



To the President of the European Parliament  
Mr. David Maria Sassoli

To the current and future Presidents of the European Commission  
Dr. h.c. mult. Jean-Claude Juncker and Dr. med. Ursula von der Leyen

21 October 2019

**Re: New EU Commission 'Innovation and Youth' portfolio**

Your Excellencies President Sassoli, Dr. Juncker and Dr. von der Leyen,

The European College of Neuropsychopharmacology, Europe's largest independent scientific association for applied and translational neuroscience, wishes to add its voice to the calls not to limit the European Union's essential programmes in research, education and innovation to a portfolio focused only on "innovation and youth."

Such a name change would signal a move away from the European research agenda that has proven so successful and which is essential to Europe's long-term growth, competitiveness and adaptability. It would send a negative message to Europe's scientific community and would inevitably be interpreted more broadly as a retreat from Europe's longstanding commitment to scientific excellence and advancement.

In addition, while we view the inclusion of "education" to the portfolio's name as positive, we would caution against seeming to confine education only to youth. The accelerating rate of technological change and economic reorganisation necessitate lifelong learning and re-training for Europe's population. It is a challenge that extends far beyond the young.

The significance of these words transcend nomenclature, and make important statements about Europe's priorities, aspirations and preparedness for the future. We encourage you to take their implications very seriously.

With this letter we enjoin the European Commission to revise the title for Commissioner Gabriel to "Education, Research, Innovation and Youth," reflecting Europe's dedication to all of these crucial areas. We also call upon the European Parliament to request this change before confirming the nominees for commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

Gitte Moos Knudsen, M.D., D.MSc.  
President

Alexander Schubert, Ph.D.  
Executive Director