consolidating science and knowledge activities and networks in European Union cities and we remain at your disposal to work together on the initiatives being developed for this objective.

Yours sincerely,

Ada Colau  
Mayor of Barcelona

Michael Müller  
Mayor of Berlin

José Luis Martínez-Almeida  
Mayor of Madrid

Giuseppe Sala  
Mayor of Milan

Dieter Reiter  
Mayor of Munich

Anna König Jerlmyr  
Mayor of Stockholm