EASN position on Horizon 2020

Overview: Horizon 2020 is an indispensible tool for the European Research Community, and as a significant part of it, for the aeronautics research community, in order to retain Europe's prosperity and global economic leadership. The EASN Association is joining its voice to them asking for an increased European budget for research and in this context for an increased budget for aeronautics research.

With respect to the budget: The requested research budget throughout FP7 for Aeronautics research projects was several times above the available. This allowed for a selection after evaluation of the most promising ideas and proposals for funding. Although this process acted in a positive way towards raising the excellence and standards of the performed research, the success rates of some FP7 calls, particularly concerning the L1 proposals, were on the limit of non-acceptable by the scientific community and a series of excellent proposals aiming to the development of innovation, new knowledge and breakthrough technologies could not be funded. To this end, the annual budget available for Aeronautics research in the frame of Horizon 2020 should appreciably exceed the respective budget of FP7.

With respect to the differentiation and split between transport and aeronautics: Aeronautics research, by nature, belongs to the most technologically advanced fields of research among all transport modes. In addition, technologies and products developed by and for the Aeronautics industry are often adopted and adapted by the rail, automotive and naval industries. The 50-50 split among Aeronautics and surface transport research has served its purpose well in the previous framework Packages and is proposed to remain as such in Horizon 2020.

With respect to the budget split between the different level projects among the Aeronautics programme: EASN is in agreement to the principle of the four different levels of projects, as introduced in the AAT- 2012 FP7 call. Each of the four levels serves its role and all four levels are interconnected and complementary. However, one should take into account that after the introduction of L3 projects, there has been a major unbalance of available budget towards the implementation of technologies and research activities of higher TRL, although a niche for academia involvement in the L3 projects calls for proposals does exist, through the need for lower TRL research. The long time frame required between an idea developing into a flying product or technology along with the downstream shift of research emphasis, may lead in the medium and long term to a shortage of new available technologies. It is therefore proposed that when calculating the budget split between L1 and L2 projects, to take into account the

possible existence of other instruments (e.g. the potential CS2) which strongly support the implementation of existing technologies rather than the development of new, upstream and innovative knowledge and technologies. EASN considers the development of new innovative and breakthrough technologies and novel solutions as an urgent need for the European aeronautics in order to retain its global leadership. This goal is better served through the exploitation of the Level 0 and Level 1 tools. Therefore, EASN is proposing a budget split of 70-30 among L0/L1 and L2 budget in favour of L0/L1 proposals.

With respect to the L0 research projects: EASN is strongly in favour of this concept. A topic open for breakthrough technologies should always be available in all the European calls for proposals. Among the European Academia, however, there has been a misunderstanding with respect to the expected projects to be submitted under these calls. The limits of “breakthrough” and “radical” not being strictly defined, has often led to hesitations on whether to submit a project idea under the L0 or L1 calls. A more careful definition of the L0 topics, their TRL limits and potential interconnection with L1 projects along with a re-examination of the available budget (total and per-project) should help to better exploit this valuable tool. EASN is always open and willing to participate to such a discussion.