A STRONG RESEARCH AND INNOVATION BASE FOR EUROPE

Joint statement by Udice and German U15, Berlin, 12 November 2026

On the occasion of their joint meeting in Berlin, German U15 and Udice call on the European Union and their national governments to strengthen, not narrow, the foundations of Europe's research and innovation system.

Europe must match its strategic ambitions with credible financial commitments. Investing in research, innovation and education means investing in Europe's future prosperity, resilience and freedom. As the world faces complex challenges in health, the sustainable use of resources, climate and energy, these investments are essential to strengthening Europe's competitiveness and capacity to act.

An ambitious FP10

These challenges cannot be addressed without strong science and cooperation. Adequate, predictable and long-term funding is essential to sustain academic excellence, nurture research talent and enable high-risk research with transformative potential. The Framework Programme delivers substantial returns on investment and adds clear value to national programmes by supporting ambitious collaborative projects that no individual Member State could undertake alone. The next MFF must provide a credible financial foundation for Europe's ambitions, including an FP10 budget of at least €200 billion in current prices.

Research and innovation must not become the balancing item in the budget negotiations. Cutting FP10 would mean cutting investment in Europe's future at precisely the time when we need to invest more, not less. The consequences would not stop at university campuses: fewer industry partnerships, fewer commercialisation opportunities, reduced access to global talent and a weaker pipeline of ideas. Every euro cut from research today limits Europe's capacity to drive social progress and build the industries that will create tomorrow's jobs, exports and growth.

Academic freedom is non-negotiable

Freedom of research and teaching is the fundamental precondition for academic excellence. Many social, technological and economic breakthroughs underpinning Europe's prosperity and values originated in fundamental research across all disciplines from the humanities, social sciences to the natural sciences and engineering without a predefined application or mission. FP10 must therefore remain research-driven, safeguarding excellence, academic freedom and researchers' autonomy to pursue emerging questions and opportunities, including at low Technology Readiness Levels. This year's Nobel Prizes offer a powerful reminder of what sustained scientific endeavour can achieve. Fundamental research is not the opposite of competitiveness but its precondition: the disruptive innovations Europe needs tomorrow depend on the curiosity-driven discoveries we fund today.

Dual use must not become the default

Europe must consider how research contributes to resilience and security without fundamentally changing the civilian character of the Framework Programme. Dual-use research must not become the default principle of FP10, nor should funding be diverted from research towards security or defence objectives, which can be funded through other channels. The starting point must remain scientific excellence and researcher-driven discovery.

German U15 and Udice stand ready to work with European institutions and partners across Europe to ensure that FP10 delivers for the next generation of researchers, European society and Europe's future.