RUSSELL GROUP

IRISH UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION

The Irish Universities Association and the UK's Russell Group represent 31 of Europe's leading research-intensive universities. Together, we call for an ambitious and open Framework Programme 10 (FP10) that puts research excellence and international collaboration at the heart of Europe's future.

Europe's ambitions for greater competitiveness, technological leadership and strategic resilience depend on sustained investment in research and innovation. FP10 must have the scale, independence and flexibility to deliver on these ambitions. We therefore welcome the intention to retain FP10 as a standalone programme, complementing the new European Competitiveness Fund. Excellent research provides the foundations for technological advances, innovation and economic growth, while helping Europe address shared societal and global challenges.

As negotiations progress under Ireland's EU Presidency, we call on EU institutions and member states to agree an FP10 that:

- **Safeguards research excellence and independence**, with a fully independent European Research Council and wholly bottom-up Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, supporting the best ideas and most promising researchers across all disciplines.
- **Maintains a strong, R&I-led collaborative Pillar II** ("Competitiveness and Society"), fully integrating social sciences, arts and humanities, to tackle shared challenges and enable researchers across Europe and associated countries to work together.
- **Protects the openness and international reach of FP10**, building on proposals to recognise "trusted partners" and ensuring the full and equal participation of associated countries, so that the EU and partners such as the UK can maximise the benefits of association.

Horizon Europe has established Europe as a global centre for collaborative research and innovation, bringing together partners from across the continent and beyond, including the UK, which has participated as an associated country since January 2024. As geopolitical pressures increase, this international openness is a strategic strength. FP10 must build on that success, reinforcing Europe's position as a global research partner and strengthening its capacity to respond to shared challenges.

The strength of UK–Ireland research collaboration demonstrates the value of these partnerships. Our universities work together on everything from life-saving cancer treatments and cyber security to solutions to climate change. Our close research relationship is supported by the Common Travel Area, which facilitates researcher mobility, doctoral networks and fellowships. The agreement reached at March's UK–Ireland Summit between UK Research and Innovation and Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland will help us grow institutional and funding partnerships and explore new areas of collaboration, including in quantum technologies and the creative industries.

The forthcoming EU–UK summit in Brussels on 20 November provides a timely opportunity to reaffirm the importance of long-term research collaboration and lay the foundations for the UK's association to FP10 on mutually beneficial terms. An early commitment would give researchers the confidence to build and rebuild the partnerships that Europe needs to deliver on its ambitions for competitiveness, technological leadership and resilience.

Europe has built a powerful instrument of international collaboration and science diplomacy through Horizon Europe. An ambitious and open FP10 will be essential to building on that success.