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**WORKING DOCUMENT**

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From:	ERAC Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SWG HRM)
To:	ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee)
Subject:	SWG HRM CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HOW TO BUILD STRONGER LINKS BETWEEN ERA (EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA) AND EHEA (EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA)

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Please find attached a contribution by the ERAC Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility (SWG HRM) on "How to build stronger links between ERA and EHEA".

It is a working document with some first reflections about how the European Research Area (ERA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) could strengthen their collaboration and common goals and vision.

It was delivered to support the discussions among the European Research Area Committee (ERAC) and the Directorate General for Higher Education (DG HE) during their joint meeting in Helsinki on October 1st organised by the Finnish Presidency.

Kind regards,

ERAC Secretariat

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## **SWG HRM CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HOW TO BUILD STRONGER LINKS BETWEEN ERA (EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA) AND EHEA (EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA)**

### **PREAMBLE and SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT**

This is a working document of the ERAC standing working group of human resources and mobility (SWG HRM) with some first reflections about how the **European Research Area (ERA)** and the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)** could strengthen their collaboration and common goals and vision. The SWG HRM is aware that ERA and EHEA have different rationales, scopes and governing mechanisms.

The present document is to support the discussions to happen among the European Research Area Committee (ERAC) and the Directorate General for Higher Education (DG HE) during their joint meeting in Helsinki on October 1<sup>st</sup> under the Finnish Presidency.

### **INTRODUCTION**

By 2030, the European Knowledge Sustainable Society will be composed of highly competitive, entrepreneurial universities and research organisations networked around societal challenges, pushing the barriers of science, mobilising innovation ecosystems and providing the necessary environment for the emergence of innovative initiatives and enterprises. This unique marketplace for growth through science and technology will be centred around: **people** (students and researchers at all career stages), **capacities** (universities and research institutes) and **data**. It will be subject to a new governance scheme that allows agility and networking with a profound structuring effect. The new ecosystem will be able to create revenues through services offering knowledge and skills intelligence.

Universities and research organisations structures should break down disciplinary and inter-sectoral barriers, where science and curricula should better match emerging business and societal needs. Agile learning and research programmes closing the skills gap as well as exploring the faster diffusion, reuse and access to knowledge need to be fully embedded and disseminated in strategic development plans for researchers, universities and knowledge diffusion for the future.

Education and Research are on top of the EU's political agenda. There is a strong consensus that education, culture and research are the foundations for resilient, cohesive and fair and competitive societies. EU Leaders made it clear in their 2017 Rome Declaration that we all have to work together for *'a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study, perform research careers and find jobs across the continent'*.

There is also a strong consensus on the next steps: what we need in the areas of higher education and research is to make existing instruments more effective, while pursuing new joint initiatives that respond to emerging challenges that society and economy are facing at the dawn of the digital era.

Research and Innovation (R&I) are undisputed drivers of industrial competitiveness, job creation and labour productivity growth<sup>1</sup>. The European Council set in 2002 the objective of

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<sup>1</sup> R&I accounted for 62% of EU economic growth between 1995 and 2007, and 15% of all productivity gains in Europe between 2000 and 2013 (European Commission, 2017).

devoting 3% of its GDP to R&D activities by 2010. The EU R&D intensity has increased by 0.9% annually, from 1.77% in 2000 to 2.07% in 2017, but to meet 3% target by 2020, the EU R&D intensity would have to increase by more than 10% per year. This also means that knowledge societies, universities and research institutions should align their ways of attracting the best talent providing them the most efficient and effective open science and innovation working conditions.

The EU backs higher education and research reforms, partnerships and students', researchers' and staff mobility with financial investment, through the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes. Going forward, both programmes will support more students' and researchers' studying and working abroad, programmes will invest in forward-looking education and in innovative postdoctoral training and more and deeper partnerships within the education and research communities are foreseen. To harness the full potential of EU investment, synergies between EU programmes, such as Erasmus, Horizon Europe, InvestEU and the European Structural Investment Funds (ESFI) will be key.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES AS THE KEY ELEMENT TO ERA AND EHEA**

Human resources at universities and research organisations have a key role in the knowledge triangle – for production of new knowledge through research, dissemination of this knowledge in students' education and life-long learning, and its transfer for turning it to socially responsible innovation. The European Union should strongly focus on its youth and citizens and on strengthening its research & innovation workforce, which should be well educated and fully capable of taking its multiple roles, as well as actively engaging with the new trends of Open Science and Open Innovation. At the same time, transnational, international and inter-sectorial mobility are crucial in building next researchers' generations. Finally, international research-driven teaching should be a cornerstone for European universities as it contributes to building resilient societies to anti-scientific movements and it is a direct way to internationalise higher education institutions. For all this to happen, a common agenda for Higher Education and Research & Innovation is deemed relevant.

ERA and EHEA are linked through the research intensive universities and research organisations in the EU that carry an important responsibility for research and innovation, researchers' education (doctoral studies) and training of undergraduate and master students. In 2017, EU28 had 1.973.733 researchers (FTE), 743.364 (38%) of which were working in the higher education and research sector<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the higher education system is a fundamental key player in making ERA collaborative, competitive and successful, and both frameworks should share clear, synergic and 'interoperable' policies. This is particularly true in regards to the implementation of the ERA priority 3 (Open labour market for researchers).

Moreover, EHEA and ERA are strongly linked through the student force that is educated through research experiences at different levels of their career, in particular through the third cycle (doctoral studies) which is the first phase of a research career and allows access to advanced level research careers (outside and within academia) and highly skilled positions beyond academia.

ERA and EHEA share the need to promote virtual, blended and geographical mobility, mainly within Europe, but also beyond. This mobility should not be an exception anymore and should

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<sup>2</sup>Source: Eurostat

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?sessionId=Ni1YxrsoefXA0\\_uWiYXIEJSiytS5E8UXBljph1LUyC-P-jmsyL6f!-27575412?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tsc00004&language=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?sessionId=Ni1YxrsoefXA0_uWiYXIEJSiytS5E8UXBljph1LUyC-P-jmsyL6f!-27575412?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tsc00004&language=en)

become a general rule as a normal component of all European researchers and academics curricula and students education. The motto should be “studying, researching and working like at home”. Students, researchers, academics and other higher education and research institutions professionals should benefit from the same conditions, rights and duties abroad as within their own institution (services, rewards, pensions, etc.).

The future of the ERA after 2020 should make this new Human Resources outlook possible by defining favourable framework conditions beyond the possibilities offered by the Erasmus programme and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships. In the context of the future of ERA and EHEA after 2020, European universities should be the cornerstone of this policy. Moreover, improvements of the quality and attractiveness of European education and research institutions, certified also by the adhesion to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and of the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment guidelines as foreseen by the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, should attract the best talents from all over the world. This implies to continue to develop collaborations and partnerships also outside Europe.

In order to do so, we advocate for a common agenda for ERA and EHEA with three main goals:

- **Supporting highly competent and socially responsible students, researchers, academics and higher education and research institutes’ (HE&RI) professionals in Europe throughout their working life**
- **Achieving effective mobility of students, researchers, academics, and HE&RI professionals within, to and from Europe**
- **Creating more common human resources standards for HE&RI in Europe, and striving for a common European students, researchers, academics, and HE&RI professionals identity**

**ANNEX: HUMAN RESOURCES SHARED CHALLENGES between EHEA AND ERA and SOME TOOLS and IDEAS TO FACILITATE LINKS BETWEEN ERA AND EHEA**

The table below identifies some of the common challenges that both areas have and identifies some already existing initiatives and some new ideas that could help strengthen the links.

This reflection document has been elaborated by the standing working group on human resources and mobility. The gender priority of the ERA is steered by the standing working group on gender in research and innovation (SWG GRI) Thus gender issues are not treated in this document as it is not the group’s field of expertise. The group understands, however, that any strategy dealing with human resources in higher education and research should fully address the gender dimension.

<b>1. SUPPORTING HIGHLY COMPETENT AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE STUDENTS, RESEARCHERS, ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONALS IN EUROPE</b>	
<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>TOOLS AND IDEAS</b>
Addressing, where applicable, the mismatch between the <b>skills Europe needs and</b> the current researchers, students and staff skills set. This will translate into a well-educated workforce with a strong set of transversal, digital and innovative skills that will make them sector and discipline-mobile	<p>Establishing a repository of competences/skills building upon the diploma supplement.</p> <p>Fostering the interest in and giving incentives for the uptake of intersectoral mobility, of innovation and risk culture, and of collaboration and knowledge sharing, in research and education.</p> <p>Put in place national strategies/agendas to support structured partnerships bringing together higher education institutions, research organisations and non-academic actors with the aim to design and deliver new curricula and courses that stimulate interdisciplinary activities/learning for students and researchers and develop entrepreneurial skills and attitudes.</p> <p>Improve the collaboration with employers in the development of educational programmes.</p>
Facilitating <b>life- long learning</b> and career development services mechanisms that allow European workforce (including researchers) to keep up to speed of the skills and competences needs in Europe.	<p>Strengthen engagement and cross-country collaboration in the EURAXESS network for packaged solutions in the domains of students’ and researchers’ mobility, career development and a better connection between academia and industry.</p> <p>Raise capability throughout the EURAXESS network to enable centres to build different levels of career development services, including activities in transferable skills and career planning in public and private contexts, for both mobile and non-mobile researchers.</p> <p>Establish alumni networks at European Universities and extend existing tracking mechanisms so as to track graduates, post-graduate and researchers in</p>

	<p>order to better understand how they advance in their careers and their training needs.</p> <p>Embed life-long learning within higher education, and widen access to higher education.</p> <p>Tackle the obstacles students and professionals experience with financing their continued education by providing EU-guaranteed loans with favourable pay back terms through InvestEU.</p>
Increasing the number of students in STEM fields as well as in humanities for STEM and the number of researchers in academia and industry.	<p>Nurture a new culture and interest to STEM fields at an early age.</p> <p>Develop links with the STEMCoalition and the STEM Alliances funded by EAC</p>
Ensuring new knowledge coming from research activities to be well integrated in training and education activities, including new HE courses and multidisciplinary programmes.	<p>Give incentives to multidisciplinary teaching.</p> <p>Develop research-driven pedagogical approaches to teaching.</p> <p>Promote multidisciplinary programmes in HE and research and share best practices.</p>
Building of innovative and collaborative spirit, as well as responsible research and professional attitude, in students, researchers, academics and staff	<p>Involve students at all education levels in creative activities to stimulate genuine innovation capacity and research experiences during their study, and facilitating industrial secondments (including thesis supervision). Establish links with existing opportunities for researchers within Erasmus</p> <p>Strengthen and modernise the innovative doctoral training principles (IDTP), considering that doctoral education is a natural continuation for researchers from EHEA to ERA (higher education to a research career) .</p> <p>Incentivise the uptake of Open Science principles and methods by students and staff.</p>
Creating a modernized <b>rewards system</b> acknowledging teaching, research and innovation activities in a more balanced way, and embedding Open Science practices.	<p>Promote innovation in teaching and innovation learning through European prizes, both on pedagogy practices and research related to pedagogy.</p> <p>Establish common European guidelines for setting up national competency frameworks for academics based on the QF-EHEA level 3 and the European Framework for Research Careers and in close link with the <a href="#">European qualifications framework</a>.</p>

	<p>Review current rewards systems with the aim of better balancing research and teaching merits, and of including recognition and rewards to Open Science and responsible research and innovation practices. Ensure consistency between rewards and career development systems.</p> <p>Identify best practices, to further develop guidelines and criteria for rewards.</p>
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**EFFECTIVE MOBILITY OF RESEARCHERS, ACADEMICS, STUDENTS AND STAFF**

<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>TOOLS AND IDEAS</b>
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<p>Achieving <b>effective mobility</b> among Europe, attracting talent towards Europe and eliminating socio-economic, cultural and legal barriers that hamper that mobility.</p>	<p>Promote and develop European Universities as pillars of the knowledge triangle: mobility is as a systematic feature of students' curricula and researchers' and academics' career development, building on the European University Alliances.</p> <p>Keep up with common approaches towards mobility and welcoming students and researchers from non-European regions, by further sharing and implementing available (incl. EURAXESS) best practices.</p> <p>Coordinated transposition of the current researchers and students visa directive to facilitate talent attraction from third countries, and regular exchange experiences between the HE and research institutions and the state authorities involved.</p> <p>Better integration of European umbrella organisations supporting students, teachers, researchers, scientific diaspora organisations and innovators (EURYDICE, NARIC, EURAXESS, Europe Enterprise Network).</p> <p>Better coordination of national, bilateral and European funding (ERASMUS+, Horizon Europe, structural funds, etc.) of mobility, and more multilevel financing – e.g. European Universities should notably favour synergies between funding sources</p> <p>Establish a common European platform for access to HE studies (in connection with the Single Digital Gateway)</p> <p>Support inter and trans-sectoral mobility encouraging sharing best practices</p>
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	Tackle the loss of occupational pension rights and improve the final retirement outcome by further rolling out and promoting <a href="#">RESAVER</a> pan-European Pension Fund.
<b>2. COMMON STANDARDS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE AND BUILDING UP A EUROPEAN RESEARCHER, ACADEMIC, STUDENT AND STAFF IDENTITY</b>	
<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>TOOLS AND IDEAS</b>
Achieving a common quality, comprehensive quality system for HE and R&I systems and organizations	<p>Evaluate the Charter and Code and the Erasmus charter, search for synergies and common goals and how both they can co-exist and work towards the same goals.</p> <p>Evaluate overlaps, potential synergies and potential gaps of existing quality systems such as EQAR for higher education and HRS4R award for research institutions.</p>
Developing features of the European researcher and European student identity by defining and their rights and obligations.	<p>Reinforcing the importance of the endorsement of the Charter and Code for researchers, and the achievement of the Human Resources Excellence in Research award (HRS4R)) in European Higher Education Institutions.</p> <p>Develop the foreseen <a href="#">European Student Card</a> and study its potential expansion to researchers and professionals in public research organisations as well.</p>
<b>3. INCLUSIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH</b>	
<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>TOOLS AND IDEAS</b>
Achieving inclusiveness, social justice, non-discrimination and equal access to education and academia.	<p>Setting up common goals in terms of inclusion of underrepresented groups both among students and academics, researchers and staff and aligning ERA and EHEA priorities in this regards<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>Improve the availability of tools (including ICT) for learning and research also for disabled people.</p>