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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on the European Research Area Roadmap
2015-2020

Delegations will find attached draft Council conclusions on the European Research Area Roadmap 2015-2020 with a view to the discussion by the Research Working Party at its meeting on 20 April 2015.

Changes to doc. 7297/15 are indicated in **bold underlined** for additions and ~~striketrough~~ for deletions.

Draft Council conclusions on the European Research Area Roadmap 2015-2020

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- The Conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 October 2013¹ 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) 2013² which note the progress in delivering the ERA and call for the development of an ERA roadmap by mid-2015;
- Its Conclusions of 5 December 2014 on the European Research Area Progress Report 2014³ acknowledging that a good progress in delivering the ERA has been made, encouraging further efforts of the Commission, Member States and research stakeholders to make the ERA fully operational, and reaffirming its support to develop by mid-2015 an ERA roadmap at the European level,

¹ Doc. EUCO 169/13.

² Doc. 6945/14.

³ Doc. 16599/14.

1. UNDERLINES that the ERA is one of the cornerstones of the Innovation Union flagship initiative and is a crucial component of the Europe 2020 Strategy focusing on maximising the potential of Europe's research systems, fostering innovation, strengthening the scientific and technological bases of the Member States as well as their competitiveness and capacity to address grand societal challenges, and therefore REAFFIRMS its commitment to make the ERA fully operational.
- 2 REAFFIRMS the priorities for the ERA as identified in the 2012 Communication on a reinforced European Research Area Partnership, including the international dimension of the ERA, and RECOGNISES the start of a new phase in ~~achieving~~ **promoting further development of** the ERA. Building on the experience of the existing ERA partnership, the Member States, the Commission and the stakeholder organisations should now ensure a fully operational ERA through coordinated efforts at the national and the EU level **while updating the ERA priorities**.
3. WELCOMES the development [and adoption] of the ERA Roadmap 2015-2020 by the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC). In this context, ACKNOWLEDGES the importance of the work undertaken by the Member States and ERAC **in close cooperation with the Commission and** in consultation with the other ERA-related Groups and the ERA Stakeholder Platform.
4. AGREES with the approach taken by ERAC that the purpose of the ERA Roadmap is to identify a limited number of top actions ~~priorities~~ **to implement the ERA priorities which will have bearing** the biggest impact on Europe's research and innovation systems; ~~and to propose a number of specific actions which might be taken to implement these priorities,~~ whilst fully recognising that national research and innovation systems across Europe have different characteristics and specificities, and that it is up to the Member States to decide upon the most suited approaches for their systems.

5. UNDERLINES the importance of the implementation of the ERA Roadmap at the national and the EU level and INVITES the Member States, ~~with the support of~~ **and** the Commission, to implement the ERA Roadmap and to integrate relevant actions, where appropriate, in national action plans and strategies. CALLS for effective use of the Policy Support Facility in this endeavour.
- 6.** ~~In this context,~~ INVITES ERAC and the ERA-related groups to propose by the end of 2015 a set of core indicators **and, where appropriate, qualitative methods** allowing to monitor the implementation of the ERA Roadmap. **These could form part** of a wider set of indicators ~~on the national and the EU level and to measure progress towards a fully operational ERA~~ **which should be developed in collaboration between the Commission, ERAC and key stakeholders.** **UNDERLINES the need to take the ERA Roadmap into account in the monitoring associated with the future ERA progress reports and** CALLS ON the Commission to **consider possible** **integration of** the monitoring of the ERA Roadmap into the ERA Progress Report 2016 and the following ERA Progress Report exercises, while avoiding creating **an** unnecessary administrative burden.
- 6.7.** NOTES the need to place the ERA Roadmap in a broader strategic context of Europe's growth agenda, including the Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy and the Innovation Union. RECOGNISES that significant efforts have been undertaken by the Member States to address the ERA priorities in the context of the European Semester. The relevant ERA actions and measures, where appropriate, should be embedded in the National Reform Programmes. CALLS on the Member States and the Commission for better coherence and complementarity between all the ERA actions, including those fostering quality and excellence of the European research and innovation as well as actions promoting innovation and growth, while taking into account the need to close the research and innovation divide across the Member States and regions.

8. INVITES ERAC and GPC, in cooperation with the Strategic Committee of Horizon 2020, to assess the coherence of the increasing number and forms of joint initiatives, especially those funded by the European Union, with a major emphasis on their European added value, feasibility, critical mass, complementarity and impact.

WITH REGARD TO THE ERA ROADMAP PRIORITIES

9. CALLS on the Member States to implement the top action priorities identified in the ERA Roadmap:

- **Strengthening the evaluation of research and innovation policies and seeking complementarities between, and rationalisation of, instruments at EU and national levels.**
- **Improving alignment within and across the Joint Programming Process and the resulting initiatives (e.g. Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs)) and speeding up their implementation.**
- **Making optimal use of public investments in RIs by setting national priorities coherent with the ESFRI priorities and criteria taking full account of long term sustainability.**
- **Using open, transparent and merit based recruitment practices with regard to research positions.**
- **Translating national equality legislation into effective action to address gender imbalances in research institutions and decision making bodies and integrating the gender dimension better into R&D policies, programmes and projects.**
- **Fully implementing knowledge transfer policies at national level in order to maximize the dissemination, uptake and exploitation of scientific results. RPOs and RFOs should make knowledge transfer second nature by integrating it in their everyday work.**

- Promoting Open access to scientific publications.
- Develop and implement appropriate joint strategic approaches and actions for international STI cooperation on the basis of Member States' national priorities.
and INVITES ERAC in cooperation with the Commission to review the progress towards the implementation of the top action priorities no later than in 2018.

10. HIGHLIGHTS the following points for possible future consideration:

- ~~7. REAFFIRMS that effective national research systems are central to the ERA and the European competitiveness and therefore UNDERLINES the need to strengthen the evaluation of research and innovation policies and seeking complementarities between, and rationalisation of, instruments at the EU and national levels.~~
8. RECALLS the need to further strengthen the Joint Programming Process, and ~~w~~Within this context EMPHASISES that the transnational cooperation requires revitalisation and therefore INVITES the Member States to better use the coordination instruments and develop better synergies with funding programs at different levels, ~~including the European Neighbourhood Instrument and the European Territorial Co-operation instruments.~~ CALLS on the Member States to better align the implementation rules and procedures in order to stimulate the cooperation on all levels and to avoid unnecessary administrative burden.

- ~~- INVITES the Member States to make optimal use of public investments in Research Infrastructures by setting national priorities coherent with the ESFRI priorities and criteria and in this context **HIGHLIGHTS the need to step up the efforts in the area of the Research Infrastructures and** UNDERLINES that the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds for these purposes should, wherever possible, be encouraged.~~
- 9.- UNDERSCORES the role of the human potential **capital** in the advancement of the ERA and the necessity to strengthen comprehensive human resources strategies **to strengthen regional and transnational partnerships** and therefore ~~CALLS ON the Member States and research organisations to use open, transparent and merit based recruitment practices with regard to research positions, taking into account the importance of mobility of researchers, including from outside the EU; **as well as from and to the private sector, and** the empowerment of young researchers by providing them with attractive career pathways. STRESSES as well the need to address the persistent gender bias in careers and to integrate the gender dimension better in research and development policies, programmes and projects.~~
- 10.- ~~UNDERSCORES the full implementation of knowledge transfer policies at the national level in order to maximise the dissemination, uptake and exploitation of scientific results as well as promoting open access to scientific publications. In this context RECALLS the new digital opportunities and challenges for research, in particular, the exponential increase of research data, and CALLS ON the Member States and the Commission for coordinated actions addressing the digital dimension of the ERA.~~

11. ~~RECALLS~~ the importance of the international dimension of the ERA and INVITES the Member States to develop and implement appropriate strategic approaches and actions for international cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation on the basis of Member States' national priorities. **HIGHLIGHTS the need to strengthen the EU as the global player while building on the successful bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Therefore INVITES to consider the roadmaps for cooperation between international partner countries and regions and the EU, while taking into account possible synergies and added value of coordination and cooperation between Member States as well as choosing the optimal level of bilateral, multilateral and European cooperation with international partner countries and regions.**

12. ~~11.~~ **UNDERLINES** that the ERA Roadmap 2015-2020 should mirror the possible evolution of the priority areas and actions and therefore INVITES ERAC in cooperation with the other ERA-related Groups to ~~revise~~ **review** it regularly **as part of the ERA progress reporting cycle**. In this context, STRESSES the importance of effective and efficient ERA governance and advisory structure in order to improve the coordination and monitoring of the ERA.