Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 23 May 2024
(OR. en)

10182/24

RECH 242
ERAC 17
EDUC 179
COMPET 579
IND 277
MI 525

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	23 May 2024
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	9330/1/24 REV 1
Subject:	Strengthening knowledge valorisation as a tool for a resilient and competitive industry and for strategic autonomy in an open economy in Europe - Council conclusions (aproved on 23 May 2024)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on *Strengthening knowledge valorisation as a tool for a resilient and competitive industry and for strategic autonomy in an open economy in europe*, approved by the Council at its 4026th meeting held on 23 May 2024.

ANNEX

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE VALORISATION AS A TOOL FOR A RESILIENT AND COMPETITIVE INDUSTRY AND FOR STRATEGIC AUTONOMY IN AN OPEN ECONOMY IN EUROPE

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

– its conclusions of 26 November 2021 on the Future governance of the European Research Area (ERA)[1], in which it agreed on the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 with a specific action on upgrading EU guidance for a better knowledge valorisation, having amongst its outcomes developing and endorsing Guiding Principles for knowledge valorisation;

– its conclusions of 17 November 2022 on the New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA)[2], which stressed the importance to accelerate the access to scale-up financing for start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to foster, attract and retain talents, including deep-tech ones, to improve and consolidate innovation ecosystems and to tackle the innovation gap in Europe;

– its conclusions of 2 December 2022 on Research Infrastructures[3], which recognised the open access policies of Research Infrastructures as a major contribution to stimulating knowledge and brain circulation and enhanced Europe's international collaboration in Research and Innovation (R&I) and reinforcing the competitiveness of the European R&I ecosystem globally;

1 14308/21.
2 14705/22.
3 15429/22.

– its Recommendation (EU) 2022/2415 of 2 December 2022 on the guiding principles for knowledge valorisation[4] - supported by the Code of Practice on the Management of Intellectual Assets and the Code of Practice on Standardisation[5], adopted in March 2023, as well as by the Code of Practice on Industry-Academia Co-creation[6] and the Code of Practice on Citizen Engagement for Knowledge Valorisation, adopted in March 2024[7]- which defines the concept of knowledge valorisation encompassing the creation of social and economic value. The recommendation emphasised the importance of developing entrepreneurial culture, practices, and of fostering transversal skills and also established guiding principles that should concern policy initiatives aimed at all ecosystem actors involved in R&I activities, including intermediaries;

– its conclusions of 23 May 2023 on High-quality, transparent, open, trustworthy and equitable scholarly publishing[8], which reiterated the importance of accelerating the transition to open science, and which invited the Member States to make scholarly publications immediately openly accessible under open licences and to apply the principles of FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) and "as open as possible, as closed as necessary" to research data;

4 OJ L 317, 9.12.22, p. 141-148.
5 OJ L 69, 7.3.2023, p. 63–74.
6 OJ L, 2024/774, 5.3.2024.
7 OJ L, 2024/736, 5.3.2024.
8 9616/23.

– its conclusions of 8 December 2023 on Strengthening the role and impact of research and innovation in the policy-making process in the Union[9], which recalled that regional development is primarily the responsibility of national and regional governments, which can use Union cohesion policy funds and the Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) to increase the interactions and cooperation among the different innovation ecosystems' stakeholders and reduce disparities; which encouraged the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to promote the role of scientific and evidence-based knowledge and its cross-cutting integration in public policies, by continuing the actions on mapping the existing practices of knowledge valorisation in policymaking, and invited the Commission to promote instruments and activities that value the 'Science for Policy' concept, including its knowledge valorisation dimension;

– its Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe, which provides recommendations that will support Member States, research organisations, funders and stakeholders in increasing stability and attractiveness of research careers in Europe, fostering inter-sectoral mobility and equipping researchers with transversal skills and an entrepreneurial mindset.

9 16450/23.

GENERAL POLICY PERSPECTIVES

1. REFERS to the Union's efforts to overcome its vulnerability due to the recent and current crises and to the complex geopolitical situation it faces, as well as to address the challenge to decrease the Union's dependency on energy, electronic components and critical raw materials, which can impact its industrial competitiveness, global technological leadership, security, and the well-being of its citizens. EMPHASIZES that this situation calls for an urgent enhancement of the Union's resilience and fostering of its strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy[10], which heavily relies on delivering innovation within European industry and on investments in Union's scientific and technological bases. HIGHLIGHTS that more efficient knowledge valorisation is crucial for boosting the Union's industrial competitiveness at the global scale and can contribute to the green transition and the digital transformation of society.

2. STRESSES that the Union is undeniably recognised for its excellence in research in terms of quality, originality, impact, international contributions, and peer recognition. This excellence is a result of sustained support for R&I activities, such as fundamental and applied research and through the promotion of collaborative research, entrepreneurship, startups, and scale-ups, including through its successive Research and Innovation Framework Programmes.

3. ACKNOWLEDGES, however, that the EU faces challenges in translating R&I results into societal use and economic value and in retaining the latter within the EU. Addressing these challenges is a precondition for knowledge valorisation and is vital for the functioning of the internal market and for the wellbeing and prosperity of society. Effective knowledge valorisation of R&I is a cornerstone for catalysing this process, ensuring that the Union generates innovative potential and capitalises on it.

---

10 "Achieving strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy is a key objective of the Union"; Special meeting of the European Council (1 and 2 October 2020) – Conclusions, paragraph 3, EUCO13/20.

4. CONSIDERS that knowledge valorisation is a powerful tool for fostering the Union's resilience. By strategically leveraging and translating knowledge into practical and innovative solutions, the Union and its Member States can reinforce their global competitiveness and resilience. To this end, the Union and its Member States should focus on strengthening the European knowledge valorisation capacities and on developing a strong European knowledge valorisation culture along with a strategy to enhance research security.

STRENGTHENING THE KNOWLEDGE VALORISATION CAPACITIES

Funding tools, policies and frameworks to support knowledge valorisation activities

5. HIGHLIGHTS the need to boost existing tools and to initiate new approaches designed to facilitate the transformation of knowledge and intellectual assets into tangible outcomes, fostering innovation and prosperity. STRESSES the role, in that regard, of technology centres, incubators, living labs, innovation platforms, foresight and networks, training and capacity building events, amongst others. CALLS ON Member States to connect the actors of these initiatives to improve the uptake of innovations in industry, public sector and society. INVITES the Commission to further support the Member States in the implementation of the relevant ERA policy actions.

6. UNDERLINES the strategic importance of critical and emerging technologies – such as artificial intelligence, life-science technologies and advanced materials - in strengthening the Union's position in global value chains and driving its resilience and sustainability, including its strategic reindustrialisation goals. STRESSES that the widespread adoption of these technologies is key for maintaining the Union's technological leadership and for facilitating smarter and more cost-effective production within the Union. Additionally, their role extends to addressing major societal challenges related to democracy, inclusiveness, public health and wellbeing, security, and climate change. ACKNOWLEDGES that the development and deployment of these technologies depend heavily on excellent research and technological breakthroughs. In that context, HIGHLIGHTS the role of fundamental research in the creation of knowledge that nurtures new and disruptive technologies. Therefore, UNDERLINES the need to adequately invest in fundamental research - including collaborative research - and in Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (SSAH) - to respond to the societal needs and to sustain the basis of Union's competitiveness.

7. EMPHASISES the importance of assessing the market access performance of knowledge created and CALLS ON the Commission to analyse the adequacy and efficiency of EU funding tools for knowledge valorisation activities and the synergies between them, across EU programmes and initiatives, considering R&I actors' input and ensuring coverage of the continuum of R&I activities from fundamental research to market and societal uptake.

8. CALLS ON the Commission to improve synergies between Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe Programme, Erasmus +, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Defence Fund, LIFE, the European Space programme, and other EU funds and programmes relevant for knowledge valorisation. HIGHLIGHTS the need to consider synergies between such EU funding opportunities at their design stage.

9. CALLS ON Members States and the Commission to promote the complementarity between regional, national and European funding programmes in supporting knowledge valorisation in a coordinated manner. ENCOURAGES Members States and the Commission to pursue the remaining actions of the NEIA. RECALLS that regional strategies based on the S3 and national Recovery and Resilience Plans are an appropriate framework in that regard. INVITES the Commission to explore with the Member States further opportunities for incentivising knowledge valorisation at national, regional and local levels, including through EU instruments in order to address the varying levels of research and innovation performance of Member states and regions by strengthening and connecting innovation ecosystems.

10. INVITES Members States to stimulate the use of living labs, incubators, knowledge communities, industrial demonstrators and regulatory sandboxes to test-drive innovations, to set up suitable conditions for private parties on the efficiency of these innovations, to facilitate raising seed capital, train teams, and to strengthen the role of research performing organisations and higher and vocational education institutions in knowledge valorisation.

11. STRESSES the need to facilitate the access to risk funding and the rise of private and public seed and growth capital, especially for spin-offs, start-ups, scale-ups, and SMEs, by working with the banking sector, private investors and venture capital funds, including through the European Innovation Council. ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to explore further possibilities in this direction, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

12. SUPPORTS the actions of the NEIA that aim to stimulate the uptake of innovation through innovation procurement in that regard, INVITES the Commission to further explore ways to support and de-risk the use of this instrument, to improve awareness and in-depth knowledge of innovation procurement in Member States. ENCOURAGES Member States to ensure the recognition of innovation procurement in their national and regional innovation strategies and to promote its uptake with the public buyers, and to consider encouraging public buyers to leave intellectual property ownership in public procurements to the contractors where appropriate.

13. INVITES Member States to strengthen the attractiveness of the European R&I ecosystem, including for investors, by raising the quality of the knowledge valorisation capacities, fostering the effectiveness and openness of research and technology infrastructures, the availability of skilled workforce and FAIR research data, the attractiveness of the regulatory framework and of international collaboration, while keeping in mind European research security when setting up international cooperation. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of facilitating the valorisation of research results in Europe, to leverage private investments and promote a resilient Union's industry development.

14. UNDERLINES the strategic importance of the public-private cooperation as the backbone of the knowledge valorisation process. CALLS ON Member States and the Commission to implement strategies that encourage businesses to collaborate with European researchers and to bring innovative technologies, products and services to the market, aligning this way research outcomes with market and society demands, and to facilitate such cooperation also through regional, national and European funding programmes.

15. RECALLS that strengthening the EU's technological leadership, economic resilience and competitiveness requires legal certainty together with the reduction of regulatory burden and the removal of legal barriers, to ensure that the internal market stimulates and supports knowledge valorisation. INVITES Member States and the Commission, within their respective competences, to offer enhanced support for SMEs, spin-offs, and start-ups to navigate through the regulatory framework, as well as standardisation processes and improved access to EU R&I funding programmes or other EU programmes relevant to the valorisation of knowledge.

Closing the gap in the network of intermediaries and facilitators of innovation

16. ENCOURAGES the Member States and the Commission to strengthen the capacity of academia-business intermediaries in Member States, such as Knowledge and Technology Transfer Offices (KTTOs), to manage intellectual assets and to investigate the market and/or the societal potential of intellectual assets resulting from Framework Programme projects.

17. ENCOURAGES Member States to enhance the role of intermediaries such as KTTOs by strengthening their professionalisation and encouraging capacity building and skills development that will allow them to detect value in R&I knowledge. ENCOURAGES Member States to explore supporting academia-business intermediaries in assisting business development activities, knowledge transfer and valorisation .

18. ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to explore the use of artificial intelligence for identifying the valorisation and commercialisation potential of research results and to promote the development of corresponding instruments in Europe, pursuant to the Artificial Intelligence Act[11].

19. ENCOURAGES the Commission and Member States to facilitate the interconnection of innovation ecosystems, research and technology infrastructures, pre-incubators, incubators, start-up workplaces, hubs, KTTOs, IT & digital environment, legal advisors and other relevant actors, including policymakers, throughout Europe, to stimulate a more efficient process of knowledge valorisation and knowledge dissemination to various beneficiaries. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of this interconnection not only in terms of efficiency, but also as an instrument to tackle the innovation divide.

[11] P9_TA(2024)0138, COR1.

20. ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to foster collaboration between the various actors of the knowledge valorisation process and incentivise them to approach knowledge valorisation as a continuous process, rather than as separate steps. CALLS ON the Commission, in that regard, to revise the Codes of Practice on the Management of Intellectual Assets and on Standardisation, when needed. INVITES Member States to promote the use of initiatives that support the networking of various actors in the knowledge valorisation process.

21. HIGHLIGHTS the important and specific role of research and technology infrastructures for knowledge valorisation and for strengthening the collaboration between universities, research institutes and the business sector. CALLS ON the Commission to suggest a definition and present the EU mapping of users' needs for technology infrastructures by mid-2025. CONSIDERS that developing an EU strategy for technology infrastructures as a follow up of this mapping is key for avoiding duplication of investments, for developing complementary assets and de-risking innovation processes, taking into account relevant work of ESFRI. To further enhance knowledge valorisation with the strategy, CALLS ON the Commission to foster the connection between research and technology infrastructures, facilitate access notably for SMEs, and develop support services related to intellectual assets management, training, regulatory or standardisation aspects .

22. ACKNOWLEDGES the relevance of EU regulatory sandboxes to enable experimentation and testing and to create a regulatory environment accelerating innovation, and ENCOURAGES the Commission to make concrete proposals on their implementation. INVITES Member States to use regulatory sandboxes with a specific attention for SMEs and INVITES the Commission to facilitate the exchange of good practices among Member States and further provide guidance, advice and support to foster regulatory learning across the EU.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF KNOWLEDGE VALORISATION

Fostering collaboration

23. STRESSES that developing a culture of knowledge valorisation involves fostering an environment where individuals, institutions and businesses recognise, appreciate and actively collaborate in the process of translating knowledge into concrete outcomes, and HIGHLIGHTS in this regard the critical role that research assessment has to play, in particular the work of CoARA (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment). In this context, ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to promote a collaborative mindset, including by raising awareness at the leadership level of research performing organisations; recognise and reward knowledge valorisation efforts; integrate knowledge valorisation into education; facilitate networking and communication; streamline administrative procedures and promote diversity and inclusion.

24. ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to involve the "quadruple helix" (academia, public authorities, industry and civil society) in the early stages of the research and innovation process. SUPPORTS improved industry-academia co-creation where they proactively pursue a common interest and jointly produce and valorise knowledge. HIGHLIGHTS the need to reinforce the trust of citizens in science and innovation by communicating about the benefits of knowledge valorisation outcomes in citizens' day to day lives. STRESSES the need to encompass both citizen involvement in research and user-driven innovation and RECALLS the importance of evidence-informed policy making.

25. ENCOURAGES the promotion of multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaborations in all innovation areas, notably collaborations between STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and SSAH that foster partnerships, joint research projects, cross-pollination for innovation and knowledge-sharing platforms to address sustainability and strategic priorities in social, environmental and economic policies. ENCOURAGES in this regard collaboration between STEM and SSAH at the level of EU-supported R&I actions**.**

26. HIGHLIGHTS that open science practices enable the valorisation of knowledge. This includes ensuring that research digital objects are FAIR-by-design. CALLS ON Member States to adopt frameworks that facilitate the strategic management of intellectual assets by research institutions and researchers, thus enabling open science and open innovation practices, knowledge transfer and valorisation.

27. RECALLS the importance of intersectoral collaboration to improve knowledge circulation and valorisation; ENCOURAGES the Commission to continue incentivising intersectoral collaboration and mobility in its R&I programmes and INVITES Member States and the Commission to support organisational change towards more attractive and sustainable R&I careers within and beyond academia, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset.

Improving training programs for entrepreneurship and innovation in all disciplines

28. CALLS ON Member States to raise awareness about knowledge valorisation and intellectual assets management amongst stakeholders, including at an early stage of researchers' careers. ENCOURAGES providing stakeholders with training, resources and guidance on entrepreneurship, knowledge and technology transfer, intellectual assets management and policies, innovation procurement and Open Science ; and SUPPORTS the dissemination of best practices amongst Member States.

29. STRESSES the need to foster an entrepreneurial culture throughout training and mobility programmes and mentorship networks and taking advantage of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology's initiatives in its educational pillar towards entrepreneurial mindsets. CALLS on Member States and the Commission to increase learning opportunities for students and researchers on the specific needs of industry and societal actors, which will stimulate their research drive towards innovative solutions as well as their communication skills across sectors. HIGHLIGHTS that, to achieve an entrepreneurial mindset, it is important to access such learning opportunities from an early age.

30. ACKNOWLEDGES that it is essential to promote both SSAH and STEM skills by raising awareness through education, media or the arts, offering life-long learning opportunities, and enhancing job market's appeal. EMPHASISES the necessity for all fields of science and education to collaborate with industry to address societal challenges , and the need to address bias in gender and diversity, as well as gender-imbalances, to nurture all talents, to attract role models and communicate widely about best practices in this context.

31. SUPPORTS the promotion of training, upskilling and reskilling of the workforce through lifelong learning, especially in the innovation and digital domains. SUGGESTS in that regard to mainstream training on intellectual asset management for researchers and entrepreneurs and to facilitate effective collaboration with KTTOs. STRESSES the importance of vocational training in this regard.