

Mr. Charles Michel  
Prime Minister of Belgium  
Wetstraat 16  
1000 Brussel

Brussels, 15 February 2018

Concerning: Attention to the knowledge budget in MFF

Dear Prime Minister,

FWO, VLIR, CRef, VLHORA and the SOCs recently published, together with other partners and on the initiative of Neth-ER, the Declaration 'EU must invest in knowledge', as attached.

On 23 February, as head of state or government of a EU member state in the European Council, you will debate on the [political priorities for the Multi-Annual Financial Framework](#) (MFF) from 2021 onwards. A month later, on 22 and 23 March, you will discuss Research and Innovation. With this letter, we would like to draw your attention to the knowledge budget in the MFF for the new programming period. Neth-ER will send a letter with approximately the same message to the Prime Minister of The Netherlands.

Since all EU27 leaders committed to a stronger, prosperous and social European Union in the Rome Declaration of March 2017, Europe's future ambitions must be based on Europe's excellent knowledge base and infrastructure. To realise Europe's ambitions, investment in research, innovation and education should be at the heart of the next MFF, as the knowledge-based economy is at the heart of Europe's future.

In our Declaration, we therefore call on our Member States to articulate ambitions to increase the budget for knowledge programmes, support the prioritisation of knowledge in all European programmes and show determination to enable potential synergies and complementarity between the programmes. Europe deserves it to strive together for coherent European knowledge policy on the road to inclusive and sustainable prosperity.

If you wish to receive further information or clarification about our joint position, we are happy to provide this. Please contact Danielle Gilliot at [danielle.gilliot@vlir.be](mailto:danielle.gilliot@vlir.be).

We look forward to hearing from you.

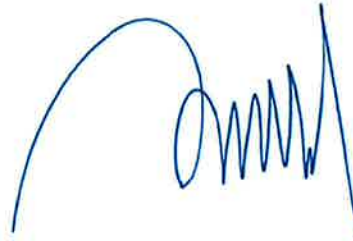
Yours sincerely,

Herman Van Goethem  
President VLIR

Pascale De Groote  
President VLHORA



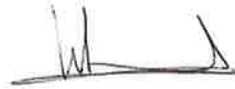
**Prof. Verstraete**  
**President FWO**



**Vincent Blondel**  
**President CRef**



**Jo Bury**  
**Managing Director VIB**



**Walter Eevers**  
**Director of Innovation VITO**

**(signature in attachment II)**  
**Dirk Torfs**  
**CEO Flanders Make**

**(signature in attachment III)**  
**Luc Van den hove**  
**President & CEO**  
**IMEC**



**Prof. Dr. Bruno Gryseels**  
**Director Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp**