EARTO Reaction to the new EC Communication on European Research Area (ERA)

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EARTO welcomes the newly published European Commission's Communication on a new ERA for Research and Innovation. Especially, EARTO appreciates the new ambitions stated in the Communication which:

1. **Reaffirm strong targets in terms of public RD&I investments at EU level ensuring strong commitments of the Member States in national spendings,**

2. **Refocus the European Research Area towards developing a strong European industrial base and technological sovereignty,**

3. **Create a European Strategy on Technology Infrastructures.**

EARTO strongly encourages Member States to pick up those recommendations within the up-coming Council's conclusions on ERA.

In addition, EARTO calls on the EU Institutions to support the key actions defined by the European Commission in this Communication by taking together the following supportive measures:

No.	Actions defined by the EC:	To implement such actions, EARTO calls the EU Institutions to:
1.	**Re-affirm the 3% GDP EU R&I investment target and propose a new EU 1.25% GDP public effort target to be achieved by Member States by 2030**	• **Boost public investment in RD&I as key driver of prosperous and sustainable growth, recognising that Europe's technological capabilities and sovereignty will be the decisive strategic factor to build Europe's future.** • **Reaffirm strong targets i**n terms of public RD&I **investments at EU level ensuring strong commitments of the Member States** in national spendings (i.e. EU 3% target of GDP investment in R&D), supported by the various EU instruments at hand like Horizon Europe, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and Cohesion Funds. • **This should also be translated into the EU budgets for RDI that are now under negotiations.** See EARTO Recommendations and EARTO Press Release: Call for the European Parliament to Become the Champion of EU RD&I Investments
2.	**Launch of ERA Forum for Transition, to support Member States in the coordination and prioritisation of national R&I funding, and reforms**	Over the last 20 years, the EARTO network has offered its support to the Member States and regions across Europe interested in learning more about the RTO model. The EARTO network will continue to support any local, regional and national government interested in developing such applied RD&I capacity with a European perspective. Hereby, EARTO re-states its offer of support to the less R&I performing Member States interested in further developing their national RTOs capabilities. Knowledge and expertise can be found within our network to support the development and implementation of reforms.
3.	**Support Member States who are below the EU average R&D investment over GDP to increase their total investment in R&D by 50% in the next 5 years**	
4.	**Set up a dedicated work stream in the ERA Forum for Transition for access to excellence and support less performing R&I Member States in increasing their number of highly cited publications by one-third over 5 years**	• **Ensure that the EU instruments proposed to tackle Europe's current innovation divide will effectively be implemented**: Especially the Interregional Innovation Investments (Component 5) and the provision proposed by the European Commission enabling Members States and regions to transfer up to 5% of their Cohesion Funds to other EU programmes, such as Horizon Europe, are key advancements that need to become realities in the next MFF. Those new instruments will allow interested national and regional governments to further develop their applied RD&I capacity, especially in many of the less RD&I intensive European regions.

5.	**Develop common industrial technology roadmaps**	• **Foster cross-border RD&I collaboration as the solution to jointly face the global societal & industrial challenges of today, especially through the pillar II of Horizon Europe with support of the EU partnerships.** • **Refocus the European Research Area towards developing a strong European industrial base and technological sovereignty**, where SMEs and midcap companies play a key role, often being "the hidden champions", with sustainable company management and strong corporate social responsibility. See EARTO Recommendations
6.	**Develop and test a networking framework in support of Europe's R&I ecosystems, building on existing capacities, in order to strengthen excellence and maximise the value of knowledge creation, circulation and use**	• **Adopt an ecosystem approach for EU RD&I policy making, boosting collaboration and co-creation, giving RTOs a clear mandate to drive the development of Europe's innovation hubs along key industrial value chains, as highlighted in the EC report on Strengthening Strategic Value Chains.** Strengthening the synergies between the different EU policies related to innovation (Industrial, RD&I, Regional, etc.) and creating alignment between the existing European national and regional strategies on innovation hubs (incl. Horizon Europe and the Digital Europe programme), would be essential, also in widening countries. Strengthening of consistent mixed-funding schemes at European, national and regional levels for those hubs would also be very valuable in achieving the industry transition across the EU. Such schemes should also support innovation hubs' orchestration activities. See EARTO Paper: European innovation hubs
7.	**Update and develop guiding principles for knowledge valorisation and a code of practice for the smart use of intellectual property**	• **Ensure the right framework conditions to stimulate and spread knowledge and technology co-creation in Europe and prevent the creation of unwanted regulatory barriers hampering European innovation capacity.** See EARTO Paper: Towards a Balanced Approach Between IPRs and Open Science Policy
9.	**Launch, via the Horizon Europe Programme, a platform of peer-reviewed open access publishing; analyse authors' rights to enable sharing of publicly funded peer-reviewed articles without restriction; Ensure a European Open Science Cloud that is offering findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable research data and services (Web of FAIR); and incentivise open science practices by improving the research assessment system.**	• **Foster a balanced approach between Open Science and Intellectual Property (IP) policies. IP's crucial role in innovation and in fostering knowledge co-creation needs to be further recognised.** EU policy makers should take great care to balance the envisaged benefits from "openness" for society at large against the proven needs of the existing technology marketplace, the latter requiring a clear competitive edge as well as clear return on its investments in innovation activities, where collaborative research plays a crucial role. EU policy makers should support a strictly bottom-up growth of Open Science, preserving scientific freedom, knowledge co-creation and technology transfer, while further developing a policy that provides effective incentives and support to researchers to efficiently disseminate and exploit their research results and encourage their translation into the commercial world, particularly through patent filing to ensure greater impact (e.g. incentives to researchers, review of the reward system for scientific careers). See EARTO Paper: Towards a Balanced Approach Between IPRs and Open Science Policy
10.	**Implement the EFSRI White Paper and establish an updated governance structure for research and technological infrastructures**	• **Create a European Strategy on Technology Infrastructures.** EARTO very much welcomes the EC SWD on Technology Infrastructures and is looking forward to the next steps. A strategic approach is needed to ensure that we pave the way to have the technology infrastructures required in Europe to answer technology needs and support European industry to develop their innovation capacity and business transformation. See EARTO Paper: Setting-up a European Strategy for Technology Infrastructures

8.	**New toolbox in support of researchers' career development**	• **Set a strategy to develop the skills for the future using all stakeholders:** When moving closer to market, the need for specialised and highly skilled personnel and know-how is high. RTOs are a valuable source of highly skilled and specialised human capital and know how, creating bridges between the many different disciplines and expertise necessary to solve societal and industrial challenges. So far, the ERA has focused mainly on academia-business relationships, often forgetting essential actors necessary for a well-functioning innovation ecosystem. RTOs support and facilitate the mobility of researchers between the actors within RD&I ecosystems. Developing the skills of the future will require to enlarge the EU mobility instruments' thinking and involved other stakeholders, linking such instruments to an innovation ecosystems and hubs' approach.
11.	**Develop a roadmap of actions for creating synergies between higher education and research, notably building on the dual role of universities**	• **Develop specific support for the training and transfer of skills from RTOs to industry, essential for industry's technology uptake within innovation hubs, especially for SMEs.** This could be intensified under Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, by focussing some of its projects to RTOs-industry connections. The **evolution and development of interdisciplinary talent for innovation and entrepreneurship done by RTOs in the European lifelong learning programmes could also be targeted.** RTOs train professionals with T-shaped profile, capable to co-create and collaborate with experts in other areas and innovate across disciplines: such capabilities should be further exploited. See EARTO Recommendations

EARTO members very much appreciate the efforts of the European Commission to further deepen the ERA and look forward to jointly implement a new ERA for Research and Innovation with the EU Institutions.

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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.