Joint EREA-EASN Position Paper on the Smart and Clean Aviation moonshot concept

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Aeronautics and Air Transport are a **strategic sector**, in which Europe is still in a **worldwide leading position**. Europe's global leadership needs to be maintained and strengthened in the sense of competitiveness, technology sovereignty and strategic autonomy, while following the crucial objective of a climate neutral European aviation.

EREA and EASN are considering the **Moonshot on smart and clean aviation** proposed by the European Commission as an overarching concept combining various European funding sources and approaches under a common scheme, which will foster the absolutely essential cross-border and cross sectoral cooperation of all European Aviation Stakeholders, i.e. industry, Research and Technology Organizations (RTOs), universities, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups, according to their roles in the research, innovation and deployment ecosystem. To implement such a European conceptual approach, an updated **European instrument** will be needed, building on the experiences with current and past European aviation partnerships.

For such an instrument, EREA and EASN are recommending:

- the aviation moonshot to **cover the entire Research and Innovation (R&I) range** from the exploration of innovations or technologies up to their deployment, with the implementation of **appropriate project types and selection approaches** fitting to the various technological readiness levels (TRL), with a fair and balanced funding distribution among industry, RTOs, universities, and SMEs, supporting the entire innovation pipeline, from fundamental research to market deployment with:
    - a **strong bottom-up collaborative research stream**, focused on basic and applied research, research driven, open, and easily accessible to all stakeholders, exploiting the potential of the diverse stakeholder communities and in particular smaller actors such as RTOs, universities, SMEs and startups, and supported by the next framework program on R&I (FP10/Horizon Europe);
    - a **top-down high-TRL research stream**, similar to the existing Joint Undertakings (JUs), focused on demonstration of innovation and technologies, led by industry, and supported by FP10;
    - and a **deployment stream**, supporting the uptake, and scaling of mature aviation technologies and solutions funded among others by the proposed European Competitiveness Fund (ECF);
- a **balanced, neutral and transparent governance structure**, avoiding conflicts of interest by ensuring that beneficiaries do not directly decide on grant allocations;
- to support **joint preparation and foster active participation of all aviation stakeholders** (industry, RTOs, universities, operators, service providers, member states = ACARE 3.0) in defining jointly **European strategic research, innovation and deployment agendas/technology roadmaps** (like the former ACARE

Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas). Said agendas and roadmaps will provide guidelines for the preparation of annual work programs and ensure their alignment with European priorities as well as their transformation on program priorities and calls for proposals;

- to **encourage and reward participation in working groups and advisory committees** to ensure that, in addition to industry, the voice of European research organizations and universities is considered as equal part within their respective structures and **governances**;
- to **broaden the definition of impact to include long term impact, education of work force and support of the entire supply chain**;
- to ensure **robust dissemination and exploitation of research results** (journal and conference publications and patents) **while preserving Europe's strategic autonomy and technological sovereignty**, together with communication strategies, including participation in major forums (e.g. Paris Air Show, ILA, Aerodays, EASN conference, etc.) and showcasing demonstrators and research outcomes;
- to highlight the **role and achievements of RTOs/universities in European aviation innovation**, making them part of the respective **governances**;
- to foster **education, training, and upskilling**, ensuring workforce capability and skill readiness for the future European high-technology sector;
- to **open the civil framework program to dual use applications where relevant**, while clearly maintaining dedicated funding streams for defence (through the European Defence Fund, EDF) and for civil and (where relevant and strategically beneficial) dual use research (through FP10/ECF). This **separation** is necessary to respect the different objectives, regulatory requirements and the different boundary conditions for military and civil research;
- to establish a **project structure covering the entire innovation pipeline**, including:
    - **small collaborative research projects** (TRL up to 4), mainly RTO/university/SME-led, focused on disruptive and evolutionary technology development,
    - **medium-sized collaborative projects for technology demonstration** (medium TRL 4-6), with balanced public-private funding, appropriate contributions from RTOs/universities, with theme/topic leadership by industry/SMEs and RTOs,
    - **large integrated demonstrator projects** (TRL>5) for overall system-level validation and market readiness/development under industrial leadership,
    - **deployment projects** (TRL>6), to facilitate market uptake.