In view of item 4.2 of the agenda of the ERAC plenary on 15-16 March, delegations will find attached the "Updates from the ERAC Standing Working Groups and from the ERA-related Groups."
## UPDATEES FROM THE ERAC STANDING WORKING GROUPS AND FROM THE ERA-RELATED GROUPS

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ESFRI INFORMATION NOTE FOR THE 37TH ERAC PLENARY

Since the 36th ERAC meeting on the 5th of December 2017 in Brussels, ESFRI focused on the following activities:

**ESFRI Roadmap 2018**

ESFRI continued the work on the 2018 update of the Roadmap. In particular, ESFRI conducted hearings with Projects admitted to the Roadmap in 2008 to finalise the evaluation of their progress towards implementation. ESFRI also conducted hearings with new proposals submitted by Member states and Associated Countries. The final evaluation reports will be discussed in the ESFRI Forum during its 64th meeting on the 21st of March in Sofia. The 2018 Roadmap is scheduled for adoption by the Forum during its 65th meeting in June 2018 and it will be publically launched under the Austrian Presidency on the 11th of September in Vienna.

**Relationship of Research Infrastructures with industry**

The 3rd volume of *ESFRI Scripta* was published "*Innovation-oriented cooperation of research infrastructures*", based on the work of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Innovation, whose report was approved by ESFRI in March 2016, with an update in December 2017.

The publication analyses the relations between Research Infrastructures and Industry and explores how to promote the RI potential for innovation. It covers such topics as the role of RIs in the innovation chain, forms of RI-industry collaboration (supplier, user), industrial access to RIs, co-creation, barriers and opportunities, data policies, data services, and other.

The report also proposes a number of recommendations to RIs, funding agencies and policy makers, which include, among others, to develop business-oriented activities and services, to improve business access schemes, to foster long-term collaboration and develop industry friendly data policies, as well as to promote the development of local/regional ecosystems.

The publication is available in hard copies at the ESFRI Secretariat and on the ESFRI websites: [www.esfri.eu](http://www.esfri.eu) and [https://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/?pg=esfri](https://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/?pg=esfri).

**ESFRI Position on the European Open Science Cloud**

In 2015, the Competitiveness Council asked ESFRI to 'explore mechanisms of better coordination of Member States’ investment strategies in e-Infrastructures, covering also HPC, distributed computing, scientific data and networks'. In response to this request, in December 2016, ESFRI issued a recommendation, of which the Council took note, according to which ESFRI, with respect to this mandate, acts as strategy hub of funders for e-Infrastructures of pan-European interest. In this role, ESFRI adopted in February 2018 a statement of its Position on the EOSC, annexed to this note.
ESFRI POSITION ON THE EUROPEAN OPEN SCIENCE CLOUD

1 - ESFRI is a STRATEGY HUB OF FUNDERS

The Forum ESFRI has been created by the European Council to develop and support a coherent and strategy-led approach to policy-making on Research Infrastructures in Europe. It represents 28 MS and 12 AC. It acts upon mandates by the Council as STRATEGY HUB OF FUNDERS of Research Infrastructures of pan-European interest and elaborates a Roadmap of the RIs to be funded as new initiatives (ESFRI Projects) or as consolidated strategic undertakings (ESFRI Landmarks). It has received in 2015 the mandate to “explore mechanisms of better coordination of Member States’ investment strategies in e-Infrastructures, covering also HPC, distributed computing, scientific data and networks”. Also with respect to this specific broad mandate ESFRI acts as strategy hub of founders for the e-Infrastructures of pan-European strategic interest.

If the EOSC will have its own Board of Member States, ESFRI still will maintain responsibility regarding FAIR and Reproducibility of Data of the Research Infrastructures (Landmarks and Projects, inspiring also other national/international RIs) while EOSC will develop action federating national data systems and enabling new actors and developments. This means that a close and effective interaction between this Board and ESFRI Forum urgently needs to be established. A continuous dialogue between ESFRI and EOSC at all levels of implementation will be needed. Moreover, in order to ensure and enhance synergies and to effectively promote convergence to advanced commons an institutionalized interconnection between ESFRI and EOSC needs to be set up. An efficient way to do this would be a Joint Strategy Board comprised on equal footing by representatives of the Boards both of ESFRI (EB) and of EOSC (Steering Committee). Such a joint Strategy Board at the top layer of governance could play an important role in ensuring convergence of strategies and implementation action within the respective realms of ESFRI and EOSC.

2 - ESFRI (and other internationally open) RIs are unique in assuring a robust quality control on scientific data to be opened

ESFRI Landmarks and Projects are Research Infrastructures producing scientific data that are operated by highly competitive and broad research communities covering most areas of research. ESFRI RIs are evaluated, selected, monitored and reviewed with much emphasis on their e-Infrastructure as an element for excellent science and excellent data services to the broadest community. ESFRI RIs are amongst the research institutions that already perform quality check on the open access data and have data management plans agreed by the users.
ESFRI RIs of all domains can engage in providing data quality check and in monitoring the persistence of data quality and integrity to release to the EOSC the necessary robustness of data products and services.

3 - EOSC should adopt a SUBSIDIARITY and PARTICIPATORY principle, where robust data management practices exist; it should NOT DELEGITIMATE, should not CREATE FUNDING PROBLEMS to well DMP-performing RIs

EOSC should recognize and fully benefit from well performing data management plans (DMPs) and practices as developed by RIs and avoid any direct or indirect negative impact on those RIs that are already performing at high level, rather it should help the full compliance of the existing DMPs with FAIR and Reproducibility of Data principles. EOSC should favour the participation of the RIs to the elaboration of “Commons” to serve as key elements of the EOSC. The acronym should actually become, or be generally understood as, European Open Science Commons.

4 - EOSC should FILL THE GAPS of unstructured areas

EOSC should concentrate in raising to the most advanced level the science domains that have unsatisfied e-needs. EOSC should transparently display which and where services already exist, and help to develop metadata standards for overall progressive alignment of different domains and their increasing integration.

5 - EOSC should enable high level INTERDISCIPLINARITY

EOSC should concentrate to develop a robust environment to promote INTERDISCIPLINARITY by favouring the exploitation of the most advanced and documented data sets by advanced metadata and data analysis support services.

6 - EOSC should make high level INTEROPERABILITY possible and workable

The great goal of INTEROPERABILITY is the most EOSC specific of all. RIs can contribute to make Data Management Plans (DMPs) more homogeneous in each domain and to address near-neighbour domains, but the general picture of cross-domain interoperability needs the EOSC action at European/international level. This is a long term goal to which the existing sectorial best practises can contribute, but should not be perturbed as far as they are the operational best existing model and system.
2. GPC

37th meeting of the ERAC, 15-16 March 2018 - Plovdiv

Updates from the of the High-Level Group for Joint programming (GPC)

The work of the GPC, since the last ERAC meeting in Dec. 2017, includes activities related to:

Measuring the Progress and Implementation of Priority 2a of the ERA Roadmap:

The Report of the Task Force “ERA NAPs and Strategies Analysis for Priority 2a” and a monitoring mechanism were adopted by the GPC. Each GPC delegate will prepare and submit the national contribution with the progress of relevant actions/per country on the implementation of ERA Priority 2a.

The output of this first monitoring exercise, as well as best practises on implemented national measures will be presented and discussed during the next GPC meeting in March 2018.

Future of Joint Programming

During the GPC meeting in Dec. 2017, the GPC discussed the main conclusions of the 3rd GPC Workshop on the Future of Joint Programming (JP) entitled “Partnerships on Mission Oriented Programmes”. The main messages were related to the need for:

i. strategic planning for R&I in the context of societal challenges
ii. stronger involvement of the society
iii. exploitation of the UN-SDGs,
iv. enhance strategic alignment of FP/partnerships/MS activities,
v. for more (sectoral) coordination of existing partnerships,
vi. openness and transparency both for selection and implementation of partnerships,
vii. ensuring self-sustainability of partnerships – limited duration of funding and
viii. clear focus on impact.

Working Group on Long Term Strategy of Joint Programming

The GPC adopted the proposed objective of the new Working Group (AT, ES, FR, PT, SE) on Long Term Strategy of Joint Programming, the methodology and the timelines.

The intermediate report will be presented during the March 2018 GPC meeting and the final report during the June 2018 GPC meeting.

Contribution to the ERAC ad-hoc WG on Partnerships

Several GPC delegates, as well as the GPC Chair and Vice-Chair, are participating to the ERAC ad-hoc group on partnerships which was launched in Dec. 2017.
3. SFIC

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE (ERAC) -
STRATEGIC FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL S&T COOPERATION

Input for the ERAC Plenary on 15-16 March 2018

on the results of the recent work

The Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) met on 8 December 2017 in Plenary format.

In the context of the preparation of an opinion on gender aspects in international cooperation, SFIC adopted an amended report on exploring the current situation at national and organisational level regarding a gender perspective for international cooperation in science, technology and innovation (STI). The rapporteur presented the draft joint opinion of SFIC and the ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI) on "Developing joint guidelines on a gender perspective for international cooperation in STI". Some Member States expressed concerns about the suggestion in the draft opinion to include gender aspects as one of the criteria used for the selection of projects, and asked to point out more clearly that it concerns both gender equality and gender-related research elements in the proposed projects. The Commission supported these comments. It also pointed out that, due to a lack of resources, it would not be in a position to take the lead in bringing together the expertise from all over Europe e.g. by organising a related expert workshop or ad-hoc expert group, as suggested in the draft opinion, and therefore asked to remove this recommendation. The Commission considered that activities to further prepare the ground and advance the knowledge base on a gender perspective in dialogues with third countries in the area of STI could only be initiated by SFIC and SWG GRI, as requested by the Council in its conclusions of December 2015. On the basis of the discussion at the SFIC Plenary meeting, the SFIC and SWG GRI rapporteurs prepared a revised draft opinion that was finally adopted by written procedure on 15 January 2018.

The rapporteur for the Toolbox Working Group informed about the outcome of a workshop on 7 December 2017. Some delegations regretted the lack of progress in the suggested development of a technical tool for making international research and innovation cooperation results more visible and publicly available, given that this was a central part of the recommendations prepared by the Toolbox Working Group whose mandate would soon expire. The Commission informed about its intention to bring together expertise of DG RTD and the Joint Research Centre in order to develop a solution, and to present concrete proposals at the next SFIC Plenary meeting.

Moreover, SFIC continued the discussion on the future of SFIC working groups, started at previous Plenary meetings, on the basis of a draft set of conditions for their establishment, highlighting and opening the discussion on the frameworks of the working groups such as clearly specified objectives and timetables as well as a minimum number of participating countries. Member States and Associated Countries generally welcomed the draft set of conditions. However, they indicated that they would prefer to keep the rules as flexible as possible, both as regards the number of participants and the duration of the mandate of a working group. They made several suggestions.
for new cross-cutting thematic and geographical working groups, mentioning in particular innovation, higher education, science diplomacy, Open Science, relations with Asia, and a working group dedicated to examining the Member States’ international strategies. It was also proposed for SFIC working groups to cooperate more closely with similar initiatives undertaken by ERAC and other ERA-related groups. The SFIC Vice-Chair invited delegations to submit their concrete proposals for new working groups (including suggestions for chairing or participation) so that SFIC could continue the discussion at its next meeting. SFIC also concluded that the mandates of the Brazil and China Working Groups had ended and that their activities had formally come to a close.

Furthermore, SFIC discussed the operation of the INCO Service Facility. The Commission gave an overview of the types of services foreseen in the Facility, the available budget and the contracts established so far or to be signed in the near future. A number of Member States expressed concern about the transparency in the Commission’s selection procedures as well as the limited availability of information on ongoing activities and about the support that could be provided by the service facility. They called for more exchange of information between Member States and the Commission on activities in third countries, with the aim of improving the EU’s presentation and visibility, and asked to involve SFIC more closely in the decision-making process.

SFIC then continued its examination of the proposed service request on Danube Region Policy Dialogue on the basis of additional information provided by the German delegation. A number of delegations highlighted the importance of this initiative and the requested support. However, the Commission underlined that this request could not be justified due to the missing element of international cooperation with third countries, given that the participating countries would mainly be EU Member States. A coupling with the Western Balkans Platform would also not be feasible. In addition, the German delegation presented a revised service request on a Conceptual Framework for Monitoring International Cooperation. Several Member States expressed their support, notably in view of the preparation of the next multiannual framework programme for research and innovation and the necessity to start the preparation for a successor to the current ERA roadmap after 2020. SFIC endorsed the request. It was published as a working paper and forwarded to the Commission. Moreover, the Commission informed that the service request for a Foresight Study on the Global Research Area would be implemented as part of a wider frame on Strategic Intelligence in spring 2018. Several countries requested a close cooperation between the Commission and SFIC in the preparation and implementation of the tender, including regular updates by the Commission on its progress.

The German and French delegations provided updates on the implementation of the joint funding schemes respectively with CELAC and ASEAN.

The Spanish delegation, the previous Chair of EUREKA, and the Finnish delegation, current Chair, presented the strategy for internationalisation of the EUREKA network and gave an overview on the latest stay of play in its implementation. Member States pointed out that the dialogue between EUREKA and SFIC should be improved.

Finally, the Bulgarian delegation informed about the work programme of the incoming Presidency, the priorities in the area of research and innovation and the relevant high-level events scheduled in the first semester 2018.

The next SFIC Plenary meeting is scheduled on 7 March 2018.
CONTRIBUTION OF THE SWG GRI TO THE ERAC PLENARY

Subject: Item 4.2 Updates from the ERAC Standing Working Groups and from ERA-related Groups – Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI)

Overview of work carried out since the last ERAC Plenary on 5 December 2017:

1. Work Programme

SWG GRI prepared its 2018-2019 Work Programme which was circulated for comment to the ERAC Steering Board held on 17-18 January 2018. The WP was presented and no comments were received from the ERAC SB. Following this, the WP was submitted to ERAC in view of the upcoming ERAC Plenary on 15-16 March 2018.

2. Sub-group on the implementation of the Council Conclusions on Advancing Gender Equality in ERA

A mandate of the sub-group was prepared and adopted by the SWG GRI. Representatives of five Member States and two Associated Countries signed up for membership in the sub-group by the deadline of 31 January 2018. The sub-group will shortly elect its rapporteur and launch its activities (March 2018).

3. Guidelines on a gender perspective for international cooperation in STI

Following the adoption of the Joint guidelines on a gender perspective for international cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation by SFIC and SWG GRI, the chairs of the two groups presented the document to the ERAC and agreed to forward the opinion to the Presidency of the Council of the EU for further distribution, as the Presidency sees fit.

4. Input for ERAC Annual Report

SWG GRI drafted its input for the ERAC Annual Report following the template provided and submitted it to the ERAC Secretariat within the agreed deadline.
5. **GENDERACTION Mutual learning workshop on the implementation of Priority 4**

Members of the SWG GRI were invited to participate in the 1st Mutual Learning Workshop on the implementation of ERA Priority 4 organized within the framework of H2020 GENDERACTION project. The workshop was organized by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, specifically the SWG GRI delegate Roberta Schaller-Steidl and her team, on 7 and 8 February 2018. A total of 38 people participated in the workshop. The workshop focused on criteria for identifying good practices both in terms of policy design and in terms of concrete actions and measures. The workshop discussion focused on six topics identified in a survey previously carried out in the GENDERACTION project: 1) Increasing the number of female professors, 2) Performance contracts, 3) Monitoring, 4) Gender in research content, 5) Gender Equality Plans, and 6) Evidence-based policy development. SWG GRI members contributed as rapporteurs from the subgroups, presenters in the subgroups (each subgroup opened with two or three presentations of good practices on the given topic) and as active discussants. ERAC co-chair Christian Naczinski delivered a keynote presentation on the coordination of ERA in Austria and Europe. A workshop report was made available to the workshop participants as well as the entire SWG GRI.
5. **ERAC SWG on Human Resources and Mobility (HRM)**

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE SWG HRM TO THE ERAC PLENARY**

**Subject: Recent results of the Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SWG HRM)**

- On the basis of the mandate given by ERAC in June 2017, the Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SWG HRM) was established on 1/7/2017. The first meeting was held on 10/October/2017 where a first discussion on the 2018-2019 was held and the Chair was elected.
- A draft work program for 2018 – 2019 has been elaborated and was discussed at the second meeting held on 28/February/2018. The work-program includes the following lines of action and thematic priorities:
  - Contribution to the next Framework program (FP9) in the areas of our work and out mission.
  - Promotion and development of research careers and inter-sectoral mobility of researchers.
  - Synergies between ERA and EHEA and issues related to higher education, training, researchers careers, and the knowledge triangle (education, research and innovation).
  - Synergies with the Open Science agenda, and follow-up on open science skills & education, as well as rewards and recognition in collaboration with SWI OS/OI as well as synergies with gender equality and the integration of gender dimensions in the research and innovation content; specifically related to human resources policies in research in collaboration with SWG GI
  - Follow-up on ERA priority 3 national action plans and its relation to national research and innovation systems, specifically in the top areas identified such as inter-sectoral mobility, open labour market for researchers, open transparent and merit based recruitment.
- At the last meeting, other results include the election of the vice-chair and adoption of the rules of procedure for the group and discussion regarding the preparation for the ERA governance review.
6. ERAC SWG on Open Science and Innovation (OSI)

Written note presenting the recent work of the SWG OSI in the perspective of ERAC 15 March plenary meeting

Since the Brussels meeting of the ERAC on 5 December 2017, the SWG OSI has focused its work on the finalization of its opinion on the EOSC (European Open Science Cloud) governance, its report on the assessment of the feasibility of the Amsterdam Call for Action, and has initiated its work on Open Innovation.

SWG OSI had a non-meeting together with the Commission on 21 December 2017, as well as a SWG meeting on 6 February 2018.

- EOSC Governance

SWG OSI has continued its close cooperation with the Commission on the development of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), in particular through an informal meeting on 21 December 2017 and at the occasion of its meeting on 6 February 2018. SWG OSI discussed and advised on the different models under consideration for the EOSC Strategic Implementation Plan, particularly as regards its governance, on the basis of the national positions that have been collected from delegations.

SWG OSI finalised its Opinion on the EOSC governance models and Strategic Implementation Plan in early 2018, supporting the general federated approach proposed by the Commission as well as the two stages approach for the EOSC governance (phase 1 & 2 pre and post-2020), but stressing that further clarity is needed on the different components of the EOSC.

There is no consensus though among delegations as regards the model to follow for the governance structure of the EOSC – in particular regarding the role of the coordination structure to be funded by Horizon 2020 -, but the respective strengths and weaknesses of the different options at stake have been explicitly stated.

- Assessment of feasibility of Amsterdam Call for Action (AC4A)

SWG OSI finalized its report on the assessment of the feasibility of the AC4A, based on the contributions from AU, BE, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, IE, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI and UK. It gives insight into the current main challenges in Open Science policy making, emphasizing policy related, institutional and socio-cultural constraints, and giving indications on which policies, according to respondents, are to preserve, modify or even disregarded.

The report underlines that there is no one size fits all approach, since Open Science policies are deeply embedded in more general political, socio-cultural and research contexts. Hence a diversity of paths towards Open Science are still deemed as relevant, including self-archiving of publications (Green Open Access). Respondents agree on the need to have a clear and well monitored EU agenda on Open Science, the necessity to bring change in research assessment (and academic career incentives) and the high stakes linked to EOSC as a federation of Open Science infrastructures. With regard to Open Access, there is a clear wish to develop a more European approach in the relationships with (Major) publishers. Most respondents consider the AC4A 'deadline' of 2020, for offering full Open Access to publications, as not feasible.
The report has been sent to the ERAC for information, and the Vice-Chair has presented it at the RWP meeting on 26 February.

- Open Innovation

SWG OSI launched its work on Open Innovation at the occasion of its 6 February meeting. National Open Innovation strategies have been presented by AU and SE delegates and discussed with the group. The European Open Innovation strategy has also been presented by the Commission, focusing on the European Innovation Council. The important issue of Open Innovation will be discussed further in 2018, including sharing of information and best practices, national initiatives and strategies in this field.