



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

Brussels, 14 December 2020

WK 14592/2020 INIT

LIMITE

RECH

WORKING PAPER

This is a paper intended for a specific community of recipients. Handling and further distribution are under the sole responsibility of community members.

MEETING DOCUMENT

From:	ERAC Secretariat
To:	ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee)
Subject:	ERAC videoconference on 16 December 2020 - Item 5.1 - Draft ERAC Work Programme 2021-2022

Dear ERAC delegates,

Please find enclosed the draft ERAC Work Programme 2021-2022, with a view to the ERAC videoconference on Wednesday 16 December (agenda item 5.1).

Best regards,

ERAC Secretariat

DRAFT

ERAC WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022

INTRODUCTION

Article 6 of the ERAC Rules of Procedure stipulates that:

"A Work Programme of the Committee shall be drawn up by the Steering Board and shall be submitted to the Committee for approval. It shall cover a period of 18 months taking into account the programmes of the relevant Presidencies. It shall include the activities the Committee plans to undertake in line with its mandate¹.

The Work Programme shall be updated every 6 months".

The ERAC Work Programme 2021-2022 takes into account two key milestones to launch a major reform of the ERA for the coming years:

- the Commission Communication on ‘A new ERA for Research and Innovation’, issued on 30 September 2020², and
- the Council conclusions on the future of the European Research Area, adopted on 1 December 2020³.

Since 2020, the cancellation of physical meetings due to COVID-19 has affected the normal functioning and working methods of the Committee as well as the end of its previous work programme, which has been altered and constrained to be adapted to a new contingency situation.

This new Work Programme covers the next period of policy development in the areas of research and innovation and closely related policies.

In 2018, the European Research Area advisory structure underwent a review. ERAC has since then moved into a new phase of activity, focussing on more strategic issues, with timely, open debates

¹ The mandate of the Committee is included in the Council conclusions on the Review of the European Research Area advisory structure (doc. 14875/15 of 1 December 2015).
² 11400/20 and 11400 ADD1.
³ 13567/20.

that are better aligned to the incoming Presidency's priorities, and with clear deliverables that can add value to the challenges faced by EU and national research and innovation systems.

In accordance with the Commission Communication and the Council conclusions, a new governance model for the ERA should be in place before the end of 2021.

The new ERAC Work Programme 2021-2022 has been prepared with this background in mind.

WORKING METHODS FOR ERAC

Article 2 of ERAC's mandate states that: "The Committee's principal mission is to provide timely strategic input to the Council, the Commission and Member States on the ongoing implementation of the ERA in Member States and Associated Countries and on other strategic research and innovation policy issues. The Committee shall do this on its own initiative or at the request of the Council or the Commission".

The ERAC's Work Programme will continue to take a flexible, proactive approach to ensure that ERAC can contribute in a timely manner to emerging and evolving issues. ERAC will consider several strategic issues each year; for example:

- to give strategic advice at an early stage in developing R&I policy;
- to consider the impact of other policies on the R&I agenda, the impact of R&I policy on other policies, and advise on the appropriate actions;
- to advise on the implementation of R&I policies and propose specific actions to support them.

It is important that ERAC considers carefully the outcome and impact it aims to achieve. ERAC is reminded that it does not have to reach consensus on topics, and that external speakers may be invited to stimulate discussions. Directors-General are strongly encouraged to attend the strategic discussions.

ERAC is continuously improving the dialogue and coordination with incoming EU Presidencies and undertaking the necessary preparatory work to contribute policy options for debates in the Council. Presidencies will be invited to present their indicative priorities and planning to ERAC well in advance of their term. ERAC will also liaise with the current/outgoing Presidency to provide advice regarding the follow-up and implementation of Council conclusions.

ERAC will continue to work on its 'regular' strands and to deliver tangible results on ongoing and new initiatives.

Prioritisation and active participation in the process from the Commission, the Member States and Associated Countries will be key factors in meeting the demands during the next period.

The quality in preparations for each strategic debate is decisive. ERAC and its Steering Board make use of the input from the other ERA-related groups, workshops, seminars, *ad-hoc* working groups and rapporteurs so that the issues at stake can reach the Plenary sufficiently mature for debate

and/or adoption, including in the form of written opinions. For that purpose, it is important to further strengthen the exchanges and collaboration between ERAC and the ERA-related Groups and among the ERA-related Groups.

To have adequate time for strategic debates in ERAC Plenary, summary information will continue to be given to members of ERAC in writing in advance of the meetings, with new important developments being taken up orally by the co-Chairs and/or the Presidency. Furthermore, input from the ERA-related groups on their recent activities will continue to be given to ERAC members in writing prior to the meetings.

ERAC STRATEGIC TOPICS FOR 2021-2022

The proposed strategic topics for consideration by ERAC in 2021-2022 are:

- The Innovation/Research divides (both within the EU and with the rest of the world)
- National structural reforms (linked to EU Semester and the contribution that PSF can make)
- Partnerships
- Improvement of R&I systems in Member States and Associated Countries
- Synergies between the European Research Area and the European Education Area, with a focus on the higher education sector
- New policy initiatives in line with the Commission Communication on a ‘New ERA for R&I’ and the Council conclusions on the New ERA

INTERACTION WITH PRESIDENCIES AND THEIR PRIORITIES

This particular part of the work programme will develop in line with the priorities for the Presidencies as they become more mature.

- Researcher's mobility and careers (PT)
- Governance and directionality of the New ERA (SI)
- High-level Conference on the New ERA (SI)
- Governance on Missions (FR)
- Young Europe, with a focus on European universities (FR)
- International cooperation in R&I (FR)

REGULAR STRANDS

These strands include advising on the following topics:

- ERA - implementation of the Commission Communication and of the Council conclusions of November 2020 on the future of the ERA;
- ERA governance - coordination of ERAC and the ERA-related groups through the ERAC Steering Board; preparation of the ERAC annual report to the Council to ensure that the Council is regularly and duly sighted on progress;
- ERAC will advise on whether and to which extent legislative action and Council Recommendations might be needed to deliver on the ‘New ERA’, on actions for creating synergies between higher education and research and on priority setting, monitoring and assessment in the context of the ‘New ERA’;
- Follow-up on Partnerships in the context the Horizon Europe Framework Programme;
- Responsible group for overseeing Priority 1 ‘Effective national research systems’, through workshops, ad-hoc working groups as well as debates with invited speakers;
- European Semester-Annual Growth survey priorities for the Semester cycle; dialogue on the R&I elements of the country reports and follow-up on R&I country-specific recommendations;
- Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility - demand-driven, Horizon Europe instrument that responds to requests made by Member States and Associated Countries for its three main services: peer reviews of national R&I systems; specific support to the design, implementation and evaluation of policy reforms; and mutual learning exercises.

WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022

<u>Regular strands</u>	16 March 2021	3-4 June 2021	Third Quarter 2021	Fourth Quarter 2021	First Quarter 2022	Second Quarter 2022
ERA - implementation of the Commission Communication and of the Council conclusions on the New ERA	The renewed and new R&D investment targets		Gender equality in ERA – towards inclusive gender equality plans			
(Strategic) debate	Synergies between ERA and EEA with a focus on the higher education sector			(tbc)		(tbc)
European Semester						
Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe Policy Support Facility	Analysis of PSF proposals to support reforms			Analysis of PSF proposals to support reforms		Analysis of PSF proposals to support reforms
ERA governance	Updates from the Commission Expert Group on the 'ERA Forum for Transition'. Participation in Evaluation of ERA policy framework Highlights from the ERA-related Groups	Updates from the Commission Expert Group on the 'ERA Forum for Transition' Update of ERAC Work Programme 2021-2022	Updates from the Commission Expert Group on the 'ERA Forum for Transition' Highlights from the ERA-related Groups ERA Scoreboard	Updates from the Commission Expert Group on the 'ERA Forum for Transition' Highlights from the ERA-related Groups Update of ERAC Work Programme 2021-2022	Highlights from the ERA-related Groups	ERAC Work Programme 2022-2023

Major events and milestones

January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021
	Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Research) (2-3 February) Competitiveness Council (26 February)	ERAC Plenary (16 March, Brussels)		Competitiveness Council (Research) (28 May)	ERAC Plenary (3-4 June, Porto)
July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021
Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Research) (20-21 July)		Competitiveness Council (Research) (30 September)		Competitiveness Council (Research) (26 November)	
January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
