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**ERAC-GPC**

**WORKING PAPER**

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From:	GPC Secretariat
To:	ERAC (GPC)
Subject:	Report by the task force on the future of the GPC and its accompanying updated programme

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Delegations will find attached the Report by the task force on the future of the GPC, and its accompanying updated programme, as adopted at the GPC plenary on 6 March 2019.

## Task Force report on the future of the GPC

### **Background**

In its recommendations regarding the governance review in 2018, the ERAC addressed specifically the case of the GPC and Priority 2a:

- Recommendation 1: However, expand the scope of ERA Priority 2a (jointly addressing grand challenges) to include the new approach on partnerships, which should also take into account the missions of Horizon Europe.
- Recommendation 4: Explore options to relaunch the existing GPC to prepare Member States' and Associated Countries' participation in the strategic coordinating process for partnerships, once its design and the design of missions is decided in the appropriate forum.

During the ERAC plenary meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2018, the European Commission presented its proposal for the so-called strategic coordinating process for partnerships. The objective of such a process is to provide advice on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of partnerships. The Commission thus proposes to establish a “Forum for European R&I partnerships”.

Moreover, in its Conclusions adopted on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 (14989/18), the Council reiterated its support toward the Joint Programming Process and called on the Commission to continue to support it as well.

### **Options for the future of the GPC**

In order to fulfill the recommendation from the ERAC on the GPC, taking into account the context of partnerships in Horizon Europe and the renewed support for the Joint Programming Process, it was thus decided to establish a Task Force with the aim of making a proposal for the short-term future of the GPC, namely in the so-called transition period between now and the next governance review. Indeed, the ERAC recommendations have made it clear that there would be no significant change of mandate at this stage, and thus all current groups are going to continue at least until the next governance review which will implement the new priorities for the ERA which will be set up in 2020.

The future of the GPC during this transition period should take into account several aspects:

- The Forum for European R&I partnerships should include the Joint Programming Initiatives in its mandate as they are important and strategic partnerships at European level, even if they are not instruments from the Framework Programme.
- The Forum for European R&I partnerships will be launched in 2019 in a transition phase but a clear link to the ERA mechanism and structure has to be considered in the long term.
- The future of the GPC, and most importantly the Priority 2a, after 2020, is to be decided at a later stage, and thus no decision taken today should have an irremediable effect. Indeed, after 2020, several options could be envisaged for the GPC, including in particular the three following ones:

- a. The GPC could continue to carry out its activities related to the JPP and JPIs and expand its scope towards promoting the coordination of national R&I policies and alignment in a broader sense, complementary to the work of the Forum. This, would require a close collaboration between these two groups in order to avoid duplication.
- b. The GPC could shift to other activities, providing that the Forum has well included the JPP and JPIs in its mandate and activities. In that scenario, one topic which is currently not covered by ERA priorities but which is politically important is the issue of inclusiveness and the R&I divide in Europe.
- c. The GPC could stop its activities, providing that they have been well transferred to the Forum.

As no option can be favored at this stage regarding the future of the GPC, and more generally regarding the future priorities of the ERA after 2020, it seems important to allow the GPC to work on different topics in the transition period:

#### 1) Work in relation with the Forum

As the Forum will have a role on all European R&I partnerships, including the Joint Programming Initiatives, and as the current expertise for JPIs lies in the GPC, it is important to ensure a close coordination between the two bodies, in view of a possible integration of the full scope of activities related to JPIs within the Forum.

#### 2) New activities for the GPC

In view of possible new orientations/priorities for the ERA after 2020, the GPC could start a pilot work on areas not currently covered by the other groups. At the last ERAC plenary meeting of 6 December 2018 and the subsequent GPC meeting the day after, there seemed to be light consensus that, without prejudice to the renewal of ERA priorities in 2021, GPC should consider to reorient for the remaining period of the ERA roadmap to key topics on openness and transparency of networks that can be seen within the remit of the current GPC mandate. In particular, the issue of inclusiveness is high on the political agenda, including but not limited to R&I divide in Europe, and so the GPC could start to work on the openness and transparency of R&I networks. The GPC was already willing to launch a task force on the Widening aspects of the JPP and JPIs, so this task force could be broadened and launched in 2019.

#### 3) Activities to be continued to support JPIs

Finally, the GPC has also started an important work with the ten JPIs in the context of the next Framework Programme, in particular an analysis of the long-term strategies that the JPIs published in 2017. The GPC should thus continue/finish this work regarding the JPIs in close collaboration with the JPIs themselves, for instance through an update of these long-term strategies, follow-up of alignment development issues or through a refined monitoring of JPIs based on the criteria set up by the GPC and which could be updated as well. This could besides help the Forum as well regarding the monitoring of partnerships.

From the procedural point of view, maintaining continuity in the set-up of GPC (i.e. only changing its work plan) would allow it to complete its work on supporting the implementation of JPIs, and support their transition to a new system. Also, opting for minimum changes in its current set up would allow to benefit from the resources that the GPC has as an ERAC Standing Working Group (e.g. support from the General Secretariat of the Council, reimbursement of travel costs, meeting rooms).

A proposal for an updated work programme is provided in Annex.

## Annex – proposal for the updated work programme 2019-2020 for the GPC

### **1. Finalizing the work on Joint Programming Process and JPIs:**

- a. Feedback from the GPC to the JPIs on their Long Term Strategies and possible updates of these strategies (9/19)
- b. Update of National Action Plan follow-up table, with Examples of national best practices on JP and alignment (9/19)
- c. Agreement on methodology for national qualitative assessment of JPP and JPI participation (6/19)
- d. Preparation and submission of national contributions to GPC, consolidation and preparation of draft (3/20) and final (9/20) GPC report on JPP and JPIs

### **2. Openness & transparency of networks**

The focus of the work of GPC along the new priority topic could be to improve the understanding on how and to what extent (national) researchers are enabled to cooperate transnationally and what role European cooperation plays here. Work on this issue by the GPC will not only allow to better understand the dynamics, bottlenecks and levels of transnational cooperation at national and/or regional level. Additional knowledge on these issues will allow to draw political conclusions on estimating appropriate levels of ‘transnational cooperation’ and to initiate policy reforms to improve the situation at national/regional level. Moreover, it could start the work on the performance indicators to monitor meaningful progress on achieving more openness and transparency of R&I networks in ERA. The approach is based on a broad understanding in the context of transnational collaboration, covering the Framework Programme, European R&I partnerships as well as any other relevant programmes or institutions:

- a. Development of a detailed roadmap to address the topic (6/19)
- b. Elaboration of national contributions as well as contributions from COM services on centrally available data and reports, status report to ERAC (12/19)
- c. Draft (3/20) and Final (6/20) GPC report on Openness & Transparency of networks with conclusions and recommendations addressed to ERAC

### **3. Relations with other groups and initiatives (ongoing)**

- a. ERAC and ERAC Steering Board
- b. ERA-LEARN
- c. Transitional Forum for European R&I partnerships