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European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Streamlining the research and innovation monitoring and reporting
landscape

- Council conclusions (adopted on 30 May 2017)

Delegations will find in annex the Council conclusions on 'Streamlining the research and innovation monitoring and reporting landscape', as adopted by the Council at its 3544th meeting held on 30 May 2017.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON 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, as well as the implementation and impact of policies are intrinsic elements of sound, evidence-based and effective policy-making in research and innovation, both at national and at EU level.
 2. 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.

¹ 14875/15.

² 9580/16.

³ 9079/15.

⁴ 9079/15 ADD 2.

⁵ ERAC 1202/17.

3. NOTES that the Commission regularly prepares and publishes high quality reports on different aspects of R&I performance and policies as identified in the ERAC Opinion⁶ with the aim of contributing to the European research and innovation policy making.
4. ACKNOWLEDGES the need to gather regular qualitative information and quantitative data to ensure an appropriate monitoring of R&I performance and policies at EU, national and regional levels where appropriate, to provide a sound evidence base for policy decisions and to encourage effective and efficient R&I systems.
5. EMPHASISES that it is crucial to reduce the significant administrative burden on the Member States and on the countries associated to Horizon 2020 through streamlining. This streamlining of monitoring and reporting processes should be guided by the principles of efficiency, proportionality and impact, to maximise the usefulness of results for monitoring and facilitate better evidence-based policy-making, taking into account the specificities of the national R&I policy landscape.
6. STRESSES that further efforts are also needed to exploit and share 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.
7. 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 closely cooperating and exploiting synergies with the OECD when applicable, including by 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.

⁶ such as the [European Innovation Scoreboard](#), the [Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU Report](#), the [Industrial R&D Scoreboard](#), the [SHE-figures](#), the [RIO Country Reports](#), the [ERA Progress Report](#) and the [report on the implementation of the R&I international cooperation strategy](#).

8. ACKNOWLEDGES the overarching role that ERAC and the ERA-related groups play in the implementation of ERA. STRESSES the importance for the Commission to continue developing a regular dialogue with ERAC on monitoring and reporting issues.
9. 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, within the logic of the “once only principle”;
 - adequate and clear timeframes for the provision and review of information should be provided;
 - the reporting frequency should be such that it balances administrative burden with the production of quality and consistent data and analysis;
 - 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 a broader stakeholder community to raise awareness to society could maximise the value of the reporting and the use of the resulting data.
10. CALLS UPON the Commission to:
 - avoid duplication of information requests and information checks by Member States and countries associated to Horizon 2020 through the full exploitation of data and information available within the Commission, in the official databases of Eurostat and, where relevant, the OECD or other repositories, including for contracted studies; rely to the maximum extent possible on the joint EC-OECD survey to collect information and consider progressively providing information on Member States and countries associated to Horizon 2020 through a single access point;
 - take stock of the purpose, content, quality, format and identity of existing reports in order to revise its reporting strategy;

- inform Member States sufficiently 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; to foster and maintain an open dialogue with Member States and keep them informed on any new planned streamlining measures that aim to reduce the reporting and monitoring burden on them;
- take into account, as appropriate, the input and feedback provided by Member States on the relevant reports prior to their finalisation, in particular the country snap shots and the related country data of the ERA progress report and the RIO country reports;
- 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 and thereby contributing to an increased quality of the RIO Country Reports;
- develop novel ways of reducing the reporting burden and enhancing the impact of reports such as: e-tools; more pro-active communication and dissemination on the reports, in order to ensure a better take-up of the analyses by end users and a better understanding of the methodology used in order to inform policy-making.

11. CALLS UPON the Member States to:

- better coordinate at the appropriate level, also between responsible Ministries and National Statistical Offices, in order to ensure that necessary information and data is provided in a timely and accurate fashion, using up to date and consistent information across the board;
- ensure the regular reporting of available, high quality, reliable and sufficient information on R&I developments, 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, where appropriate, with the broader stakeholder community to improve the implementation and up-take of recommendations addressed to different STI stakeholders.

12. CALLS UPON the Commission and the Member States to

- ensure adequate contextualisation of information in the reports, including where relevant through the inclusion of qualitative interpretations alongside quantitative data, in order to ensure high quality and relevant reports that enable better follow-up of the analysis by the end users and to better shape policy action, by exchanging information within the framework of ERAC;
- facilitate the exchange of best practice 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;
- properly coordinate any 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 of relevance, not already available to avoid duplication; to examine ways to ensure the necessary and timely planning of all requests in the fixed reporting cycle;
- achieve an effective balance between the value of reporting, its implementation and any necessary follow-up.
