

THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE IN EUROPE

On the eve of the European Union's parliamentary elections, this special issue examines the prospects for science across the region.

The European Union is facing a pivotal political moment. Populist, anti-EU sentiment is rising in some countries, and the bloc is preparing to lose one of its most powerful member states: the United Kingdom. Whereas positive economic forecasts suggest that Europe as a whole is on the upturn, research spending in some countries hasn't recovered since the global financial crisis of 2008. But researchers hope that these tensions won't dent the region's reputation for world-class, open and collaborative science — and they are planning for what the next decade will bring.

An infographic on page 470 explores the research investment and scientific output of the disparate countries that make up Europe. On page 472, a News Feature examines how

the EU is developing its next giant research programme, called Horizon Europe, a roughly €100-billion (US\$112-billion) funding stream that will run from 2021 to 2027 and is a linchpin for collaborations across the bloc. And another News Feature looks at the EU's controversial plans to boost its spending on defence research, a programme that many academics oppose (page 476). In a Comment on page 479, research-policy specialists James Wilsdon and Sarah de Rijcke portray the EU as filling a void in international scientific leadership. They

highlight the potential for its model of science policy and governance to become more influential around the world in the decade ahead.

Not everyone is as optimistic: on page 481, *Nature* presents the views of nine leading Europeans on the future priorities for science. They rail against nationalism and short-term planning, appeal to make climate change the main focus of all research programmes and call for more openness, cooperation and spending.

Amid all the uncertainty, early-career scientists still flock to the region, and a Careers feature on page 589 discusses what they encounter when they join the European research community. And an Editorial on page 455 urges Europe's scientists to continue celebrating the strengths that make the EU great. ■

