ASD recommendations for the second half of Horizon 2020

10th March 2017

Background

Horizon 2020 is the European Union’s Research and Innovation programme with nearly 80 billion Euros of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020). The European Commission currently carries out its interim evaluation until end 2017.

Compared to its predecessor FP7, Horizon 2020 has brought several major benefits: it increased the European Research & Technology (R&T) budget; it brought new instruments for innovation; and simplified administrative and financial terms and conditions. Two Joint Undertakings essential for the aeronautics sector, Clean Sky and SESAR, were extended. Nevertheless, after three years of experience, Horizon 2020 also reveals some shortcomings. ASD advocates for the following adjustments for the 2nd half of H2020 Framework Programme in order to use the programme to its full extent, specifically for the research activities led outside the Joint Undertakings.

About ASD

The AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe represents the aeronautics, space, defence and security industries in Europe in all matters of common interest with the objective of promoting and supporting the competitive development of the sector. Its membership comprises major European aerospace and defence companies as well as national associations.
Grants Based Funding Framework Programme
Continued EU investment in Research Programmes based on grant funding is essential. It is adapted to the specificities of the aerospace and security sector, characterized by long-term research cycles, innovative supply chain and SMEs and a growing international competition threatening our global leadership. It incentivizes the necessary collaborative research and the investment in actions that contribute to societal needs and to EU policies. Furthermore, funds allocated to transversal issues should not entirely replace those dedicated to sectorial research: once the technologies have matured, they need a sector specific approach.

Framework Programme preparation and industry representation in expert groups
By gathering all relevant stakeholders and establishing shared strategic research road-maps, European Technology Platforms (ETPs) such as ACARE for Civil Aviation, joint undertakings, and joint technology initiatives have proven their ability to contribute to the framework programme preparation.

Industry representation in H2020 preparation has been reduced, especially in expert advisory groups (<20%) and evaluation panels (<16%). ASD therefore asks for more transparency in the selection of experts both for advisory groups and evaluation panels. It is important to have a sufficient number (e.g. 30%) of industrial representatives to ensure that research will properly be implemented by industry.

Success rate increase
The current non-specific, open-ended nature of calls generated a huge number of bids. This led to large oversubscription and a very poor success rate (around 13%). Even more worrying, a large number evaluated as high quality proposals (almost 75%) were rejected/excluded. Simultaneously, building proposals remains extremely time and resource consuming, especially for calls evaluated in 2 steps. In order to decrease the number of submitted proposals, ASD advocates to change call descriptions and address more focussed topics in 1 step calls; and limit the use of 2 step calls to non-specific topics only.

Open data and IPR policy compatible with industrial constraints
Commissioner Moedas’ 3 Os policy is a positive step towards a new European innovation-friendly ecosystem. However, for the sake of efficient research and subsequent exploitation, terms and conditions (especially Open Data) need to be flexible and compatible with industrial requirements. One way to protect the vital intellectual property of European private stakeholders would be to open data access by option rather than by default. ASD supports a strong cooperation between legal experts from the Commission and the private sector in the implementation of the Open Data Policy.

[Signature on file], Jan Pie, ASD Secretary General, Date 07th April, 2017