

EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA  
AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

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– ERAC –  
Secretariat

Brussels, 9 July 2015  
(OR. en)

ERAC 1210/15

**NOTE**

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From: ERAC Secretariat  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Summary conclusions of the 26th meeting of ERAC, held in Riga (LV) on  
16-17 April 2015

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Delegations will find attached to this Note the summary conclusions of the 26th meeting of ERAC, held in Riga (LV) on 16-17 April 2015.

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**Chair:** Robert-Jan Smits (16 April), Rudolf Strohmeier (17 April)

**Vice-Chair:** Krzysztof Gulda

**Secretariat:** General Secretariat of the Council

**Present**<sup>1</sup>: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom (33)

**Absent:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania (8)

## **1. Adoption of the provisional agenda**

The Chair welcomed the new delegates as well as the Ukrainian Deputy Minister in charge of science and research, special guest to the meeting.

The provisional agenda was adopted with the following additional AOB points: 1) a point requested by the SE delegation on the Lund revisited conference on 4 December; 2) an update from the FR delegation on the informal meeting of DGs to be held in Paris on 11-12 May; and 3) a point suggested by the Chair on the 22 May Workshop on framework conditions for sectoral R&I.

## **2. Approval of the draft summary conclusions of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of ERAC, held in Brussels on 24 February 2014**

The draft summary conclusions were approved.

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<sup>1</sup> The list of delegations present or absent at the meeting is based on the List of Participants that was circulated during the meeting for completion by delegates.

### 3. Standing information points

The Presidency provided an update on the ongoing discussion on the ERA Governance. The Presidency traced back the history of the discussion on the governance of the ERA-related groups in ERAC, the Ministerial lunch in the Competitiveness Council in March and in the Research Working Party so far, where many delegations believe there is a need for further discussions in ERAC. The draft Council conclusions currently include clear guidelines for ERAC and deadlines for the review of the ERA governance structure. The Presidency invited ERAC delegates to coordinate at national level on the draft conclusions.

### 4. ERA and Innovation Policy

#### 4.1 EU ERA Roadmap

The rapporteur (UK delegation) gave an update on the status of the ERA Roadmap since the last plenary meeting in February. A lot of comments were received on the draft discussed at the previous plenary meeting which the rapporteur team tried to accommodate, with one remaining outstanding issue from the DE delegation.

The DE delegation had distributed a room document with their suggestions for two changes in Priority 2b which were taken on board with a slight modification based on IT's suggestion in the wording. The Commission clarified that they would provide a facility to host the good practice examples that had not been incorporated into the ERA Roadmap.

The Chair concluded that the ERA Roadmap was adopted following the two changes agreed on and encouraged all Member States to prepare their national ERA roadmaps by the end of the year.

As regards the draft Mandate of the Working Group on Monitoring the ERA Roadmap, Ward Ziarko (BE) clarified that it was a limited Mandate focussing on developing the indicators for monitoring the ERA roadmap. The 1st meeting will take place on 8 June in Vienna.

Delegations expressed concerns about the number of indicators and the possible difficulties to interpret them. A number of delegates volunteered to contribute to the work of the group.

The Chair concluded that, following the agreement to include in the wording of the draft Mandate that the Working Group should cooperate with the ERA-related groups and stakeholders, the Mandate was adopted.

Delegations also had an overall discussion on the ERA Roadmap and a number gave updates on the preparation of their national plans. Delegations expressed the need for a political mandate from Council as a signal for developing national roadmaps given the connection between the ERA Roadmap, the Council conclusions on the roadmap and national R&I strategies. The need for more time for developing the national ERA roadmaps (beyond end-2015) was raised by some delegations, as well as the difficulties and need for coordination to define the baseline, objective, instruments and delivery for the national roadmap while pointing out that the exercise was worth doing. The Commission suggested it could assist in sharing good practice by organising a workshop on drafting Roadmaps. The Vice-Chair stressed that national coordination between ERAC delegates and Research Working Party delegates was key as regards the draft Council conclusions on the ERA Roadmap and its follow-up. The Chair highlighted the need for a political endorsement of the ERA Roadmap in the Council conclusions on the subject as well as on the need to have national roadmaps with ambitious timeframes in terms of delivering.

## **5. Mandate / Rules of Procedure / Administrative issues**

### **5.1 Election of the Vice-Chair**

The Chair informed delegates that one nomination had been received for the post of Vice-Chair: David Wilson (UK). As all delegations supported his nomination, David Wilson was elected Vice-Chair of ERAC for a period of two years, starting in June 2015. The Chair took the opportunity to thank the current Vice-Chair, Krzysztof Gulda for his tenure as Vice-Chair.

The Chair also informed delegations that there were two vacant posts in the ERAC Steering Board following David Wilson's election as Vice-Chair and Dan André's (SE) end of term in June. A note will be sent out to delegations calling for expressions of interest, in view of an election at the next ERAC plenary meeting.

### **5.2 ERAC Work Programme 2015-2016**

The Vice-Chair explained that following the inputs received at the last ERAC meeting as well as those received from the upcoming Presidencies, the 2015-2016 Work Programme had been updated. A more precise timetable cannot be provided at this stage, given the ongoing discussions on the ERA governance and the possible inputs from the informal Directors-General meeting organised by the FR delegation in May.

Delegations supported the idea of getting a debrief from the Directors-General meeting in May, asked to get more details from the forthcoming Presidencies and suggested the addition of other issues such as the simplification of the R&I landscape, support for joint programming, streamlining monitoring and reporting, updates on what other Commission services are doing relevant to ERAC's work, the Policy Support Facility and the outcome of the Lund conference in December 2015.

The Chair asked for further clarity from the forthcoming Presidencies on their priorities. For LU it will be research integrity and gender in research. For NL: indicators for the ERA Roadmap, ESFRI roadmap, Juncker's Plan, Open Science, improving the framework conditions for R&I and the ex-post evaluation of FP7. The NL delegation also informed ERAC delegates that there will be an ERAC meeting on 14-15 January in Amsterdam. Finally, SK informed delegations that their priorities will include key challenges for the business sector, the ESFRI roadmap, young researchers and widening participation in Horizon 2020.

The Chair declared the Work Programme adopted clarifying that it is a living document that will be regularly updated and called on the forthcoming Presidencies to see to what extent ERAC could help them with their respective priorities.

## **6. Presentation of R&I policy in Latvia and discussion**

Dr. Agrita Kiopa, Latvian Deputy Secretary of State for Higher Education, Science and Innovation gave a presentation on the recent reform on the R&D&I policy in Latvia. She provided an overview of the R&D&I system, the roles of the core actors and the reforms carried out in Latvia with the objective of increasing the innovation capacity and creating an innovation system that promotes economic growth.

Delegations posed questions on the how the ambitious targets could be achieved, the smart specialization strategy, how they managed to get support from the reforms, whether they had seen mergers in the research institutes following the reforms carried out, and what kind of reforms they had seen resulting in a boost of private investment.

The Chair thanked the speaker and stated delegates were impressed with the courage of the reforms carried out.

## 7. Implementation and monitoring of the Innovation Union (IU) in the context of EU 2020

### 7.1 Innovation Union Scoreboard 2015

The Commission provided a presentation on the Innovation Union Scoreboard (IUS) due to be published by the end of April 2015. The IUS 2015 focusses on a small set of indicators (25) and covers 44 countries. The EU's innovation performance has not improved in the last year. 13 Member States have a declining innovation performance and 15 Member States have improved their performance. The Commission asked delegations about the policy measures taken in their countries which have proven to be the most successful in improving the innovation performance, and which was the most important challenge for boosting innovation.

Delegations indicated that the indicators used in the IUS possibly don't match the richness of instruments available in the different countries and queried the Commission on why the Innovation output indicator was not included. Some delegations indicated the need to let the market lead, the need to have support at the highest political level, while others stressed the impact of the economic crisis on the innovation systems in Europe. The need to consider structural indicators over a time period was also pointed out.

### 7.2 European Semester

As regards the outcome of the 17 March 2015 Workshop on the R&I aspects of the European Semester, the Commission stated that one of the main outcomes was the agreement on the validity, pertinence and usefulness of the R&I element of the Country Reports and that the European Semester is key in steering national debates. Delegations proposed a number of issues that could be addressed in future workshops including the use of structural funds linked to Horizon 2020, reforms in the higher education system and their influence on the changing research landscape, as well as the need for ERAC to look at the European Semester from a strategic perspective, perhaps through a working group rather than a workshop.

The Commission also provided an update on the EC/OECD questionnaire, based on past inputs provided by ERAC. The objective is to have a new joint questionnaire based on the OECD STI Outlook Policy questionnaire. ERAC delegates should send comments by 8 May 2015. The first joint questionnaire will be launched in October 2015.

Delegations congratulated the Commission and the OECD for the simplification of the policy questionnaire and asked to look at it in relation to the ERA Roadmap.

The Chair concluded that ERAC should not forget about the review of the Europe 2020 strategy and that the Steering Board will have a discussion on how to integrate it in ERAC's work. As regards the questionnaire, ERAC calls for biennial reports and its link to the ERA Roadmap.

## **8. Any other business**

### **8.1 LERU press release on the ERA Roadmap**

Following LERU's publication on 16 April of a press release on the adoption by ERAC of the ERA Roadmap, the ERA Roadmap rapporteur suggested a few lines ERAC delegates could use if they were asked about it, namely:

- 1) the Roadmap does not contain new policy, it is an implementation plan;
- 2) the Roadmap is sending a clear signal on the main actions that need attention and will have the greatest impact;
- 3) the Roadmap is the result of an inclusive consultation process at every stage; most stakeholder organisations provided inputs;
- 4) ERAC will develop indicators by end-2015 to measure progress.

The Chair concluded that there was agreement on a common line based on the 4 points outlined by the ERA Roadmap rapporteur.



## **8.2 Invitation to Ukraine to participate in ERAC meetings as an observer**

The Chair informed delegates that following the signature by Ukraine of the accession agreement to Horizon 2020 on 20 March 2015, and pending ratification by the Ukrainian Parliament and some necessary procedural steps in the Council, Ukraine will be asked to nominate its representatives to ERAC as observers (Art. 6.3 of ERAC's Rules of Procedure). Mr. Maksyms Strikha, Deputy Minister in charge of science and research attended the ERAC plenary meeting as a guest.

The Chair concluded that Ukraine will be officially invited to ERAC as Observer once all the procedural steps had been followed.

## **8.3 Informal Directors-General meeting in Paris**

The FR delegation provided an update on the informal meeting of Directors-General for Research and Innovation they are hosting on 11-12 May in Paris. The main topic for discussion will be "Investment for research: new tools including Juncker's Plan".

## **8.4 Lund revisited conference**

The SE delegation reminded delegates that they had already received a Save the Date for the Lund revisited conference which will take place on 4 December to follow up on the Lund conference held in 2009 and take stock of joint programming and the next steps for tackling societal challenges.

## **8.5 ERAC Workshop on framework conditions for sectoral R&I**

The workshop will be held on 22 May in Brussels. Only one contribution had been received to the date. The Chair encouraged delegates to contribute to the workshop.

## 8.6 Next ERAC meeting (7-8 July, Luxembourg)

The forthcoming LU Presidency informed delegations that the meeting will start with an informal get together in the afternoon of 6 July. The plenary meeting will start on 7 July in the morning followed by a visit to a research industry in the afternoon and a Gala dinner. The meeting will continue on 8 July in the morning and will end at lunchtime. The Steering Board will draw up the provisional annotated agenda of the 27<sup>th</sup> ERAC meeting on the basis of the Work Programme 2015-2016.

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