

## ERF Declaration on the Horizon 2020 Framework Proposal

**The ERF:** ERF represents European nationally funded research facilities open to international access and serving every year over 20,000 academic and industrial users from Europe and all over the world, see <http://www.europeanresearchfacilities.eu/>.

ERF members are committed to peer review-based acceptance of proposals to utilise Research Infrastructures (RIs) in pursuit of excellence in research, applying the ESFRI criteria of excellence and European relevance.

**The service to Europe:** ERF members have demonstrated that excellent RIs, working together and open to international use, provide a vital component of the ERA (European Research Area) with very strong performance in science, in research-driven innovation, in training human resources and in cutting-edge technology transferred to industrial development. However this effort needs to be further supported to consolidate the ERA and its innovation potential.

The RIs in ERF have contributed strongly to build the competitive response of European industry to the challenges of globalisation. Their excellent service to research, e.g. in Materials and Biomaterials, has supported quality in the most advanced manufacturing, pharmaceutical and chemical industries, as a major and unique asset for Europe. But this early success should not be taken for granted and we should further strengthen the capability to respond to the growing societal challenges.

**Horizon 2020 and its limits:** ERF welcomes that RIs are recognized as a main component of “Excellence in Science” in the Horizon 2020 proposal. However, while the funding to H2020 is increased over that of FP7, the part allocated to RIs in Horizon 2020 is further decreased relative to Framework 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> and further diluted by a proposed increase in the number of facilities and in the fragmentation of actions, while lacking focus on excellence.

EU funding, of sufficient magnitude and properly prioritised and addressed, could leverage and help to focus much greater national funding for RIs needed to maintain them at international level and to provide European-wide access. ERF RIs already attract on average 30% of non-national users, but this level is unsecured. Given decreased EU support, there are indications of reversal of the recent progress towards internationalisation of RIs - Increased EU funding of the best RIs is necessary to avoid this.

ERF supports an appropriate use of structural funds alongside those in Horizon 2020 for RIs in strengthening the European dimension, but warns that, lacking sufficient EU longer-term support to the operational costs, the sustainability of structural investments is at risk.

### **Proposal:**

Excellent, open RIs are essential to the ERA.

Horizon 2020 should allow high return on investment of RIs, with sufficient funding to leverage national and structural funds, supporting their capabilities and operation in excellent science, in training human resources, in development and transfer of knowledge/technology, as well as in their response to global challenges, innovation and industrial potential.

The EU funding for RIs within H2020 should, in any case, be focused on excellence so that Europe may realise these advantages.