



To:

Ms. Signe RATSO , DG RTD Acting Director General
Mr. Henrik HOLOLEI, DG MOVE Director General
Mr. Herald RUIJTERS, DG MOVE Acting Deputy Director-General
Ms. Ditte JUUL-JOERGENSEN, DG ENER Director General
Mr. Timo PESONEN, DG DEFIS Director General
Ms. Clara DE LA TORRE, DG CLIMA Acting Director General
Mr. Roberto VIOLA, DG CNECT Director General

Cc:

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From:

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Brussels, December 5th, 2022

Dear Ms. Signe RATSO, Mr. Henrik HOLOLEI, Ms. Ditte JUUL-JOERGENSEN, Ms. Clara DE LA TORRE, Mr. Herald RUIJTERS, Mr. Timo PESONEN, Mr. Roberto VIOLA,

European citizens, energy consuming industry and SMEs are facing the crippling consequences of the energy crisis. The increase of cost of living and the significant fluctuations of the energy prices are becoming a daily companion of our lives, placing an uncertainty never experienced before on the entire European industrial and social ecosystem. The research and innovation community is facing the same problems, which is why EREA and EASN turn to you to address this major concern.

Research programs are experiencing a steep rise in the costs for execution of experimental research campaigns, for material procurements; thus, we express our concerns about the short-to-midterm sustainability of our RTD&I activities. Within the Horizon 2020 funding framework, we are running contracts that include experimental activities that were budgeted years ago, accounting for salaries, energy and material costs that do not reflect the actual market costs anymore.

As reported in a recent ScienceBusiness article¹, the energy cost of research infrastructures soared. Within their actual research activities EREA research establishments, universities and industry manage and operate large and complex research and technology infrastructures, such as wind tunnels, test aircraft, simulators and high-performance computers with high-energy consumption.

We want to stress that our research endeavors need to be resilient against external threats, and that so far the European Commission has always been open to discuss and search for viable solutions. The

¹ "Energy crisis is starting to hit Europe's big science labs". ScienceBusiness 20 September 2022
<https://sciencebusiness.net/news/energy-crisis-starting-hit-europes-big-science-labs>



approach followed during the Covid crisis is a good example. However, the current situation demands again significant flexibility to ensure resilience and continuity; in many projects the difficulties to procure materials and associated costs and the costs of using research and technology infrastructures are causing delays in projects. Some may eventually even be stopped without reaching all the planned objectives due to severe cost overruns. Education and training projects, involving experimental activities (e.g. PhD theses), are also significantly impacted by the energy cost.

Allow us to provide you with some examples. The CIRA icing wind tunnel alone saw a doubling of the price in 2022 with the prospect of further increases in 2023. This price increase is due to the cost of electric energy and of gas, which had a peak up to five times with respect to the 2021 costs. Another example is the cost of electricity for INCAS that doubled in 2022 compared to 2021 and for 2023 suppliers are proposing to increase prices by up to eight times compared to 2021, whilst the government is proposing a threefold increase. These are only a few examples, but the situation is similar for all research establishments, universities and industry.

This increase of costs is creating a situation where contracted experiments are structurally underbudgeted. Moreover, the extreme fluctuations in energy and material prices make it more and more difficult to plan and budget projects.

With this letter, EREA and EASN wish to engage a constructive dialogue with the European Commission and its Agencies, to find a viable way to make RTD&I projects resilient to external threats like energy price fluctuations, material scarcity and material prices.

We remain committed to the high-level objectives of the European Green Deal, whilst making the European air transport industry carbon-neutral by 2050.

Best regards,

Paweł STĘŻYCKI
Chairman of EREA

Andreas STROHMAYER
Chairman of EASN



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