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MEETING DOCUMENT

From:	ERAC Secretariat
To:	ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee)
Subject:	ERAC videoconference on 10 September 2020 - Item 4.2 - Updates from ERA-related groups

Dear ERAC delegates,

Please find in annex the document Updates from ERA-related groups with a view to the ERAC videoconference on Thursday 10 September (agenda item 4.2).

Kind regards,

ERAC Secretariat

UPDATES FROM THE ERA-RELATED GROUPS

(item 4.2 of the agenda)

ESFRI.....	2
GPC.....	4
SFIC.....	5
ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation (GRI).....	6
ERAC SWG on Human Resources and Mobility (HRM).....	7
ERAC SWG on Open Science and Innovation (OSI).....	8

ESFRI

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

1) Croatian Presidency conference on “European Research Infrastructures for a Smarter Future”

ESFRI collaborated in the organization of the "European Research Infrastructures for a smarter future" Conference held digitally on May 15th 2020, with high-level speakers from the European Research and the Research Infrastructures areas. The event was open to all participants, and was hosted by the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The overall objective of the conference was to explore the potential of European RIs to make a meaningful impact on the European strategic agendas and identify the ways in which this could be achieved.

The conference was composed of three sessions exploring the relations and the impact of RIs in the European strategic agendas, regional development and the fight against COVID-19. One session was dedicated to the presentation of the [ESFRI White Paper](#). The conference concluded with a high-level policy panel identifying directions for the future of European research infrastructures' policy.

This online event had an attendance of 600-850 participants throughout the day with 781 people officially registered and 1013 YouTube views. The Croatian Presidency, with the support of the moderators of the different sessions, has prepared a policy focused paper presenting the main messages of the Conference. This conference report has been circulated to the ERAC Delegations..

2) ESFRI Roadmap update process

The 2021 ESFRI Roadmap update process is underway. The monitoring of Projects that entered the Roadmap 2016 has been finalized. The assessment of the Projects showed good progress and most of the RIs are on the right path to reach implementation before the 10-year deadline. This is the result of higher entry-level requirements, based on the lifecycle concept with minimal key requirements, with more comprehensive and robust evaluation of, separately, science and implementation case, which was first implemented in the 2016 Roadmap.

The monitoring of Projects that entered the Roadmap 2010 has started at the beginning of the summer.

The deadline for receiving new project proposals for the ESFRI Roadmap 2021 has been postponed due to COVID-19 outbreak to the 9.9.2020.

The ESFRI plenary, organized digitally on 16-17 June, agreed on the scope of the ESFRI Landscape Analysis, which will have a more strategic approach and focus on the impact of RIs' services in three areas: SDGs, crisis response and digital transformation.

3) ESFRI meetings

Since the last ERAC plenary, ESFRI Executive Board met six times. Three of these meetings included the Strategic Working Group Chairs.

On 16-17 June, ESFRI organised its 72nd Forum in a completely digital format. The main agenda points focused on:

- The preparation of the ESFRI Roadmap 2021
- Discussion on the follow-up actions on the ESFRI White Paper to support the new ambition for European science within the renewed ERA
- Discussion on the implementation of the Monitoring Framework

Due to the ongoing travel restrictions related to COVID-19, the next ESFRI Plenary meeting, scheduled on 1-2 October 2020, will also be held in a fully digital form.

4) European Open Science Cloud

ESFRI Task Force is organising a second ESFRI-EOSC Workshop 'Research Infrastructures shaping EOSC' on 5-6 October 2020. It is planned as a physical event in Athens with web-streaming of the plenary sessions, however the format of the event may be reconsidered due to recent developments related to COVID-19 pandemics.

5) ESFRI Monitoring Framework

On 18 June, the ESFRI Chair presented the ESFRI Monitoring Framework at the ERAC OSI SWG.

GPC

Since the last ERAC informal videoconference (June 4), the GPC has not had any meeting. The last one was performed online, on May 25 and the next one is expected online, for September 30.

According to our 2019-2020 Work Programme there is one remaining theme left – 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 (doc. WK 14146/2019).

During the last meeting on May 25, the (ex) 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. Part of this had already been done by JPIs themselves in September 2018, with the conference on 10 Years Joint Programming – Achievements and the Way Forward, where the ten JPI's used the occasion to present a joint JPI Chairs declaration. The declaration, Driving research and innovation to address global challenges, summarises the JPIs' views and ambitions for their future development and impact.

After low interest and commitment to the task from the GPC delegates, mainly due to being very busy and engaged in the coordination of countries participation in European Partnerships at national level and due to scepticism and disbelief in the importance and meaningfulness of such report, the **continuation of the work on Future of Joint Programming is still unsettled.**

Main deliverables of 2019-2020 Work Programme:

- The 3rd monitoring exercise for the monitoring of Priority 2a based on ERA National Action Plans and Strategies was concluded and used as input for the Report on Monitoring National Action Plans for ERAC.
- The final Report by the GPC task force on [Openness and transparency of networks](#) was endorsed by the GPC on 18 March.

SFIC

Current developments within the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation in STI:

- Two meetings of SFIC delegates are planned for the second half of 2020, on the 7th of October and 2nd of December. For the moment, both meetings are envisaged as virtual meetings. The meeting on 7th of October will be complemented by the dissemination meeting of the MLE on “National Strategies and Roadmaps for International Cooperation in Research and Innovation” scheduled on 6th of October, also in a virtual format. (Recommendations of the MLE are attached, the full report can be found at <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/policy-support-facility/mle-national-strategies-and-roadmaps-international-cooperation-research-and>).
- The Task Force on Africa is working on issues to be followed-up related to the future cooperation with Africa and a mandate for a potential second phase of the Task Force and possibilities of cooperation activities with the EC will be discussed in the October meeting.
- SFIC has published its opinion on “Relevance of International Cooperation in research and innovation for the EU – boosting the international dimension of the ERA & Horizon Europe”, on 3rd of July 2020.
- The SFIC Task Force on Science Diplomacy is working on a thematic paper with regard to potential topics to be integrated in Horizon Europe and the paper is currently for comments with the delegations and is expected to be published in September.
- With view to innovation aspects, a first discussion in SFIC has taken place how to better integrate the innovation topic in the work of SFIC. For the moment, delegations favour an integrative approach over a dedicated SFIC Task Force.
- Regarding the topic of China, the European Commission has held a first meeting with EU Member States representatives to launch of a EU R&I Knowledge Network on China. Interviews with MS to detail the topics to be addresses are taking place in August/September 2020 and a next, thematic oriented meeting is planned for October 2020.
- To increase visibility and communication of the SFIC work, the chair has launched a Group “Facilitating International Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation” on LinkedIn and the so far published posts have received a wide audience.

ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation (GRI)

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

- **Report on the Implementation of Targets: Follow-Up on the 2018 Guidance Recommendations** (doc. WK 8491/2020) has been published on 18 August 2020 and circulated to relevant stakeholders.
- The profile of SWG GRI at the [ERA portal Austria](#) has been updated.
- SWG GRI contributed to the work of the triangle task force consisting of SWG HRM/OSOI/GRI the objective of which is to revise the Charter and Code, with a view to update/revise OSOI and gender aspects.
- Input for and comment on the Report on Monitoring National Actions Plans has been provided to the rapporteur.
- An update has been submitted to the ERA Action Plan Helpdesk on behalf of SWG GRI.
- **Dissemination plan and its execution:**
 - o An article by the SWG GRI Chair has been published on *EurActiv* presenting the recommendations of SWG GRI on gender equality in the future ERA: "[The new ERA must do more for gender equality](#)".
 - o [An update on SWG GRI position papers, policy briefs and reports as well as recommendations](#) has been circulated to ERA stakeholders.
 - o SWG GRI chair was invited to present at the [EMBL virtual conference The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women in science: Challenges and solutions](#) on 9 September 2020, presenting the SWG GRI position paper on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on researchers and research.

ERAC SWG on Human Resources and Mobility (HRM)

The **last SWG HRM meeting** was held on June 3 (the day before ERAC plenary) and was held virtually. The initial plan was for this June meeting to be back-to back with the European Commission Euraxess network BHO representatives, but due to the COVID-19 situation it was agreed to postpone the back to back meeting and have just a regular (virtual) meeting.

Currently, the main on-going issues and activities completed are the following:

- The monitoring of Priority 3 NAPs has been completed and presented at the meeting and used as input for the report to ERAC. The information on Priority 3 was submitted to the Final Report on Monitoring NAPs.
- The communication plan was presented and discussed. The context and objectives of the plan are the following: For the ERAC SWG HRM promoting the dissemination and communication of its activities, reports and actions is an important task and should be encouraged at national level among the delegates of the SWG HRM, but also through a common approach. Currently, visibility and accessibility of the work of the SWG HRM should be improved. Therefore, the following points were agreed:
 - Austria has kindly offered all of the three ERA-related SWGs (HRM, GRI, OSI) a space on their website. The space for the SWG HRM would be the following: Governance > Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility. The group agreed to this option.
 - The European Commission has kindly offered the SWG HRM to publish the outcomes of the group on the European EURAXESS webpage. This offer is exclusive for the SWG HRM (no other ERA-related groups). The group agreed to this option and contacts have already been made to make a special section for our group. The European Commission EURAXESS Policy Library for the work carried out by the SWG HRM.
- The Horizon Europe position paper has been circulated and has been approved by written procedure.
- The call for candidates for Chair and Vice Chair has initiated. Since the mandate for the Chair concludes in October and the Vice Chair has formally stepped down from the group.
- Bilateral meetings with ERA related stakeholder groups such as CEASAR and EUA, as ERA stakeholders were held to discuss the revision of Charter and Code and in general to comment the work carried out by the group and possible synergies. Meetings also with the European Commission have also taken place regarding human resources and mobility issues concerning research profession.
- 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 is 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. The SFIC Chair, Martina Hartl, will also participate in the task force and contribute with the international cooperation dimension when relevant. The joint cross task force was created to address two specific interrelated goals and will be working through two subgroups:
 - 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 & Code¹ at the light of the future of ERA developments.

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

ERAC SWG on Open Science and Innovation (OSI)

[Last meeting (online) took place on 18 June]

- **Specific SWG OSI actions launched in the context of the COVID-19 crisis:**
 - SWG OSI has further completed its **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.
 - On the basis thereof and using desk research in a complementary way, SWG OSI Chair and Vice-Chair have drafted during the summer period a policy paper **Open Science and Open Innovation in times of pandemic**. The document still has to be discussed and validated by the group. It presents in an evidence based way the opportunities and challenges that the coronavirus crisis has brought in terms of open science and innovation practices, and provides concrete policy recommendations.

- The **OSI plenary Spring meeting** happened on 18 June. The meeting had a thematic focus on the issue of Open Science monitoring and OS and OI indicators. CONOSC co-chair (Marin Dacos) was invited to participate to this point of the agenda. Chair of ESFRI also took part to the thematic discussion, as well as an external expert (Dr. Thed van Leeuwen, CWTS).

- SWG OSI delegates have started to work within the two “goal” subgroups of the **joint taskforce (OSI-HRM-GRI) on researchers’ training and research evaluation**. In regard to the Goal 1, which aims at providing policy guidelines and is chaired by the Chair of SWG OSI, the summer period has been used to collect examples of national practices and do the needed desk research. A survey has also been designed that will be administrated in September, and meant to be answered by delegates of SWG OSI, HRM and GRI alike. A particular focus within Goal 1 is to investigate to what extent taking into account Open Science in research assessment can also contribute to favor gender equality, and under which conditions. This approach will constitute in our view a specific added value of the final deliverable.