



Council of the
European Union

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COMPET 143

NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on 'Streamlining the Research and innovation monitoring and reporting landscape'
- Presidency text

Delegations will find attached a Presidency text on the Draft Council conclusions on 'Streamlining the Research and innovation monitoring and reporting landscape' with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on 6 March 2017.

**STREAMLINING THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION MONITORING AND
REPORTING LANDSCAPE**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING:

- its Conclusions of 1 December 2015 on the Review of the European Research Area advisory structure¹, calling on the Commission and the ERA-related groups to identify areas where monitoring and administrative burdens of reporting may be reduced through further streamlining;
 - its Conclusions of 26 May 2016 on "Better Regulation to strengthen competitiveness"² in which the Council welcomed the Commission Communication "Better regulation for better results - An EU agenda" of 19 May 2015³, and in particular the guidelines on monitoring, contained in the Commission Staff Working Document setting out the Better Regulation Guidelines⁴,
1. NOTES that monitoring and reporting on R&I performance and policies are intrinsic elements of sound, evidence-based and effective policy-making in research and innovation, both at national and at EU level.
 2. NOTES that the Commission traditionally prepares and publishes high quality reports on different aspects of R&I performance and policies, including on the Open Innovation, Open Science and Open to the World priorities, such as the [European Innovation Scoreboard](#), the [Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU Report](#), the [Industrial R&D Scoreboard](#), the [SHE-figures](#) and the [ERA Progress Report](#) and the [report on the implementation of the R&I international cooperation strategy](#).

¹ 14875/15.

² 9580/16.

³ 9079/15.

⁴ 9079/15 ADD 2.

3. ACKNOWLEDGES the continuous need to gather qualitative information and data to ensure an adequate monitoring of R&I performance and policies at national and EU level.
4. EMPHASISES that it is however crucial to streamline the significant administrative burden on the Member States, caused by monitoring and reporting. This streamlining should be guided by the principles of efficiency, proportionality and impact, to maximise usefulness of results for monitoring and permit better evidence-based policy-making.
5. STRESSES that in addition to the streamlining of the monitoring and reporting processes, further efforts are needed to exploit the information and data generated and to feed it back to Member States in a manner which is suitable for better policy design, implementation and evaluation.
6. ACKNOWLEDGES the work already carried out by the Commission as part of its endeavours to ensure Better Regulation across the board as well as its dedicated streamlining efforts in the field of R&I, such as combining forces with the OECD and launching a joint international survey on STI policies (hereby replacing similar surveys run through ERAC), the elimination of the former "R&I country profiles" and their replacement by dedicated infographics and the shortening and focusing of the "RIO" country reports;
7. WELCOMES the Opinion adopted by the **European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC)** on Streamlining the Research and Innovation reporting and monitoring landscape⁵ and CALLS FOR its implementation as soon as possible. In this context, ACKNOWLEDGES the overarching role that ERAC and the ERA-related groups play in the implementation of ERA and ENCOURAGES the Commission to further develop a regular dialogue with ERAC on monitoring and reporting issues, and adequate planning of forthcoming reports.

⁵ ERAC XXXX/17.

8. AGREES with the approach taken by ERAC in its Opinion on streamlining that:
- duplication of requests to Member States for information for different purposes should be avoided;
 - adequate and clear timeframes for the provision of information should be provided;
 - the reporting frequency should be such that it balances administrative burden with the production of quality and consistent data;
 - the usefulness and impact of R&I reports for policy-making is a key criterion for streamlining; in that context, adequate contextualisation of the data used is important;
 - the engagement of the broader stakeholder community will maximise the value of the reporting and the use of the resulting data;
9. CALLS UPON the Commission to:
- minimise duplication of information requests and information checks by Member States through the full exploitation of data and information available in the official databases of Eurostat and OECD or in other repositories; and rely to the maximum extent possible on the joint EC-OECD survey to collect information;
 - take stock of the purpose, content, format and identity of existing reports in order to revise its reporting strategy, with a focus on three main categories of reports: 'R&I Performance', 'R&I Policies' and 'R&I Rankings';
 - inform Member States in advance on planned reporting requests, including, where appropriate, those which will be part of EU commissioned studies in the field of R&I, preferably in the form of a calendar to be presented to Member States at the beginning of the year starting in 2018; keep Member States informed on any new streamlining measures taken to reduce the reporting and monitoring burden on them;
 - synchronise the timing between the various reports in the policy cycle as this will require less checks and validation by Member States, for instance by linking the timing of the RIO country reports with those of the EC-OECD joint survey on STI policies and the ERA Progress Report, aligning those to a more effective policy cycle of 2 years;

- develop novel ways of reducing the reporting burden through: e-tools; more pro-active communication on the reports; enhanced contextualisation of information through qualitative interpretations alongside quantitative data in order to ensure better the take-up of the analyses by end users and to inform policy-making; and smarter benchmarking of Member States in the reports;

10. CALLS UPON the Member States to:

- better coordinate at the national level, also between responsible Ministries and National Statistical Institutes, in order to ensure that all necessary information and data provided is provided in a timely and accurate fashion, using up to date and consistent information across the board;
- ensure the regular reporting of high quality, reliable and sufficient information on R&I evolutions, in line with the yearly planning;
- help increase the impact of reports by attaching to them the right political relevance and visibility through outreach actions at the national level and by engaging with the broader stakeholder community to improve the implementation and up-take of recommendations addressed to university and research organisation level;
- promote the exchange of best practice among Member States as regards the collection of information on R&I policy developments, the timely delivery and quality of data and analyses, and addressing reporting challenges such as cost and HR efficiency.

11. CALLS UPON the Commission and the Member States to

- ensure adequate contextualisation of information in the reports, including through the inclusion of qualitative interpretations alongside quantitative data, in order to ensure better follow-up of the analysis by the end users and to better shape policy action, by engaging within the framework of ERAC;

- properly coordinate any new and ad-hoc requests from the Commission services, the ERA-related groups and other groups in the field of research and innovation, to ensure that the information is not already available and to avoid duplication; examine ways to include the necessary and timely planning of these ad-hoc requests in the well planned and fixed reporting cycle;
 - achieve an effective balance between the value of reporting, its implementation and any necessary follow-up.
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