

EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 26 May 2014
(OR. en)

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

– ERAC –
Secretariat

ERAC 1208/14

NOTE

From:	ERAC Secretariat
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Draft summary conclusions of the 19th meeting of ERAC held in Brussels (BE) on 27 March 2014

Delegations will find attached to this Note the draft summary conclusions of the 19th meeting of ERAC, held in Brussels (BE) on 27 March 2014¹.

Tasks to be undertaken have been *put in italic type and underlined*.

¹ Please refer to the ERAC website for all PowerPoint presentations given at the meeting and for all Commission and ERAC Secretariat documents relating to the various agenda items and circulated to the Committee ahead of the meeting (follow this link: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/era/erac/erac-plenary-meetings/19th-erac-meeting-27-march-2014>).

Chair: Rudolf Strohmeier

Vice-Chair: Krzysztof Gulda

Secretariat: General Secretariat of the Council

Present: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom (32).

Absent: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia (10).

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

The Committee adopted the provisional agenda.

2. Approval of the draft summary conclusions of the 18th meeting of ERAC, held in Brussels (BE) on 6 February 2014

The Committee approved the draft summary conclusions of the 18th meeting of ERAC.

3. Standing information point

Delegations were provided with papers on the state of play on the innovation topics Open Access and Public Procurement of Innovation (for practical reasons, the latter information was provided under Any Other Business).

4. ERA and Innovation policy

4.1 ERA Progress Report

On behalf of the Steering Board, Mr David Wilson (UK) presented a Note on developing an ERA Roadmap and the possible ways forward². The Note outlined the principles, possible contents, approach to doing the work and the timing for drafting the Roadmap

Delegations welcomed and generally endorsed the Note.

Delegations agreed **the principles** (1) to emphasise implementation of the existing ERA policy and not add new priorities; (2) to build on existing work and avoid duplication with ongoing work; (3) to keep the roadmap short and focused on European added value; (4) to concentrate on ends, not means, and so avoid overprescription; and (5) to keep the Roadmap a living document that can evolve as new issues arise.

The Committee also broadly agreed on the **contents**: the Roadmap should set the objective of significant improvements in the functioning of ERA in specific areas by 2020 and it should inform future monitoring exercises, as well as, in turn, use the outcome of future ERA Progress Reports to shape developments.

² See ERAC website referred to in Footnote No 1.

Concerning the **division of labour**, Mr Wilson suggested that the Steering Board (working together with the Commission) took overall charge of the process, including, among others, overall editorial control through an identified rapporteur. — The other ERA advisory groups should lead on the various chapters aligned with the the ERA priorities. — The Working Group on the European Semester and on ERA Monitoring should lead on the issues which do not have a clearly defined Group (e.g. effective national research systems). — ERAC itself will consider issues of overarching policy or direction. — The Commission provides support at all stages of the project, and Member States at their own initiative share any relevant national strategy documents as input to the Roadmap. — Each of the Groups should ensure that national stakeholder organisations are fully brought into the process in order to encourage ownership of the Roadmap by the organisations whose members will be central to its implementation.

With regard to **timing**, it was suggested that the Roadmap be adopted by the Competitiveness Council on **28-29 May 2015** (the Council having asked for the Roadmap to be ready by mid-2015). This in turn would imply adoption by ERAC at its meeting in **April 2015** (April being provisional planning by the future LV Presidency). Given this tight schedule for a substantial amount of work, work should start without delay. — ERAC agreed the overall timeframe. Mr Wilson undertook to provide a more detailed timeline for the June meeting of ERAC. Both the Chair and Vice-Chair observed that the ERA Roadmap as requested by the Council was a top priority for ERAC.

The Chair concluded that ERAC needs to look at the Council conclusions when developing the ERA Roadmap. In line with the debate, the following way forward / elements to be taken into account were agreed:

- Need to integrate references to basic documents (such as the 2012 ERA Communication with the ERA Priorities) and emphasise the European added value.
- Re the steering role for ERAC: there was a need for greater coordination with the other ERAC-related groups, while ERAC should be in the lead, as requested by Council.

- Focus on implementation including specifying the EU added value.
- Need for greater domestic coordination.
- Include international cooperation.
- Steering Board to take the lead, no need not for external consultant.
- Nominations for an ERAC delegate to draft the Roadmap should be sent to the Steering Board; Mr David Wilson will integrate the points raised during the meeting in a revised version of his Note, including how to involve the ERA-related groups and providing more detail on the timeframe, as well as providing more content on the different issues raised in the Note. A new version of his Note will be provided for the June meeting of ERAC.

The Commission gave an update on the preparations for the second ERA Progress Report³.

4.2 ERA-related groups

The Vice-Chair updated ERAC on the meeting of the Steering Board and the ERA-related groups that had been held on 7 February 2014. The meeting made it clear that the groups are working on the basis of their own agendas, which are not, or at least not fully, aligned to the 2012 ERA Priorities.

The Vice-Chair undertook to circulate a revised version of the list of decisions taken on 7 February which will include a time schedule for the self-assessments.

There was also a need for alignment of national research agendas and programmes, an issue that should be included in the work programmes of all ERA-related groups.

The Steering Board had invited the groups to carry out a self-assessment and pass on the results to ERAC.

³ See ERAC website referred to in Footnote No 1.

Delegations expressed the need for ERAC to take on a leading role in bringing about greater coordination and coherence (the present organisation of the ERA advisory work was said to be messy, unclear and not in line with the ERA Priorities as defined by the Commission and endorsed by the Council), as well as the need for more clarity on who does what, and for greater coordination among the ERA-related groups. The EPG subgroup should also be involved.

The Chair concluded the following:

- *The Steering Board will continue to look into ERAC's role vis-à-vis the other ERA-related groups.*
- Invited both the current and the upcoming Presidency to indicate how to take up this matter and provide guidance as regards the timing for any changes in the ERA advisory work.
- *Delegates should ensure support and preparedness for the review exercise at national level.*

5. Implementation and monitoring of the Innovation Union in the context of Europe 2020

5.1 European Semester

The Chair of the Working Group on the European Semester and on ERA Monitoring, Mr Ward Ziarko, presented the outcome of the ERAC Mutual Learning Seminar that took place on 20 March 2014 on "Efficiency of research and innovation systems for economic growth and employment"⁴.

⁴ See ERAC website referred to in Footnote No 1.

The Chair invited Mr Ziarko to do the necessary for the policy discussion that Mr Ziarko suggested for the June ERAC meeting, which could take into account the full report of the Mutual Learning Seminar.

5.2 Innovation Union Scoreboard 2014

The Commission presented the Innovation Union Scoreboard (IUS) 2014, which had been published on 4 March 2014⁵.

Delegations discussed the findings of the IUS, including the indicators used (which were said to be open to improvement, as they did not include, at least not explicitly, such elements as tax credits, clusters and spin-offs) and provided examples of initiatives taken at national level to improve innovation performance.

Israel asked to be included in the IUS.

The Chair asked the Commission for its conclusions, stated the importance of the IUS in keeping innovation performance on the political agenda, and emphasised the role of businesses as factors for investment.

5.3 Research and Innovation as new sources of growth

The Commission presented the outline of its forthcoming communication on "research and innovation as sources of renewed growth", which is scheduled to be released in June 2014 as a joint initiative by Commissioners Rehn and Geoghegan-Quinn⁶. The communication is expected to comprise three main blocks: investing in R&I for growth, reforming national R&I systems, and new challenges.

⁵ See ERAC website referred to in Footnote No 1.

⁶ See ERAC website referred to in Footnote No 1.

The Vice-Chair encouraged delegates to give feedback on the Commission's question as which concrete reforms have proven to be particularly successful in increasing the quality and efficiency of R&I investments. This could serve as input for the draft communication.

The Chair asked delegations to send any further written input to the ERAC Secretariat within 2 weeks (i.e. before Easter), so that their points could be taken into consideration by the Commission.

The Chair also invited delegations to consider an opinion which could provide input to the IT Presidency.

6. Mandate/Rules of Procedure/Administrative issues

6.1 Presentation of report for tracking ERAC impact

The Vice-Chair presented the final report on tracking ERAC's impact based on the input from Member States and Associated Countries⁷. The input by delegations had been insufficient for a reliable picture of ERAC's influence at national level.

The Vice-Chair called for more input from delegations who had not yet replied.

Several delegations pointed to the importance of ERAC, although this could not always be underpinned by hard evidence concerning the impact of the Committee's work. The Vice-Chair invited those delegates with alternative ideas for linking the report to send concrete suggestions to him.

⁷ See ERAC website referred to in Footnote No 1.

7. Any other business

Next ERAC meeting (5-6 June 2014, Crete)

The Presidency updated delegations on the preparations for the next ERAC meeting on 5-6 June in Crete.

The Chair reminded delegations that the term of the present Vice-Chair will expire in November and that his re-election or the election of a new Vice-Chair would need to take place at the October meeting.

The Steering Board will draw up the provisional annotated agenda of the next meeting on the basis of the Work Programme 2014-2015.
