

EARTO Welcomes Commission Communication on Simplifying the Implementation of the Research Framework Programmes

Brussels, 29 April 2010

The European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO) welcomes today's publication of a Communication on Simplifying the Implementation of the Research Framework Programmes by the European Commission.

In the run up to the next generation of programmes for research and innovation and with the important EU2020 goals in mind, finding efficient solutions to the continuing administrative problems and burdens which considerably reduce the attractiveness of the Framework Programme has become crucial. In this respect, EARTO particularly welcomes many of the Commission's proposals, which correspond to earlier EARTO recommendations, such as the idea of a uniform application of rules across all Commission services, the acceptance of usual accounting practices of beneficiaries, in particular for average personnel costs, and the removal of the obligation to open separate interest-bearing bank accounts for research projects.

However, EARTO considers that proposals following the "one-size-fits-all" approach and the widespread use of flat rates are bound to fail as a consequence of marginalising the key players whose very involvement is essential if we are serious about building a world-leading, "fit-for-purpose" research and innovation policy in Europe.

Christopher John Hull, EARTO Secretary General, said:

"EARTO strongly welcomes a number of proposals contained in this Communication, particularly the ideas of a uniform interpretation of the rules across Commission services and the recognition of beneficiaries' usual accounting practices. However, technical improvements can only solve some of the problems linked to the implementation of the research framework programme. What is also needed is an agreement between Commission, Parliament and Council on a more realistic level of tolerable risk in relation to research: that, together with real-time auditing, to reduce the number of ex-post audits, would go a long way to ensuring the efficient and effective implementation of FP7."

"Clear and uniformly agreed rules will be needed for future programmes. It will be crucial to associate stakeholders in the process leading to their adoption to ensure that future rules and definitions correspond to real-life practices and that the FP remains an incentive programme".

But a necessary first step will be to regain the confidence of key FP players by drawing a line under the Commission's present dysfunctional ex-post audit campaign of FP6 projects.

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Notes to Editors

RTOs (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 confronting society and to exploit opportunities for new wealth creation and, hence, improved standards of living. RTOs accomplish their mission through a portfolio of activities and services:

- **monitoring social and economic developments** in order to anticipate and identify future science and technology needs;
- **strategic research** to develop new knowledge and technologies for future application;
- **collaborative and contract research** to develop technologies for specific applications and clients, and
- **knowledge transfer** to ensure the widest possible diffusion and adoption of technologies

EARTO

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 €15 Billion, special equipment and facilities to a value of many € billions and more than 100,000 customers from the public and private sectors annually.

<http://www.earto.eu>

European Commission Communication on Simplifying the Implementation of the Research Framework Programme

Today, the European Commission published a Communication on Simplifying the Implementation of the Research Framework Programme. The Commission's official press release can be found here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/472&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

The Communication can be found here:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/pdf/communication_on_simplification_2010_en.pdf#view=fit&pageMode=none