

## **EARTO Open Letter to the EC on EU Institutions Own Transparency: European Commission's Who's Who Digital Tool**

9 June 2023

### **To the Secretariat-General of the European Commission**

Dear Ms Juhansone,

We would like to express our great concern about recent changes made in the Who is Who directory of the European Commission. A few weeks ago, not only contacts below the Head of Unit level were removed, but also all information regarding the functions, staff numbers and topics. From a stakeholder point of view, this new approach is very much to the detriment of the research & innovation community in Brussels which works closely with the European Commission in order to bring European funding closer to the users in the Member States and to foster an understanding of the EU institutions, their policies and funding instruments.

The RD&I community in Brussels plays a vital role in communicating, explaining, training and guiding the public and private sector through the very complex European funding landscape. We work with your administration on a daily basis to make the added value of European research and innovation visible, accessible and tangible to our members across EU Member States.

To date, access to information, transparency and openness for a direct exchange with European Commission's colleagues has been an asset for both sides. For us as multipliers, the ability to directly contact Policy & Project Officers as well as Head of Sectors has helped promoting European programmes and policies. **Being able to easily identify who is working on which area within EU programmes across many Directorate Generals generates the necessary general understanding of how EU funding programmes are managed.**

The European Commission has also committed itself to "stakeholder involvement" and "co-creation" in its various EU funding programmes such as Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Defense Fund, Innovation Fund, Space programme, etc. Within Horizon Europe, the EU largest programme, strategic plans have been introduced with the goal of "enlarging the ownership of the programme to a broader number of stakeholders".

A personal dialogue of your administration with external actors is vital, not least in the light of efforts to create a more even playing field for participation in EU funding programmes. This direct dialogue cannot be replaced by anonymous functional mailboxes, online trainings, YouTube videos or power point presentations.

In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, it should be in the European Commission's interest to be accessible to those who support their work and help to multiply vital information and facilitate the uptake of EU policy initiatives and the implementation of EU funding programmes. As key EU actor we would like to continue the dialogue with your administration and its staff at all levels and support your policies achieve their goals and impact, to do so a minimum transparency on with who we should work thanks to a proper "who's who" tool is vital. If such a tool is key for well established EU actors like EARTO, we expect that for smaller organisations this lack of transparency will make accessing your institution even harder.

Hoping for a reinstatement of the who's who to its original form, we are looking for your feedback on this matter,



Muriel Attané  
Secretary General  
EARTO

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**EARTO - European Association of Research and Technology Organisations**

Founded in 1999, EARTO promotes RTOs and represents their interest in Europe. EARTO network counts over 350 RTOs in more than 31 countries. EARTO members represent 150,000 highly-skilled researchers and engineers managing a wide range of innovation infrastructures.

**RTOs - Research and Technology Organisations**

From the lab to your everyday life. RTOs innovate to improve your health and well-being, your safety and security, your mobility and connectivity. RTOs' technologies cover all scientific fields. Their work ranges from basic research to new products and services' development. RTOs are non-profit organisations whose core mission is to produce, combine and bridge various types of knowledge, skills and infrastructures to deliver a range of research and development activities in collaboration with public and industrial partners of all sizes. These activities aim to result in technological and social innovations and system solutions that contribute to and mutually reinforce their economic, societal and policy impacts.

**EARTO Contact:** [www.earto.eu](http://www.earto.eu)