

THE GERMAN COUNCIL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES  
PROVIDES ADVICE TO THE GERMAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
AND THE STATE GOVERNMENTS ON THE STRUCTURE  
AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.

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# A call for a strong and independent research and innovation location Europe

## European Advisory Councils for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy met virtually on 10 November 2020

Partner organisations from fourteen European countries had accepted the invitation of the German Council of Science and Humanities to the Annual Plenary Meeting of the European Advisory Councils for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy in autumn – the group of participants has rarely been this large before. In addition to Switzerland and Austria, a number of the Benelux countries and the Baltic States, Denmark for the Scandinavian region, Poland and Hungary from Eastern Europe, and Croatia, Malta, Spain and Turkey from the southern regions took part in a one-day video conference with almost forty people.

“We were very pleased with the positive response”, said Dorothea Wagner, chairwoman of the German Council of Science and Humanities. “Of course, we had hoped to meet our European partners personally in Berlin in the year of Germany's EU Council Presidency. Everything was prepared for this, but unfortunately the sharp rise of the second Corona pandemic wave made it impossible.”

This year's meeting, which was dedicated as usual to the exchange on current science policy issues, focused on the future of the European Research Area (ERA). The participants agreed that the major challenges – not only those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic – can only be overcome by transnational global collaboration. As a strong research and innovation area that is open to the rest of the world, Europe has an essential role to play.

In this spirit, a number of the participating councils signed a joint declaration, carried by the belief that only financially strong and independent research can fulfil its responsibilities to society. Therefore, they support the agreement reached on 10 November between the Council Presidency and the European Parliament's group of negotiators for a substantial improvement on the extraordinary European Council's July conclusions concerning the EU multiannual financial framework (MFF). The participating councils urge the Member States to endorse that agreement and thus to secure Europe's research and innovation capacity in the long run. The councils also strongly welcome the "Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research" adopted on 20 October by the Ministerial conference on the European Research Area.

"Despite the numerous problems Europe is currently facing, our exchange has taken place in a climate of confidence and optimism, and the discussions have been fruitful in many ways", Dorothea Wagner summarised at the end of the event. "I am all the more glad, because it shows that, even in difficult times of crisis and despite existing intra-European controversies, there can still be a high degree of consensus on the essential issues in science and the respective political sphere."

### **The joint declaration**

#### **European Councils for Science, Technology and Innovation Policy – Annual Meeting 2020 | Conclusions (11th November 2020)**

[https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/2020/EU\\_STICouncils\\_Conclusions.pdf](https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/2020/EU_STICouncils_Conclusions.pdf)