

19 February 2020

Message to the Special European Council meeting on 20 February 2020

Dear President,

Ahead of the special European Council meeting of 20 February, I would like to support your efforts to reach a timely agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Europe and its citizens need a future oriented MFF at the level of EU's ambitions, and we need it soon. In that context, I would like to bring the [EARTO Recommendations for European RD&I Policy Post-2020](#) to your attention.

A future oriented MFF requires ambitious commitments to prioritise and secure RD&I investments for the whole duration of the MFF.

EARTO is the voice of 350 Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs), harnessing science and technology in the service of innovation to improve European citizens' quality of life and boost economic competitiveness. [Together with 90+ key European industry associations](#), EARTO has repeatedly called for clear and ambitious commitments to (1) prioritise Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) investments in the next MFF, and to (2) ring-fence the European RD&I budget to preserve it from any spending cuts for the whole duration of the MFF. Such commitments are essential to build a safer, fairer, greener, more inclusive and sustainable future for the next generations, ensuring that Europe remains a model of economic and social prosperity. In our changing geopolitical environment, strengthening Europe's technological capabilities and strategic industrial value chains has become a decisive factor.

Setting concrete targets of raising public RD&I investments at EU, national and regional levels will be essential to deliver impact for all European citizens.

- **At EU level:** In the next MFF, the European Council needs to ensure ambitious funding and complementarity between EU programmes for the maturation, scale-up and optimal (re-)use of technology and innovation, each focussing on its own strengths. The Horizon Europe programme, the Digital Europe programme, the Space programme, and the Defence programme will ensure European technology leadership in strategic value chains and areas of public interest, supporting the green and digital transformation of industry.
- **With national ambitions:** While the international competition for innovative solutions escalates, the EU 3% target of GDP investment in R&D should not be questioned: the next MFF should rather aim at making it a reality. A concrete roadmap to achieve this target should be the focus of the new European Research Area (ERA) Communication. The EU has a great role to play to ensure that Member States' ambitions are set at the right level.
- **Supported at regional level:** Reducing the innovation divide to ensure an inclusive economic development across Europe should be set as a key priority for the Cohesion policy in the next MFF. For that, creating concrete synergies of funds will be essential. The possibility for Member States to transfer up to 5% of their Cohesion Funds to other EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, as well as the new Interreg Component 5 for Interregional Innovation Investments both need to become reality in the next MFF.

In turn, concrete and ambitious commitments of public RD&I investments at all levels will give the right signal to boost private RD&I investments in Europe.

By demonstrating support to technology-intensive sectors and thereby reducing the risk and uncertainty of private RD&I investments, EU funded-programmes and policies such as the EU Green Deal and the upcoming EU Industrial Policy will enable to make innovation accessible to industries of all sizes across Europe. The European model of public-private co-financing needs to be fostered in the next MFF, especially by supporting the long-term trust-based partnerships between European industry and RD&I actors, such as Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs), contractual Public Private Partnerships (cPPPs), Strategic Value Chains (SVCs) and Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI), EIT KICs, etc.

EARTO Members are fully convinced that Europe has the potential to lead the global innovation race and to remain a model of economic and social prosperity. We are committed to play our part and support Europe. For that, we count on the European Council to take the necessary decisions: clearly prioritising and securing RD&I investments in the next MFF.

Yours sincerely,



Antti Vasara
President of EARTO
CEO of VTT, Finland

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 with public missions to support society. To do so, they closely cooperate with industries, large and small, as well as a wide array of public actors.

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 20 countries. EARTO members represent 150.000 highly-skilled researchers and engineers managing a wide range of innovation infrastructures.

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