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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on "FP7 and the Future Outlook : Research and innovation investments for growth, jobs and solutions to societal challenges" - Presidency text

Delegations will find in annex a Presidency text on Draft Council conclusions on "FP7 and the Future Outlook: Research and innovation investments for growth, jobs and solutions to societal challenges" with a view to the Research Working Party meeting on 14 March 2016.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**FP7 and the Future Outlook:****Research and innovation investments for growth, jobs and solutions to societal challenges****THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION****RECALLING:**

- its Conclusions¹ of 9 March 2011 on the "Interim evaluation of the 7th Framework Programme for Research (FP7), including the risk-sharing finance facility";
- the Conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 October 2013², stating that investments in research and innovation (R&I) fuel productivity and growth and are key for job creation while noting the need to accelerate structural reforms of national R&I systems;
- its Conclusions of 26 May 2014³ on the "Implementation of the Roadmap for the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure (ESFRI)" which welcomed the plans of ESFRI to update its roadmap in 2015/2016 and called on ESFRI to continue the prioritisation of all the research infrastructure projects of the ESFRI roadmap;
- the Conclusions of the European Council of 26-27 June 2014⁴ which outline a "Strategic agenda for the Union in times of change" with priorities set for the next five years in support of a Union of jobs, growth and competitiveness, including the need to invest and prepare our economies for the future by addressing overdue investment in R&I;

¹ Doc. 7585/11.
² Doc. EUCO 169/13.
³ Doc. 10257/14.
⁴ Doc. EUCO 79/14.

- its Conclusions of 14 October 2014 on "Measures in support of investment in Europe"⁵, which stress that the composition of public expenditure should be better orientated towards growth, notably in supporting of investment, and that the quality of public expenditure in areas such as R&I is critical for the investment climate, and agree with the need to focus on key sectors with EU-added value to boost the competitiveness and the growth potential of the Union, among which and notably R&I;
 - its Conclusions of 5 December 2014⁶ on "Research and Innovation as sources of renewed growth", referring to the need to raise the quantity and quality of public R&I investments in Europe.
1. WELCOMES the Commission Communication⁷ and Staff Working Document on the Ex Post Evaluation⁸ of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) as well as the Report by the High Level Expert Group⁹ (HLEG) and NOTES that many of the recommendations of the HLEG have already been addressed in Horizon 2020; and LOOKS FORWARD to Commission's report on the progress with the implementation of all the recommendations and suggestions of the HLEG in the Horizon 2020 Interim Evaluation in 2017.
 2. RECOGNISES the importance of striving for a European Research Area (ERA) and UNDERLINES the need to continue the joint efforts to develop the ERA and the importance of the current and future EU R&I Framework Programmes as instruments for its further development.

⁵ Doc. 14334/14.

⁶ Doc. 16425/14.

⁷ Doc. 5475/16 + ADD 1-5.

⁸ Decision 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the 7th Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013): "Two years following the completion of this Framework Programme, the Commission shall carry out an external evaluation by independent experts of its rationale, implementation and achievements." (OJ L412, 30.12.2006, p.6).

⁹ "Commitment and Coherence - essential ingredients for success in science and innovation", November 2015.

3. RECOGNISES the major contribution of R&I to competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and jobs; in that respect NOTES that FP7 has proved to be effective in boosting excellent science and strengthening Europe's industrial competitiveness, contributing to jobs and growth.
4. ACKNOWLEDGES the key recommendations of the High Level Expert Group as a valuable contribution to the design and implementation of future EU R&I Framework Programmes and on that basis PUTS FORWARD the following considerations:
 - a) EMPHASIZES that **excellence and impact** are the fundamentals of current and future EU R&I Framework Programmes to contribute to sustainable economic growth and jobs and build a world-leading, competitive economy based on knowledge and innovation, fostering open innovation, open science and being open to the world, and ENCOURAGES the Commission to explore the need for, and the feasibility of establishing a European Innovation Council¹⁰ as a means to foster disruptive market-creating innovation and streamline existing instruments;
 - b) ACKNOWLEDGES the Commission has already taken important measures in Horizon 2020 to connect **science and society**, as well as to promote open science, and ENCOURAGES the Commission to step up its efforts to bring science closer to the citizens and to involve citizens more in the strategic agenda-setting of R&I priorities at EU level;
 - c) SUPPORTS a strong **strategic approach** in order to address the most pressing societal challenges and to contribute to Europe's competitiveness through current and future EU R&I Framework Programmes, which should maintain a good balance between curiosity-driven research and mission-oriented R&I.
 - d) NOTES the increased number of large-scale, long-term public-private partnerships (PPPs) since the beginning of FP7 and EMPHASIZES that the balance and complementarity between such **partnerships and collaborative projects**, delivered through calls for proposals in the Work programmes under the EU R&I Framework Programmes needs to be protected.

¹⁰ As proposed in doc. 5475/16.

- e) RECOGNISES the importance to address the silos in the current and future EU Framework Programmes and SUPPORTS the ambitious **simplification efforts** initiated by the Commission under FP7 and scaled up in Horizon 2020, and ENCOURAGES the Commission, as simplification is a continuous challenge, to continue to explore the scope for further simplification for participants, especially when taking into account rapid changes due to technological developments; NOTES that support for innovation in the EU is too slow and complex to ensure global competitiveness and therefore ENCOURAGES the Commission and the Member States to further speed up the process of bringing innovations to market so that the current and future EU R&I Framework Programmes can contribute to economic growth and solving societal challenges much quicker.
- f) ACKNOWLEDGES that to strengthen the evidence base of R&I policy the **effectiveness of investments** in R&I needs to be properly measured and monitored. Macro-economic models for policy-making typically do not account adequately for the long-term benefits of public research and innovation investments and policies; CALLS on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to further develop evaluation methods and modelling tools to assess the longer-term impact of EU R&I Framework Programmes also at national level and NOTES the importance to systematically assess impacts of funding for R&I at EU and national level; RECOGNISES the role of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) and the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility to support this process, as appropriate; INVITES the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, to develop an agenda to improve current macro-economic models so that they can account more realistically for how research and innovation funding translates into economic growth and societal progress; and in this regard STRESSES the need to develop commonly agreed methods to systematically assess the impacts of funding for R&I at national level.

- g) HIGHLIGHTS the need to optimise the collection, analysis and use of **robust data** on the EU Framework Programmes and on R&I policy in general, including links to bibliometrics, patent databases, or by using new text and data mining tools, regarding the participation, results and longer-term impacts with a view to better monitor and evaluate the achievements of programme objectives in terms of outputs, results and socio-economic impact, and ACKNOWLEDGES that sufficient high quality data from participants and Member States is needed to assess the longer-term impacts of the EU Framework Programmes, whilst taking into account the need to minimise the administrative burden for participants.
- h) INVITES the Commission and the relevant national and regional authorities to explore novel ways, including smart specialisation strategies to fund R&I and to increase the **leverage effect of public R&D spending** on business R&I, through grants and new financial instruments (such as Horizon 2020 InnovFin debt and equity products), as well as to foster public-private cooperation; RECOGNISES the role the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) can play in this respect in addition to Horizon 2020 InnovFin facilities; CALLS on the Commission to step up further the provision of guidance to R&I stakeholders on how to engage with and benefit from EFSI, by using Horizon 2020's InnovFin Advisory service, the European Investment Advisory Hub (EIAH) and the European Investment Project Portal.
- i) ACKNOWLEDGES the need to better align policy agendas, research programmes and instruments at national and EU level, as well as the need to prioritise R&I vis-à-vis other public expenditure in the context of the fiscal consolidation efforts of the Member States, and ENCOURAGES the Commission to continue fostering **synergies** between different EU policies, programmes and funding mechanisms, to ensure performance and coherence, to maximise added value, and to encourage the development of scientific capacities across Europe. In that respect, RECOGNISES that the Commission and the Member States should aim for better use of other European funds, in particular the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), not only to facilitate and prepare optimal participation in the EU R&I Framework Programmes, but also to support R&I (related) projects and cater for downstream exploitation of research results for marketable products and services.

5. UNDERLINES the importance of **Research Infrastructures** for a functioning ERA and an innovative and competitive Europe, and WELCOMES the Strategy Report and Roadmap Update 2016 developed by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI);
- a) ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts made by ESFRI to further prioritise¹¹ Research Infrastructure projects on the ESFRI Roadmap, WELCOMES the identification of ESFRI Landmarks, RECOGNISES their continued strategic role in driving scientific excellence and innovation in Europe and CALLS on ESFRI to closely monitor the implementation of ESFRI projects, to periodically assess the status of ESFRI Landmarks, and to prepare the next ESFRI Roadmap update in 2018; RECOGNISES that research infrastructures and e-infrastructures are becoming more and more interlinked, STRESSES the need for intensified cooperation between ESFRI and other stakeholders and SUPPORTS their joint efforts for coordination of the national e-infrastructures investment strategies¹²;
- b) RECOGNISES the support of the Commission to the preparatory phases of the ESFRI projects; INVITES the Member States to continue their efforts in developing and updating national roadmaps for Research Infrastructures in line with the ESFRI roadmapping process and to secure appropriate funding in order to achieve their timely implementation; and ENCOURAGES the Member States to make full use of the EFSI for facilitating the implementation of these projects; UNDERLINES the importance of ensuring **long-term sustainability** of Research Infrastructures and INVITES the Commission to prepare together with ESFRI and relevant stakeholders a targeted action plan. WELCOMES the Charter for Access to Research Infrastructures as an open science instrument that enables a common understanding and harmonisation of access policies when disseminated widely in ERA and beyond.

¹¹ Doc. 10257/14.

¹² Doc. 9360/15.