

**UPDATES FROM THE ERA-RELATED GROUPS**

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## **ESFRI**

The main activities of ESFRI since the last ERAC Plenary include:

### **1) ESFRI White Paper 'Making Science Happen – a new ambition for Research Infrastructures in the European Research Area'**

In the autumn of 2018, ESFRI launched an internal reflection process on the future of research infrastructures in the ERA. The reflection process has been continued throughout 2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemics, the publication of the White Paper was delayed from early March to end of April this year.

The White Paper presents ESFRI vision of a fully consolidated European ecosystem of Research Infrastructures underpinning the ERA, offering cross-disciplinary integrated / harmonized services and enabling their users both to pursue the greatest of scientific challenges and generate new knowledge, as well as to maximise their impact on the most pressing of global societal challenges and the everyday life of European citizens.

This vision is intimately related to achieving the following main objective:

1. *Ecosystem*: consolidating the existing Research Infrastructure landscape and continuously strengthening its capacity through investments in unique, cutting-edge scientific instrumentation and services, overcoming administrative, legal, and intellectual barriers and working jointly to serve researchers' needs across disciplines.

Implementing the vision also requires the delivery of the following specific interdependent objectives, on some key dimensions of the Research Infrastructures universe and the Policies underlying the "Triangle of Knowledge" (Research-Innovation-Education).

2. *Research*: maintaining an absolute edge globally in Research Infrastructure capabilities to serve ambitious, curiosity- and demand-driven, societally relevant, scientific and technological research, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the ERA and of European Research Infrastructures for researchers, industrial users and international partners
3. *Innovation*: accelerating the development and exploitation of European Research Infrastructures as knowledge and innovation hubs, boosting their role as drivers of economic growth, social and environmental transitions, and place-based innovation
4. *Education*: engaging Research Infrastructures (and universities) in specialized training of students, young academics and industrial scientists on individual technologies, interdisciplinary methodologies, or data management skills, to develop the next generation of researchers and, more widely, to contribute to the science literacy of society

5. *Policies*: increasing coherence between European, national and regional priorities and policies for Research Infrastructure development and funding, inclusiveness of the ERA, and effective synergies with other European policies and funding instruments, e.g., regional development, environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing
6. *Data*: exploiting the data science and data engineering expertise of Research Infrastructures for the development of the European Open Science Cloud and, in turn, increasing data sharing and use well beyond what individual RIs or scientific domains could

ESFRI considers that achieving this vision will require a strengthened partnership in the ERA among Member States and Associated countries, the European Commission and the scientific community, supported by increased effectiveness and strategic leadership of ESFRI.

The White Paper was broadly distributed to the broad range of stakeholders, including key policy makers at European and national level. It was also presented and discussed during the Croatian Presidency conference on 'European Research Infrastructures for a smarter future' held on 15 May 2020. This online event had an attendance of 600-850 participants throughout the day.

The White Paper is available on <https://www.esfri.eu/esfri-white-paper>.

## **2) Research Infrastructures in the fight against COVID-19**

To support a science-led response to the COVID-19 outbreak, ESFRI set up a dedicated website, which aggregates information about dedicated services offered by Research Infrastructures at European and national level to facilitate the development of diagnostic tools, treatments and vaccines. Currently, information from close to 100 Research Infrastructures is available and the website is continuously updated. This initiative is part of the ERAvsCORONA Action Plan.

Information is available at: <https://www.esfri.eu/covid-19>.

## **3) ESFRI Roadmap 2021 update**

The 2021 ESFRI Roadmap update process is underway. The monitoring of Projects that entered the Roadmap 2016 will be finalise by the end of June.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the related restrictions, the deadline for submission of new proposals was extended from 5 May 2020 to 9 September 2020. This decision was taken in order to ensure equal chances for all consortia, many of which experienced significant difficulties to effectively collaborate across borders, especially in the first weeks of the pandemics. The Roadmap is still expected to be published in the second half of 2021.

#### **4) Coordination with the European Open Science Cloud**

ESFRI Task Force on EOSC has planned to organise a large-scale workshop bringing together ESFRI RIs and EOSC on 13-14 May alongside the INSPIRE conference in Dubrovnik. Due to the current travel restrictions, the workshop was cancelled.

#### **5) Monitoring of RI performance**

ESFRI Working Group on Monitoring of RI performance finalised its report, which was approved during the ESFRI plenary on 18 December 2019. ESFRI will take a decision in the plenary on 16-17 June on the practical implementation of the framework.

The report is available at the ESFRI website:

[https://www.esfri.eu/sites/default/files/ESFRI\\_WG\\_Monitoring\\_Report.pdf](https://www.esfri.eu/sites/default/files/ESFRI_WG_Monitoring_Report.pdf).

## **GPC**

Since the last ERAC meeting, only one GPC meeting took place during the first semester 2020, on May 25 (informal online videoconference).

### **1. Follow-up to the Final report on openness/transparency**

The final [Report by the GPC task force on Openness and transparency of networks](#) was endorsed by the GPC on 18 March and was presented by the Vice-Chair during the last GPC meeting. Delegates exchanged views on the follow-up to the Report.

The Group concluded that the report will be very useful for the future of activities in this field, which will be most likely under the remits of the Forum of Partnerships. The Group concurred that it remains to be seen how the GPC will fit in the landscape after the presentation of the Commission communication on the ERA, expected this summer, and the review of the ERA advisory structure due in 2021. Given this context, it is still difficult to predict how the situation will evolve at this point in time.

### **2. Continuation of the work on impact of Joint Programming**

A first presentation had been made at the GPC plenary of 10 December 2019 on the preliminary findings of the survey that was conducted in 2019 (document WK 14146/2019).

During the last meeting on May 25, the Chair notably explained that the results of the survey can be very useful in the context of the assessment of the work carried out by the JPIs during the last 10 years, and how the achievements by the JPIs can be valuable in the current Partnerships' process.

Several GPC delegates also elaborated on the future of the JPIs as a part of the landscape after the establishment of the Forum for Partnerships in R&I.

The workshop on the impact of JP at national level originally planned in April 2020 could not take place because of the COVID-19 crisis. However, it was not excluded that the workshop, with physical attendance, could be organised in the second half of 2020, which should have a forward-looking focus. ERA-LEARN has also additional data that could be combined for the follow-up of the assessment on JP.

### **3. Monitoring of the ERA Priority 2a**

During the last meeting, the Vice-Chair debriefed on the state of play of the ongoing exercise for the monitoring of Priority 2a, following the request for written inputs which took place during April and May 2020.

Among other things, she explained that this 3rd monitoring exercise allows to make a comparison with the 2018 and 2019 monitoring exercises. In this respect, she pointed out that there have been almost no cancelled measures.

### **4. Update on the preparation of European Partnerships and the transitional Forum for Partnerships**

During the last GPC meeting, the Commission presented an oral update on the current status of preparation and next steps on European Partnerships and informed delegations on the ongoing work of the transitional Forum for Partnerships.

### **5. Synergies with other ERA-related groups**

A workshop with SWG GRI dedicated to gender targeting GPC delegations, originally foreseen for 27 May was cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

### **6. Chairmanship of the GPC**

The Chair has announced that he would have to step down from his duties as Chair of the GPC for professional reasons as from 1 June 2020.

Following previous exchanges with the Vice-Chair, the Council Secretariat and the MS ERAC co-Chair, it was proposed that the current Vice-Chair, Petra Zagar, assumes the role of Acting Chair of the GPC to avoid a gap in the chairmanship of the GPC.

There was a common understanding among the GPC delegates that the current Vice-Chair should act as Acting Chair of the GPC to ensure the continuation of the chairmanship at least until the end of 2020.

## SFIC

Here are the current developments within the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation in STI:

- SFIC had its last physical plenary meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2020 and a dedicated workshop on Africa on 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2020.
- The planned Plenary meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic but a virtual informal meeting of SFIC delegates has taken place on that date.
- In the March Plenary, the election of the SFIC Vice-Chair has taken place. Because Ms. Tiina Vihma-Purovaara has offered to serve a second term as Vice-Chair and no other candidatures have been put forward, she has been elected Vice-Chair for another 3-year term.
- Also in the March Plenary the Science Diplomacy Task Force has presented its input paper to delegations, which focuses on advancing the impact of Science Diplomacy at EU and Member States level through targeted support and improved coordination. The paper was approved by delegations (ERAC-SFIC 1352/20). Currently the Task Force is working on a complementary paper describing Science Diplomacy related topics that could be of interest in the different Horizon Europe clusters.
- The Task Force on Africa has presented its initial report to the plenary on 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2020. After that, the dedicated workshop with experts and African representatives has provided additional inputs, as did delegations in written form. The revised report has been sent to delegations and has been finalised on 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 (doc. 1355/20).
- SFIC has published a COVID-19 related opinion that was drafted and approved in a very short time span in a complete virtual/electronic working method (doc. 1354/20, also circulated to ERAC members for information). Positive feedback from the European Commission has been received on the usefulness and timeliness of the report.
- SFIC is currently working on an opinion "Relevance of International Cooperation in research and innovation for the EU – boosting the international dimension of the ERA & Horizon Europe", which is expected to be approved in June 2020.
- With view to the topic of China, SFIC has launched a second internal survey to delegations, focusing on the available knowledge resources in the MS/AC – from think tanks to competence centres to the Science counsellors in China and existing joint labs or campuses of EU universities in China. 18 countries have so far responded to the survey and the EC and MS/AC have been provided with the summary analysis (WK 4905/2020 INIT – revision on the way).

## ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation (GRI)

The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SWG GRI took place on 1-2 April 2020 via an online platform.

The following main actions have been achieved and are under way:

- Following discussions at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, two new task forces have been formed:
  - o Task force on gender and COVID-19: the task force prepared and SWG GRI adopted a **position paper on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on research and researchers** (document WK 5659/2020).
  - o Task force on gender in the future of ERA: the task force prepared and SWG GRI adopted a **position paper gender equality in the future of European Research Area 2020-2030** available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-1204-2020-INIT/en/pdf>.
  - o **“Support to address policy challenges related to gender in R&I: Analysis on sexual harassment and sexual assault in academia, with a focus on international mobility”**: The task force prepared and finalised and SWG GRI adopted **the report (document ERAC 1205/20) and a policy brief, with recommendations to all ERA Stakeholders, including national authorities.**
- **Follow-up to Guidance to facilitate the implementation of targets to promote gender equality in research and innovation**: SWG GRI has collected information on the state of implementation of the seven recommendations contained in the Guidance, which will also present proposal for future course of action and recommendations. The report will be circulated to SWG GRI for comment on 5 June 2020. This work will be finished and the report adopted and published in June 2020.
- **ERA governance**: Members provided an update on the state of implementation of ERA Priority 4 in ERA National Action Plans and Strategies using the Progress Tool; **analytical input was sent** to the rapporteur Cecilia Cabello using the provided template.
- **Cooperation with other ERA related groups**: SWG GRI is part of a **task force consisting of SWG HRM/OSI/GRI** the objective of which is to revise the Charter and Code, with a view to update/revise OSOI and gender aspects.
- **Gender and digitalization**: A small group on gender and digitalization headed by IE presented its work plan at the April meeting, with the plan to organise a mutual learning workshop in Ireland in the second half of the year. The objective of the workshop will be to present developments in MS/AC on gender and digitalization/AI policy, identify areas for policy actions and develop recommendations.

## **ERAC SWG on Human Resources and Mobility (HRM)**

The next meeting will be held on June 3 as virtual meeting. The monitoring of Priority 3 NAPs has been completed. A Joint Task force between ERA related groups has been defined and set up (OSI-GRI-HRM)

**The context and objectives of the group called TRIANGLE TASK FORCE are the following:**

Human resources policies in research, gender equality in research and innovation and open science and innovation (OSI) are three ERA priorities strongly linked together. In 2020, the three standing working groups (chaired by Cecilia Cabello, Marcela Linkova and Marc Vanholsbeeck, respectively) addressing these priorities decided to create a joint cross task force to address two specific **interrelated goals**:

- ✓ GOAL 1: Recommendations on training, incentives and evaluation of researchers with an OSI and gender perspective
- ✓ GOAL 2: Reviewing and potential update of the [Charter & Code<sup>1</sup>](#) at the light of the future of ERA developments.

The result of both goals will be presented to the three standing working groups for comments and input, adoption, dissemination and presentation to the ERAC.

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<sup>1</sup> [The European Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment](#)

## **ERAC SWG on Open Science and Innovation (OSI)**

NEXT MEETING: 18 JUNE (online)

- **Specific SWG OSI actions launched in the context of the COVID-19 crisis:**
  - SWG OSI has drafted an **Open Register of Open Science and Open Innovation initiatives in the context of the pandemic**. We aim at collecting information about initiatives at institutional, national, European level and international level. We dedicate a specific attention to the initiatives in the fields of SSH and social innovation since these are relatively less documented than those in STEM and health sciences. The document has been put on line in the form of an open google doc so that OSI delegates, external experts and stakeholders alike could complete and update it. The Register can be used as a source of inspiration at national level. Furthermore, SWG OSI intends to use the collection of initiatives to make an ex post assessment of the Open Science added value – but also the gaps that may be identified – in a pandemic crisis context. Hence the Open Register will offer the empirical basis for a future SWG OSI opinion paper on the topic.
  - **Regular contacts between SWG OSI Chair and Vice-Chair with Kostas Glinos and Anette Bjornsson (OS team at the Commission)** have allowed to keep exchange of information. OSI has shared with the Commission its abovementioned Open Register of OSI initiatives relating to COVID-19, while the Commission keeps OSI delegates updated about most recent initiatives, notably the COVID-19 Data Portal.
- The **OSI plenary spring meeting** has been postponed from 23 April to 18 June. This will be an online conference. The meeting will have a thematic focus on the issue of Open Science monitoring.
- SWG OSI Chair has participated as an observer to the first (virtual) meeting of the **CONOSC network** on 16 April. Co-chairs of CONOSC will be invited as observers to future SWG OSI meetings.
- SWG OSI has conducted a **survey about the impact of its activities on national OS and OI policy making**. The results should be analyzed during the summer period.
- SWG OSI has launched its **new joint taskforce (OSI-HRM-GRI) on researchers' training and research evaluation**, and virtual meetings between chairs of the 3 groups as well as with ERA stakeholders (EUA and CESAER) happened on line. Chairs of OSI and HRM (in HRM case as a speaker) participated to a series of EUA Webinars on the topic of

research assessment in an OS perspective, which was also the occasion to communicate about the taskforce. As such, SWG OSI considers these experience of online interactions as rather positive, even if they are to be considered as complement and not a replacement for physical meetings;

- **Monitoring of the 5th priority of ERA NAPs** has been conducted and a preliminary report has been drafted. Although the participation rate is still relatively low, we have no reason to consider it is due to the current circumstances.

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