

EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA  
AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

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– ERAC –  
Secretariat

Brussels, 13 September 2017  
(OR. en)

ERAC 1209/17

**NOTE**

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From: ERAC Secretariat  
To: ERAC delegations  
Subject: Summary conclusions of the 34th ERAC plenary meeting on 16 June 2017  
in Brussels

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Delegations will find annexed to this Note the summary conclusions of the 34th ERAC plenary meeting on 16 June 2017 in Brussels, as adopted by written procedure.

## Summary conclusions

### 34th ERAC plenary meeting, 16 June 2017 in Brussels

**Co-Chairs:** Robert-Jan Smits and David Wilson

**Secretariat:** General Secretariat of the Council

**Present**<sup>1</sup>: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom (36)

**Absent:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel, Ukraine (6)

#### 1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

The agenda was adopted with one AOB item requested by the Commission relating to the results of a meeting organised on 12 June 2017 on the European Open Science Cloud.

The co-Chairs welcomed new ERAC delegates to the plenary.

#### 2. Summary conclusions of the 33<sup>rd</sup> meeting of ERAC

The Member State (MS) co-Chair indicated that the summary conclusions of the 33<sup>rd</sup> meeting of ERAC, held in St. Julian's, Malta, on 16-17 March 2017, had been approved by written procedure on 24 May 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> The list of delegations present or absent at the meeting is based on the List of Participants that was circulated during the meeting for completion by delegates.

### 3. Information from the co-Chairs and Presidency

The MS co-Chair referred to the last ERAC Steering Board meeting on 16 May 2017, and the summary sent to ERAC following the Steering Board meeting. The MS co-Chair pointed out that at the Steering Board meeting, the Commission had presented the recently published RISE book on Open Science, Open Innovation and Open to the World. Printed copies of the book had been distributed to all ERAC delegates at this Plenary.

The MS co-Chair then informed ERAC that for personal reasons, he would be stepping down later in the year (date to be confirmed) from his role in the International Science and Innovation Directorate within the United Kingdom government, and consequently also from the ERAC co-Chairmanship. He regretted this very much but indicated that it was proving very difficult to reconcile his limited working time with his obligations, which was why he had taken the decision to step down. COM co-Chair also regretted this and thanked the MS co-Chair for his long-time dedication and support in ERAC work.

### 4. ERA and Innovation Policy

#### 4.1 Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020 and preparations for the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

Following the workshops with stakeholders and ERAC delegates on 10-11 May in Brussels, the Rapporteur Denis Desprésaux had circulated an advanced draft of the *ERAC Opinion on the Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020 and preparations for the next Framework Programme for R&I* for consultation to ERAC delegates and Chairs of the ERA-related groups on 19 May. On the basis of the comments received, the Rapporteur had circulated a revised draft Opinion on 12 June to be discussed at this meeting.

The COM co-Chair underlined the importance of a timely adoption of the Opinion in view of the high-level conference the Commission was organising in the presence of Pascal Lamy, the Chair of the High Level group, on 3 July and the informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Competiveness (Research) in Tallinn, Estonia, on 24-25 July. He urged ERAC to either adopt the Opinion at the present meeting or immediately afterwards.

The Rapporteur Denis Desprésaux presented the current draft Opinion. He indicated that there was wide agreement on the key features of Horizon 2020 (H2020):

- 1) the support of the whole R&I chain with the 3 pillars approach, strengthened by a right timeframe (Work Programme of 2 years) and by simplification efforts;
- 2) the cooperation among transnational and intersectorial teams is well incentivised by sound criteria (excellence/impact) and by appropriate funding schemes;
- 3) H2020 is contributing to the achievement of ERA; and
- 4) H2020 delivers widely supported initiatives: (ERC, MSCA, Research Infrastructures, collaborative research).

The consultation of ERAC had shown that in order to bolster the openness and impact of the Framework Programmes (FPs), it was essential to enhance the contribution of FPs to ERA achievement, strive to include more excellent participants from all Member States and Associated Countries in all actions, relaunch international cooperation, promote linkages between FPs and relevant EU sectoral policies and continue the dialogue with the society. For innovation, the FPs should support the stakeholders of the EU's R&I ecosystem.

Most delegations took the floor and recognised this Opinion as the most important piece of work done by ERAC in the recent years. The draft circulated prior to the meeting was welcomed by most as a very good basis for the discussions and the inclusion of the aspect of higher education was seen as especially positive. The main remaining concerns for delegations were the following:

- link between ERA and the FP should be strengthened in the report;
- inclusiveness and widening should not be linked, as inclusiveness was also related to the questions of "closed clubs"; there should be a better balance between research and innovation;
- there should be stronger wording regarding the JPIs when it comes to priority setting;
- the concepts "excellence" and "inclusiveness" should be separated; and
- the functional synergies between the FPs and structural funds should be underlined.

Several delegations expressed the need for the executive summary and the introduction to focus more on the contribution of the FPs to economy, competitiveness and growth, stressing that this was the message that needed to be passed on to the Ministers of economy.

There were some concerns about the tight schedule for the adoption of the opinion but also agreement about the importance of a timely adoption. ERAC agreed on the following timetable: the rapporteur would prepare a final draft by 23 June and that ERAC would adopt it by 28 June. ERAC also agreed that in case of major outstanding issues towards the end of the written procedure, the co-Chairs would try to work together with the rapporteur to find a compromise solution. ERAC would be kept fully informed during the whole process.

## 4.2 Research integrity

The COM co-Chair introduced the item together with the Commission (Mr Wolfgang Burtscher). Following the Council conclusions of 1 December 2015 on Research integrity, in which Member States endorsed the principles included in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity developed by the European Science Foundation (ESF) and All European Academics (ALLEA), indicating that research at EU and Member State level should be founded on those principles, a new version of the Code was developed by ALLEA and published in March 2017.

According to the COM co-Chair, it would be interesting to learn what has been done at national level in this respect. 9 delegations (CY, DE, DK, FR, IE, NL, NO, PT, SE) took the floor, indicating that measures to include the Code in their national strategies were either on-going or had already been taken, even if the way this was done varied. The FR delegation proposed to create a Mutual Learning Exercise (MLE) on research integrity.

The COM co-Chair concluded by reminding delegations that research integrity is an evolving concept and that the new version of the ALLEA Code also includes data integrity. He underlined that a sound system of research integrity was just as important as a sound system of financial management.

## 4.3 Joint EC/OECD Survey on Science, Technology and Innovation Policies

Together with the OECD, the Commission (Mr. Román Arjona) presented the joint 2018 EC/OECD survey on Science, Technology and Innovation policies. Mr Arjona underlined that the survey is in line with the commitments made by Commissioner Moedas following the adoption of the Council conclusions on streamlining the R&I monitoring and reporting landscape, notably concerning the quality, focus, identity and

purpose of the report. Furthermore, it will contain only around half of the number of questions compared to the 2016 survey. Mr Arjona underlined that the responsibility to streamline is a shared one between the Commission and the Member States and that good reports require high-quality, timely and committed input by the latter. He also explained that the 2018 survey will cover very interesting STI issues like market-creating innovation, open science and science-industry linkages. Furthermore, and as a result of EC-OECD cooperation supported by Horizon 2020, Member States will get access to all data and will be able to exploit the results of the survey. For this purpose, a "Google-like" search engine will be provided.

The OECD (Mr Philippe Larrue) presented the detailed structure of the survey. For the first time, the survey will include a module on ERA-related initiatives. The OECD will use a new survey tool (LimeSurvey) which will considerably ease the burden on both the participating countries in completing and administering the survey, and on the EC-OECD in processing and analysing the results. There will also be a new semantic database that will contribute to the smart storing and analysing of country STI policy information. Mr Larrue invited delegations to send their comments and suggestions for this first round of consultation by the end of June. He reminded delegations about the next steps: second round of consultation on the survey (first half of July); delegates send comments on 2nd draft, and on the usability of the IT platform (by end of August); final version of the survey sent for final approval (first week of September); launch of the survey (end of September); close of survey and start of the analytical work (mid-November).

Several delegations thanked the Commission for its streamlining efforts, with the BG delegation underlining that streamlining has to permit adequate monitoring. The BE delegation underlined the importance of the survey and said that the data gathered will also be used for the ERA Progress Report. Some delegations asked for more details

about the module on ERA-related initiatives. The AT delegation pointed out that this module was only focussed on some areas and that there were no questions concerning the Framework Programme. The NO delegation inquired whether this module was only for the Member States and expressed the wish that the Associated countries could also reply to the questions concerning this module as they are active in ERA policy. A question concerning the central gateway at the national level for the survey was also asked. The Commission/Mr Arjona assured delegations that Associated countries could also reply to the ERA module. He explained that this module did not cover all ERA-related aspects because there were questions in other parts of the survey that ensured a full coverage of all relevant aspects of the ERA agenda. He underlined that this is the first survey running on the new taxonomy and digital structure, and thus remains a learning process that can be improved in the next round. The OECD (Mr Larrue) explained that the survey does not go into the monitoring of the Framework Programme because this is not its scope, which remains national STI policies. He reassured delegations that the CSTP Committee in the OECD and ERAC would be simultaneously consulted on the survey. Delegations were informed by the Commission (Mr Arjona) that there will only be a single official gateway on the survey at the national level, to avoid possible overlaps. This will be the CSTP delegates for those Member States and Associated Countries that are OECD countries, and the ERAC Members for the rest.

The MT delegation inquired whether it was possible to prepare country fiches also for non-OECD countries. MT explained that it had taken a lot of effort to participate in the 2016 survey and that it would very much appreciate getting feedback in return for the data it provides. The CY, HR and LT delegations, also non-OECD countries, supported MT. The Commission /Mr Arjona gave assurances that non-OECD countries would be treated just like the OECD countries and that there would be country fiches for each participating country.

The MS co-Chair concluded by reminding delegations of the timetable for the survey and inviting delegations to send their comments and suggestions by the end June.

## 5. Standing Information Point

Documents concerning the draft Report "Science, research and innovation performance of the EU 2018" (document WK 6201/17), the Update on the H2020 Policy Support facility (document WK 6597/17), the Outcome of 2017 European Semester (country reports and CSR package 2017) (document WK 6200/17) and follow-up on the ERA National Action Plans and strategies (document WK 6199/17) had been circulated to delegations prior to the meeting.

As regards the draft report "Science, Research and Innovation performance of the EU", scheduled for early 2018, some delegations wished to have an in-depth discussion in ERAC on the report. The Commission/Mr Román Arjona welcomed the idea but wondered whether it would be more useful to have an upstream Workshop organised under the auspices of ERAC in the autumn, rather than to discuss it after release in a Plenary.

Concerning the outcomes of the 2017 European Semester as regards R&I aspects, including the country-specific recommendations, delegations considered that the work done was highly valuable and thanked the Commission for it. Some delegations felt that the country-specific recommendations would be a good subject for mutual learning exercises (MLE) under the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF) so that countries, especially those who received them, can share experiences and benefit from policy insights. The Commission/Mr Román Arjona indicated that the PSF is already doing this around topics such as R&D tax credits, performance-based funding of universities, or innovation procurement, and is ready to consider further exercises proposed by ERAC members as a response to the Expression of Interest on the PSF launched in June 2017 to ERAC.

Regarding the follow-up on the ERA National Action Plans and strategies (NAPs), the AT delegation suggested that the Commission look into the NAPs and check which countries have mentioned one or several of the suggested subjects (excellence, funding and complementarity) and then choose the Member States for each sub-group on this basis. The Commission/Mr Burtscher agreed that mutual learning on the basis of the implementation of the NAPs was the purpose of the workshop. An email with more details would be sent to delegations after the plenary.

## **6. ERA Governance**

### **6.1 Review of the ERA governance foreseen in 2018**

The MS co-Chair gave a short update on progress and feedback received since the latest ERAC plenary. His sense was that the general feeling did not favour a major review of the advisory structure or the ERA priorities at this early stage. If this was indeed the case, the upcoming review would therefore be more in the nature of a stock-taking exercise of what is going well and what is not. He further explained that the ERAC Steering Board (SB) was having a structured debate on the questions to put to the upcoming ERAC plenary meeting in December at DG level. At the Malta plenary, Christian Naczinsky from the AT delegation had volunteered to help in coordinating the views of delegations on this. Mr Naczinsky updated ERAC briefly on the discussions within the group of countries and on key messages emerging.

The MS co-Chair said that the SB would continue its discussions at its next meeting on 27 June. He also reminded ERAC that if it is decided that an in-depth review of ERAC itself is necessary, the procedure to follow is described in Annex D of the ERAC Opinion on the review of the ERA advisory structure foreseen in 2018. The SB's discussion on 27 June would also cover this aspect. Representatives for the upcoming BG and AT Presidencies would be invited to the SB meeting and kept involved throughout the process.

## 6.2 ERAC Annual Report 2016

The MS co-Chair gave a short update to delegates on the state of play concerning the draft ERAC Annual Report 2016. A draft of the Annual report had been sent to delegates on 8 June, with the deadline to provide comments by 15 June. Only minor comments had been received. The CH delegation had proposed to include critical reflections on the objectives that had not been reached and on the open questions that remained. While the MS co-Chair fully agreed that such reflections were necessary, he did not consider that the Annual report would be the best place to do this.

Concerning the graph on page 4 of the draft report, the BE delegation commented that it looked like there had been a big step forward in some priorities whereas in others much less progress had been made. Furthermore, the BE delegation pointed out that the work on the indicators that was started in 2016 was not finalised yet and suggested that a discussion be held on the issue at a future plenary meeting. The MS co-Chair explained that explanatory text was added under the graph to clarify how it should be interpreted. He considered it important to include the graph to show that work has indeed been done on the indicators but suggested that a sentence would be added to indicate that indicators are work in progress. He also agreed that there should be a follow-up to the ERAC Opinion of 2016 on the indicators and indicated that the SB would look into this when planning the agendas of the upcoming ERAC plenaries.

The MS co-Chair concluded by explaining that a consolidated version of the draft Annual report would be circulated to ERAC following the plenary for adoption by written procedure. Once adopted, it would be submitted to the Presidency with a cover letter by the co-Chairs. To the question on whether the Annual report would be presented at a meeting of the Council or a preparatory body, the MS co-Chair said that it would be necessary to discuss the possibilities with the incoming Estonian Presidency.

## 6.3 Updates from the ERAC Working Groups

### 6.3.a Ad-hoc Working Group on Measuring the Impact of EU Framework Programmes for R&I at National Level

On 31 May 2017, the Chair of the Ad-hoc Working Group (WG), Mr Tiago Santos Pereira, had submitted a draft of the Report to be discussed at this meeting, with a deadline for comments of 13 June. The MS co-Chair thanked him for the draft and all the work done. Mr Santos Pereira briefly presented the progress made since the plenary in Malta. He explained that the initial discussions at the Ad-hoc WG had been very ambitious but that consequently the group had taken a much more practical position, with focus on existing data and indicators that could be used without causing additional burdens. On this basis the group had identified various impact dimensions. He also indicated that the template was not meant to be a fixed document which would set limits for national implementation or additional analysis.

Delegations who took the floor also thanked the Chair for the work done as the task of the Ad-hoc WG had not been an easy one. They commented that measuring impact is very complex and that there can be no "one size fits all" solution. They also considered that as the report is based on the structure of Horizon 2020, the indicators are very specific and the template would therefore not be easy to use. There were also questions about the follow-up: how the countries should now use the template, how will it enable them to compare the impacts in different countries. Mr Santos Pereira clarified that the objective had not been to concentrate on Horizon 2020 but that it had been easier to articulate the impacts using an existing structure. He explained that there were big differences in the measurement methodologies currently used in the countries and

that the group had decided to use data that was either shared by the countries or could be replicated. The group had tried to find a balance between a more sophisticated template and one which would be relatively easy to use and a template that was not too fixed to tie the hands of the users but fixed enough to offer common nominators.

The COM co-Chair asked which countries were already doing sophisticated monitoring of the impact at national level. The MT delegation indicated that MT had started monitoring and was looking at impact and that the report would be very useful for this exercise.

The MS co-Chair concluded by indicating that a final draft report would be prepared by Mr Santos Pereira by 22 June and that this draft would be circulated to ERAC for adoption by written procedure which should end by 29 June, just before the expiry of the extended mandate of the Ad-hoc group. The MS co-Chair also encouraged delegations to reflect at national level how they could use the template and flagged the possibility of a workshop before one of the upcoming ERAC plenary meetings in a Presidency country to compare experiences.

### 6.3.b Standing Working Group on Open Science and Innovation

The Chair of the Standing Working Group on Open Science and Innovation (SWG OSI) explained that the SWG was currently finalising its Opinion on the Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020 and preparations for the next Framework Programme for R&I but that its approach had been slightly different from the other ERA-related groups as it was providing answers to the questions asked by the High Level expert group chaired by Pascal Lamy. The SWG was also continuing its work on the assessment of the Amsterdam Call for Action. Furthermore, the SWG had invited representatives from DE and NL to its next meeting to present the GO FAIR initiative that these delegations originally presented at the meeting of the Council (Competitiveness) on 30 May 2017.

The Chair also indicated that the SWG was reinforcing its work and analysis concerning open innovation but that it was not an easy task as open innovation is such a broad concept.

#### **6.4 Updates from the ERA-related groups**

The MS co-Chair informed ERAC about the status of the transition of the Helsinki and SGHRM groups as ERAC Standing Working Groups before the triennial review. He explained that the mandates had been approved by ERAC by written procedure and that a call for expressions of interest for memberships and the position of the Chairs of the groups had been launched by the ERAC Secretariat and was on-going.

Both the Chair of the Helsinki Group (HG) and the SGHRM representative took the floor to express their concern concerning the issue of meeting premises and to request that a long-term, sustainable solution should be found for the two new ERAC SWGs. Some delegations expressed the same concerns, adding that the issue of reimbursement should also be solved. A representative of the General Secretariat of the Council explained that, as already clarified to ERAC during the discussions on the review of the ERA advisory structure in 2015 by representatives of the General Secretariat and the Council Legal Service and again at the ERAC plenary in December 2016, the ERAC Standing Working Groups would become advisory bodies of the Council and with this status they would not be entitled to use Council premises for their meetings nor would their members be entitled to be reimbursed.

The HG Chair called for an urgent solution to the problem. The MS co-Chair concluded by agreeing that an urgent solution had to be found and indicating that further discussions were needed.

## **7. Any other business**

### **7.1 35<sup>th</sup> ERAC meeting (21-22 September 2017, Tartu, Estonia)**

The MS co-Chair indicated that at its next meeting on 27 June 2017, the Steering Board would draw up the provisional annotated agenda of the next ERAC plenary meeting on 21-22 September 2017 in Tartu, Estonia, on the basis of the updated Work Programme 2016-2017. He asked delegations to let the Secretariat know in good time if there were items they wished the SB to consider for the Tartu agenda.

### **7.2 Results of the meeting organised on 12 June 2017 on the European Open Science Cloud**

The Commission (Ms C. Asero) presented the results of the high-level meeting organised on 12 June 2017 on the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). She explained that the meeting had been very well attended both on site and online. Several commitments had been made on four key areas of implementation to the EOSC and High Performance Computing (HPC). Moreover, strong reference had been made to the GO FAIR initiative by the DE and NL delegations for implementation of FAIR data principles.

The meeting will be followed up by an "EOSC Declaration" which will be open for endorsement by stakeholders by the end of September. This Declaration will feed directly into the first draft of the "Roadmap for governance and funding". An EOSC Stakeholder Forum is planned to meet annually, and the Commission will present to Member States a proposal for the EOSC Governance Board in autumn 2017. The Work Programme 2018-2020 of Horizon 2020 is expected to include support for the key priorities identified for the EOSC.

The COM co-Chair concluded that ERAC would be regularly updated on the progress on the EOSC.