

EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

– ERAC –
Secretariat

Brussels, 22 November 2019
(OR. en)

ERAC 1215/19

NOTE

From: ERAC Secretariat
To: ERAC delegations

Subject: Summary conclusions of the 43rd ERAC plenary meeting on 2 October 2019 in Helsinki

Delegations will find annexed to this Note the summary conclusions of the 43rd ERAC plenary meeting on 2 October 2019 in Helsinki, as adopted by written procedure.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

43rd ERAC plenary meeting, 2 October 2019 in Helsinki

Co-Chairs: Jean-Eric Paquet / Christian Naczinsky

Secretariat: General Secretariat of the Council

Present: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom (33)

Absent: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine (11)

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes as set out in document [CM 3552/1/19 REV 1](#).

The ERAC co-Chairs welcomed the new ERAC delegates.

2. Summary conclusions of the 42nd ERAC plenary meeting on 6 June 2019

The summary conclusions of the 42nd meeting of ERAC, held on 6 June 2019 in Brussels, were approved by written procedure on 18 September 2019, as set out in document [ERAC 1211/19](#).

3. Information from the co-Chairs and Presidency

- ERAC was debriefed on the outcome of the ERAC Steering Board of 2 July 2019.
- The MS co-Chair outlined that the next strategic debate at DG level for the December ERAC plenary will focus on two topics¹:
 - Quantitative targets for investments in R&I and with directionality towards sustainability, and
 - Knowledge circulation and mobility of resources/brain circulation linked to inclusiveness

The Commission will organise a workshop prior to the December ERAC plenary on these subjects, including preparation of background notes.

- Delegations were debriefed on a joint informal working lunch between the ERAC co-Chairs and members of the Bologna Follow-up Group on 20 September to explore possible options for cooperation without creating bureaucratic burden.
- The MS co-Chair debriefed delegations on his presentation at the High Level Working Group for Competitiveness and Growth on 19 July 2019 on innovation and the EU's growth agenda.
- The rapporteur for the implementation of the ERA Action Plan 2019-2021 (WK 3182/2019) invited the different players to provide any outstanding replies on the state of play on the implementation of the actions they are responsible for as soon as possible (by mid-October).

¹ Following agreement between the co-Chairs after the Plenary meeting, the actual titles of the topics have been slightly changed to: 1) R&I investments for sustainability and 2) Brain circulation.

- The Finnish Presidency made a presentation on R&I policy in Finland, including the relevant Presidency priorities (WK 11047/2019).
- The incoming Croatian Presidency made a presentation on its Presidency priorities and the calendar of meetings and events (WK 11049/2019), including preparations for the 45th meeting of the ERAC to take place on 30-31 March 2020 in Opatija, Croatia, and the key topic on "brain circulation".

4. ERA and Innovation Policy

4.1 Ad-hoc Working Group on the future of the ERA: Interim Report

ERAC endorsed the conclusions and 19 recommendations presented by the Ad-hoc Working Group on the future of the ERA, pending minor adjustments to be made in the text in order to take account of the comments provided by certain delegations during the meeting.

ERAC discussed the idea of "ERA Lighthouses" and was of the general view that the draft ERAC Opinion to be submitted at the December ERAC plenary on this issue should encourage the Commission to take into account "ERA Lighthouses" with a view to preparations for the upcoming Commission communication on the future of the ERA, including the possibility to launch a pilot project on lighthouses.

ERAC expressed a cautious view on "ERA Lighthouses", but the committee is supportive of this idea if the "ERA Lighthouses" serve the objectives of ERA, if they contribute to the branding and the visibility of ERA, if they are rather structural in nature than thematic, if they help connecting different elements of ERA, and if the concept of "ERA Lighthouses" becomes clear, avoiding confusion, duplications of efforts and an increase in complexity of ERA.

The Commission announced that a "Tour des Capitales" for gathering input on the ERA in the Member States is envisaged from end of 2019 to March 2020. It will include outreach events involving also research communities and citizens.

4.2 Monitoring ERA National Action Plans

ERAC adopted the final report on Monitoring the ERA priorities with ERA Roadmap National Action Plans ([1212/19](#)).

5. ERA Governance

5.1 Highlights from the ERA-related Groups

ERAC took note of information on recent activities by the ERA-related groups (WK 10146/2019).

ERAC also took note of preparations by ESFRI on its upcoming report on "Monitoring of the performance of Research Infrastructures including a framework on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)" (WK 11052/2019).

The Chair of ESFRI recalled that the Competiveness Council adopted conclusions in May 2018 on "Accelerating knowledge circulation in the EU" which invites the Member States and the Commission within the framework of ESFRI to develop a common approach for monitoring of their (RIs) performance and invites the Pan-European Research Infrastructures, on a voluntary basis, to include it in their governance and explore options to support this through the use of KPIs".

To implement this mandate, ESFRI set up a Working Group on Monitoring to consolidate the existing knowledge on monitoring of RI performance, propose a common approach at European level and explore options to support this through the use of KPIs.

In particular, the Chair of ESFRI announced that a final draft of the report will be submitted for approval by the ESFRI Forum on 18 December 2019.

The Bulgarian delegation announced an international conference on "Research Infrastructures of the Future – synergies, sustainability, smart specialization and social impact" to take place on 10 and 11 December 2019 in Sofia, following up on the previous ones organised in 2018 ([Bulgarian Presidency Flagship event](#) and [International Conference for Research Infrastructures](#) in Vienna).

6. Standing Information Point

ERAC took note of written information by the Commission on:

- The role of the Commission in the ERA-related groups. ERAC will come back to this topic at its next plenary meeting in December (WK 10305/2019).
- The outcome of the 2019 European Semester cycle (WK 10307/2019).
- Future Partnerships (WK 10147/2019).

7. Any Other Business

- ***ERAC Annual Report 2018***

ERAC took note of the approval by written procedure of the 2018 ERAC Annual report ([1213/19](#)).

The MS co-Chair thanked the Belgian delegation as the only one having provided comments to the draft report.

- ***Joint Conference of Directors-General for Higher Education and ERAC (1 October 2019)***

ERAC took note of the outcome of the Joint Conference of Directors-General for Higher Education and ERAC organised by the Finnish Presidency on 1 October 2019 in Helsinki.

The purpose of the conference was to intensify dialogue and cooperation between higher education and research and innovation. The main themes of the conference were digitalisation, artificial intelligence and openness, as well as the responsibility of education, research and innovation for tackling future global challenges.

In this context, the French and German delegations requested to start work within ERAC to identify relevant topics common to both European Education and Research areas. The COM co-Chair announced that the issue would be included in the agenda of the next ERAC Steering Board meeting.

The ERAC Stading Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility delivered a written contribution on "How to build stronger links between ERA and EHEA" as an input for the joint conference (WK 10870/2019).

7.1 44th ERAC meeting (17 December 2019, Brussels)

The next ERAC plenary meeting will take place on 17 December 2019.

It will be preceded by an ERAC workshop that will be organised by the Commission in close cooperation with the incoming Croatian Presidency on 16 December 2019 in Brussels, in order to prepare the strategic debate of the ERAC plenary the following day
