



## **EU-LIFE Open Statement in support of the position of the European Parliament of opposing the cuts in the EU budget earmarked for research**

EU-LIFE strongly welcomes the position of the European Parliament committees made public on 20<sup>th</sup> April about the Strategic Investment Fund - EFSI or “Juncker Plan” - where Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) defended the protection of the EU budget earmarked for research. However, if this position fails to reach the final EFSI legislation, the future of innovation in Europe and the goal of enforcing the EU as a leading knowledge economy will be at imminent risk.

Therefore, the scientific community represented by EU-LIFE strongly supports the position of the European Parliament against H2020 cuts and now urges the EU Commission to substantially amend the EFSI proposal to ensure full protection of the EU budget for research; and the support of Member States Governments to ensure this protection.

In particular, EU-LIFE calls for the following measures:

1. Stop deviating funds from research. Science must be protected if Europe wants to be a leading economy. In particular:
  - a. It is not acceptable to deviate funds from the thoroughly negotiated and validated H2020 budget to beneficiate a yet unproven mechanism to boost research & innovation.
  - b. Ultimate responsibility for the R&I budget, including H2020 and its “Excellent Science pillar” which includes the European Research Council (ERC), must remain with the Research, Innovation & Science Commissioner.
  - c. ERC has proven to be a robust instrument to stimulate research & innovation. However, due to budget shortages much of the best frontier research remains currently unfunded, which means we are already wasting innovation competence within Europe. Therefore, a reduction, albeit small, in the H2020 budget (including ERC) will shrink the success rate of applications even more – and have tremendous effects on the global competitiveness of European research.
2. Regarding EFSI implementation:
  - a. It is crucial to ensure clear evaluation of EFSI projects based on research quality criteria.
  - b. Frontier R&I must be the focus of EFSI and not infrastructure projects. In particular, EFSI must be amended in order to be inclusive for frontier research projects, which are by nature not fundable by loans.



- c. EFSI governance must be guided by R&I quality parameters and include all research and innovation key players such as research-performing organisations.
  - d. Public and non profit research institutions must be eligible to benefit from EFSI.
3. Create clear compensation investment for 2018-2020 in frontier research, namely ERC funding, if the catastrophic scenario of research fund cutting occurs in 2016-2017 due to EFSI.

Barcelona, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015