

PRESS RELEASE
23 January 2015

ERA Stakeholders Joint Statement on the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

Today CESAER, EARTO, EUA, LERU and Science Europe, members of the European Research Area Stakeholder Platform, are expressing their great concern regarding the European Commission's proposed regulation for the new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).

As ERA stakeholders, we clearly support the European Commission's efforts to support growth and job creation and believe that most of those objectives will be reached by strongly supporting research and innovation (R&I) so as to boost European innovation performance. Supporting industry to create jobs will come from enhancing R&I chains and ecosystems in Europe; this means supporting all actors involved in such value chains which include of course industry but also universities, other research performing organisations (RPOs), Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) and regional/national public actors. The only strategic European-level instrument supporting R&I activities is Horizon2020.

Horizon2020, much like national R&I funds, is based on granting funds recognizing that R&I actors such as universities, RTOs and RPOs have specific business models requiring strong public support (that cannot primarily come from loans). Deviating funds from such a pan-EU R&I programme to create new loans facilities aiming at supporting only one actor within Europe's R&I value chains and eco-systems does not make sense, especially given that such loans facilities already exist at the European Investment Bank (EIB) as well as under Horizon2020 (INNOVFIN).

Despite many calls made by some of the ERA stakeholders to the European Commission since last autumn, the proposed funding of the EFSI budget foresees substantial cuts for the Horizon2020 budget. This will weaken Horizon2020 rather than adding EFSI as a complementary tool to this programme. CESAER, EARTO, EUA, LERU and Science Europe hereby would like to warn EU-decision makers that such plans will be detrimental to the only pan-European R&I activities running today. **The European Parliament and the Council should continue to support pan-European research and innovation as they have done by supporting Horizon2020 budget up to now.**

Accordingly, CESAER, EARTO, EUA, LERU and Science Europe are expressing their great concern on the EFSI regulation since it entails a Horizon2020 budget cut while offering little reassurance that the projects to be funded under the new EFSI will effectively aim at supporting R&I activities.

The European Parliament and the Council should also define clear amendments to the proposed regulation to ensure that:

- **Projects to be funded under EFSI:**
 1. **have clear research and innovation criteria for selection ("R&I Check") before the loans are awarded,**

2. prove clear involvement of all R&I actors within the projects even if managed by industry or governments,
 3. allow participation of all relevant R&I actors even if some of them may not be able to raise loans (e.g. as sub-contractors fully funded and covered by the guarantee funds).
- To ensure this, R&I actors should:
 1. be involved in the governance of EFSI,
 2. be involved in the evaluation of the projects to be funded under EFSI as independent advisers on the quality of projects proposed by the industry or governments for funding.

Notes to Editors

The **European Research Area Stakeholder Platform** was created in July 2012 following the signature by relevant stakeholder organisations of a Joint Statement with the European Commission expressing their strong willingness to work towards completing ERA. It was set up by the European Commission to support ERA policy development and foster structured dialogue with key research and innovation stakeholder organisations. The Platform is currently composed of **CESAER**, **EARTO**, **EUA**, **LERU**, **Nordforsk** and **Science Europe**. Further information can be found [here](#).

Joint Statement endorsed by:

Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER)

<http://www.cesaer.org/en/home/>

European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO)

<http://www.earto.eu/>

European University Association (EUA)

<http://www.eua.be/Home.aspx>

League of European Research Universities (LERU)

<http://www.leru.org>

Science Europe

<http://www.scienceeurope.org/>

More information

Please contact Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, Secretary-General LERU: +32 499 80 89 99 or

kurt.deketelaere@leru.org

Media contact - Bart Valkenaers, Press and Communications Officer: +32 498 08 43 49 or

bart.valkenaers@leru.org

About LERU

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is an association of twenty-one leading research-intensive universities that share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded in 2002, LERU advocates education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; and the promotion of research across a broad front in partnership with industry and society at large.

The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience. LERU regularly publishes a variety of papers and reports which make high-level policy statements, provide in-depth analyses and make concrete recommendations for policymakers, universities, researchers and other stakeholders.

The LERU universities are:

- University of Amsterdam
- Universitat de Barcelona
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Freiburg
- Université de Genève
- Universität Heidelberg
- University of Helsinki
- Universiteit Leiden
- KU Leuven
- Imperial College London
- University College London
- Lund University
- University of Milan
- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
- University of Oxford
- Pierre & Marie Curie University
- Université Paris-Sud
- University of Strasbourg
- Utrecht University
- University of Zurich

www.leru.org

<https://twitter.com/LERUnews>