

For immediate release: Friday 22 June 2018

MEP Christian Ehler meets President of the BioMed Alliance to discuss Horizon Europe

Christian Ehler, member of the European Parliament since 2004, will visit researchers at the Charité University of Berlin and will meet with Professor Axel Pries, Dean of Charité and President of the BioMed Alliance on Friday 22 June. Dr. Ehler has just been appointed EPP rapporteur for Horizon Europe.

In view of the political discussions around the European Commission's proposal for funding research and innovation through the Horizon Europe program from 2021 to 2027, it is a good moment for researchers to express their concerns, hopes and wishes for the future of Europe. Also, it is time for EU-funded researchers to better communicate the value of European research and innovation and promote their groundbreaking research and its direct impact on EU citizens' health and wealth.

In this context, Dr. Ehler will discuss with the Charité delegation the existing EU instruments such as the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions as well as collaborative research between academia and industry within Horizon Europe. Exploring ways of cooperation between researchers and policymakers to ensure a competitive European research landscape and generate societal benefits will be on the agenda as well.

The Horizon Europe program totals €94.1 billion in inflation-adjusted prices and is distributed between three funding streams. "We will fight to increase the figure for research and innovation to € 120 billion in the European Parliament", says Dr. Ehler. "We have to tackle today's global health challenges and we will use Horizon Europe smartly towards this", Dr. Ehler is expected to say.

The BioMed Alliance acknowledges the European Commission's hard work in putting together the budget for Horizon Europe in view of Brexit and its budgetary consequences, as well as changing priorities. The biomedical research community welcomes the fact that Horizon Europe builds on Horizon 2020's success and emphasises simplification. However, Prof. Axel Pries, speaking on behalf of the BioMed Alliance, expresses concern about inadequate funding levels: "Horizon Europe includes € 7.7 billion for health research and we strongly believe that the proposed budget is insufficient to meet global health challenges. Furthermore, we fear that researchers will have to face Horizon 2020 issues such as oversubscription and lower success rates. It is critical that an appropriate proportion of the research budget is dedicated to health research".

The BioMed Alliance looks forward to working with the European Parliament to ensure a more ambitious Horizon Europe, both in terms of the overall budget and that allocated to the health cluster.

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