

Mr Jean-Claude Juncker  
President  
European Commission  
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1049 Bruxelles

From the President Paul Nurse

4 December 2014  
Our ref: PN/BH/JB

Dear President

I have read with some considerable concern about plans to raid the budget of the very highly valued Horizon 2020 in order to support the European Fund for Strategic Investment. The EU has a proud tradition of supporting excellence in discovery and applied research and that research makes a considerable long-term contribution to sustainable economic growth.

Countries around the world, including many within the EU, are recognising the need to invest in science and innovation and importantly they recognise the need to maintain a strong base of what I refer to as discovery research. Without this 'seed corn' there can be no applied research. Great consideration has been given to ensuring that Horizon 2020 supports the full ecosystem of research including discovery science and research in more applied areas. It would seem foolish to weaken this carefully planned approach. I understand the pressure on politicians to deliver short-term gains but these quick wins can come at the expense of sustainable growth.

I understand that this proposal to transfer funds from Horizon 2020 is due to be discussed soon and I would urge you to consider very carefully the implications of any such action. It would be a great shame if a scheme as outstanding and visionary as Horizon 2020, one that has been built up over many years, were to be diminished as a result of short term political expediency.

I do hope you will be able to give due consideration to this matter before any long-term harm is done.

Yours sincerely



Paul Nurse

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cc: The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP  
Professor Jos van der Meer, President, EASAC  
Mr Jerzy Buzek, Chair of Industry,  
Research and Energy Committee, EU



President Sir Paul Nurse  
Executive Director Dr Julie Maxton

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