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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations
Subject: Draft Council conclusions on [the Future of the European Research Area]

Delegations will find attached a Presidency text on the draft Council conclusions on the Future of the European Research Area with a view to the discussion by the Research Working Party at its meeting on 21 September 2020.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON
[THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA]

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- The communication from the Commission of 18 January 2000 “Towards a European Research Area”;
- the Council Resolution of 15 June 2000 establishing a European area of research and innovation¹;
- the Council Resolution of 16 November 2000² on the need to deepen the debate on science in society, to increase public awareness and to reinforce the links between research policies and societal needs;
- the Conclusions of the European Council in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000 and in Stockholm on 23 and 24 March 2001 on the creation of a European knowledge-based society, including the emphasis placed on education, training and information technology skills and on the ethical aspects of biotechnology, respectively;
- that the Barcelona European Council in March 2002 agreed that overall spending on research, development and innovation in the Union should be increased with the aim of approaching 3% of GDP; NOTING that this initiative has been an important element in contributing to the successful implementation of the European Research Area (ERA);

¹ OJ C 205, 19.7.2000, p. 1

² OJ C 374, 28.12.2000, p. 1

- the Conclusions of the European Council of 3-4 February 2011³ that 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 2012⁴, and recalled in its Conclusions of 29 June 2012⁵ and of 18-19 October 2012⁶;
- its Conclusions of 2012 on “A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth”⁷ in which the existing ERA⁸ priorities were agreed;
- the Conclusions of the European Council of 2013⁹ calling for a fully functioning ERA by the end of 2014 as a political objective to accelerate structural reforms of national systems and improve the mobility and career prospects of researchers through adequate pensions solutions, transnational access to research infrastructures and open access to publicly funded research results and knowledge transfer as part of innovation strategies at national and European levels;
- its Conclusions of May 2015 on the “European Research Area Roadmap 2015-2020”¹⁰ which formed the basis for the subsequent ERA National Action Plans of Member States;
- its Conclusions of December 2015 on a “Review of the European Research Area advisory structure”¹¹ that formed the basis for a rationalisation of the advisory structure;

3 EUCO 2/11
4 EUCO 4/3/12 REV 3
5 EUCO 76/12
6 EUCO 156/12
7 Doc. 17649/12
8 ERA as defined in Article 179 of the TFEU
9 Doc. EUCO 169/13
10 Doc. 9351/15
11 Doc. 14875/15

- its Conclusions of December 2017 “From the Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020 towards the ninth Framework Programme”¹² in which the Council reiterated the importance of continued joint efforts by Member States and the Commission for further developing and strengthening the ERA, and emphasised the role of the Framework Programme as the main instrument to support the objectives and implementation of ERA;
- its Conclusions on the “Governance of the European Research Area”¹³, adopted on 30 November 2018, which invited the Commission to publish by mid-2020 a new ERA Communication for the period beyond 2020;
- the European Council conclusions of 21 and 22 March 2019¹⁴, which called on the EU to step up investment in research and innovation (R&I) in order to remain globally competitive in key technologies and strategic value chains;
- the Opinion on the future of the ERA adopted by the European Research and Innovation Committee (ERAC) on 17 December 2019 that outlined the main elements for a “New ERA”;
- [the Commission communication of XXX 2020 on the Future of Research and Innovation and the European Research Area].

¹² Doc. 15320/17

¹³ Doc. 14989/18

¹⁴ Doc EUCO 1/19

I. POLITICAL CONTEXT

1. STRESSES that the society as a whole in Europe and its underlying systems, including ecological, health-related and economical ones, are facing major and rapid changes due to a series of external and internal factors with a deep and consistent impact on the everyday life of all citizens. RECOGNISES the risks but also the opportunities of this fundamental transformation to the “European way of life” and the future of our planet.
2. UNDERLINES the importance of the implementation and up-grade of the “Leaders strategic agenda 2019-2024” adopted by the European Council in June 2019 addressing the most pressing challenges focusing on protecting citizens and freedoms, developing a strong and vibrant economic base, building a climate-neutral, healthy, green, fair and social Europe and promoting European interests and values on the global stage.
3. WELCOMES in this regard also the six new priorities of the Commission for 2019-2024 focusing on the essential areas of transformation including a new approach to innovation as stated in the “New industrial strategy” (“An economy that works for people”), the aspect of “Global Health”, Europe becoming the first climate-neutral continent (“European Green Deal”) and empowering people with a new generation of technologies (“A Europe fit for the digital age”) aiming for a healthy planet, preparing Europe for a new digital world and expanding its technological sovereignty.
4. WELCOMES the long-term planning of the current TRIO Presidency for ERA initiatives to achieve a dynamic and impactful ERA; UNDERLINES the importance to address the further development of the “New ERA” on an ongoing basis and to ensure a long term perspective in order to achieve the necessary impact; IDENTIFIES the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the “European Green Deal”, and digitalisation as the primary focus of thematic actions in the “New ERA”.

5. UNDERLINES the important interlinkages between the EU Framework Programme for R&I and the ERA. UNDERLINES that, within ERA and with respect to the world, ERA capitalises on the EU R&I Framework Programmes, which stand for both excellent research and world-class innovation in Europe. CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to ensure better coherence, in particular with respect to targeted measures supporting the “New ERA” across all parts of the FP.
6. *[WELCOMES the results of the ERA Ministerial Conference in Bonn, 20 October 2020, highlighting the “Bonn Declaration on Research and Innovation for a free and value-based R&I in the ERA”; CONSIDERS this event as the start of a policy-driven process to achieve direction and political commitment for the further development of the ERA.]*

II. GOALS OF THE “NEW ERA”

7. UNDERLINES that R&I and the knowledge they produce have a value far beyond their contribution to growth and jobs by providing an essential cornerstone of our European democracies.
8. RECOGNISES that the EU's progress and competitive edge depends on the resilience and health of its citizens, its public support systems and its economy; STRESSES the significant role of R&I in detecting risks, coping with crises and facilitating transformational processes in society and economy towards sustainable growth which are empowered by the benefits of a strong ERA.
9. UNDERLINES the essential role that the “New ERA” has to play to deliver the necessary frame for an effective, coherent and self-standing European R&I policy to reach this common goal; REAFFIRMS the relevance of a value based ERA that builds on freedom of science, openness, high ethical values, trustworthiness and which is people centred (“human-centric”).
10. DEFINES the “New ERA” as a value-based, excellence and knowledge-driven area, which stands for shared responsibilities, co-creation and co-ownership with stakeholders and citizens, smart directionality, equality, diversity, connectivity and inclusiveness and which builds on the diversity and strengths of the national R&I systems.

11. ACKNOWLEDGES that the “New ERA” should build on the previous achievements, be flexible and draw adequate lessons out of critical experiences such as the COVID-19 pandemic, produce the necessary knowledge for innovations and political decisions; AGREES that the concrete actions stemming from the “New ERA” will be directed towards:

- Transformational changes towards a more sustainable development and growth pattern;
- Enhancing the quality and societal relevance of R&I policies and actions across the Union based on common values and principles;
- Mobilising the full transnational cooperation potential of Member States in R&I.

CALLS on the Commission and Member States to ensure a greater involvement of R&I stakeholders and other relevant societal actors in the design and implementation of future-oriented ERA policies and actions. UNDERLINES that citizen engagement and the participation of society as such are key factors in bringing the “New ERA” to life.

12. STRESSES the need to make the “New ERA” more tangible, impactful and relevant for R&I stakeholders, researchers and citizens across Europe. UNDERLINES in this respect the added value of strategic and concrete ERA actions that should be jointly designed and implemented according to an agreed selection methodology, based in particular on the following criteria: EU and national added value, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, coherence and impact. UNDERLINES that the diversity of Member States’ R&I policy frameworks requires a variable geometry approach for the implementation of strategic ERA actions while aiming for a broad participation. CALLS on Member States, the Commission and ERA stakeholders to elaborate a relevant systemic selection methodology before the end of 2021. RECOGNIZES the potential of launching a small number of concrete ERA pilot actions in 2021 in order to maintain the political momentum in priority fields of action and to inform the elaboration of the systemic selection methodology.

13. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to further develop the concept of “ERA lighthouses” as defined in the ERAC opinion on the future of the ERA, notably in view of the future implementation of strategic and concrete ERA actions.

14. UNDERLINES that the “New ERA” has to provide a coherent, comprehensive and systemic approach both regarding the necessary concrete policy actions and the respective governance encompassing the local, regional, national, European and international levels. STRESSES the need for a new and reliable co-ownership between the Commission and the Member States to jointly develop this “New ERA” at all levels. UNDERLINES the need for policy ownership at national level for the further unfolding of the ERA.

III. CONCRETE ACTIONS

A. CONNECTIVITY

15. DEFINES the element of “Connectivity” as shared responsibility of the EU and its Member States to strive for better working and other relevant framework conditions at all levels to fully unlock the cooperation potential in the ERA at researchers, project, programme and institutional levels, including the factors of creating sufficient “critical mass” for cross-border cooperation.
16. STRESSES that Member States have the responsibility to invest more and reliably into R&I; URGES the Member States to reform their national R&I systems and their respective institutions and organisations making them more attractive, competitive and ERA compatible; UNDERLINES that excellence and impact are the key components of every strong research system.
17. RECOGNISES the particular responsibility of the Commission to stimulate and incentivise Member States reforms to achieve better “connectivity” in the EU, both by financial support through the EU Framework Programme for R&I, Horizon Europe, as well as through corresponding policy actions beyond financial support such as the provision of the evidence base, guidance, advice and monitoring activities.

18. RECOGNISES the potential for launching selected strategic ERA pilot actions in 2021 and CALLS on the Commission and Member States to further develop and implement the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) as the ERA strategic pilot action to foster “connectivity” within the ERA.
19. WELCOMES the significant progress made in further developing and rolling out the EOSC based on a pan-European federation of data infrastructures; RECOGNISES the EOSC as a major milestone to a “web of data” which allows for increased access to and reuse of research results and data in the ERA; CALLS on the Commission to continue its support for EOSC post 2020 and to submit concrete proposals for integrating those Member States that currently lack the necessary national infrastructures or framework conditions to participate fully in the EOSC and to report back to the Council by May 2021 at the latest.
20. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement strategic ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to foster “connectivity” across the ERA, based on a policy-driven priority setting mechanism. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to present an ERA action plan to foster “connectivity” in 2022. The elaboration of these strategic ERA actions and the corresponding ERA action plan should further detail out on the following topics in particular:
 - **Research careers:** STRESSES that enhancing the attractiveness of research careers is a vital element for the improved operationalisation of the ERA; therefore INVITES the Commission to update – in close cooperation with the Member States – the “European Charter for Researchers” and the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”, taking into account open science, gender equality and multiple career paths and the potential to strengthen the link with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). WELCOMES the Zagreb Call for Action in this regard, in particular with respect to the importance of early career researchers, the potential of tenure-track like mechanisms and intersectoral mobility, as a basis for further reflection on how best to address persistent obstacles.

- **Synergies:** UNDERLINES the need for creating more synergies between European funding instruments as well as between EU policies and funding instruments to maximise the impact of different sources of funding, especially between Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, the Structural Funds, EU4Health and the Digital Europe Programme, the latter with regard to building the necessary infrastructural capacities for research and development.
- **Freedom of Science/Academic Freedom:** ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts of the Bologna Process to strengthen and monitor academic freedom in the Higher Education Sector (“HES”) of the 48 participating countries in the EHEA and CALLS on Member States and academic institutions to apply the core principles of academic freedom and social responsibility also beyond the HES, in particular at public non-university research organisations.
- **Linking ERA and EHEA:** SUPPORTS the further development of the “European University Networks” as a flagship example for high-class universities in Europe profiting from transnational cooperation and on how to bridge education, research and innovation maximising excellence-driven research and high-quality-oriented training. NOTES that stronger synergies between the ERA and the EHEA are to be developed; IDENTIFIES research careers, training and the knowledge circle as possible fields of a more determined cooperation.

- **R&I Infrastructures:** WELCOMES the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) white paper “Making Science Happen” as a contribution to the “New ERA” striving for scientific excellence with impact. UNDERLINES the need to sustainably invest in national and European Research Infrastructures (RIs) throughout their lifecycle to enable them to contribute to excellent results in fundamental and applied sciences, also as a precondition for relevant contributions to societal challenges and policy goals; REMINDS Member States and Associated Countries as well as the Commission to better consider the potential of the diverse European landscape of RIs to contribute to the comprehensive and excellent base of knowledge that will be essential for the activation of the ERA as well as for enabling swift and coordinated responses to unexpected future situations of crisis. ENCOURAGES the Commission as well as Member States and Associated Countries to acknowledge and fully consider the potential of R&I infrastructures for connectivity and co-creation in the “New ERA”, including with respect to a better integration of national R&I agendas, for example through the cross-national coordination of services in distributed infrastructures; ENCOURAGES them to work towards the development of a sustainable European ecosystem of R&I infrastructures, taking full advantage of its essential contribution to FAIR data sharing, data quality control and interoperability, thus facilitating multi-disciplinary approaches to complex scientific challenges and societal demands. INVITES them in ESFRI to foster understanding and assessment of the costs associated with these contributions to Open Science as a precondition for sustainable business models of financing. REMINDS that providing sufficient transnational access to national RIs is key for excellence and inclusiveness. INVITES Commission as well as Member States and Associated Countries to make RI access costs eligible for an expanded set of funding sources.

- **Open Science:** HIGHLIGHTS that open science, including mainstreaming open access to publications and – where appropriate – research data, has a crucial role in boosting impact, transparency and integrity of R&I, and brings science and society closer together. ENCOURAGES the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to include open science practice in their reward and evaluation systems. POINTS OUT the importance of open science for open innovation and in this regard WELCOMES the initiative of the Commission to review the intellectual property rights regime. RECOGNISES that bibliodiversity in a context of open access to publications, multilingualism and the promotion of recognition of all scientific productions are relevant elements of an ERA policy on open science.
- Further possible actions/initiatives could include:
 - "The ERC could be further strengthened by establishing a network with national funding bodies. Such a networking initiative has a potential for increasing the European value added."
 - "We could suggest to develop joint R&I initiatives intensive in SSH to target issues such as human behaviours, deeper understanding of China, or education, taking into account priority research programs in the Member States."
 - "In the context of the development of big data driven initiatives at the interface of health, research, innovation and digital policies – like the health data space, the COVID-19 Data Platform or the 1 Million Genomes Initiative – it is important to agree on a shared vision in regard to privacy and other ethical issues. This could be a very good ERA action supported by many if not all Member States as a joint R&I driven policy action."

- “European research infrastructures are a key pillar of the European Research Area and one of its most successful achievements to date. Europe needs a robust, connected ecosystem of research infrastructures, based on the highest scientific standards, and creating essential framework conditions for excellent research, accelerating innovation, fostering higher education, increasing coherence between European, national and regional priorities and policies, and providing quality controlled data thanks to the data engineering expertise. This requires consolidating the existing research infrastructures landscape and continuously strengthening its capacity through investments in unique, cutting-edge scientific instrumentation and services, and working jointly to serve researcher’s needs across disciplines.”

- “Implementing a healthy EU R&I ecosystem might be considered as crucial in supporting EU and national efforts to achieve a knowledge-based economy and society. Our common efforts for an R&I-driven, competitive and sustainable economy could be maximized by increasing and intensifying the synergies between national and EU R&I investments and S3, coordinated and complemented by EU-level measures. Explicit focus of the ERA actions on (1) Research careers and Skills, (2) Research Infrastructures and (3) Knowledge circulation and diffusion, as per the 2018 Council conclusions on ‘Accelerating knowledge circulation in the EU’, could be considered.”]

B. DIRECTIONALITY

21. DEFINES the element of “Directionality” as a process of strategic coordination at R&I policy level with other relevant policies and the respective design and implementation of R&I driven policy initiatives that contribute to achieving the SDGs across Europe and beyond.

22. ENCOURAGES the Member States to engage more systematically and more consistently among each other and with the Commission before deciding on strategies covering sector policies with a view to removing barriers in their horizontal policies at national level. RECOGNISES the potential of the Horizon Europe “missions” to engage with other policy areas and CALLS on the Member States to establish national “mirror” activities to ensure broad societal engagement in the design and implementation of European “missions”.
23. RECOGNISES the “European Green Deal” as core opportunity to put the new ERA approach into action that should be translated into concrete policy actions including the rapid establishment of pilot actions; REMINDS the Commission and the Member States that the respective R&I investments should follow the principle of smart directionality in order to achieve the respective political goals.

Against this background,

- CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to come forward with action plans to set out the role of R&I in achieving these shared goals.
 - EMPHASISES that national investments are needed and CALLS on the Member States to commit 20% of their national competitive R&I budgets over the next ten years to transnational activities towards realising the “European Green Deal”.
 - CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to break up existing silos between different sectoral policies following the “whole of government” approach and to ensure that R&I policy provides more and adequate support for the absorption of knowledge and technologies in the different sectoral policies.
24. RECOGNISES the potential for launching selected strategic ERA pilot actions in 2021 and CALLS on the Commission and Member States to further develop and implement the “Green Hydrogen Initiative” as the ERA strategic pilot action to foster “directionality” within the ERA.

25. ACKNOWLEDGES that hydrogen is one of the most promising paths to contribute to solving Europe’s energy problems and that from a long-term perspective green hydrogen deserves special attention with respect to efforts aimed at reaching the Union’s climate-neutrality objectives; UNDERLINES that fast pilot actions are needed which integrate national and European efforts from the very start; thus
- a) WELCOMES the important role of research in the hydrogen strategy of the Commission.
 - b) WELCOMES the results of the preliminary “green hydrogen mapping exercise” and CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to build on these results to carry out a Europe-wide agenda process in 2021 that should result in the elaboration of a strategic R&I agenda on green hydrogen to be jointly implemented by the Commission and Member States from 2022 onwards. ACKNOWLEDGES the different national views regarding green hydrogen and CONSIDERS to organise the initiative on a voluntary basis and in variable geometry, while keeping it open for all Member States. ENCOURAGES Member States to ensure coherence with national measures.
26. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement strategic ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to foster “directionality” across the ERA, based on a policy-driven priority setting mechanism. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to present an ERA action plan to foster “directionality” in 2022. The elaboration of these strategic ERA actions and the corresponding ERA action plan should further detail out on the following topics in particular:
- **European Resilience Initiative:** ACKNOWLEDGES the measures initiated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the “ERAvsCorona” action plan and the creation of the “European Health Data Space”; RECOGNISES the need to continue to act on the challenges imposed by the crisis and to work on advanced prevention and response structures to enhance Europe’s resilience in the future; CALLS on the Commission and Member States to set up a medium-term joint and coordinated R&I driven policy initiative [ERA lighthouse].

- **Artificial Intelligence:** RECOGNISES the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as one of the R&I areas with the strongest possible impact on business and society; REMINDS that a coherent and strategic approach to the different activities on the European and national level is strongly needed based on our common European values and ethical principles and with the aim to strive for a global outreach; CALLS on the Commission to submit a proposal to pursue the establishment of a Europe-wide AI network with global outreach, integrating the different strands of AI related activities with the goal of enhancing the impact.

- **European Partnerships:** WELCOMES the significant progress made in developing a new strategic and comprehensive approach towards European R&I partnerships and preparing the new “Strategic Coordinating Process”; UNDERLINES that partnerships linking national and European investments and political commitment will also play a vital role in the new directionality. CALLS on Member States to fully use the potential of partnerships and missions to achieve jointly scale and scope in Europe to effectively address the SDGs, including by providing appropriate national financial and in-kind contributions to complement EU-level initiatives. CALLS on the Commission to ensure the timely launch of the Strategic Coordinating Process for Partnerships at the beginning of 2021.

- **EUREKA:** RECOGNISES that the activities funded by the EU on directionality are closely interlinked with those of EUREKA; ACKNOWLEDGES the significant achievements of EUREKA in contributing to the European ecosystem in R&I and especially to the external dimension of ERA; NOTES the need to ensure complementarity between EU and EUREKA activities. WELCOMES the planned [Framework agreement/Memorandum of Understanding] and CALLS on the Commission and Member States:
 - to contribute to further develop EUREKA as a leading pan-European structure to implement bi- and multilateral close-to-market R&I activities by industry and academia, in particular focusing on pressing questions like Global Health, “Green Deal” and digitalisation, and involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-caps;

- to utilise EUREKA public-private partnerships to develop solutions to pressing questions in a fast and flexible manner, especially building on the added value of strong communities;
 - to foster European and international R&I collaboration of SMEs for improving their competitiveness, including stretching out to Western Balkans and Africa;
 - to broaden the scope of joint activities between Commission, Member States, Research and Technology Organisations and EUREKA by developing new formats, inter alia for providing venture capital for bringing applied research to markets and for SMEs to grow.
- **International Cooperation:** STRESSES the political importance of the external dimension of ERA; WELCOMES the new partnership between the Commission and the Member States regarding science, technology and innovation (STI) cooperation agreements and “Science Diplomacy”; RECOGNISES the field of international cooperation as one of the most important fields in which Commission and Member States have to coordinate more effectively in order to achieve not only a “smarter engagement” in full respect of the principles of reciprocity, transparency, common values and intellectual property rights, but also more impact with regard to overarching goals such as the SDGs and the “European Green Deal”; therefore
 - IDENTIFIES the further development and deepening of the cooperation with Africa and the Eastern Partnership countries as relevant geographical priorities;
 - UNDERLINES the need to strengthen the cooperation with the Western Balkan region and WELCOMES respective initiatives;
 - ACKNOWLEDGES the current efforts in establishing a Europe-wide network of China Competence Centres.
 - [Further possible actions/initiatives could include:

- “International cooperation and corresponding safety issues have been discussed often recently. A European strategy on this topic would be a good concrete ERA action.”]

C. VISIBILITY: INTERACTION WITH SOCIETY

27. DEFINES the element of “Visibility” as joint efforts by the EU and Member States to increase the interaction with society in the design, implementation and knowledge exchange of R&I initiatives at both project and programme levels.
28. AGREES that an increased interaction with society and its citizens is key to the next phase of European R&I policy; ACKNOWLEDGES that not only more awareness among citizens of the impact and benefits of R&I in their daily lives but also more involvement of the society from policy design to implementation and monitoring is needed; STRESSES the need to provide to the broader public and society fact-based, science-driven evidence as a basis for functioning democracies and value-driven processes.
29. RECOGNISES the potential for launching selected strategic ERA pilot actions in 2021 and CALLS on the Commission and Member States to further develop and implement the “plastic pirates” citizen science campaign as the ERA strategic pilot action to foster “visibility” within the ERA.
30. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement strategic ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to foster “visibility” across the ERA, based on a policy-driven priority setting mechanism. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to present an ERA action plan to foster “visibility” in 2022. The elaboration of these strategic ERA actions and the corresponding ERA action plan should further detail out on the following topics in particular:
 - **Citizen Science Campaigns:** CALLS on the Member States and the Commission to organise at least every two years a Europe-wide Citizen Science Campaign.

- **Science Communication:** CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to establish a new “EU Science Media Network” that offers access to up-to-date scientific insights on contemporary topics to the European public, the media and politics. ENCOURAGES Member States and the Commission to reinforce efforts to improve public awareness of science and technology, to stimulate the popularisation of science and the interest of the media in this respect; to boost science education and develop strategies to attract the younger generation to careers in science and technology. CALLS on the Member States and the Commission, in close cooperation with the scientific community, to promote ERA and the role of ERA in citizen’s life through regular events of high visibility and quality presenting important topics of scientific and technological research and exploring scientific and technological issues of interest to the public at large.
- **Citizen Engagement:** RECOGNISES the potential of the annual “R&I Days” to serve as a platform to engage with citizens on ERA-related issues in a more systematic way and CALLS on the Commission in close cooperation with the Member States to integrate citizens’ oriented ERA activities in the future “R&I Days”. WELCOMES the pilot actions on citizen engagement on European “Missions” as a learning tool in order to build a long term agenda on interaction with society. UNDERLINES the relevance of social innovations as a particular opportunity to empowering citizens in R&I policy design and implementation.

D. BROAD INCLUSIVENESS

31. DEFINES the element of “Inclusiveness” as measures at national and/or EU level to promote and facilitate openness and inclusiveness of collaboration networks and to ensure a broad and non-discriminatory participation of researchers and R&I stakeholders across Europe in ERA activities in order to fully activate and use the potential of ERA to contribute to national and European policy objectives.

32. REMINDS with great concern that the gender balance remains unequally implemented across Member States, still preventing Europe from using the full potential of its R&I system aiming for excellence.
33. RECOGNISES the potential for launching selected strategic ERA pilot actions in 2021 and CALLS on the Commission and Member States to further develop the EURAXESS initiative as the ERA strategic pilot action to foster “inclusiveness” within the ERA.
34. CALLS on the Commission to strengthen the EURAXESS network as an instrument for removing barriers of mobility; CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to accelerate the digital transformation in science, education and innovation, and make full use of digital tools to enable location-independent access to scientific data, services and networks.
35. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement strategic ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to foster “inclusiveness” across the ERA, based on a policy-driven priority setting mechanism. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to present an ERA action plan to foster “inclusiveness” in 2022. The elaboration of these strategic ERA actions and the corresponding ERA action plan should further detail out on the following topics in particular:
- **Brain Circulation:** REITERATES that the phenomenon of “brain drain” still represents a major challenge in and for Member States having its roots in a number of different socio-economic factors at local, regional and national levels. RECOGNISES that mobility of researchers is a key feature of modern science and needed for ensuring world-class results. ACKNOWLEDGES the need for Member States to constantly reform their national systems and ensure the necessary institutional and organisational reforms in order to improve their attractiveness for excellent researchers including with the support of Horizon Europe’s dedicated instruments. ACKNOWLEDGES that promoting brain circulation is a core dimension for future ERA work on research careers. STRESSES the need in light of promoting “brain circulation” to increase mobility incentives and incentives for research excellence on national levels and CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to accelerate the digital transformation in science, education and innovation and make full use of digital tools to enable location-independent access to scientific data, services and networks.

- **Science Management:** RECOGNISES the growing need for exchange on the level of science management where networking and mutual learning becomes a key factor for the professionalisation of research and funding organisations and their ability to participate in international research projects; based on the positive experience of national mobility programmes for science managers, CALLS on the Commission to submit a proposal for a Europe-wide mobility programme for science managers (“ERA Fellows”).
- **COST:** Acknowledges COST as a significant R&I instrument and entrance portal to the ERA by fostering European research cooperation, including through its inclusiveness and bottom-up approach; CALLS on the Commission and the Member States
 - to reinforce COST’s role as a leading networking instrument in ERA through connecting, empowering and retaining in particular young researchers in order to enhance European cooperation and address pressing societal challenges;
 - to support the free circulation of scientists, including the development of research careers through connecting excellent researchers in the ERA and beyond, in particular fostering the participation of European Neighbourhood countries, e.g. through COST training schools and short term mobility mechanisms.
- [Further possible actions/initiatives could include:

- “We suggest the following overall initiative ‘Inclusive ERA’ that could amount to many concrete actions e.g. (i) openness and transparency of the existing networks towards the global R&D community; (ii) cooperation between the low and high performing Member States based on the scientific excellence in order to maximize the utilization of the most advanced research infrastructures and foster collaborative networks through creating new or significant upgrading of existing centres of excellence; (iii) strengthening and inciting wider and more inclusive collaborative networks across the EU and across sectors; (iv) increasing utilization of existing funding programmes and initiatives that promote, facilitate and consolidate inclusive collaborative networks.”]

IV. NEXT STEPS

36. INVITES the future Presidencies of the Council of the European Union to organise “ERA Ministerial Conferences” at least every two years in close cooperation with the Commission with the aim of deciding on further actions for the implementation of the “New ERA” and to take stock of the development and the achievements of the current ERA initiatives.
37. CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to set out in 2021 a multi-level governance model based on the new ERA narrative that is driven by the following principles:
 - **Inclusiveness:** Involvement of all Member States in cooperation with countries associated to the Framework Programme including, where appropriate, regional authorities and stakeholders such as universities and research organisations, business and civil society.
 - **Effectiveness:** Defining governance processes apt to implement the ERA priorities by setting common objectives and deciding on the necessary steps to implement ERA initiatives, involving sectoral policies where appropriate.
 - **Coherence:** Striving for more exchange and cooperation with relevant sectoral policies to address structural issues outside the narrow remit of R&I policy.

- **Efficiency:** Linking up with the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2021-2024 to enhance the prospects for alignment of R&I policies and measures at an early stage, thus broadening the scope and impact of national and EU R&I actions.
- **Evidence-based approach:** Fostering, in close cooperation with the Commission, a review of the ERA monitoring system including its indicators and reporting procedures and seeking to provide technical and expert assistance to Member States for the improvement of national ERA monitoring activities and their connection to the European Semester.
- **Relevance:** Policy-driven and priority-setting mechanism endorsed by the Council, inter alia prepared through regular ERA ministerials, involving stakeholders and partners beyond the Member States, as appropriate.

38. COMMENDS the implementation of the ERAC action plan, in line with the Council Conclusions of 20 November 2018, and INVITES the Commission and the Member States to decide on the scope and design of the initiatives contained in these Council Conclusions and, in cooperation with ERAC, to establish and regularly update a roadmap for their implementation.
39. CALLS on ERAC to assess the question whether and to which extent legislative action (for instance a Council Recommendation) in the field of ERA might speed up the further deepening of ERA.
