

Informal videoconference of the members of the GPC

15 June 2021

Main results

1. Welcome and introduction by the Acting Chair

The Acting Chair of the GPC, Petra Žagar, welcomed the delegates participating at the GPC meeting and recalled that, in accordance with the Council rules, online meetings are informal ones where no formal decisions can be taken.

The agenda was approved without changes (CM 3522/21).

2. Presentation of the Presidencies of the Council of the EU

The Portuguese Presidency, represented by Carla dos Santos, reported on the progress made of the Presidency priorities in R&I, including on the following issues:

- The publication of the Horizon Europe package.
- 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.
- The draft regulation for setting up joint undertakings for nine institutionalized partnerships under Horizon Europe, where there are prospects for the presentation of a progress report before end of June on the basis of a Presidency compromise text.
- The draft decision for a public-public partnership on Metrology, where a mandate could be requested in Coreper before the end of June to start negotiations with the European Parliament.
- The conclusion of negotiations on the two draft decisions related to the Research Fund for Coal and Steel.
- The progress made towards the official opening of negotiations for the international agreement on the participation of Faroe Islands, a category d) country, to Horizon Europe.
- The outcome of the flagship event held on 2-4 June "All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance", an international cooperation initiative of Atlantic nations.

The next Slovenian Presidency, represented by the Acting Chair, Petra Žagar, presented the broad priorities, plans and events in R&I during the second half of 2021 (doc. WK 7945/2021).

The design of the governance for the new ERA will be a top priority, which will directly affect the future of the GPC in its current format. In line with the current Trio-Presidency programme, other priorities will include: gender equality, green hydrogen, researcher's careers, cancer research, citizens engagement in science and international cooperation in R&I. The informal meeting of research ministers is scheduled on 19 July and the two formal Competitiveness Council meetings on research on 28 September and 26 November.

The upcoming French Presidency, represented by Anne-Sophie Gallou, anticipated some of the main priorities and key themes to be considered in the first half of 2022, which are still under political consolidation. There will be a main general focus at transectorial level on subjects of relevance for EU for citizens aimed at restoring and promoting confidence in Europe. In the field of R&I, emphasis will be put on a number of issues which will include: synergies between the European Research and Education Areas; synergies with European Universities Alliances; breakthrough innovation and EU Missions, as well as international cooperation in R&I (with possible organisation of a thematic conference in Marseille on this subject).

3. Debrief on recent activities of ERAC and of the ERA Forum for Transition

The Acting Chair debriefed the GPC on the outcome of the latest ERAC plenary that took place on 3 and 4 June by highlighting the following issues:

- During the strategic debate, ERAC delegations discussed on how to accelerate and scale-up the valorisation of research results at national and EU level and on possible initiatives to further support knowledge circulation and uptake. The Commission introduced the subject that was brought forward in the September 2020 Communication 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. Moreover, it announced the launch of a "Knowledge Valorisation Platform" at the next edition of the R&I Days (23 and 24 June). Some of the main topics outlined by the ERAC delegations were related to the promotion of 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; and the application of a broad approach on knowledge valorisation, including for the review of the 2008 Recommendation on the management of IP.
- The Commission also provided updated information on the Horizon Policy Support Facility and renewed the invitation to Member States interested in benefiting from the HPSF to engage in bilateral meeting.
- On behalf of the current Trio-Presidencies, the DE delegation 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. A new Mutual Learning Exercise is planned between Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022.

Furthermore, the Acting Chair also informed on the ongoing work within the Expert Group on the 'ERA Forum for Transition' that was set up in the beginning of the year. The new Expert Group will notably provide advice on proposals for a future ERA governance framework. In this respect, the Acting Chair outlined that the expert group is making progress on the preparations for the Pact for R&I for Europe. The discussion on the future Pact are currently focussing on its

principles; priority areas; R&D investment targets, policy coordination and monitoring and implementation. Upcoming discussions are expected to be dealing with the future ERA governance framework and the ERA policy agenda.

4. Recent development of Partnership Knowledge Hub and Report on A robust and harmonised framework for reporting and monitoring European Partnerships in Horizon Europe

The Commission, represented by Maria Leek, made a presentation on the state of play of the Strategic Coordinating Process for Partnerships and the five objectives that will be driven by the Partnership Knowledge Hub (doc. WK 7947/2021).

Following on the adoption of the Horizon Europe programme, the Transitional Forum for Partnerships is evolving towards a Partnership Knowledge Hub where discussions about strategic issues related to Partnerships will take place with all relevant stakeholders of the partnership landscape, including the Commission itself, the Member States, designated third countries in the process of association to the Horizon Europe programme and Partnership representatives.

The Partnership Knowledge Hub, which will have the format of an informal Commission expert group, will notably provide advice and support for preparing the biennial monitoring report, foresight activities, strategic discussions, community building and mutual learning, in implementation of Article 6 of the HE Specific Programme.

Its work will build on the recommendations of the ERAC Ad-hoc Working Group for Partnerships (2018), the Transitional Forum for R&I Partnerships (2019-2020) and the various studies and inputs in this field.

The nomination process for delegates to participate in the Partnership Knowledge Hub – where strategic coordinating process for partnerships will be done – will take place via Permanent Representation offices.

A key element for the Strategic Coordinating Process will be ensuring a well-functioning reporting and monitoring system for partnerships, with good quality data and evidence for political discussion and decision-making.

5. Presentation of Report ERA-LEARN / GPC analysis of the impact of JPP and JPIs at national level

Following on the previous presentation made at the GPC plenary on 23 March, ERA-LEARN, represented by Effie Amanatidou, updated the GPC on the final conclusions on the draft Report "Analysis of the impact of JPP and JPIs at national level" (doc. WK 7612/2021).

The Report, which will be an ERA-LEARN/GPC joint publication, has been elaborated by ERA-LEARN with the support of a small advisory group from GPC members made up of representatives from the AT and FI delegations together with the GPC Acting Chair.

The report is expected to be highly valuable in the context of the future Partnerships as it will show the challenges that the Member States/Associated Countries are facing in implementation of the JPIs at national/regional level and the benefits of joining such initiatives. New

partnerships will certainly face similar challenges that have already been addressed within the JPIs and the report could be very useful for steering their future.

GPC delegations will be requested to proceed to the final verifications on the text of the Report before the end of June, with a view to its subsequent endorsement, transmission to ERAC and publication.

6. Any other business

The next GPC meetings are scheduled on 17 September and 10 December 2021.

As announced at the GPC meeting on 23 April, Coreper approved in February 2021 an updated list of Council preparatory bodies removing GPC and SFIC from this list as from 1 July 2021.

Consequently, from 1 July the GPC will not be able to meet in the Council buildings or use the Council's digital platform for videoconferences; GPC delegates will not be entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses for the meetings and there will be no interpretation regime during the meetings.

The upcoming Slovenian Presidency will put at disposal its Permanent Representation for holding physical meetings, or will propose the use of online platforms for distant meetings, during the second half of 2021.
