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Subject: Draft Council conclusions on the New European Research Area

**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON
THE NEW EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- the Council Resolution of June 2000¹ establishing a European area of research and innovation;
- that the Barcelona European Council in March 2002² agreed that overall spending on research, development and innovation in the Union should be increased with the aim of approaching 3% of GDP;

¹ OJ C 205, 19.7.2000, p. 1

² SN 100/1/02

- the Article 179 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, establishing a European Research Area;
- the Conclusions of the European Council of February 2011³ that confirmed that Europe needs a unified research area to attract talent and investment and that called for the creation of a genuine single market for knowledge, research and innovation;
- the Commission Communication of July 2012⁴ and its Conclusions of 2012 on “A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth”⁵ in which the existing European Research Area (ERA) priorities were agreed;
- its Conclusions of 2013⁶ on “Enhancing and Focusing EU International Cooperation in Research and Innovation: a Strategic Approach” recognising the international dimension as an important part of the ERA;
- its Conclusions of May 2015⁷ on the “European Research Area Roadmap 2015-2020” which formed the basis for the subsequent ERA National Action Plans of Member States;
- its Conclusions of December 2015⁸ on the promotion of gender equality in the ERA;
- its Conclusions of May 2016⁹ on “The transition towards an Open Science system”;
- its Conclusions of November 2016¹⁰ on “Measures to support early stage researchers, raise the attractiveness of scientific careers and foster investment in human potential in research and development”;
- its Conclusions of May 2018¹¹ on the “European Open Science Cloud”;

3 EUCO 2/11
 4 12848/12
 5 17649/12
 6 497/12
 7 9351/15
 8 14846/15
 9 9526/16
 10 15013/16
 11 9291/18

- its Conclusions of November 2018¹² on the “Governance of the European Research Area” which invited the Commission to publish by mid-2020 a new ERA Communication for the period beyond 2020 and which was followed-up by an European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) action plan;
- the European Council conclusions of March 2019¹³, 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 EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024¹⁴, which underlines the need to increase research efforts, in particular by addressing the fragmentation of European research, development and innovation and recognises that we need to do more to ensure equality between women and men, as well as rights and equal opportunities for all;
- the Opinion on the future of the ERA adopted by ERAC in December 2019¹⁵ that outlined the main elements for a “New ERA”;
- the Commission communication of September 2020¹⁶ on “A new ERA for research and innovation”.

I. POLITICAL CONTEXT

1. UNDERLINES the importance of the implementation of the “Leaders strategic agenda 2019-2024” addressing the most pressing challenges focusing on protecting citizens and freedoms, developing a strong and vibrant economic base, building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe and promoting European interests and values on the global stage.

¹² 14989/18

¹³ EUCO 1/19

¹⁴ Adopted by the European Council on 20 June 2019

¹⁵ ERAC 1201/20

¹⁶ 11400/20 + ADD1

2. WELCOMES in this regard also the new priorities of the Commission for 2019-2024 focusing on the essential areas of transformation including Europe becoming the first climate-neutral continent (“European Green Deal”), a new approach to innovation as stated in the “New industrial strategy” (“An economy that works for people”), the relevance of “Global Health”, reinforcing Europe’s responsible global leadership (“A stronger Europe in the world”), empowering people with a new generation of technologies (“A Europe fit for the digital age”), “A new push for European democracy” and “Promoting our European way of life”, aiming for a healthy planet, preparing Europe for a new digital world and expanding its technological sovereignty. RECOGNISES that developing a transformative and forward-looking research, innovation and diffusion strategy, is necessary to achieve these priorities and ensure Europe’s sustainable productivity growth and competitiveness.
3. ACKNOWLEDGES the progress in the achievement of the ERA, in particular on the basis of the ERA roadmap and the ERA national action plans addressing the current ERA priorities aimed mainly at improving the quality of R&I systems across Europe and their interaction. NOTES with concern the slowing down and the uneven progress across the Union¹⁷. WELCOMES in this respect the new ambitions concerning the ERA as expressed in the “ERAC opinion on the future of the ERA” and the Commission communication on “A new ERA for research and innovation”. STRESSES the need for the Commission and the Member States to co-create and jointly implement this “New ERA” at all levels to ensure a fair and balanced co-ownership across the Union.
4. CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to support the development of the “New ERA” throughout all parts of the EU Framework Programme for R&I as well as through the mobilisation of other proposed EU policies and programmes, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Cohesion policy instruments, the Digital Europe Programme and the Technical Support Instrument. UNDERLINES that the EU Framework Programme for R&I is the most important instrument at EU level for supporting and implementing the ERA.

¹⁷ ERA Progress Report 2018

II. GOALS OF THE “NEW ERA”

5. **DEFINES** the “New ERA” as a researchers-centred, value-based, excellence as well as impact-driven area, in which researchers, knowledge and technology are supported and can circulate freely. This “New ERA” should be based on shared responsibilities, participation of stakeholders and citizens, building on the diversity and strengths of the European R&I ecosystems, being responsive to smart directionality and in which in particular fundamental research is essential for ensuring excellence, attractiveness and the competitive edge of R&I ecosystems.
6. **UNDERLINES** that R&I activities, encompassing the full range from fundamental to applied research and innovation, and the knowledge they produce have a value far beyond their contribution to sustainable growth and jobs by making an essential input to address societal challenges and constituting a cornerstone of value- and evidence-based policy making and thus of our European democracies. **EMPHASIZES** the importance of a continued openness to international collaboration for achieving the goals of the “New ERA”, to support Europe’s role as a global leader and **CONSIDERS** that Associated Countries are key partners of the “New ERA”.
7. **STRESSES** the significant role of R&I in delivering on Europe’s recovery while enabling and accelerating the digital and green transition, strengthening resilience and crises preparedness and supporting Europe’s competitive edge. **UNDERLINES** the importance of R&I policy for leveraging business R&I investment, deploying new technologies and supporting the absorption of knowledge and technologies in relevant policy fields in order to enable European business develop new products and services that can compete successfully in global markets and provide effective solutions to societal challenges, thus contributing to technological sovereignty.
8. **UNDERLINES** the potential of closer R&I cooperation and coordination in the ERA between regional, national and European levels in order to maximize the impact of investments to achieve common policy objectives in an effective and impact-oriented manner, including for reducing the R&I divide across the Union.

9. STRESSES that the “New ERA” should continue to strengthen the quality of R&I systems and their linkages across Europe, while contributing to better interactions between R&I policies and other policy fields, in particular Higher Education policies and industrial policies and provide for a more effective interaction with society.
10. CALLS on Member States and the Commission to prioritize investments towards the “New ERA” and REAFFIRMS the 3% EU GDP R&D investment target¹⁸. INVITES Member States to set investment targets at national level, in particular with respect to public R&D efforts. TAKES NOTE of the Commission proposals to include a new 1.25% EU GDP public effort target to be achieved by Member States by 2030 in an EU coordinated manner and two new voluntary targets for Member States to commit 5% of national public R&D funding to joint programmes and European partnerships by 2030 and to increase by 50% the R&D investment in countries that are below the EU R&D intensity average¹⁹.

¹⁸ The Europe 2020 strategy sets the target of ‘improving the conditions for innovation, research and development’, in particular with the aim of ‘increasing combined public and private investment in R&D to 3 % of GDP’ by 2020, whereby 2/3 should stem from the private sector and 1/3 from the public sector.

¹⁹ Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) covers all expenditures for R&D performed in the national territory during a specific reference period (Frascati 2015). GERD covers public and private R&D expenditure. It is the aggregate of the R&D performed by four institutional sectors: business enterprise (BES); government (GOV); higher education (HES); private non-profit (PNP).

11. STRESSES the need to make the “New ERA” more tangible, impactful and relevant for researchers, innovators, R&I stakeholders, and citizens across Europe. UNDERLINES in this respect the added value of concrete ERA actions as part of an ERA policy agenda that should be jointly developed in a systemic and timely manner and implemented between Member States and the Commission in a way that maximises impact across Europe to strengthen national ecosystems, build momentum and ensure political commitment. UNDERLINES that the diversity of Member States’ R&I policy frameworks requires a voluntary approach for the implementation of concrete ERA actions while aiming for a broad participation. RECOGNISES the potential of launching ERA pilot actions in 2021 that have a broad political support and are jointly implemented by a critical mass of Member States and the Commission in order to maintain the political momentum in priority fields of action across the Union and provide opportunities beyond the participating States to benefit all Member States.

III. ERA ACTION PRIORITIES

12. UNDERLINES the need to translate the goals of the “New ERA” into concrete ERA actions in line with the four priority fields described below. CALLS on the Member States and the Commission to agree swiftly on an ERA policy agenda, TAKING DUE CONSIDERATION of the ERA roadmap proposed by the Commission as an important starting point.

A. DEEPENING THE ERA – FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

13. DEFINES the element of “deepening the ERA” as a shared goal of the EU and its Member States to strive for better working, employability and other relevant framework conditions at all levels to fully unlock the cooperation potential and the connectivity in the ERA at researchers, project, programme and institutional levels.
14. INVITES the Member States to continue reforming their national R&I systems and their respective institutions and organisations, making them more attractive, interoperable, inclusive and competitive; UNDERLINES that apart from excellence, impact-orientation and appropriate investments and resources, the key components for a robust European R&I system are ethics and common values – including research integrity, freedom of scientific research, sound peer evaluation, equality and diversity.

15. RECOGNISES the role of the Commission to stimulate and, incentivise Member States reforms and investments to achieve better interoperability in the EU, both by financial support through relevant EU programmes and instruments – the EU Framework Programme for R&I in particular, as well as through regular dialogues and corresponding policy support instruments beyond financial support, including provision of analysis, guidance, advice, technical support, monitoring and data analytics activities.
16. CALLS on the Commission and participating States to further develop and implement the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and its framework conditions as the ERA pilot action to deepen the ERA, notably by continuing to federate across Europe research data infrastructures and services and to foster open and collaborative knowledge and data sharing and interoperability within the ERA, to serve in an tripartite governance as a trusted, secured and functional research and innovation data space and service platform in Europe and to connect to thematic data spaces such as the common European health data space.
17. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to deepen the ERA. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to agree on priority actions as part of an ERA policy agenda in 2021, including on actions in the following domains:

- i. **Research careers:** STRESSES that enhancing the attractiveness of research careers is a vital element of the “New ERA”, by creating attractive and safe working and employment conditions for more sustainable and appealing researchers’ careers and, consequently, attracting and retaining excellent researchers; INVITES the Commission and the Member States to co-design an enhanced “European Competence Framework for Research Careers”, including for Research Infrastructures,– as a follow-up to the “European Charter for Researchers” and the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers” taking into account open science, gender equality, digital skills, research assessment, diversification of research careers and multiple career paths and additional relevant elements of the European Skills Agenda²⁰ and of the “Zagreb Call for Action”; TAKES NOTE of the Commission proposals in the ERA communication, including a toolbox of support for research careers and an ERA4You initiative to strengthen, among others, cooperation and mobility between academia and business.
- ii. **Synergies:** WELCOMES the new efforts for creating and exploiting synergies between European funding instruments in order to maximise the impact of different sources of funding to ensure an effective twin transition and a quick recovery, especially between the future Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, the Cohesion Policy Funds (ERDF, ESF+ and Cohesion Fund), Next Generation EU, the Single Market Programme, the EU external action instruments, EU4Health and the Digital Europe Programme, and URGES the Commission to provide practical guidance and streamlined tools to Member States on how best to implement those synergies in the national and regional context.

²⁰ 9349/20

- iii. **Freedom of Science/Academic Freedom:** ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts of the Bologna Process to strengthen and monitor academic freedom in the higher education sector of the 49 participating countries in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). WELCOMES the Bonn declaration on the freedom of scientific research endorsed on 20 October 2020 [and the Ministerial Communiqué covering academic freedom adopted during the EHEA conference in Rome on 19 November 2020] as a joint starting point to safeguarding and enhancing freedom of science/academic freedom and CALLS on the Commission, Member States and academic institutions to follow the experiences of the Bologna Process closely and assess its implications for research and work together in particular with respect to potential indicators, evaluation and monitoring methods and their relevance for further reinforcing freedom of scientific research within the ERA.
- iv. **Linking ERA and EHEA:** STRESSES that stronger synergies and interconnections between the ERA, the EHEA and the higher education related elements of the European Education Area (EEA), are to be developed; IDENTIFIES institutional transformations, research careers, science education, training, international cooperation and knowledge circulation as possible fields of a more determined cooperation. SUPPORTS the further development of the “European University Alliances” as a flagship example for modern and inclusive higher education institutions of the future in Europe. TAKES NOTE of the Commission proposal to develop a roadmap of actions for creating synergies between higher education and research.

- v. **Research Infrastructures:** 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 and deliver the comprehensive knowledge needed to address present and future challenges; ENCOURAGES Member States, Associated Countries and the Commission, by building on the white paper “Making Science Happen” of the European Strategy Forum on RIs (ESFRI), to work towards the development of a more effective and sustainable European ecosystem of RIs as a key resource of the “New ERA” and taking full advantage of its essential contribution to FAIR data sharing and data quality control. RECALLS that providing sufficient open access to national and transnational RIs, their increased collaboration and integration across the EU, and improving the exchange of information on the existing capacities e.g. through national RIs Roadmaps and the ESFRI process is key for excellence and inclusiveness.
- vi. **Open Science:** HIGHLIGHTS that open science, including mainstreaming open access to publications and research data, has a crucial role in boosting impact, quality, efficiency, transparency and integrity of R&I, and brings science and society closer together whilst taking into account legitimate legal, security and privacy aspects. ENCOURAGES the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to support and implement open science practices in their reward and evaluation systems for research, researchers and institutions, including RIs, and strengthen their European coordination. WELCOMES the launch of the Open Research Europe publishing platform. RECOGNISES that bibliodiversity, multilingualism and the acknowledgement of all scientific productions are relevant elements of an ERA policy on open science.

B. DIRECTIONALITY: R&I DRIVEN JOINT INITIATIVES WITH OTHER POLICY AREAS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

18. DEFINES the element of “Directionality” as a process of strategic coordination between R&I and other relevant policy areas in order to strategically orient and prioritise R&I investments and prepare for the design and implementation of R&I driven policy initiatives that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) across Europe and beyond.
19. RECOGNISES the “green” and “digital” twin transition and a resilient recovery as the core directions for translating the “New ERA” into concrete policy and funding actions. EMPHASISES the importance of transnational R&I investments and joint programmes at regional, national and EU levels, and CALLS on the Member States to ensure ambitious contributions to ERA actions aiming to address this transition. UNDERLINES the need for specific actions to ensure that R&I policy provides more and adequate support for the absorption of knowledge and technologies in the different policy areas, including for the implementation of Europe’s industrial strategy. STRESSES in this context the importance of adequate links within and between innovation ecosystems and their actors across Europe to ensure that research results are applied faster in the economy and the society.

20. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to develop synergies between European and national actions on the path towards clean energy transition and work towards a “Green Hydrogen R&I Initiative²¹” as the ERA pilot action to foster “directionality” with the goal to contribute to the Union’s climate-neutrality objectives while ACKNOWLEDGING the relevance of a broader hydrogen R&I policy approach beyond this ERA pilot action. RECALLS the Member States’ national prerogative to decide on their energy mix, including on issues related to other safe and sustainable low-carbon energy technologies. CALLS on the Commission and the participating Member States to carry out an agenda process for the green hydrogen ERA pilot action in 2021 that should result in the elaboration of a strategic R&I agenda on green hydrogen to be jointly implemented 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 participating Member States to ensure coherence with national R&I measures. STRESSES the importance to link the strategic R&I agenda to related downstream measures, in particular with the demonstration phase prior to deployment needed for the uptake and diffusion of new technologies across the EU.
21. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to foster directionality, the twin transition and a resilient recovery. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to agree on priority actions as part of an ERA policy agenda in 2021, including on actions in the following domains:

²¹ Green hydrogen refers here to hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources, including from wind, solar, biomass, water and marine energy sources.

- i. **European Resilience Initiative:** ACKNOWLEDGES the measures initiated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the “ERAvsCorona” action plan and the joint creation of the “European Health Data Space” by research infrastructures and e-infrastructures within the EOSC; 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, including a shared vision in regard to privacy and other ethical issues; CALLS on the Commission and Member States to set up a medium-term joint and coordinated R&I driven policy initiative, taking into consideration the priorities established in the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

- ii. **Digital Transformation:** ACKNOWLEDGES that the digital transformation profoundly impacts all aspects of the “New ERA”; STRESSES that digital technologies (5G networks, processors and electronic components, high performance computing, data access, processing and analytics) contribute to European technological sovereignty; ENCOURAGES the Commission and Member States to increase the level of national and European coordination, in particular on research infrastructures and e-infrastructures. HIGHLIGHTS the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this regard. RECALLS that a coherent, comprehensive and strategic approach to the different AI-related activities on the European and national level is strongly needed, adopting a human-centred approach based on common European values and ethical principles, including social diversity and gender equality, and with the aim to strive for a global outreach; CALLS on the Commission to continue its efforts to establish Europe-wide AI networks of excellence, integrating the different strands of AI-related activities, pooling knowledge and research results, with the goal of maximising impact, and promoting the adoption of AI applications in strategic areas, both within Europe and globally.

- iii. **European R&I 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 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.
- iv. **Knowledge Circulation:** UNDERLINES that additional efforts are needed to translate the Union's intellectual and scientific assets into new products and services that meet societal demands. CALLS on Member States and the Commission to promote open science and open innovation practices and to stimulate knowledge and technology co-creation in Europe; WELCOMES the initiative of the Commission to review the 2008 EC Recommendation on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities and Code of Practice in accordance with the New Industrial Strategy for Europe and to develop an EU Strategy for Technology Infrastructures²² to facilitate collaboration and exchange of knowledge between European companies and to ensure their access to the right skills and expertise.

²² “Technology infrastructure” means facilities and resources, such as test beds, pilot lines, demonstrators, testing facilities or living labs, and related services, that are used by public research laboratories or industry to develop, manufacture, test and improve highly innovative technology that has been validated in a laboratory environment, including prototype development, definition of fabrication process and test procedures; access to these infrastructures is open to several users.

- v. **EUREKA: ACKNOWLEDGES** the significant achievements of EUREKA in contributing to the ERA, including to its external dimension, 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 the twin transition, and involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-caps including their increasingly relevant European and international collaboration potential.
- vi. **International Cooperation: EMPHASISES** the need for a strengthened partnership between the Commission and the Member States regarding science, technology and innovation (STI) cooperation agreements and “Science Diplomacy” in order to achieve a more consolidated engagement with third countries in full respect of the principles of reciprocity, openness, transparency, common values, including human rights and intellectual property rights and more impact with regard to overarching EU-policy goals; **CALLS** on the Commission to coordinate in close cooperation with Member States policy dialogues to enhance established R&I relationships and strengthen collaboration with third countries and regions, including Africa, the Eastern and Southern partnerships, the Euro-Mediterranean region as well as to further strengthen cooperation initiatives with the Western Balkans and **IDENTIFIES** the need for a more comprehensive approach with respect to safeguarding the EU’s strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy including through its R&I cooperation with third countries. **UNDERLINES** the need for increased effort for coordinated multi-level foresight, evaluation and monitoring of the impact of R&I cooperation beyond Europe.

C. PARTICIPATION: VISIBILITY AND RELEVANCE OF R&I FOR SOCIETY

22. **DEFINES** the element of “participation” as joint efforts by the EU and Member States to make the “New ERA” more visible within the research community and to increase the visibility and relevance of R&I for society in the design, implementation and knowledge exchange of R&I initiatives at project, programme and institutional levels.

23. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to further develop and implement the “plastic pirates” citizen science campaign as the ERA pilot action to foster “interaction” within the ERA in order to raise awareness among citizens, in particular young citizens, on the impact and benefits of R&I in their daily lives. ENCOURAGES cooperation with the proposed Mission on Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters.
24. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to foster the interaction with society. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to agree on priority actions as part of an ERA policy agenda in 2021, including on actions in the following domains:
- i) **Citizen Science Campaigns:** CALLS on the Member States and the Commission to organise at least every two years a Europe-wide Citizen Science Campaign in order to roll-out good practices for incentivising and rewarding citizen participation in R&I policy design and implementation across Europe in order to reinforce citizen trust in science and facilitate the uptake of science, technology and innovation. ENCOURAGES synergies between these Citizen Science campaigns and the proposed Horizon Europe missions.
 - ii) **Science Communication:** 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 and to boost science education and to provide researchers with appropriate training and skills on scientific communication. CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to establish an European policy approach on science communication, considering a federated “EU Science Media Network” that offers access to up-to-date scientific insights on contemporary topics to the European public, the media and politics, a new European Capitals of Science and Innovation initiative and networking activities aiming at better connecting relevant regional, national and EU-level initiatives.

D. BROAD INCLUSIVENESS AND ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE

25. DEFINES the element of “Inclusiveness” as a broad, gender-balanced and non-discriminatory participation of researchers and national and regional actors and R&I stakeholders across Europe in ERA activities in order to fully activate and use the potential of ERA to contribute to regional, national and European policy objectives by means of targeted measures at national and/or EU level to promote and facilitate openness and inclusiveness of collaboration networks and to reduce fragmentation and disparities between and within Member States.
26. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to develop EURAXESS as the ERA pilot action to foster “inclusiveness” within the ERA into an ERA Talent Platform fit to address existing barriers to unbalanced mobility pattern by supporting researchers in their career development within the ERA, connecting researchers and institutions, improving employability and talent absorption and mobility schemes.
27. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to jointly develop and implement ERA actions in close cooperation with ERA stakeholders that address the main challenges to foster broad inclusiveness. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to agree on priority actions as part of an ERA policy agenda in 2021, including on actions in the following domains:
- i. **Brain Circulation:** REITERATES that the phenomenon of “brain drain”, having its roots in a number of different socio-economic factors at local, regional and national levels, still represents a major challenge in and for Member States and contributes to the research and innovation divide within the EU. RECOGNISES that mobility of researchers, both geographical and intersectoral, is a core dimension of the “New ERA” for ensuring world-class results. CALLS on the Commission and Member States to monitor and recommend measures to address unbalanced brain circulation, including the system of remuneration, mobility pattern, employment conditions, social security policies, portability of grants and pensions as well as intersectoral mobility of researchers.

- ii. **Gender Equality:** RECALLS with great concern that there continues to be a major gender imbalance preventing Europe from using the full potential of its R&I system aiming for excellence, and CALLS on the Commission and Member States for a renewed focus on gender equality and mainstreaming, including through the instrument of gender equality plans and the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content. INVITES Member States and research funding organisations to advance measures to ensure that allocation of research funding is not affected by gender bias.

- iii. **Science Management:** RECOGNISES the growing need for the professionalization of science management at research performing and funding organisations, including through digital skills in order to improve their ability to participate in ERA-wide collaboration networks; CALLS on the Commission to launch a pilot action for a Europe-wide networking programme for science managers including research infrastructure managers and CONSIDERS the added value of cooperation between science management training providers, including within the higher education sector, to develop science management programmes and guidelines.

- iv. **COST:** ACKNOWLEDGES COST as a significant R&I instrument and entrance portal to the ERA by fostering European and international 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 and to support the free circulation of scientists, including the development of research careers, in particular fostering the participation of European Neighbourhood countries, e.g. through COST training schools and short-term mobility mechanisms.

IV. NEXT STEPS

28. INVITES the future Presidencies of the Council of the EU and the Commission to organise regular policy dialogues in support of impact-driven investments and reforms at national and regional level and the mobilisation of all funding sources and available policy support tools at European level, including through “ERA Ministerial Conferences” at least once in two years with the aim of shaping further actions for the implementation of the ERA policy agenda and to take stock of the development and the achievements of the current ERA actions.
29. CALLS on the Commission and the Member States to develop in 2021 an ERA policy agenda and a multi-level governance model to deliver on the “New ERA”, encompassing the development and implementation of ERA actions and TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the governance-related elements in the ERA communication from the Commission, the ‘Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe’ and the ‘ERA Forum for Transition’. UNDERLINES that the development of the new governance model should be driven by the following principles:
- **Inclusiveness:** Involvement of all Member States including regional authorities, the European Committee of the Regions, R&I stakeholders and civil society, where appropriate.
 - **Effectiveness:** Defining lean governance processes appropriate to develop and implement the ERA actions by setting common objectives and deciding on the necessary steps to implement ERA initiatives, involving relevant sectoral policies.
 - **Coherence:** Striving for more exchange and cooperation between regional, national and EU-levels to address structural issues within and outside the remit of R&I policy.
 - **Efficiency:** Linking up with the proposed Horizon Europe strategic planning to enhance the 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-informed approach:** Fostering, in close cooperation with the Commission, a review of the ERA monitoring system including its indicators and reporting procedures CONSIDERING the proposal of the Commission of establishing a yearly ERA scoreboard, 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 and the deployment of their Recovery and Resilience plans.
- **Relevance:** Policy-driven priority-setting through, *inter alia*, an appropriate role of the Council as well as policy debates through regular ERA ministerial conferences involving stakeholders and partners beyond the Member States, as appropriate.

30. CALLS on ERAC to advise on the question whether and to which extent legislative action and Council Recommendations might be needed to deliver on the “New ERA”.
31. INVITES the incoming Portuguese Presidency to take forward the topic of “research careers” and the Commission to present concrete ERA related proposals for this purpose.
