

Open Letter of European STI Councils and Advisory Bodies and other Science Organisations on the Participation of Switzerland under Horizon Europe

Over the last years, the Swiss Confederation and the European Commission held complex negotiations about market access, which unfortunately did not result in a successful outcome. Hopefully, new ways will be found to overcome this difficult situation and clarify the relationship.

The signatories of this letter would like to underline the importance of continuing the long established and mutually beneficial cooperation between the EU and Switzerland in the domain of research and innovation. Swiss participation in European FPs already started in the 1980s. As of 2004, Switzerland has been an Associated Country, with a short-term interruption as partially Associated Country between 2014 – 2016. Under the previous FPs, Switzerland has made important contributions in many fields, such as the health sector, climate, and quantum technologies. Furthermore, Switzerland is a founding member of the European Space Agency as well as COST and EUREKA and together with France host country to the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

Switzerland is home to world-class research institutions and ranked among the most competitive and innovative countries for years. As an open nation to research and innovation, it contributes through its collaborations and co-authorships to the excellence of the European Research Area (ERA). Downgrading Switzerland to a Third Country would severely limit its expertise being brought into Horizon Europe projects tackling today's and tomorrow's global challenges. We are convinced that this would lead to a lose-lose situation, putting successful cooperation in strategic areas at risk and ultimately weaken the ERA as a whole.

Global competition in R&I is on the rise and becomes more and more multipolar; geopolitical tensions worldwide increased as well. At the same time, the world faces unprecedented challenges such as the post-Covid recovery and Climate Change. Therefore, Europe should stand together and unite its forces.

As Science, Technology, and Innovation organisations, we are sincerely convinced that a full association of Switzerland to Horizon Europe will ensure the continuity of a successful collaboration between the Swiss Confederation and the European Union in Research and Innovation.

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