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WORKING PAPER

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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee)
Subject:	Informal videoconference of ERAC (3-4/06) - Item 4.2 UPDATES FROM THE ERA-RELATED GROUPS

Dear ERAC delegates,

Please find enclosed the document on above mentioned subject, with a view to the ERAC videoconference on Friday 4 June (agenda item 4.2).

Best regards,

ERAC Secretariat

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ESFRI

Since the last update on 23 April, ESFRI's activities included:

1) 76th ESFRI Forum

The next Forum meeting is planned for 30 June – 1 July in Lisbon, hosted by the Portuguese Presidency. Options for hybrid or fully digital meeting are still open.

2) ESFRI Roadmap update process

The process is progressing according to schedule. The evaluation exercise for New Proposals and 2010 Projects is almost over and the outcomes are expected to be approved by the Forum at the end of June.

Work on the research infrastructures' landscape analysis is also progressing.

A decision on the overall structure of the Roadmap is expected at the end of June and formal adoption of the Roadmap in September.

3) ESFRI Stakeholder Forum

The work on the preparation and setting up of the first ESFRI Stakeholder Forum has been proceeding.

A Programme Committee was established and a first meeting will be organised soon. Three representatives from the Slovenian Presidency, three representatives from the ESFRI Executive Board and one representative from the European Commission compose the Programme Committee.

The first ESFRI Stakeholder Forum will take place in December 2021. In the meantime, ESFRI will work on a broader roll-out of its updated stakeholder engagement strategy.

4) ESFRI Chair

The current mandate of the ESFRI Chair, Mr. Jan Hrusak, expires at the end of 2021. In accordance with its Procedural Guidelines, ESFRI decided to set up a Search Committee for a next Chair. The Committee started its work in February. Deadline for nomination was on 23rd of April and the Search Committee conducted the interview with the candidates.

The election of the new ESFRI Chair is planned during the plenary meeting at the end June.

GPC

Since the last ERAC Plenary Meeting, the GPC held an online meeting on 23 March 2021. The next one is scheduled in June 2021.

According to the GPC 2021-2022 Work Programme, the activities of the GPC will focus on the analysis and the report on **Impact of Joint Programming at national level** that will shed light on the impact of the Joint Programming Process and the principal means to implement it – the Joint Programming Initiatives, at national level. This task will be led by ERA-LEARN with a small Advisory body from AT, FI and SI delegates, with an extended deadline from February 2021 to mid-2021. The Report is being drafted despite the uncertain future of the GPC, as it seems that the Joint Programming Process will stay at the heart of the new Partnerships' approach under Horizon Europe. Thus, the results to be presented in this report will be very relevant for the design of the new Partnerships under Horizon Europe.

To summarize briefly:

Most countries share similar expectations from participation in the JPP and JPIs → joining national resources at European level to create critical mass necessary to tackle global challenges and creating common research and innovation agendas. These initial expectations were fulfilled at varied degrees across the countries. JPIs are considered to fall short in translating research results into usable inputs for policy-making and other stakeholders. The most relevant barrier to JPI participation is the difficulty to allocate national resources to JPI activities due to the absence of a relevant national programme, incompatibilities of the programme's own procedures and timing with those of the JPIs and incompatibility of annual national policy cycles.

Positive impacts mainly have to do with the opportunities offered for cooperation with other European countries on a bilateral basis, possibly as spin-offs from the JPIs partnerships, and with non-EU countries within the JPIs.

However, the impact of participation in JPIs extends beyond supporting research projects and influencing policies or structures at national level. It also relates to policy learning, improved capacity to manage transnational programmes and many benefits gained via mutual learning.

Other issues that were addressed at the latest GPC meeting dealt with:

- Work Programme 2021-2022 and discussion of the reasonableness and level of ambition of the operation in the year 2021 leading to agreement that the GPC role would be more in a hibernation mode until the end of the year
- possible positioning of the GPC in ERA Forum for Transition
- continuation of the role of Acting-Chair by elected Vice-Chair due to uncertainties surrounding the continuation of the GPC and the upcoming reform of the ERA advisory structure.

SFIC

Latest developments and planned activities until the next plenary meeting:

- The Work Programme of SFIC 2021/2022 has been adopted by written procedure on 19th of March 2021.
- SFIC has organised a thematic workshop on 9th of March 2021 related to three priority regions and countries, namely Africa, the Indo-Pacific Region and UK in relation to the coming work programme and SFIC activities. In the three panel discussion SFIC has for the first time organised a structured exchange with EU and Member States Science Counsellors in those countries (WK 3455/2021 INIT).
- The virtual informal Plenary Meeting took place on 10th of March 2021. Beyond the update on ERA-related activities, the Africa Working Group and the Science Diplomacy Task Force and China related issues, new activities related to implementing the SFIC Work Programme have been discussed. Moreover, an exchange with the current EUREKA chairmanship on the international activities within the EUREKA schemes has taken place (ST 1351 2021 REV 1).
- The SFIC Africa Group has launched a Survey to SFIC delegations about their work with Africa, and the report on the analysis has been finalised (ERAC-SFIC 1353/21).
- The Task Force on Science Diplomacy has launched an online survey to map national activities in the field on Science Diplomacy to which 19 countries have responded. The analytical report has been published on 27th of May 2021 (ERAC-SFIC 1354/21). Moreover, it has been decided to prolong the work of the Task Force until end of October 2021 to finalise the envisaged tasks of the work programme.
- An Ad-Hoc Task Force has been created to work on a concrete follow-up related to the Bonn declaration in the context of International Cooperation. The Task Force has drafted recommendations, which are currently with delegations for their comments and inputs.
- China: the EU-KNOC has so far held 4 CCG and 6 ad-hoc meetings and three further meetings are planned until summer. After a first discussion in the Plenary, SFIC is planning to develop recommendations focusing on potential concrete activities to be deducted from the recommendations papers of EU-KNOC. Once approved by SFIC the EC would also like to see an endorsement by ERAC of these recommendations.
- The EC has launched the communication on the "Global Approach to Research and Innovation Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world" on 18th of May 2021. SFIC will dedicate a strategic workshop on 9th of June to developing a related SFIC Opinion on the communication.
- The next Plenary meeting will take the form of an informal virtual meeting and will be held on 10th of June 2021. It will be the last meeting where SFIC will have the status of a Council Preparatory Body, after that it will work under the same conditions as the other Standing Working Groups.

ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation (GRI)

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

- **ERAC workshop on gender equality in ERA organised by Trio PRES:** The SWG GRI chair presented the results of the SWG GRI analysis of the implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and the needs and challenges facing MS in implementing GEPs.
- The **9th meeting of SWG GRI** took place on 29 and 30 March (two half day meetings).
- The work of the following sub-group and task forces is underway:
 - o **Task force on Gender Equality Plans:** The draft report was circulated to the SWG GRI prior to the meeting and the draft was discussed in detail at the 9th meeting. Additional input and comments were received after the meeting, and the report was finalized and adopted. The report is planned to be widely distributed in the course of June 2021.
 - o **The sub-group on gender and digitalisation** has prepared a background paper on the topic in cooperation with H2020 GENDERACTION project, which informed a series of three exploratory workshops for policy makers and other stakeholders. These exploratory workshops were organised by IE with participation of SWG GRI chair and PT representative for PT PRES and took place on 26 March and 15 April, with the support of external experts and presenting promising practices from MS. Recordings of the sessions will be made available.
 - o **Task force on intersectionality, diversity and racisms:** The task force is working to prepare a strategic discussion for the 10th meeting of SWG GRI in June 2021.
- **Cooperation with other ERA related groups:** SWG GRI has contributed to the work of the Triangle Taskforce both on Goal 1 (revision of assessment practices to reflect better Open Science and Gender Equality issues) and Goal 2 (revision of Charter and Code to incorporate better Open Science and Gender Equality considerations). A presentation by a Triangle Taskforce representative, Izaskun Lacunza Aguirrebengoa, was made at the 9th meeting.
- **Cooperation with EU PRES:** SI PRES is cooperating with the two TRIO PRES in preparation of the SI PRES + GENDERACTION final conference, in particular the conference sessions dedicated to advances on national level and on Gender Equality Plans.
- **Cooperation with the Commission:** MS delegations and the Commission discussed the planned eligibility requirement of GEPs in Horizon Europe at the 9th meeting. A workshop has been organised for SWG GRI members with the EU-funded project CASPER to discuss the potential scenarios for a European certification scheme for gender equality on 19 May 2021. SWG GRI members were invited to participate and contribute to a mutual learning workshop organised by the Horizon 2020 GENDERACTION project on gender equality in ESF/ERDF on 12 May 2021.
- **Communication and dissemination:**
 - o Information for the AT ERA portal has been updated, and the internal members' space has been launched.

ERAC SWG on Human Resources and Mobility (HRM)

Since the last SWG HRM held virtually on March 2 the Work programme 2021-2022 has been approved by written procedure.

The HRM Chair and other HRM delegates have actively been participating in the two studies that have been commissioned by EC RTD: “Study on Policy Measures within ERA Priority 3 Open Labor Market for Researchers” and the “Study to evaluate the ERA policy framework/ERA monitoring”.

- **“Fostering research careers in Europe: tools to support implementation of the new ERA”** held on 21 April 2021.
- **“Supporting research careers in the context of the new ERA: EURAXESS and the ERA Talent Platform”** held on 19 May 2021.

The Triangle Task force between ERA related groups (OSI-GRI-HRM) has continued its work. The context, objectives and update on results so far of the Triangle Task Force are the following:

- **Subgroup for GOAL 1:** *Recommendations on training, incentives and evaluation of researchers with an OSI and gender perspective.* This subgroup is chaired by the OSI Chair with participation from HRM/GRI representatives. The first draft of the Guides Recommendations document has been completed. A separate report is being prepared for the survey results.
- **Subgroup for GOAL 2:** *Reviewing and potential update of the [Charter & Code](#) at the light of the future of ERA developments.* This subgroup is chaired by a Spanish HRM delegate with participation of OSI/GRI representatives. The first draft of the revision has been completed and presented. The final webinar will be held at the end of this month and a stakeholder consultation specifically for validating the C&C will be organized. The final document will be ready by September.

ERAC SWG on Open Science and Innovation (OSI)

[Last meeting (online) took place on 1 June. Next meeting on 12 October.]

- SWG OSI delegates continue to work within the two “goal” subgroups of the **joint taskforce (OSI-HRM-GRI) on training, incentives and evaluation in OS&OI**. The final draft of the **guideline paper** (Goal 1) on research evaluation in a context of Open Science and gender equality has been adopted by the 3 SWGs and the paper will be sent to the ERAC in the coming days. The guideline paper provides all stakeholders involved in research evaluation with principles, guidelines and good practices to better integrate consideration for Open Science and gender equality in research evaluation. SWG OSI is glad to present the main outcomes of this paper to ERAC delegates at the next ERAC meeting.
- The SWG OSI Task Force on **research integrity** with delegates from EE, FI, FR, HR, LV and RO, together with the EU Commission, has begun its work. The main aim is to take stock of the initiatives that have been conducted recently at the crossroads of Open Science and research integrity, to identify the opportunities as well as the obstacles in regard to the cross-fertilization between both policy domains, and to analyse relevant case studies at national level.