

Press Release

RTOs Supporting Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies: Debate at the CoR Open Days Launch of a New JRC Policy Brief

Brussels, 15th October 2015

Today EARTO members and their partners took time to discuss the role of RTOs in supporting regional Smart Specialisation Strategies.

First, EARTO and [ERRIN](#) (European Regions Research and Innovation Network) continued their collaboration started last year – with the publication of a [joint paper](#) on synergies of funds – by joining efforts to debate with key players “How can regional Smart Specialisation Strategies support innovation ecosystems & value-chains?” in the frame of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) [OPEN DAYS 2015](#).



On this occasion, **Mr Markku Markkula**, President of the CoR, emphasized how important research and innovation is for Europe: “*We all know that research and innovation are the drivers of growth in regions and cities. Now it is time to take this to new level. This means taking decisions that lead to concrete actions. Our CoR priorities stress the need for bottom-up approach, a new entrepreneurial spirit, a functioning Digital Single Market and effective Smart Specialization. We, the Committee of the Regions, welcome the contribution of RTOs to making Europe competitive*”.

Mr Lambert van Nistelrooij, Member of the European Parliament, also delivered a keynote highlighting the importance of RTOs in the RIS3 process: “*We need a European pact for innovation. We will launch the Pact of Amsterdam during the upcoming Dutch EU Presidency with key stakeholders in innovation ecosystems such as EARTO and ERRIN*”.

In addition, following the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between European Commission’s Joint Research Centre and EARTO signed in June this year, the JRC launched today its new [Policy Brief](#) on RTOs and Smart Specialisation on the occasion on the [Joint JRC-EARTO Event](#) at the CoR in Brussels. The event welcomed some 100 regional practitioners to discuss the role of RTOs in supporting their regions designing and implementing their Smart Specialisation Strategies.

This new JRC Policy Brief explains that RTOs support regional innovation strategies by, among others:

- Contributing to regions’ entrepreneurial discovery process, playing an important role in connecting the various innovation actors within and to innovation value-chains and ecosystems,
- Building research and technology capacities at regional level, contributing to technology transfer within innovation value-chains,
- Supporting regions in both policy-making and regional programmes implementation as well as industries within regional clusters and value-chains.

EARTO hereby thanks the [European Commission’s DG JRC IPTS](#) for its effort in drawing key policy recommendations as follows:

- Public agencies should seek to better involve RTOs in the design and implementation of Research & Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3),
- RIS3 should support collaboration between RTOs and SMEs fostering innovation,
- Regions should explore RTOs expertise in creating and supporting competitive clusters (also using inter-regional collaborations),
- Regions should consider how to best support RTO involvement through different funding models.

EARTO takes the opportunity to thank the CoR, ERRIN and the JRC for their great collaboration in making today the day of discussion on regional innovation ecosystems and RTOs’ role in helping innovative regions. The events put forward many recommendations which will lead the way to future work by EARTO and its partners.

Notes to Editors

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Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) have a distinct mission and a key role in the knowledge and innovation economy: they produce, integrate and transfer science and technology to help resolve the grand challenges of society and support Europe's industrial competitiveness. RTOs occupy nodal positions within innovation eco-systems, bringing together key players across the whole innovation chain, from fundamental to technological research, from product and process development to prototyping and demonstration, and on to full-scale implementation in the public and private sectors.

EARTO is the European trade association of the research and technology organisations (RTOs), a non-profit organisation founded in 1999. EARTO groups over 350 RTOs with a combined staff of 150,000, an annual turnover of €23 billion, special equipment and facilities to a value of many € billions and more than 100,000 customers from the public and private sectors annually. [EARTO Corporate Video](#)