



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 8 October 2014
(OR. en)

14016/14

RECH 391
COMPET 559
MI 750
TELECOM 173

NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

No. Cion doc.: 13197/14 RECH 366 COMPET 508 MI 657 TELECOM 163

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on the European Research Area Progress
Report 2014
- Presidency text

Delegations will find attached a Presidency text on the Draft Council conclusions on the European Research Area Progress Report 2014 with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on 13 October 2014.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
PROGRESS REPORT 2014

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- Its Conclusions of 29 May 2008 on the "Ljubljana Process - Towards realisation of ERA"¹ in which it sets out general orientations on ERA and of 2 December 2008 on the definition of a 2020 vision for ERA²;
- Its Conclusions of 26 November 2010 on the "Europe 2020 flagship initiative Innovation Union: Accelerating the transformation of Europe through innovation in a fast changing world"³ confirming that a well-functioning and coherent ERA is an integral part of the Innovation Union to strengthen the knowledge base in Europe;
- The Conclusions of the European Council of 3-4 February 2011⁴ which confirmed that Europe needs a unified research area to attract talent and investment and called for the completion of the ERA by 2014, including by addressing any remaining gaps in order to create a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation, as confirmed by the European Council of 2 March 2012⁵, and recalled in its Conclusions of 29 June 2012⁶ and of 18-19 October 2012⁷;

¹ Doc. 10231/08
² Official Journal C 25, 31.1.2009, p.1-4
³ Doc. 17165/10
⁴ Doc. EUCO 2/11
⁵ Doc. EUCO 4/3/12 REV 3
⁶ Doc. EUCO 76/12
⁷ Doc. EUCO 156/12

- Its Conclusions of 11 December 2012⁸, endorsing the Commission Communication on 'A reinforced European research area partnership for excellence and growth'⁹, including the setting-up by the Commission of a robust ERA Monitoring Mechanism, followed by a first Commission ERA Progress Report 2013¹⁰, acknowledging the state-of-play of ERA implementation at both national and European level;
 - The Conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 October 2013¹¹ which note the need to accelerate structural reforms of national systems and to strengthen progress monitoring based on robust data provided by Member States in view of obtaining a full European Research Area by the end of 2014;
 - Its Conclusions of 21 February 2014 on the progress report from the Commission on European Research Area (ERA) 2013 which noted the progress in delivering the ERA and called for the development of an ERA roadmap by mid-2015.
 - The need for close cooperation with Associated Countries in the development of ERA, and NOTING their contributions to the ERA Progress Report 2014;
 - [ERAC opinion on the 2014 ERA Progress Report]
1. EMPHASIZES that the ERA remains a major EU policy objective and the cornerstone of the Innovation Union flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the full integration of the ERA principles in this flagship initiative boosts jobs, growth and competitiveness.
 2. ACKNOWLEDGES that the ERA partnership has made good progress in delivering ERA and that the conditions for the completion of the ERA, set out in the Communication on a reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth, are now in place. Although much has already been achieved, further efforts of the Member States and research stakeholders are needed to make the ERA fully operational.

⁸ Doc. 17649/12

⁹ Doc. 12848/12

¹⁰ Doc. 13812/13

¹¹ Doc. EUCO 169/13

3. **ACKNOWLEDGES** that the second ERA Progress Report 2014 provides a comprehensive view of the progress towards the achievement of ERA and **AGREES** with the findings of the Report that the completion of ERA remains a gradual process and that more efforts are needed. It is now up to the Member States and research stakeholders, in close collaboration with the Commission, to implement the necessary ERA reforms and to make the ERA fully operational and fully functioning.
4. **REAFFIRMS** its commitment to develop by mid-2015 an ERA roadmap at the European level, which will provide a shared understanding of the ERA principles and concrete measures to implement them, together with a set of tools and best practices to support Member States in developing and implementing their national policies according to their respective specificities and priorities. The ERA roadmap will serve the purpose of guiding the national implementation of the ERA through tailor-made national action plans.
5. **EMPHASIZES** that the Member States are the primary actors to develop the ERA reforms at national level and mandate their implementation by research funding and research performing organisations. **ENCOURAGES** Member States to further identify actions, through their national and regional research and innovation strategies, including the relevant smart specialisations strategies, to be implemented as part of the National Reform Programmes in the context of the European Semester.
6. **NOTES** that fiscal consolidation affects R&D investments which are among the main sources of future growth and job creation. **ACKNOWLEDGES** that all Member States have adopted national research and innovation strategies; **RECOGNISES** the need to intensify our efforts to raise the quality and impact of public spending on research and innovation in accordance with these strategies.
7. **INVITES** the Member States to further strengthen their commitment to Joint Programming Process in order to strategically coordinate and align, where possible, their national strategies and research programmes and activities, aiming at better jointly tackling grand societal challenges; **STRESSES** that the appropriate Horizon 2020 funding instruments should continue to encourage the process of alignment.

8. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to launch a debate with the Member States aiming at achieving a better level of coordination and alignment of national research strategies and investments to increase the impact at the EU level on the societal challenges. INVITES the Commission to involve in this debate the High Level Group on Joint Programming.
9. While RECOGNISING the great efforts made by Member States to strategically plan their investments in research infrastructures, NOTES the need for further synchronization of national and European roadmaps on research infrastructures and for further pooling of financial commitments for the development of research infrastructures, including those identified by ESFRI.
10. WELCOMES the progress reported by the Commission in its first Report on the implementation of the ERIC Regulation, CALLS upon the Commission and Member States to take appropriate measures to facilitate the use of the ERIC instrument and to stimulate investments in ERICs, in particular as concerns in-kind contributions. INVITES the Commission to present the next ERIC implementation Report by July 2019.
11. UNDERLINES that evidence shows that open and attractive research systems go hand in hand with strong innovation performance and CALLS on all the ERA actors to work together to ensure that open, transparent and merit based recruitment becomes and remains a landmark of all national research systems, being also a pre-requisite for fostering all modalities of researchers' mobility, including across different sectors.
12. NOTES the persistence of gender bias in careers, of gender imbalance in decision-making roles, as well as the lack of a gender dimension in most of the national research programmes. INVITES therefore Member States to adopt and/or improve national policies and support to gender issues and work-life balance in public research.
13. CALLS on all the ERA actors to adequately address the remaining gaps in the area of open access to scientific publications and research data, effective knowledge transfer in research and innovation between public and private sectors and digital infrastructures.

14. UNDERLINES that the success of ERA will depend on research reflecting society's needs and challenges, and so INVITES the Member States to adapt national policies to facilitate the joint involvement of all stakeholders, including citizens and civil society organisations, in research and innovation activities.
15. RECALLING that the international dimension remains an important and integral part of the ERA, INVITES the Commission to further ensure the integration of this dimension in the ERA Monitoring Mechanism and in the next ERA Progress Report, including also input and impact indicators. UNDERLINES that the importance of the international dimension requires not only its mainstreaming as a fully integrated part in all the ERA priorities but also its strengthening as a specific priority of the ERA.
16. REAFFIRMS the importance of monitoring the ERA progress and CALLS ON the Commission to further improve the ERA Monitoring Mechanism in close cooperation with the Member States, also through ERAC and other ERA-related groups, and in consultation with research stakeholder organisations. INVITES the Commission to consider possible ways of monitoring the progress within the future ERA roadmap.
