

EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

– ERAC –
Secretariat

Brussels, 10 December 2019
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ERAC 1216/19

NOTE

From: ERAC Secretariat
To: ERAC delegations
Subject: Updated ERAC Work Programme 2019-2020

Delegations will find annexed to this Note the updated ERAC Work Programme 2019-2020, as approved by the ERAC Steering Board at its meeting on 12 November 2019.

ERAC WORK PROGRAMME 2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

The work programme will cover the next period of policy development in the areas of research and innovation and closely related policies.

In 2018, the European Research Area advisory structure underwent a review of its structures and processes. ERAC has then moved into a new phase of activity, focussing on more strategic issues, with timely, open debates that are better aligned to the incoming Presidency's priorities, and with clear deliverables that can add value to the challenges facing EU and national research and innovation systems. The ERAC Work programme 2019-2020 has been prepared with this background in mind.

WORKING METHODS FOR ERAC

Article 2 of ERAC's mandate states that: "The Committee's principal mission is to provide timely strategic input to the Council, the Commission and Member States on the ongoing implementation of the ERA in Member States and Associated Countries and on other strategic research and innovation policy issues. The Committee shall do this on its own initiative or at the request of the Council or the Commission."

ERAC's work programme will continue to take a flexible, proactive approach to ensure ERAC can contribute in a speedy and timely manner, as appropriate, to emerging and evolving issues. ERAC will consider several strategic issues each year. Such topics will give ERAC an opportunity, for example:

- to give strategic advice at an early stage in developing R&I policy;
- to consider the impact of other policies on the R&I agenda, the impact of R&I policy on other policies, and advise on the appropriate actions; and
- to advise on the implementation of R&I policies and propose specific actions to support these policies.

It is important that ERAC considers carefully what outcomes and impacts it aims to achieve. ERAC is reminded that it does not have to reach consensus on topics and outside speakers may be invited to stimulate discussions. It is proposed that Directors-General are strongly encouraged to attend the strategic discussions.

ERAC will improve the dialogue with the incoming Presidencies, undertaking the necessary preparatory work to contribute policy options for debates in Council. Presidencies will be invited to present their indicative priorities and planning to ERAC well in advance of their term. ERAC will also liaise with the current/outgoing Presidency to provide advice regarding the follow-up and implementation of Council conclusions.

ERAC will continue to work on its 'regular' strands, in particular the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the ERA National Action Plans, to achieve the objective of implementation by 2020, as set out in the ERA Roadmap and the National Action Plans. In addition, ERAC will work on ensuring the momentum is maintained on the initiatives to deliver tangible results.

Prioritisation and willingness to actively participate in the process, from both Commission and Member State representatives, will be the key factors in meeting the demands during this period.

The quality in preparations for each strategic debate is decisive. ERAC and the Steering Board will have to make use of the input from the other ERA-related groups, workshops, seminars, *ad hoc* working groups and rapporteurs so that the issues at stake can reach the Plenary sufficiently mature for debate and/or adoption, e.g. in the form of a written opinion. For that purpose, it will be important to further strengthen the exchanges and collaboration between ERAC and the ERA-related Groups and among the ERA-related Groups.

To have adequate time for strategic debate in ERAC Plenary, summary information will continue to be given to members of ERAC in writing in advance of the meetings (under Standing Information Points), with new important developments being taken up orally by the co-Chairs or Presidency. Furthermore, input from the ERA-related groups on their recent activities will be given to ERAC members in writing prior to the meetings.

ERAC STRATEGIC TOPICS FOR 2019-20

The proposed strategic topics for consideration by ERAC in 2019-20 are:

- The Innovation/Research divides (both within the EU and with the rest of the world)
- Review of the ERA Advisory Structure 2021
- National structural reforms (linked to EU Semester and the contribution that PSF can make)
- Partnerships
- Improvement of National Research and Innovation systems of Member States and Associated Countries

INTERACTION WITH PRESIDENCIES AND THEIR PRIORITIES

This particular part of the work programme will develop in line with the priorities for the Presidencies as they become more mature.

- Coherent development of European Education, Research and Innovation systems (FI)
- Further promotion of digitalisation through more transparent practices, thus improving quality and increasing effectiveness (FI)
- Increasing the level of R&I investments towards reaching the 3% GDP goal and solving Grand Challenges (FI)
- Human resources - brain circulation and future jobs within ERA (HR)
- Lübeck Declaration on the future of the ERA and Council conclusions on the ERA (DE)

REGULAR STRANDS

These strands include:

- ERA - implementation and monitoring the ERA Roadmap, including Member States' ERA National Action Plans and strategies; interim review of the implementation of the ERA National Action Plans which will also feed into the ERA Progress Report 2020; discussion on the future orientation and development of ERA in line with the Council conclusions of May 2015 that states that the ERA Roadmap and thereby the National Action Plans are seen as living documents, implementation of the Council conclusions of December 2015 on advancing gender equality in the ERA;
- Follow-up on the Review of the ERA Advisory Structure 2018 (including Action Plan);
- ERA governance - implementation of Council conclusions, including the coordination of ERAC and the ERA-related groups through the ERAC Steering Board with the objective of knowledge sharing and greater alignment of activities; preparing the annual report to the Council on the progress and impact against the ERA Roadmap to ensure that the Council is regularly and comprehensively sighted on progress;
- Follow-up on Partnerships in the context to preparations for the next FP;
- Responsible group for overseeing Priority 1 “Effective national research systems”, through workshops, ad hoc working groups as well as debate with invited speakers;
- European Semester – Annual Growth survey priorities for the Semester; dialogue on the R&I elements of the country reports and follow-up on R&I country-specific recommendations;
- Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility - demand-driven, Horizon 2020 instrument that responds to requests made by Member States and Associated Countries for its three main services: Peer Reviews of national R&I systems; specific support to the design, implementation and evaluation of policy reforms; and mutual learning exercises.

WORK PROGRAMME 2019-2020

<u>Regular strands</u>	1-2 October 2019 43rd meeting Helsinki	17 December 2019 44th meeting Brussels	30-31 March 2020 45th meeting Opatija	4 June 2020 46th meeting Brussels	Day Month 2020 47th meeting Germany	Day Month 2020 48th meeting Brussels
ERA - implementation and monitoring the ERA Roadmap, National Action Plans and strategies, Future of the ERA	Presentation of R&I policy in Finland Ad-hoc WG on the future of the ERA: interim report	Ad-hoc WG on the future of the ERA: final report	Presentation of R&I policy in Croatia A European R&I Data Hub. Better sharing of data for better R&I policies Synergies between ERA and EHEA	ERA National Action Plans and Roadmap as a policy tool (tbc)	Presentation of R&I policy in Germany	
Strategic debate		R&I investments for sustainability		Topic tbc		Topic tbc
European Semester	Outcome of the 2019 European Semester cycle			Outcome of the 2020 European Semester cycle		Launch of the 2021 European Semester cycle
Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility			Update on the H2020 Policy Support Facility and new call for Expression of Interest		Update on the H2020 Policy Support Facility and outcome of the call for Expression of Interest	
ERA governance	Highlights from the ERA-related Groups	Highlights from the ERA-related Groups Update of ERAC Work Programme 2019-2020	Highlights from the ERA-related Groups (Review of the ERA governance 2021) ¹	Highlights from the ERA-related Groups Update of ERAC Work Programme 2019-2020 (Review of the ERA governance 2021) ¹	Highlights from the ERA-related Groups (Review of the ERA governance 2021) ¹	Highlights from the ERA-related Groups ERAC Work Programme 2020-2021 (Review of the ERA governance 2021) ¹

¹ This topic is likely to be discussed only after the Council conclusions on the ERA, expected by end November 2020.

Major events and milestones

July 2019	August 2019	September 2019	October 2019	November 2019	December 2019
Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Research) (4 July, Helsinki)		Competitiveness Council (26-27 September, Brussels)	Joint Conference of ERAC and EU Directors-General for Higher Education (1 October, Helsinki) ERAC Plenary (2 October, Helsinki)	Competitiveness Council (28-29 November, Brussels)	ERAC Plenary (17 December, Brussels)
January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
	Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Research) 4 February, Croatia Competitiveness Council (27-28 February, Brussels)	ERAC Plenary (30-31 March, Opatija)		Competitiveness Council (28-29 May, Brussels)	ERAC Plenary (4 June, Brussels)
July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020
Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (21-22 July, Bonn)		ERAC Plenary (10-11 September, Munich) Competitiveness Council (25 September, Brussels)	ERA Ministerial Conference (21-22 October 2020, Lübeck)	Competitiveness Council (27 November, Brussels)	ERAC Plenary (16 December, Brussels)