



Ms Ursula VON DER LEYEN  
President of the European Commission  
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22 June 2022

**Subject: Open letter to the European Commission's President on Horizon Europe association**

Dear President of the European Commission Ms Ursula von der Leyen,

We write on behalf of the signatories of the Stick to Science campaign – a movement representing over 5600 researchers and research organisations across Europe – to urge you to use your unique role to safeguard vital science collaboration in Europe and worldwide. Throughout your legislature, you have championed the health of those living within and beyond the EU. Please continue to demonstrate this commitment and vision by helping to unblock progress towards UK and Swiss association to Horizon Europe.

UK and Swiss association to Horizon Europe is currently tied together with broader political issues which, although of grave importance, are not linked to science. As we face the very real and pressing risk that Horizon Europe could continue without two of its most committed partners, we emphasise that research collaboration benefits us all. And, of course, our collective futures will be poorer with less collaboration on science. The broad coalition supporting Stick to Science, which brings together industry, philanthropic organisations, charities, research organisations and many others, demonstrates that there will be no political winners if association fails. The European research sector stands united in its agreement that researchers in the UK and Switzerland still have much to offer science in Europe. We must allow them to continue to contribute.

As we look to the future and the challenges we face, we must work together. From climate change to preparing and preventing future pandemics, collaboration stacks the odds in our favour for finding solutions that benefit us all. Political relationships can heal, but the impact of fragmenting research now will continue to be felt in the decades to come.

We ask you to intervene urgently on this crucial issue. Securing UK and Swiss association now, notwithstanding the challenging political impasse, will further strengthen your remarkable legacy at the helm of the European Commission.

Yours sincerely,

The co-initiator organisations of the [Stick to Science initiative](#):

Michael O. Hengartner  
President ETH Board

Jeremy Farrar  
Director Wellcome Trust

Joël Mesot  
President ETH Zurich

Adrian Smith  
President of the Royal Society

Martin Vetterli  
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Professor Steve West CBE  
President, Universities UK