

## **Main results**<sup>1</sup>

### **DAY 1 (Thursday 3 June, 15.00)**

#### **1. Adoption of the provisional agenda**

The ERAC co-Chairs (Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General DG RTD and Clara Eugenia García, R&I Counsellor from the ES Ministry for Science and Innovation), welcomed all participants to the videoconference, including those attending the ERAC meeting for the first time).

They expressed the shared general feeling of sorrow for not being able to hold the meeting physically in Porto, Portugal, as originally planned, because of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **2. Information from the co-Chairs and from the Presidency**

The MS co-Chair reported back on the latest ERAC Steering Board meeting held on 23 April.

The President of the National Innovation Agency in Portugal (Joana Mendonça) made a presentation<sup>2</sup> on the Portuguese R&I system, including its key strategic guidelines, the mapping of the technological infrastructures, data of the STI ecosystem and the network of interface centres and collaborative laboratories, the breakdown of investments between 2015 and 2020, as well as statistics on the Portuguese participation in the EU's R&I framework programmes. Portugal (previously a moderate innovator) joined the group of strong innovator countries in the ranking established in the [2020 edition of the Innovation Scoreboard](#).

The PT Presidency (Luisa Henriques) gave a summary overview of the achievements accomplished so far by the Presidency and, in particular, on the outcome of the Competitiveness Council session of 28 May which included the agreement on a General Approach on the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC), as well as the adoption of Council Conclusions for improving researchers' careers. On behalf of ERAC, the ERAC co-Chairs praised the work and remarkable results obtained by the Presidency up to date.

The incoming Slovenian Presidency (Peter Volasko) presented the main horizontal objectives and the key thematic priorities and events in the field of R&I that will take place in the second half of 2021. An informal meeting of the Ministers responsible for Research is scheduled on 19 July and a High-Level Conference on the future of ERA on 26-27 October, in Ljubljana.

The future French Presidency (Rozenn Saunier) provided oral information on the possible priorities, which are currently being defined, and plans in R&I for the first half of 2022. A meeting of ERAC might be organised in Strasbourg.

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<sup>1</sup> This unofficial synopsis has been produced under the sole responsibility of the ERAC Secretariat for information purposes. It is intended to present the main practical operational points of the ERAC informal videoconference of 10 September for follow-up. Under no circumstances can it be considered as being official summary conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> All audio-visual presentations made at the meeting can be found in document WK 7432/2021.

The future Czech Presidency (Lukáš Levák) provided oral information on the Presidency priorities and plans in R&I for the second half of 2022. Two main work streams will deal with Research Infrastructures (including possible Council conclusions and the organisation of an ESFRI plenary in Brno) and Synergies of investments sources for R&I activities and projects (including debates at the Competitiveness Council and the organisation of a flagship conference in Prague). A meeting of ERAC might be organised in Prague.

### 3. ERA and Innovation Policy

#### 3.1 Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality

The PT Presidency (Luisa Henriques, current chair of the Council's Research working party) provided information on the Council conclusions on "[Deepening the ERA: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain circulation a reality](#)" which were adopted at the Competitiveness Council session on 28 May 2021.

The conclusions establish a policy framework for enhancing the attractiveness of research careers and fostering mobility of talents in the ERA, notably by improving the working and employment conditions for researchers. This framework is to be considered as a key component aimed at achieving an internal market for knowledge.

The conclusions also stress the importance of facilitating fluent geographical and cross-sectoral mobility by removing obstacles to circulation and career development for researchers. In this context, it will be crucial to consider all relevant policies and to deal with all the multilevel aspects for an efficient implementation of the Council conclusions.

Furthermore, the conclusions invite the Commission to set up an Observatory on Research Careers in order to monitor and provide data on mobility, career paths, employment and working conditions.

On behalf of the Commission, Director Anna Panagopoulou informed on the ongoing work carried out by the Commission that will contribute to the implementation of the Council conclusions, which includes the following elements:

- to define a "European competence framework" and a taxonomy of researchers' skills;
- to set up an Observatory to monitor the trends in the research labour market careers, skills and talent;
- to revise the European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers;
- to develop the ERA Talent Platform as online one-stop-shop, as the successor of the EURAXESS services network, and
- to work towards better recognition of the profession of researcher.

She also announced preparations for an upcoming Commission communication on Universities.

### **3.2 Update on the study ‘Evaluation of the ERA policy framework’**

The Commission (Manuel Aleixo) briefed on the state of play of the ongoing ‘Study to evaluate the ERA policy framework/ERA monitoring mechanism’.

Two workshops will take place in June related to monitoring and indicators to support the implementation of the new ERA Communication, and to the future ERA policy framework and its governance. The outcome of the workshops will also feed into upcoming discussions in the expert group "ERA Forum for Transition".

### **3.3 Global Approach**

The Commission (Florent Bernard) made an oral presentation of the [Communication on Global Approach to R&I](#) issued on 18 May.

The communication, which was presented by Commissioner Gabriel to the Ministers for research at the Competitiveness Council on 28 May, is aimed, among other things, at strengthening the geopolitical dimension of the new ERA.

The Commissions' intention is to modulate upcoming bilateral cooperation in R&I with roadmaps based on shared goals and values while promoting greater reciprocity on aspects related to the ERA priorities. The negotiation of the future roadmaps will benefit from the experience gained during the negotiations held with China.

On questions by a few delegations on whether the EU research policy should be strictly guided by geopolitical considerations, the COM co-Chair clarified that the new communication supports openness to the world, but at the same time the EU should be more assertive as regards the future partners in comparison to the generous approach established in the past.

The upcoming SI Presidency announced that a set of draft Council conclusions on international cooperation might be proposed after the Summer break, in close interaction with the following FR Presidency.

### **3.4 Horizon Policy Support Facility - Mutual Learning Exercise on Citizens’ science**

The Commission (Magda de Carli) provided updated information following on previous presentations to ERAC of the Horizon Policy Support Facility and renewed the invitation to Member States interested in benefiting from the HPSF to engage in bilateral meetings (WK 7133/2021).

On behalf of the current Trio-Presidencies, the DE delegation (Alexander Grablowitz) presented the latest developments and next steps of the ["Plastic Pirates" initiative](#), which follows the call of the December 2020 Council conclusions on the New ERA to further develop and implement the “plastic pirates” citizen science campaign as an ERA pilot action.

Member States were encouraged to provide feedback on the overall approach, definition of objectives and priority topics of the initiative with a view to joining a new Mutual Learning Exercise planned between Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022.

A number of delegations confirmed the intention to join this preparatory exercise in support of this initiative that is expected to be linked to the future Mission on Healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters.

## **DAY 2 (Friday 4 June, 09.00)**

### **3.5 Strategic debate: "ERA Action 7 – exchange of views on the update and development of guiding principles for knowledge valorisation and a code of practice for the smart use of intellectual property"**

On the basis of a Commission background note (WK 7135/2021), ERAC delegations discussed on how to accelerate and scale-up valorisation of research results at national and EU level and on possible initiatives to further support knowledge circulation and uptake.

The Commission (Peter Dröll) introduced the subject that was brought forward in the September 2020 Communication (action 7 of the roadmap) in order to update and develop guiding principles for knowledge valorisation and a code of practice for the smart use of intellectual property, by the end of 2022, including facilitating the implementation of the unitary patent, to ensure access to effective and affordable intellectual property protection.

During his presentation, which included a debrief on the outcome of the [Knowledge Valorisation Week \(27-30 April\)](#), Director Peter Dröll explained that the political mandate on Valorisation policy development goes beyond R&I and referred notably to the new IP Action Plan and the Industrial strategy. Moreover, he announced the launch of a "Knowledge Valorisation Platform" at the next edition of the R&I Days (23 and 24 June).

Following a rich round of interventions, the main topics outlined by the ERAC delegations were related to:

- promote a change of mind set and culture in the various R&I players, like businesses and academia, towards knowledge valorisation, including the design of valorisation strategies at early stages of every new project;
- apply a broad approach on knowledge valorisation, including for the review of the 2008 Recommendation;
- the use of existing EU instruments at disposal to promote activities such as standardisation, entrepreneurial training and incubation support to scientific results, as well as testing pilots within the Universities' alliances;
- consider the application through the industrial technological roadmaps;
- move from the concept of knowledge transfer to the knowledge valorisation;
- seek beneficial complementarities between IP management and Open Innovation policies;
- boost the professionalization of "knowledge valorisers".

ERAC delegations encouraged the Commission to consider taking forward these aspects in the next steps, including in the new subgroup of the "ERA Forum for Transition" on knowledge valorisation.

## 4. ERA Governance

### 4.1 Updates from the Commission Expert Group on the ‘ERA Forum for Transition’

The Commission (Anna Panagopoulou) updated ERAC about the progress made on the work of the Expert Group ‘ERA Forum for Transition’, with a focus on the preparations for the Pact for R&I for Europe.

The discussion on the future Pact have concentrated on its principles; priority areas; R&D investment targets, policy coordination and monitoring and implementation.

Upcoming discussion will also be dealing with the future ERA governance framework and the ERA policy agenda.

### 4.2 Highlights from the ERA-related Groups

ERAC took note of written updates on the activities carried out by the ERA-related Groups (WK 7273/2021).

The SWG OSI Chair (Marc Vanholsbeeck) made a presentation of the [Guideline Paper on ‘Research evaluation in a context of Open Science and gender equality’](#), jointly adopted by the "Triangle task force HRM - GRI - OSI". The report provides stakeholders involved in research evaluation reforms with a set of guidelines aimed at fostering Open Science and gender equality and at providing decision-makers, funders and researchers with opportunities to renegotiate, through evaluation, the social roles and responsibilities of publicly funded research. The report elaborates on six general principles: Foster the diversity of open research ecosystems; Promote inclusiveness and collective involvement in the design of Open Science and research evaluation policies; Encourage a responsible attitude in research evaluation; Foster transparency in research evaluation and trustworthiness in the added value of Open Science and gender equality; Provide the right incentives through evaluation; Create a virtuous circle between training and evaluation.

The SWG GRI Chair (Marcela Linkova) made a presentation of the [Report on "Gender Equality Plans as a catalyst for change"](#). The report addresses the policy instrument of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and presents the main findings of a survey to assess the adoption of GEPs by Member States and Associated Countries, and to identify the needs related to the implementation of GEPs at national level.

The SFIC Chair (Martina Hartl) expressed readiness to provide input from SFIC for the implementation of the new Commission communication on the Global Approach to R&I. She also announced an upcoming SFIC Opinion with recommendations on the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research in international cooperation.

The GPC Acting Chair (Petra Žagar) announced the finalisation of the Report "ERA-LEARN / GPC analysis of the impact of JPP and JPIs at the national level" to be discussed at the GPC plenary meeting on 15 June for subsequent endorsement.

The SWG HRM Chair (Cecilia Cabello) and other delegates of the Group have been actively contributing to two independent studies on "Policy measures within ERA Priority 3 - Open Labour market for researchers" and the "Study to evaluate the ERA policy framework/ERA monitoring".

The next ESFRI Forum meeting announced by its Chair (Jan Hrušák) is planned on 30 June and 1 July.

## 5. Standing Information Point

None

## 6. Any Other Business

### - *Recovery and Resilience Plans*

The COM co-Chair briefly updated on recent developments regarding the national [Recovery and Resilience Plans](#) (RRPs), that were also discussed at the Competitiveness Council on 27-28 May 2021 as an important component of the key implementing features for the rollout of the new ERA.

More than 20 RRP's have been forwarded to the Commission by the Member States up to date. The majority of the countries have identified in their plans R&I as a stand-alone policy area or as supporting other policy areas. Some Member States have doubled their budgets within their national plans for R&I-related actions.

The COM co-Chair committed to provide updated information to ERAC when necessary and expressed readiness on behalf of the Commission to assist Member States with the implementation of their RRP's.

### - *Next ERAC plenary*

The 46th ERAC meeting is planned on 30 September and 1 October in Slovenia, back-to-back with a meeting of Directors-General for Higher Education.

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