

Informal Videoconference of ERAC

16 December 2020

Main results¹

New ERAC co-Chair from the Member States

ERAC welcomed Clara Eugenia García (ES) to her first ERAC meeting as new ERAC Member States' co-Chair.

Clara Eugenia García was elected as MS co-Chair on 14 December 2020 following a vote by written procedure and appointed from that date to this post for an initial period of three years.

She replaces the former ERAC MS co-Chair, Christian Naczinsky (AT), who stepped down from this position at the end of his three-year official term on 22 September 2020.

The new MS co-Chair thanked the MS representatives in the ERAC Steering Board, Fulvio Esposito (IT) and Erik Hansalek (DE), for having ensured caretaking duties during the interim period.

Fight against Covid-19

- The COM co-Chair, Jean-Eric Paquet, encouraged Member States to join the Commission's information and communication efforts to develop and apply a positive narrative on the EU's vaccines strategy against COVID-19, while pointing out disinformation as one of the concerns having negative impact on public trust.
- The Chair of the ERAC Standing Working Group on Open science and innovation (SWG OSI), Marc Vanholsbeeck, presented the recently adopted [Opinion on Open Science and Open Innovation in times of pandemic](#). This Opinion contains a set of evidence-based recommendations to maximize the benefits of the open science and open innovation paradigm to efficiently face the new challenges that have emerged from the Covid-19 crisis.

Expert group on future ERA governance

ERAC held a debate on 'Co-designing a new ERA governance framework' on the basis of a background note (doc. WK 14316/2020) jointly drafted by the Commission and the Presidency-Trio (DE-PT-SI), and agreed to set up an expert group in the Commission to deliver advice on the future of the ERA governance.

¹ 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 16 December 2020 for follow-up. Under no circumstances can it be considered as being official summary conclusions.

The expert group will be made up of representatives of the Member States and the Commission and should be operational in early 2021 for a period of approximately 12 months.

This group should deliver advice on:

- ERA governance (including the features of the permanent ‘ERA Forum for Transition’) and on the ‘Pact on Research and Innovation’ during the first semester of 2021, and
- the future ‘ERA Scoreboard’ during the second semester of 2021.

Taking account of the advice of the expert group, a proposal on the ‘Pact for Research and Innovation’ is to be submitted by the Commission before the summer 2021, with a view to its examination and approval in the second half of the year.

The two main guiding documents of the new group will be:

- the Council conclusions on the 'New European Research Area' adopted on 1 December 2020, and
- the Commission communication on “A New ERA for Research and Innovation” adopted on 30 September 2020.

In this respect, the Commission Director Anna Panagopoulou gave a presentation of the communication (doc. WK 14808/2020) highlighting the main steps to be undertaken in 2021, which will include the elaboration of an ERA Policy Agenda of priority actions to be jointly developed by the Commission and the Member States.

Final report of the ERAC Action Plan 2019

The Helpdesk in support of the implementation of the ERAC Action Plan (Fulvio Esposito, David Wilson, Gunhild Kiesenhofer-Widhalm) presented the final report on "[The 2019 Action Plan for the Advisory Structure of the European Research Area](#)", which had been adopted by ERAC by written procedure on 11 December 2020.

The visual presentation can be found in document WK 14808/2020.

The report is aimed at helping the Member States and the Commission to build the future ERA governance framework.

The overall assessment is that ERAC has accomplished its mission according to the [2018 Council conclusions on the governance of the ERA](#).

Information from the co-Chairs and the Presidencies

- The Committee took note of the outcome of the latest ERAC Steering Board meeting held on 10 November 2020, as well as of the progress made by the ERA-related groups up to date.
- The Trio of Presidencies (DE, PT, SI) provided indications on their priorities, programmes and key events for their respective Presidency terms, and the FR delegation anticipated some of the broad lines in R&I that will be guiding its Presidency mandate in the first semester of 2022.

Workshop on ‘Labour market for researchers, skills, assessment and monitoring’

ERAC was debriefed on the outcome of the workshop on ‘Labour market for researchers, skills, assessment and monitoring’, which took place on 15 December 2020, by the rapporteurs Eduardo Maldonado and Luísa Henriques, as representatives of the incoming PT Presidency.

The virtual workshop, which was attended by around a hundred experts from the EU Member States and Associated Countries, the Commission, ERA-Groups and ERA stakeholders, addressed the following three main topics:

1. Labour market for research, skills, assessment and monitoring
2. Career assessment in the new context – talent profiles vs Excellence metrics
3. Synergies between ERA and EEA: European Universities Alliances as a pilot for strengthening research careers and framework conditions

A written summary on the outcome of the discussions at the workshop will be provided by the rapporteurs in the coming days.

Final Report of the Transitional Forum for Partnerships

The COM presented the Final Report of the Transitional Forum for Partnerships (doc. WK 14589/2020).

The Transitional Forum for R&I Partnerships was set up in 2019 to provide advice on the future design and implementation of the strategic coordinating process through the following deliverables:

1. Recommendation for the scope and structure of the biennial monitoring report and the necessary processes and data requests;
2. Recommendation for the scope, approach and necessary resources of foresight activities;
3. Common guidelines (enabling conditions) for the design and implementation of national governance structures, national monitoring mechanisms, etc.;
4. Report on the status of preparation of Member States / Associated Countries;
5. Opinion on the proposal for the Forum and its scope, implementation and governance during Horizon Europe;
6. Final report of the Transitional Forum to ERAC.

ERAC work programme 2021-2022

ERAC examined the draft ERAC work programme 2021-2022 (doc. WK 14592/2020), which will be circulated to ERAC for comments by delegations until mid-January, with a view to its subsequent adoption by written procedure.

ERAC work programmes are updated at least once every six months.
