

Press Release

Brussels, 15th October 2014

350 European RTOs Responding to Today's Innovation Emergency: EARTO Presents Two Key Recommendations for Europe's Future Research and Innovation Policy to Allow Smarter & Sustainable Growth Through Innovation.

Following the call of the President of the European Commission Mr. Juncker¹ for a stronger focus of EU RD&I policy on applied research with greater participation of the private sector and a special focus on SMEs with the aim to reinforce Europe's industrial leadership and capacity to address societal challenges, European Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) are responding present!

The 350 European RTOs, members of EARTO, are already responding to the present "innovation emergency" through performing applied research with industry collaboration and by offering their full support to EU decision-makers in defining an efficient European innovation policy and in implementing key aspects of the Horizon 2020 programme. RTOs' core mission is to harness science and technology to support innovation in public and private sectors, to improve the quality of life and build economic competitiveness in Europe. RTOs have a special interest in collaborating with SMEs, as they often act as the "external R&D lab" for SMEs which cannot afford their own R&D resources.

While efforts are well underway to improve the economic future of the EU, it is critical that they focus on the right activities. Accordingly, EARTO presented today two key recommendations for Europe's future Research and Innovation policy to the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, aiming at supporting smart and sustainable growth:

EARTO Recommendation 1 - Europe needs strong value-chains and innovation ecosystems:

European RTOs are best positioned to develop broad support to European value chains together with the European Commission and Member States. Cooperation across public and private sectors, nationally and internationally, is a key characteristic of European RTOs. EU politicians and decision-makers are invited to continue their support to existing European value chains and innovation ecosystems and use RTOs to set up new ecosystems. In order to achieve this, EU decision-makers should support RTOs in managing research and technological infrastructures and facilities necessary for innovation in such ecosystems.

EARTO Recommendation 2 - Europe needs impact delivered from national and European RD&I investments:

RTOs have a major role to play in supporting Member States and the EU to deliver impact from invested RD&I funds. A multipronged approach allows RTOs to deliver impact by providing strategic advice on key areas where those funds should be invested, by performing RD&I, and by maintaining and constructing the necessary research & development infrastructures and demonstration facilities in Europe.

An EARTO paper outlining these key recommendations was presented on the occasion of the EARTO Policy Event 2014, held on 15 October 2014, which saw key EU policy makers discuss the future of EU Research and Innovation.

Ms. Maria Khorsand, EARTO President, said: *"This EARTO paper is a strong reminder to our European and national decision makers that investments by governments and industry in mission-driven, problem-solving research and innovation are key for Europe's future. Strengthening innovation eco-systems and ensuring that the funds effectively spent in RD&I deliver the expected impact in term of Europe's innovation performance and economic growth, will require our politicians to rely even more on RTOs".*

Mr. Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General Research & Innovation at the European Commission, said: *"The European Commission and EARTO have a long-lasting history of cooperation, and once again we welcome EARTO recommendations as a highly valuable contribution to help design future European R&I policies".*

Dr. Christian Ehler, Member of the European Parliament, said: *"This paper shows the important contribution of RTOs in delivering impact from EU R&I investment. In time of budget constraints, investments should be strategic and address key challenges in Europe, such as improving EU's innovation performance. This can be done by bridging the so-called valley of death thanks to applied research, and RTOs have shown their key role in supporting industry for that."*

¹ See Juncker's letter to Mr. Moedas: http://ec.europa.eu/about/juncker-commission/docs/moedas_en.pdf

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 ecosystems, 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](#)