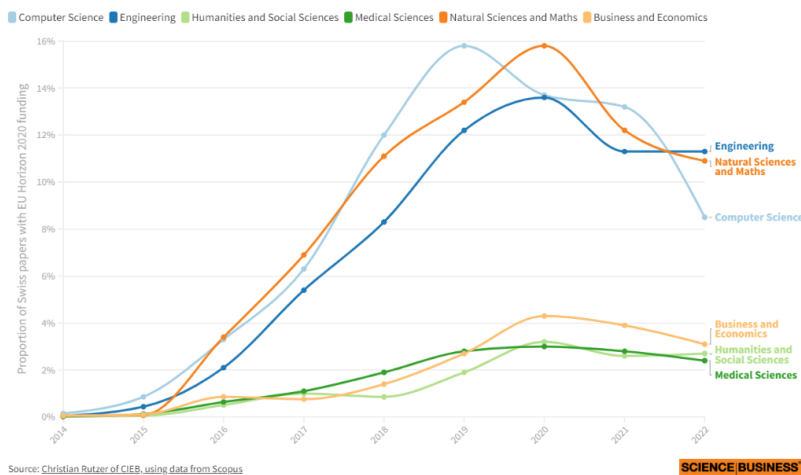


Switzerland's non-association to Horizon Europe could hit STEM subjects hard - with consequences for innovation

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Importance of Horizon 2020 for STEM-linked research in Switzerland



Non-association to Horizon Europe could have a disproportionate effect on fields such as computer science, engineering and life sciences that are the engine of innovation in Switzerland, according to an analysis of the country's participation in the previous programme, Horizon 2020.

The share of Swiss scientific publications that involved Horizon 2020 funding varied considerably, with 15% of published science, technology and engineering papers having EU money. Meanwhile, Horizon 2020 played only a minor role in social sciences, economics, humanities and medicine, with fewer than 5% of authors acknowledging EU funding.

The country's association to Horizon Europe is currently blocked by the row between Bern and Brussels over Switzerland's wider relationship with the EU.

The analysis is based on data from the Scopus citation database, covering over 35,000 journals. It was carried out by Christian Rutzer, deputy head of the Centre for International Economics and Business (<https://cieb.unibas.ch/en/team/>) at the University of Basel.

“The idea of the graph was to understand better what Switzerland’s association to EU framework programmes has meant for research in the past, and what it could mean in the future,” Rutzer said.

Switzerland has set up domestic alternatives to Horizon Europe run by the Swiss National Science Foundation. That could mean the impact of not associating to Horizon Europe will be less stark than the analysis suggests, Rutzer said.

“It is not as if Switzerland is going from full Horizon 2020 funding to zero funding, but the graph does show that non-association could have a heterogenous impact on research fields,” he said.

“Switzerland champions itself as a leader in innovation, and STEM-linked research is a major part of that, so a loss of funding there is important.”

Beyond the financial loss that non association could have, Rutzer said there could also be a negative effect on Swiss researchers collaborating with other European partners, as well as making it a less attractive destination for scientists.

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