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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

**CHARTER OF ACCESS FOR INDUSTRIAL USERS TO RESEARCH AND
TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURES**

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1. RATIONALE FOR IMPROVING ACCESS FOR INDUSTRIAL USERS

As announced in the start-up and scale-up strategy¹, and in complementarity with the European strategy on research and technology infrastructures², the European Commission is publishing the ‘Charter of access for industrial users to research and technology infrastructures’ (‘the Charter’) with the objective to shorten the journey from ideas to market.

As put forward by the Draghi report on EU competitiveness³, Europe’s world-class ecosystem of research and technology infrastructures drives innovation, strengthens competitiveness and connects talent through collaboration across borders while reinforcing European economic security. Companies, including start-ups and scale-ups, need access to these services to rapidly develop, test, demonstrate, upscale, and validate new technology and products, thereby accelerating time-to-market. This ecosystem also provides a compelling reason to choose Europe as the place to deliver groundbreaking innovation. The visibility and accessibility of research and technology infrastructures should be enhanced for the European industrial users that need them. The Charter complements the European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures⁴, revised in 2024.

Several Council conclusions⁵, as well as extensive analyses and reports⁶, highlight the significant barriers faced by industrial users, including start-ups and scaleups, when they wish to access research and technology infrastructures. Firstly, especially startups and scaleups highlight the high cost as a major barrier to access. However, there are also multiple non-financial, but nevertheless significant barriers. These barriers, such as a lack of information, are further exacerbated when considering cross-regional and transnational access, where additional language, legal and regulatory issues arise, and the financial costs of access are usually greater. This often prevents smaller companies not only from accessing the available research and technology infrastructure services, but even from being aware that such services exist, particularly when facilities are in other regions or countries.

Furthermore, stronger collaboration between research and technology infrastructures and national and regional authorities can catalyse further support for innovative companies.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - The EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy Choose Europe to start and scale, COM(2025) 270 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0270>.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures, COM(2025) 497 final/2, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025DC0497R%2801%29>

³ *The future of European competitiveness*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, doi:10.2872/1823372.

⁴ European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *European Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures – Principles and guidelines for access and related services*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/8299402>.

⁵ Such as: Council conclusions on the New European Research Area, 1 December 2020, doc.13567/20; Council conclusions on the New European Innovation Agenda, 2 December 2022, doc.14705/22; Council Conclusions on Research Infrastructures, 2 December 2022, doc. 15429/22; Council Conclusions on Knowledge Valorisation, 23 May 2024, doc. 10182/24; Council Conclusions on European industrial policy, 24 May 2024, doc. 10127/24; Council Conclusions on The importance of research and innovation for the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy, 30 September 2025, doc. 13357/25.

⁶ Such as: European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *User needs for technology infrastructures – Analytical report*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/4186567>.

Promoting a harmonised way to tackle these challenges, the Charter sets out a set of principles and guidance governing access to research and technology infrastructures and invites those in charge of these infrastructures to endorse these principles on a voluntary basis.

2. THE CHARTER OF ACCESS FOR INDUSTRIAL USERS TO RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURES

2.1. Increasing the visibility and availability of services

Research and technology infrastructures should adopt a proactive approach to increasing the visibility of their services among all industrial users, including start-ups and scale-ups. The services offered should evolve in line with user demand and technological developments. The descriptions of services should be harmonised to the extent possible, and awareness should be raised of the value of these services for industrial users. Relevant information on the services and capacities of research and technology infrastructures should be available on a transparent basis and searchable in a user-friendly way.

2.2. Transparency and quality of services

Research and technology infrastructures should ensure that they offer high-quality services backed by transparent processes to ensure that outcomes are credible and respected. Infrastructures should provide accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive information on the scope, performance and availability of their services, ensuring that users can make informed choices. Services should be delivered in accordance with the communicated specifications, timelines, and quality benchmarks, fostering trust, accountability, and comparability across providers.

2.3. Simplified contract and agreement procedures

Research and technology infrastructures should adopt transparent and rapid contract and agreement procedures. These contracts should be designed to clearly articulate the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all the parties involved while incorporating, when applicable, clauses on intellectual property rights, confidentiality, data protection, liability and dispute resolution.

2.4. Safe intellectual property management

Research and technology infrastructures should establish clear guidelines on the management of intellectual assets and the ownership of the intellectual property rights arising from their collaborations with industrial users, covered by contracts and agreements. These guidelines should ensure that the rights of all parties are respected and prevent any disputes over newly-created or pre-existing intellectual property. Research and technology infrastructures should put in place robust measures to protect the trade secrets of their users. This includes confidentiality agreements, secure data-handling protocols and limited access rights to sensitive information, ensuring that the competitive advantages of industrial users are preserved.

2.5. Tailored support to companies

Research and technology infrastructures should provide tailored support to industrial users, including start-ups and scale-ups, on open, transparent and non-discriminatory terms. They should endeavour to reduce administrative and technical barriers and be responsive to industrial timelines.

The overall goal is to strengthen the EU's technological sovereignty and foster regional innovation ecosystems, in line with both the applicable Member State and EU rules, and with any commitments undertaken with international partners and organisations and through collaborations.

2.6. Cooperation between infrastructures and access to data

Research and technology infrastructures should foster cooperation and interoperability between their services and platforms to facilitate transnational, multisite, cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary access to services⁷. They should encourage efficient data access, data sharing, process alignment, and cooperative innovation in the EU without compromising confidentiality commitments and the protection of data and intellectual property, and with high standards of cybersecurity and research security⁸. The shared data should be findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR principles) to maximise its use.

3. CONCLUSION

The research and technology infrastructures that endorse and implement these principles will contribute to the EU's competitiveness, resilience and technological sovereignty by providing simplified access to their services and harmonised contractual conditions for using them. Furthermore, the Charter will improve awareness of the opportunities offered by the infrastructures and reinforce trust in collaborations between infrastructures and industry across the EU.

The Commission will maintain and publish a list of research and technology infrastructures that endorse the Charter and will consider a revision of the Charter whenever deemed necessary, to ensure its principles remain relevant and aligned with the needs of industry.

⁷ Where appropriate infrastructures should align processes with the European Interoperability Framework (EIF)

⁸ Including, if necessary, implementing access restrictions to certain entities from third countries.