



EU-LIFE's questions to Ekaterina Zaharieva

Commissioner-designate for Startups, Research and Innovation

On 5 November 2024, Ekaterina Zaharieva, Commissioner-designate for Startups, Research and Innovation, will appear before the European Parliament.

EU-LIFE members are among the most influential research and innovation (R&I) organizations in Europe, with a proven track record in delivering cutting-edge research, transferring knowledge to industry and societal partners, and fostering the next generation of researchers.

In anticipation of this hearing, EU-LIFE presents the following questions we would like to see clarified in Commissioner-designate Zaharieva's vision and mission:

- 1. Research & Innovation (R&I) as a Driver of Europe's Future:** we welcome the recognition of R&I as a cornerstone of Europe's prosperity in the new Commission's plan. We strongly support the plan to expand the European Research Council (ERC), the European Innovation Council (EIC), and Research Infrastructures in the next budgetary period. However, it remains unclear whether these pivotal programmes, as well as a coherent FP10, will be diluted in a too broad spectrum of priorities ranging from defence-driven to industrial strategies. ***How do you envision the expansion of the ERC and the EIC? How will you protect FP10 from a dilution into a too broad spectrum of political priorities?***
- 2. Strengthening the European Research Area:** A resilient, world-leading European R&I ecosystem is essential for a healthy, prosperous, and sustainable future. Research quality transcends institutional and sectoral boundaries. A robust and dynamic European Research Area relies on a diverse mix of excellent research institutes, universities, other research performing organizations and businesses. ***How do you intend to enhance the excellence of research institutions (including research institutes and universities) in a manner that is quality-driven, open, equitable, fair, and inclusive, while considering all key actors in the ecosystem?***
- 3. Closing the Gap in Fundamental Life Sciences Research:** The success of the European Strategy for Life Sciences depends on our ability to deepen the understanding of fundamental molecular and cellular mechanisms in humans, animals, plants, microorganisms, and their environment in addition to unlocking high-value technologies. However, to achieve this, large-scale collaborative approaches for



groundbreaking fundamental research connecting researchers across Europe and worldwide are essential and currently not promoted enough at EU level. ***How will your mission address this critical gap in European research?***

Barcelona, 30 October 2024

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About EU-LIFE

EU-LIFE is an alliance of research centres whose mission is to support and strengthen European research excellence (www.eu-life.eu). EU-LIFE members are leading research institutes in their countries and internationally renowned for producing excellent research, widely transferring knowledge and nurturing talent.

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