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Minister Esben Lunde Larsen
Ministry of Higher Education and Science
PO Box 2135
1015 COPENHAGEN K
DÄNEMARK

Secretary General

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via email: min@ufm.dk

Budgetary Cuts and their Impact on DFF

Dear Minister Lunde Larsen,

It is with great concern that I heard about the envisaged cuts of the DFF's budget for 2016 and the years to come, in particular to radically reduce the overall amount of funding by a third to just 804 million DKK.

When I chaired the Evaluation Panel in 2014, there was widespread consensus among Danish researchers, policy-makers, and politicians that DFF serves as an important guarantor of internationally acknowledged high quality research funding. Therefore, the Panel explicitly recommended that DFF should be provided with sufficient funds to secure the health and development of the Danish research system, and "the funding allocated to DFF should move beyond its current phase of stagnation" (October 2014).

As a catalyst of long-term success in and for the Danish research ecosystem, DFF is key to ensuring a continual flow of well-trained and highly-qualified researchers among and between the different stakeholders in universities, in industry and the service economy, as well as in other sectors of society.

Severe cuts like the proposed ones are not only painful with respect to the current state of affairs. But they will have long-term detrimental effects on the quality and reputation of Danish universities, and last but not least on the (insufficient) supply of young and promising researchers.

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VolkswagenStiftung
Kastanienallee 35
30519 Hannover
Deutschland

Phone +49 (0) 5 11 / 83 81-2 15
Office +49 (0) 5 11 / 83 81-2 25
Fax +49 (0) 5 11 / 83 81-2 35

krull@volkswagenstiftung.de
www.volkswagenstiftung.de

Norddeutsche Landesbank
IBAN DE98 2505 0000 0101 0440 06
SWIFT/BIC NOLADE2H

As you know, in future any advanced knowledge-based society will rely even more heavily on the training of excellently qualified people who can take over leading functions in various walks of society. Of paramount importance will be the provision of highly specialized expertise and the transfer of newly acquired knowledge to other organizations and companies as they seek to meet future challenges in a rapidly changing world.

If Denmark wants to make sure that it can also in the medium-, to long-term future provide an excellent research ecosystem in which the highest standards of achievement can be attained, then it should see to it that it maintains its international visibility and attractiveness, last but not least with respect to the inflow of highly talented researchers from all over the world.

Research on living organisms tells us that even in a state of emergency and severe starvation they will make every effort to ensure the continued functioning of their brain power. As several examples have demonstrated in the past, in particular in times of crisis cuts in public spending on basic research turn out to be the least sensible ones. Therefore, I urge you in the interest of the future of Denmark, in particular its prospects for social and economic success in the decades to come, to do everything you can in order to reconsider the envisaged cuts, and thus to avoid severe damages that otherwise might occur quite soon.

As far as DFF is concerned, I sincerely hope that there is still time and space for thoroughly revising current budgetary plans which would work to the detriment of its hitherto outstanding achievements in and for the Danish research system.

I do look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Wilhelm Krull