

PRESS RELEASE

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COOPERATION IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION WITH TRUSTED PARTNERS IS VITAL FOR EUROPE

EuroTech Universities Alliance supports the “Stick to Science” initiative calling for a swift association of Switzerland and the UK to Horizon Europe

Brussels – A year after the launch of Horizon Europe, Switzerland, a long-standing partner of the EU, and additionally the UK which left the EU at the end of 2020 remain un-associated to the EU’s framework programme for research and innovation. EuroTech Universities Alliance considers it vital for the European Union to continue cooperation with Swiss and UK research institutions without barriers. Therefore, the Alliance supports the “Stick to Science” initiative and calls for a swift association of both countries to the programme.

The “Stick to Science” initiative gathers more than 200 most prominent scientists, research leaders and organisations, including several Nobel Prize and Fields Medal laureates. They urge the European Council, Parliament, Commission, as well as EU Member States and the governments of the UK and Switzerland rapidly to conclude UK and Swiss association to Horizon Europe, recognising that advancement in research and innovation is best achieved when all actors work together across geographic boundaries.

Martin Vetterli, President of EPFL: “I’m pleased that so many scientists and others working in science, research and innovation are backing the ‘Stick to Science’ initiative and stating the crucial importance of comprehensive agreements involving Switzerland and the UK. And that other voices, including from the business community, are now also emphasizing the need to transcend borders and work together.”

World-class research to solve global challenges

EuroTech Universities Alliance as a whole as well as the Presidents of its member universities in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland and Israel, are part of the initiative’s first supporters. Both Switzerland and the UK are ranked among the most innovative countries and home to world-class research institutions with which the EuroTech Universities maintain trusted collaboration.

“The challenges our continent is facing are enormous and require cooperation without barriers and borders between the very best scientists and innovators from the EU, Switzerland and the UK,” says Robert-Jan Smits, President of Eindhoven University of Technology.

Swiss excellence is benefitting European research

In the context of the EuroTech Universities Alliance, EPFL collaborates with five leading universities of science and technology. The long-standing partnership has resulted, inter alia, in numerous joint

activities in research, strengthening Europe's competitiveness and training the scientific leaders of tomorrow.

Two concrete examples:

Since 2017, the *EuroTechPostdoc programmes* have been offering in total 150 Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships to experienced high-potential researchers from all over the world, attracting international talent to Europe. For this initiative, EuroTech Universities will have invested more than €10 million in addition to the funds provided by the European Union. The postdoctoral fellowships are jointly implemented by two universities of the EuroTech Alliance and follow an interdisciplinary approach. The programme has developed an excellent international reputation. Last year, a former EuroTechPostdoc team from TU Eindhoven and EPFL developed a breakthrough fabrication approach for biologically sized artificial cilia, which could be used in future microfluidic devices and sensors. A follow-up research project was awarded one of the prestigious ERC Advanced Grants. [Read more about it here.](#)

The EU-funded research project *I.AM.* strengthens European leadership in the field of robotics. I.AM. focuses on impact-aware manipulation in logistics, a new area of application for robotics which will grow exponentially in the coming years due to socio-economical drivers such as booming of e-commerce and scarcity of labour. EPFL is one of the core partners of the project, bringing a long-standing expertise in developing robust and adaptive control architectures to realise skilful robot motions. EPFL is involved through its Learning Algorithms and Systems Laboratory (LASA), which is a world premier laboratory on research on programming by demonstration. [Read more about it here.](#)

Background information

The EU finalised the association of numerous third countries by the end of 2021 but progress has stalled towards the association of the UK and Switzerland for political reasons unrelated to research. Both countries can look back on a decades-long participation in the EU's framework programmes for research and innovation. For more information, please visit www.stick-to-science.eu.

EuroTech Universities Alliance has been supporting the association of Switzerland and the UK to Horizon Europe from the very beginning. Read also:

- [Joint statement on UK Association to Horizon Europe](#) (4 November 2021)
- [Open letter on the participation of Switzerland under Horizon Europe](#) (17 June 2021)
- [EuroTech letters to the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, the European Commission and the European Parliament](#) (22 March 2021)

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About EuroTech Universities Alliance

The EuroTech Universities Alliance is a strategic partnership of leading European universities of science and technology joining forces to build a strong, sustainable, sovereign, and resilient Europe. The partners bring their excellence in research and education, their active engagement in vibrant eco-systems and service to society. Together, they join forces to accelerate their research in high-tech focus areas and advocate for change, through dedicated partners and a strong presence in Brussels. Based on the EuroTech values, the partners aspire to a new level of cooperation by bringing together their inclusive, diverse, and sustainable campuses. The EuroTech Universities create a unique environment for international talents to lead a new generation of change agents in research, entrepreneurship, industry, and society. Find more information on www.eurotech-universities.eu.