

Informal videoconference of the members of the GPC

30 September 2020 - from 15.00 to 17.00

Main results

1. Welcome by the Chair

The Acting Chair (Petra Žagar) welcomed the participants and clarified that, in accordance with the Council rules, the virtual meeting is an informal one where no formal decisions can be taken. The main objective of the meeting being to exchange information on the various topics of the agenda.

2. Presentation of priorities of the EU Presidencies

The German Presidency (Alexander Grablowitz) gave an overview of the progress made so far in R&I files. It was notably recalled the agreement on a General approach on Horizon Europe reached at the Competitiveness Council on 29 September, thus finalizing the Council's position for the negotiations with the EP with a view to its final adoption in 2020.

The upcoming Portuguese Presidency (Luisa Henriques) anticipated the main priorities and plans in R&I for the first half of 2021. There will be notably a focus on the improvement of researchers' careers. Among other files, all possible efforts will be made to try to finalise the legal proposals on European R&I Partnerships. The Portuguese Presidency offered its availability to the GPC.

3. The future of the GPC

The presentation of the new communication "A new ERA for R&I" that had been originally planned on the GPC agenda could not take place because the communication was adopted on the same day by the Commission college. The Acting Chair referred to the parts of the communication related to Joint Programming that could have an influence on the potential future activities of the GPC.

During the exchange of views on the future of the GPC, delegations highlighted the uncertainties arising from possible parallel activities to be carried out under the remit of the Transitional Forum for Partnerships, and how to ensure compatibility in the future landscape for activities related to European R&I Partnerships and to Joint Programming.

A message will be sent to the GPC delegates with a view to identifying topics for the update to the current GPC work programme.

4. Impact of Joint Programming at national level

The Acting Chair recalled that a first presentation on the impact of JP at national level 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).

A workshop on the impact of JP at national level originally planned in April 2020 could not take place because of the COVID-19 crisis.

On 1st July, at the request of the GPC Acting Chair, the ERAC Steering Board recalled the importance of JP and recommended the GPC to try to finalise a report on the impact of JP as it will be of added value, unless no volunteers could be found within the GPC to take forward the tasks to finalise the report.

After prospecting the GPC during the summer, it was found that there were not enough volunteers available from the GPC members to joint a potential task force to elaborate the report, in spite of the fact that it is a matter included in the GPC work programme for 2020. The Acting Chair was of the view that the main barrier lies in the specific situation of the GPC, with the center of gravity currently moving towards the participation in actions more directly related to European partnerships.

At the end of the debate, it was agreed the following:

- it will be considered that every GPC delegation have access to the package of data and the work done so far, so that delegations will undertake, on a voluntary basis, their own analysis and formulate their own conclusions, instead of having a dedicated GPC task force;

- it will also be considered to inquire at ERA-LEARN if they could finalise the report to secure the findings for future discussions on Partnerships and the new ERA. Eventually, the work by ERA-LEARN could be accompanied by a small advisory group of GPC members.

5. Strategic Coordinating Process for R&I Partnerships

The Commission (Maria Reinfeldt) made a presentation on the state of play of the Strategic Coordinating Process for R&I Partnerships (WK 10391/2020).

Afterwards, the Commission replied to questions by GPC delegates dealing, among other things, with the situation of co-programmed Partnerships, the participation to the Partnerships' Knowledge hub, as well as the origin of resources and possible contributions from the structural funds.

Finally, the Commission reiterated the importance of receiving input from the Member States all along the process.

6. Report on the Monitoring of ERA National Action Plans

The rapporteur for the Monitoring of ERA NAPs (Cecilia Cabello) presented the final Report on Monitoring ERA Priorities with ERA Roadmap National Action Plans (WK 10394/2020).

The GPC had also provided its contribution to this report that was adopted by ERAC on 17 September. ERAC considered that this report constitutes a useful contribution to the assessment of the ERA priorities, and that the lessons learned from the monitoring exercise should feed into upcoming reflections and debates on the ERA and its future governance.

7. Recent developments within other ERA-related groups

The Acting Chair summarised the most important aspects of the latest ERAC plenary videoconference that took place on 10 September 2020, namely:

- the development of synergies between the European Research and Education areas. This topic will feature the agenda of the next ERAC plenary planned on 16 December;
- the discussions on the Strategic Coordinating Process for Partnerships and on the Report on the Monitoring of ERA National Action Plans (see also here above);
- the work on the ERA governance carried out by the Helpdesk in support of the implementation of the ERAC Action Plan 2019-2021. The final report will be presented to ERAC for final approval in December. The Helpdesk also made a proposal on a draft ERAC Opinion on the future ERA advisory structure, with a view to providing input to the German Presidency for the preparations of the draft conclusions on the future of the ERA that will be submitted for adoption at the Competitiveness Council on 27 November;
- the finalization and publication of the [ERAC Annual Report 2019](#). The GPC had also contributed to this report; and
- the ongoing process for the replacement of the ERAC MS co-Chair.

8. Any Other Business

The next meeting of the GPC is planned on Friday 4 December 2020.
