

ERAC 1211/19

NOTE

From: ERAC Secretariat
To: ERAC delegations

Subject: Summary conclusions of the 42nd ERAC plenary meeting on 6 June 2019
in Brussels

Delegations will find annexed to this Note the summary conclusions of the 42nd ERAC plenary meeting on 6 June 2019 in Brussels, as adopted by written procedure.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

42nd ERAC plenary meeting, 6 June 2019 in Brussels

Co-Chairs: Jean-Eric Paquet / Christian Naczinsky

Secretariat: General Secretariat of the Council

Present: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (29)

Absent: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Israel, Latvia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine (15)

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes as set out in document CM 2934/19.

The ERAC co-Chairs welcomed the new ERAC delegates.

2. Summary conclusions of the 41st ERAC plenary meeting on 21-22 March 2019

The summary conclusions of the 41st ERAC plenary meeting on 21-22 March 2019 in Bucharest (Romania) were adopted by written procedure on 16 May 2019, as set out in document ERAC 1208/19.

3. ERA and Innovation Policy (part I)

3.1 Strengthening the strategic capacity of ERAC

ERAC held a strategic debate, at Directors-General level, on the "Role of R&I for the future of Europe".

The strategic debate had been prepared the day before the plenary, on 5 June, at a workshop hosted by the RO presidency. The two key subjects at the workshop and of the ensuing strategic debate at the ERAC plenary were:

1. *"Investing in and for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"* and
2. *"Inclusiveness in R&I"*.

The outcome of the debate, which was placed in the context of the Sibiu summit on 9 May and the EU's next strategic agenda 2019-2024, will feed into preparations for a possible Commission communication on the future of the ERA to come out in 2020.

The Commission (Kurt Vandenberghe) made a general introduction of the current context and the setting of long-term directions on the basis of:

- the ten commitments adopted at the Sibiu summit on 9 May by the EU leaders and the steps for the elaboration of the EU's strategic agenda for 2019-2024, to be adopted by the European Council on 20-21 June 2019
- the need for an ambitious financial envelop for the Horizon Europe research programme in order to increase the leverage capacity for innovation and breakthrough results to respond to societal challenges

- the European Semester package 2019 approved by the Commission on 5 June which for the first time addresses country specific recommendations in the field of research and innovation
- the Commission's reflection paper "[Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030](#)".

1. Investing in and for the SDGs

The Commission (Román Arjona) presented the subject and put forward questions for discussion and the MS co-Chair debriefed on the key findings of the workshop of 5 June (doc. WK 7112/2019).

The majority of delegations gave an overview of the situation on investments in R&I in their respective countries against the backdrop of the target of 3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in R&D set out by the Europe 2020 strategy, and which will expire next year.

The discussion showed that:

- there was overall support by delegations for keeping a quantitative target for investment in R&I in the EU after 2020 as an aspirational reference. However, this common target should be accompanied with directionality aimed at accelerating the transition towards an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable Europe, in line with the international commitments to achieving the SDGs by 2030;
- a better association of R&I with other policies' objectives is needed. At EU level, the policy mix should facilitate a combination of investment tools; smart regulation and the systematic application of the innovation principle, and
- national budgets should be reoriented to ensure a shared direction within the EU and measures should be further developed to increase the attractiveness of Europe for investments.

2. *Inclusiveness*

The Commission (Magda de Carli) presented the subject making it clear that inclusiveness was to be considered in a wider sense, and put forward questions for discussion. Erik Hansalek (DE) debriefed on the key findings of the workshop of 5 June (doc. WK 7112/2019).

Following an exchange of views, delegations agreed that:

- education and research and innovation must be better linked;
- more measures are needed to support innovators and foster excellence, but also to help overcome the innovation gap across the EU and spread knowledge to prevent situations where "the winner takes it all";
- the European Semester could play an important role to monitor and promote inclusiveness, and
- synergies among different instruments at the various levels are of paramount importance to achieve inclusiveness.

4. **Information from the co-Chairs and Presidency**

- The MS co-Chair provided information on the main issues discussed at the latest ERAC Steering Board meeting held on 7 May 2019, which included:
 - the organisation of the Helpdesk set up in support to the implementation of the Action Plan on the ERA review (doc. ERAC 1205/19)
 - a preliminary discussion on a possible revision of the ERAC Rules of Procedure to take into account the recommendations in the new Action Plan among other issues

- preparations for the kick-off meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Future of the ERA on 24 May 2019
 - the coordination of Work Programmes 2019-2020 of the ERA-related groups.
- The Romanian Presidency (Ioana Ispas) made a presentation on the progress and achievements of the Presidency priorities in R&I (doc. WK 7113/2019).
 - The incoming Finnish Presidency (Erja Heikkinen) made a presentation on its Presidency priorities in R&I for the second semester of 2019, which include ‘Sustainable growth, competitiveness and security’, and on the Joint Conference of ERAC and the EU Directors-General for Higher Education to be held on 1 October (doc. WK 7113/2019).

5. ERA Governance

5.1 The follow-up on the Council conclusions of 30 November 2018 on the ERA and on the Review of the ERA advisory structure

- The rapporteur for the ERAC Action Plan 2019-2021, Fulvio Esposito (IT), recalled that the Helpdesk established to help with the implementation of the ERAC Action Plan, had send to the relevant players the list of actions to be implemented in the first half of 2019.
- The Chair of the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Future of the ERA, Eduardo Maldonado (PT), debriefed the Committee on state of play and the next steps of the work to be carried out by the group in the coming months (doc. WK 7114/2019).

5.2 Highlights from the ERA-related Groups

ERAC took note of written updates by the ERA-related groups (doc. WK 6702/2019) and exchanged views on gender and innovation on the basis of a draft policy brief presented by the Chair of the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation, Marcela Linková (doc. WK 7115/2019).

The policy brief, which elaborates on key factors and trends in the participation of women in innovation and the integration of a gender dimension in innovation processes, addresses a number of recommendations to policy makers, research funders and innovators.

Some delegations raised the question on how to implement the recommendations in the most efficient and appropriate manner while taking into account national policies and the EU current context, in particular the implementation of the next framework programme Horizon Europe, as well as other relevant dimensions such as education, awareness campaigns and development of smart regulation for both public and private domains.

5.3 ERAC Work Programme 2019-2020

ERAC adopted its Work Programme for 2019-2020 as set out in document [1209/19](#).

6. ERA and Innovation Policy (part 2)

6.1 Monitoring ERA National Action Plans

The rapporteur Cecilia Cabello (ES) gave an oral update on Monitoring ERA National Action Plans for all ERA-related Groups (doc. WK 7116/2019).

The presentation was based on the inputs provided by all ERA-related groups on their respective ERA priorities. A final written report is expected at the Steering Board meeting on 2 July 2019.

A few delegations commented that, in spite of the fact that the ERA hasn't made as much progress as expected, some good achievements can be noted.

6.2 Evaluation of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility

- The rapporteur (David Wilson) and a member (Jacqueline Grech) of the Expert Group for the evaluation of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF), presented the results of the evaluation together with a set of recommendations aimed at upgrading the role for the PSF to drive reforms and improving its design and mechanics (doc. WK 7119/2019).
- The Commission (Marta Truco), taking into account the recommendations by the Expert Group, presented a number of developments concerning the ‘PSF 2.0’ and its implementation in the near future (doc. WK 7119/2019).

Delegations congratulated the Expert Group for the accomplished work as well as the work provided by the PSF, and encouraged to take forward further initiatives under an improved PSF.

7. Standing Information Point

The Committee took note of the written information by the Commission on the European Innovation Scoreboard and Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2019 (doc. WK 6635/2019).

8. Any Other Business

8.1 43rd ERAC meeting (2 October 2019, Helsinki)

The Steering Board will draw up the provisional annotated agenda of the next meeting on the basis of the Work Programme 2019-2020.

A Joint Conference of ERAC and the EU Directors-General for Higher Education is scheduled on 1 October 2019 in Helsinki.
