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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	European Research and Innovation Area Committee (ERAC) – plenary session, 12-13 October 2026, Dublin
	How to foster R&I and industry alignment

European Research and Innovation Area Committee (ERAC) delegations will find attached a background note on "How to foster R&I and industry alignment", in view of the strategic debate with a short keynote by Jason Lynch, at the ERAC plenary on 12-13 October 2026.

How to foster R&I and industry alignment

Strategic debate

Context

In previous ERAC plenary meetings the necessity of well-functioning and robust regional, national and European research and innovation (R&I) ecosystems that complement and strengthen each other has been highlighted as an important condition for a resilient and competitive Europe.

The European Framework Programmes for R&I have contributed significantly to getting these ecosystems in place, by building connections and fostering cooperation within the EU and beyond. At the same time, stronger links between R&I and other policy domains are needed to maximise its societal and economic value. This is also reflected in the current ERAC Work Programme, which identifies stronger R&I alignment with industry and other non-academic sectors as one of ERAC's priority themes and calls for closer interaction and synergies with economic, business and industrial policy.

This topic is particularly relevant to ensure a solid linkage between Horizon Europe 2028-2034 and the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) and to enable a seamless innovation to investment journey. This journey should support the progression of research results through validation and demonstration towards market uptake and scale-up, while recognising that innovation is an iterative and non-linear process.

A number of existing and emerging EU initiatives already address different aspects of closer R&I-industry alignment. There is a specific action under the ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027 on industrial transformation and competitive sustainability, which aims to better understand industrial needs for R&I results and investments and to mobilise more R&I investment¹.

¹ ERA Action 16, “Accelerating R&I investments for Europe’s industrial transformation and competitive sustainability”, aims to develop and test a toolbox to better reflect industrial needs and support the transfer of R&I results into industrial applications, including in relation to research infrastructures, investment agendas and the deployment of advanced, sustainable technologies.

The same Policy Agenda also includes a structural policy to strengthen knowledge valorisation capacities and practices, including the links between academia, industry and other actors². Also in the area of knowledge valorisation, the Commission is developing a Blueprint on licensing and spinoff creation to support the commercialisation of publicly funded research results³. Improving companies' access to research and technology infrastructures is being addressed through the Charter of Access for Industrial Users⁴, while the recent European Innovation Act aims to improve the framework conditions for innovative companies to commercialise and scale up in Europe⁵. Horizon Europe also increasingly supports the further valorisation and commercialisation of research results⁶. At the same time, recent exchanges in the European Research Area Forum ([ERA Forum](#)) with industry stakeholders and with the European Innovation Council Forum ([EIC Forum](#)) reflect growing interaction between the research, innovation and industrial policy communities.

Together, these developments provide a useful backdrop for considering where important gaps and barriers remain and how policies, resources, instruments and actors could be better connected. Against this background, the ERAC exchange provides an opportunity to look across these different strands and draw on national experience to identify where further alignment between R&I, industry and investment is needed.

Objective of discussion

The objective of the discussion is twofold: on the one hand, it aims to identify how pathways from research to market can be improved and where the European innovation to investment journey could become more seamless, by examining the bottlenecks and gaps between the different stages from research results, through validation and demonstration, to market uptake and scale-up.

² Actions include ongoing work on a Competence Framework for knowledge valorisation intermediaries and a European scheme on responsible licensing principles and shared data governance.

³ The forthcoming EU Blueprint on IP licensing and spinoff creation, part of the “Lab to Unicorn” initiative under the [EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy](#), will provide guidance on the commercialisation of academic IP and spinoff creation and support effective partnerships with industry.

⁴ The [Charter of Access for Industrial Users to Research and Technology Infrastructures](#), adopted by the Commission in July 2026, sets out principles to facilitate and accelerate companies' access to research and technology infrastructures. The work on the Charter is addressed in the ERA Action on industrial transformation and competitive sustainability.

⁵ The [European Innovation Act](#) and the [Public Procurement Act](#), both adopted by the Commission on 9 September 2026, are complementary: the former supports the development of new solutions, while the latter helps public buyers deploy them at scale, together covering the journey from invention to commercial uptake.

⁶ The Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027 includes dedicated actions to explore the commercial potential of R&I results and support their testing and validation in real-world settings.

Next to identifying these bottlenecks and thresholds, the focus of this discussion will be on how Member States and Associated Countries have developed strategies and instruments to overcome these hurdles and strengthen their R&I cooperation across the entire lab to market journey, including by sharing their best practices.

Delegations are invited to approach this topic by addressing questions such as:

- Looking at your country, where do you identify the main bottlenecks in creating a more seamless innovation to investment journey (at national or European level), in particular in moving from R&I towards industrial uptake and scale-up? What good practices have proved effective in overcoming these bottlenecks, including in translating academic IP into investable and scalable ventures?
- What barriers does your industry face in accessing research and technology infrastructure services, especially in a cross-border context, and how could access better respond to industrial needs?
- How can synergies between European and national R&I funding be strengthened, and what is needed to ensure that Horizon Europe and the ECF are well aligned with each other and responsive to the needs of industry and the wider R&I ecosystem?
- How can R&I ecosystems better connect research, industry, investors and other actors in order to strengthen Europe's capacity to turn R&I into industrial and economic value and help close the innovation gap with other global players?

Setting

Jason Lynch (CEO of Equal1) will introduce this item with a short keynote. Equal1 is a pioneering silicon quantum computing company and a spin-out from University College Dublin (UCD). It employs 36 people and has expanded into five overseas markets – Canada, Japan, Netherlands (Delft), Romania and the US. After the keynote, there is the possibility to ask clarifying questions.

Following this, delegations are invited to use their 2-minute intervention time to highlight where they see the most significant opportunities and obstacles to align R&I with industry, with a particular focus on good practices from their countries that could be relevant for other countries or at European level.

Next steps

A short report will be drafted with the outcomes of the discussion.
