



Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe

Health research should be a top priority in the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

The BioMed Alliance welcomes the European Commission's proposed budget for the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon Europe) within the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). A budget of 100 billion euro for Horizon Europe represents an increase of almost 30 per cent, and it is essential to provide effective solutions to societal challenges and foster scientific excellence in Europe.

While the proposal could have been more ambitious, as the Lamy report and the European Parliament's research committee have suggested, the biomedical research community acknowledges the European Commission's hard work to put together the budget in view of Brexit and its budgetary consequences, as well as changing priorities.

Following from the MFF it is now extremely important to allocate a substantial budget for research positively impacting European citizens' health and wellbeing. A healthy population generates an important economic benefit as well as a better quality of life for individuals. Biomedical research advances diagnostics, therapeutics and technology, and has had a major impact on life expectancy and healthy life years. It also offers a high return on investment, which according to a recent analysis¹, showed that medical research offers the equivalent a 25% return every year, forever.

The advantages of EU research funding are most evident in health research, which is often too complex to be effectively supported or managed at the national level. Only 10.5% of Horizon 2020's initial budget of €80 billion was earmarked for biomedical and health-related research, amounting to an investment of only approximately €2-3 per EU resident per annum². Based on the European Commission's own assessment of the programme³, the allocated budget was not sufficient, and underfunding has been a challenge for policy-makers and researchers. Horizon 2020 had lower success rates than its predecessors, especially for high quality proposals.

The BioMed Alliance therefore calls on the European Commission, European Parliament, and the Council of the EU to secure a robust budget for health research under Horizon Europe. 25-30% of the Horizon Europe budget dedicated to biomedical and health-related research will ensure a coherent, competitive European research landscape, and it will generate societal benefits and long term positive economic impact⁴.

¹ <https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/whats-it-worth-musculoskeletal-disease-research-januar-2018.pdf>

² https://www.biomedeuropa.org/images/eu-policy/Recommendations_of_the_BioMed_Alliance_for_the_FP9.pdf

³ https://www.biomedeuropa.org/images/pdf/events/2017-annual-meeting/1_2017-11-08_BioMedAlliance_SC1Evaluation_Dr_Cornelius_SCHMALTZ.pdf

⁴ Bouillon et al. 2015. Public investment in biomedical research in Europe. *Lancet* 386: 1335.