

CORINA CREȚU
Member of the European Commission

CARLOS MOEDAS
Member of the European Commission

Brussels, 25. 04. 2018
Ares S (2018) 1616010

Dear members of the Ad Astra Association,

Thank you for the observations formulated in your letter Ares(2018)1020128, which refer to the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionality 1.2 (Research and innovation infrastructure). This conditionality was considered not fulfilled at the date of submission of the Partnership Agreement (CCI 2014RO16M8PA001) covering the 2014-2020 programming period and the Competitiveness Operational Programme (2014RO16RFOP001) for the same period. More specifically, you refer to the procedure used to develop the national roadmap for research infrastructures, questioning its legitimacy and transparency.

The unfulfilled criterion of the conditionality referred to the existence of a multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritisation of RDI investments in Romania. The action plan agreed with the Commission, in order to ensure fulfillment, called for the update of the list of national roadmap for RDI infrastructures. Following several rounds of discussion and assessment, in November 2017 the Commission services considered that this action had been completed, based on the following elements:

1. The final version of the roadmap has been sent to the Commission (including the bottom-up prioritization of infrastructures that was missing from previous versions).
2. The roadmap has been validated by the scientific oversight committee (the Romanian Committee for Research Infrastructures - RCRI), according to the letter by the RCRI president attached to the roadmap.
3. The roadmap has been approved by the Ministry for Research and Innovation (ministerial order no. 624/3 Oct 2017).

According to the procedure laid down in the Regulation (notably, Article 19(3) of the Common Provisions Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), this decision was based on reporting and supporting evidence provided by national authorities in the context of their self-assessment and limited to the assessment of the adequacy and consistency of the information.

The Members of Ad Astra Association
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For your information, when declaring the conditionality fulfilled, the Commission also highlighted the following points that would require further attention from the Romanian authorities and which are constantly monitored:

1. For those projects that have not been already qualified in the context of competitive EU evaluations (ESFRI, Horizon 2020) or have not been pre-identified in national strategic documents, the bottom-up assessment of research infrastructure projects needs to be firmly established as the default mode of assessment and prioritisation. We count on the stable commitment of the Ministry of Research and Innovation to ensure proper application of the prioritization methodology.
2. In the years to come the Romanian Committee for Research Infrastructures should receive adequate political and institutional support in order to be able to provide the scientific steering of the prioritization process.
3. We also count on the Romanian authorities to fully implement the strategic planning mechanism that matches requests for support with available/forecasted funding from European, national and other sources.

Further to the above, we welcome Ad Astra's observations which we will take up with the competent authorities, primarily the Ministry of Research and Innovation, in order to obtain the necessary clarification.

Let us also underline that, beyond the fulfilment of the said ex ante conditionality, the utmost objective of the EU policy and investment is to make sure that the public support to research and innovation activities is strategically planned and sustainable in the long run, for the benefit of the Romanian economy and society.

Yours sincerely,



Corina CREȚU



Carlos MOEDAS

Copy: Ms Rovana PLUMB, Minister of European Funds
Mr Nicolae BURNETE, Minister of Research and Innovation