

Press conference
Impact of COVID-19 and budget cuts on the next generation of EU researchers

European Research Factsheet

The European Parliament's initial proposal for the Horizon Europe budget was 120 Bn€, 25% less than the 160Bn€ that research organisations and universities were asking. The Commission's first budget proposal was 94Bn€ in June 2018. Then came the negotiations between countries. The Council's final proposal is 75Bn€.

The comparison with the previous budget is hard to make because of the impact of Brexit (the UK's contributes 12.5% of the EU budget globally but receives a higher percentage for research). Also, one has to take inflation into account. Hence there are different calculations, but all give the same evaluation: the Horizon Europe budget is at best stagnant compared with Horizon 2020

Here we highlight the following considerations:

- compared to 2020, the budget for 2021 will see a sharp decrease. For 2020 and 2021, the MSCA budget is respectively **1.046 billion** and 778 billion (-**26%**), while the ERC budget is **2.201 billion** and 1.914 (-**13%**). The numbers for 2021 are from the **draft agreement proposed by the member states** (page 5).
- The overall budget for Horizon Europe, taking inflation and Brexit into account, is approximately 7 times the budget for the last year of H2020. This translates into an effective shrinking of the EU R&I capacity.

As a significant testimony of the importance of EU programmes for young researchers the number of ERC advanced grants and MSCA individual fellowship applications in summer 2020 increased by **42%** and **17%** respectively, despite Brexit. It is likely that the demand will increase!

Despite the increase in demand and the need to support financially young researchers, MSCA and ERC budget have suffered huge cuts and will not have access to Next Gen EU funds - ironically, the next generation of EU researchers will suffer cuts and not access to the funds for next gen EU!