Sehr geehrter Herr Präsident,
Dear Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy,

We hear with great relief that the European Parliament is discussing taking a stance against the 2.7 billion cut to Horizon 2020 and we want to strongly encourage you in this important endeavor.

We support the EFSI aim of fostering the competitiveness of Europe. However, our experience as Germany’s largest research organisation tells us that credit financing is not a feasible tool to achieve research-based innovation. Groundbreaking innovation does not fit into the mold of predictable return on investment in short timeframes: Planning to improve candles is possible, but you cannot plan to invent electricity. This is why EFSI will surely foster investment in wind parks and roads in Europe, but its impact on research and innovation will remain negligible.

Indeed, the vast majority of the German research and innovation landscape will not be in a position to propose significant projects under a credit-financing scheme. In most cases, publically funded Research Institutes in Germany are prohibited from making use of loan financing. This is regularly set forth in their articles of associations and cannot be simply overruled by decisions of supervisory bodies.

This is no reason to abandon the aims of EFSI, but it must not be funded from Horizon 2020. Europe has to remain true to the investment goals of the Lisbon agenda, and cutting research funding at EU level is a very dangerous signal for the future of Europe. You are surely aware of the strong protest of the major research stakeholders in Europe in this respect, which I fully support.

Europe, as I don’t need to tell you, has no other choice than being a leader in research and innovation if we want to remain able to pay salaries and create jobs; and to solve urgent challenges as our energy security we need to join forces in innovative research by joint projects, by sharing research infrastructures and by creating visionary new ideas. This is why Horizon 2020 is so important for the future of Europe and why it must not be cut, most notably not for such a promising
initiative as the Juncker Plan which should complement and boost, not cannibalise, our innovation power.

Innovative ways to ensure that Horizon 2020 is not damaged by the EFSI have to be found and we urge you and all members of the European Parliament to find such solutions!

We remain of course at your disposal for further discussion.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

President of the Helmholtz Association