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NOTE

From: The Commission
To: Delegations

Subject: State of play of the implementation of the new governance of the European Research Area
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find attached a note from the Commission on the “State of play of the implementation of the new governance of the European Research Area” with a view to the AOB items at the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 10 June 2022.

State of play of the implementation of the new governance of the European Research Area**- Information note from the Commission**

The new European Research Area (ERA) governance was established in November 2021 with the adoption of the [Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe¹](#) and [Council conclusions on the future ERA governance of 26 November 2021²](#), which comprises the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024.

State-of-play

As requested by the Council (paragraph 17 of the Council Conclusions), the Commission established a new ERA Forum (in the form of a [Commission expert group](#)), which has met seven times by June 2022. Some elements of the ERA Forum are:

- i. co-chairing by the Commission and a Member State representative;
- ii. continuous involvement of Horizon Europe associated countries, Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee as well as representatives of seven types of stakeholders (universities and other higher education institutions, research and technology performing organisations, R&I-intensive businesses, including SMEs, individual researchers and innovators, including at early and middle stages of their carriers, research infrastructures, R&I-funding organisations and academies of sciences); and
- iii. guidance by a Steering Committee, consisting of the Commission and the incumbent and subsequent Trio Presidencies of the Council of the European Union.

The Forum closely coordinates its work with the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), the Partnership Knowledge Hub and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) Steering Board, all of which regularly inform the ERA Forum.

¹ Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe, OJ L 431, 2.12.2021, p. 1.

² Council document 14308/21.

As the body in charge of facilitating an effective implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda, the Forum discussed all 20 ERA actions based on detailed explanatory documents provided by the Commission during the first half of 2022. At its meeting in April, the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) held a strategic debate on the ERA Policy Agenda in order to provide guidance to Member States on how to express national commitments to an ERA action, and subsequently adopted an opinion.

The Forum is also invited to co-design and co-implement the new ERA monitoring and evaluation mechanism (paragraph 18 of the Council conclusions). A first in-depth discussion took place at the ERA Forum meeting on 5 May based on a Commission background note.

As recommended by the Council conclusions of November 2021 (see paragraph 27), the ERA Forum has set up a standing sub-group on the Global Approach, co-chaired by a Member State and the Commission, to take into account and continue the work done by SFIC (the Strategic Forum for International Scientific and Technological Cooperation). The sub-group will support the objectives set out in the Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation, and in particular support the implementation of Action 9 on the ERA Policy Agenda “Promote a positive environment and level playing field for international cooperation based on reciprocity”.

Next steps

ERA Policy Agenda actions: According to the Council conclusions (paragraph 10 of the Council conclusions), ERA actions need to secure the commitment of at least half of EU Member States representing a critical mass in order to ensure a broad political support.

Member States have been invited to indicate their commitment to the ERA actions through templates (co-designed in the ERA Forum by the Commission and the Member States) by the end of June 2022. Associated countries and stakeholders have been invited to express their interest as well.

In September, ERAC will hold a discussion on the outcome of the commitments and the subsequent implementation of actions.

Moreover, during the second semester of 2022 the ERA Forum will engage in debating the concrete implementation of the actions on the ERA Policy Agenda.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanism: In the Council conclusions (paragraph 18), the Commission was invited to present to the Council by mid-2022 a monitoring and evaluation framework for the implementation of the ERA co-designed with the ERA Forum.

The ERA Forum agreed on the elements and the overall approach of the framework for the future ERA monitoring mechanism, which will include an online policy platform, an ERA scoreboard and a dashboard as well as the regular annual reports of the Commission on the Member States' progress. The monitoring and evaluation framework is presented in the annex to this note. The ERA Forum will, throughout the second semester of 2022, provide further advice to the Commission regarding the development and implementation of the future monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

Framework for the future ERA monitoring mechanism

- (1) The Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe³ (the “Pact for R&I”) states that “*the Member States and the Commission should implement an enhanced monitoring mechanism, to ensure a proper basis for evidence informed policy making in the ERA and to provide evidence and analysis in the context of the European Semester*”.
- (2) The Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA of November 2021 invited the Commission “*to present to the Council by mid-2022 a monitoring and evaluation framework for the implementation of the ERA*”.
- (3) Based on the Council Conclusions, the Pact for R&I, and the advice by the ERA Forum, the following elements should be considered for an efficient and effective ERA monitoring mechanism:
 - an online ERA policy platform;
 - a scoreboard;
 - a dashboard; and
 - regular reporting: (i) a report on the state of play of the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda every 18 months; (ii) annual reports of the Commission on each Member State’s progress in the implementation of the ERA.
- (4) The new ERA monitoring mechanism should collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative information regarding the progress in contributing to the ERA priority areas and in implementing the actions of the ERA Policy Agenda.
- (5) Progress should be monitored along the 16 priority areas for joint action (ERA priorities) as set out in the Pact for R&I, which are addressed through the ERA actions of the ERA Policy Agenda and through other activities (e. g. investments or reforms) at all levels that are not included in the ERA actions.

³ Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe, ST/13701/2021/INIT, OJ L 431, 2.12.2021, p. 1–9.

- (6) The ERA monitoring mechanism will be set up in such a way as to avoid additional administrative burden, and therefore will use existing indicators and available data (e.g. Eurostat, OECD) to the largest possible extent, including through linking the monitoring mechanism to other relevant information sources .
- (7) During the second half of 2022, the ERA Forum will further advise the Commission on the development and implementation of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism, including the functionalities of the online ERA policy platform, the choice of the monitoring indicators, the modalities for the scoreboard and dashboard, and the necessities for the regular reporting.

Online ERA policy platform

- (8) The online ERA policy platform will be a user-friendly platform for informing on (i) the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda at Union and national level and on (ii) other relevant investments, reforms and activities supporting the principles and ERA priority areas set out in the Pact for R&I. National authorities will be able to use the platform in an uncomplicated manner in order to submit the requested information and data needed for analysing the progress on implementing the ERA.
- (9) Member States, associated countries and the Commission will be able to share information through the policy platform on their current and planned policies, programmes and other relevant investments, reforms and activities that contribute to implementing the ERA Policy Agenda, and more broadly contribute to the principles and priorities set out in the Pact for R&I.
- (10) The platform will ease the management and the processing of relevant information and data for monitoring the ERA, and support the analysis of the information and data for the required reporting by the European Commission.
- (11) The information collected on the platform will enable a qualitative contextualisation of progress made in implementing the ERA, recognising the individual environment and circumstances of each Member State.

- (12) As a minimum requirement, the platform will be composed of the following sections:
- Visualised data, e.g. displaying the scoreboard, dashboard (by country; by priority/by action), investments;
 - Data portal enabling up- or downloading of data/information used by the scoreboard and the dashboard and data/information e.g. on policies, reforms, investments;
 - Information portal for access to the descriptions of ERA Policy Agenda actions, other ERA-related documents and all reports.
- (13) The platform will allow for a non-public section.

The scoreboard

- (14) In line with the Pact for R&I, the scoreboard *”monitors progress towards the ERA objectives at Union level”*. It *“should assess the overall consolidation and collective progress of ERA priorities and should only display aggregated data at EU level”*.
- (15) The scoreboard will show the overall progress on the priority areas for joint action at EU level based on a limited number of quantitative indicators.
- (16) The indicators would consist mainly of outcome and impact indicators.
- (17) The number of indicators per priority area does not need to be the same, however, a balance of indicators should be aimed for.
- (18) The chosen indicators will ensure that recent changes in policies can be reflected (i.e. the most recent data will be used) and that an annual update of the scoreboard is feasible. The proposed indicators will also ensure that progress can be monitored over time as for most indicators time series data will be available. In case data is not available for each Member State, the EU aggregate will be constructed using a smaller group of countries.
- (19) The scoreboard will indicate the overall divergence or convergence between Member States per ERA priority without naming any specific country.

The dashboard

- (20) The Pact for R&I lays down that *”a more detailed dashboard monitoring progress towards the ERA objectives at national level, through a rich combination of relevant input, outcome and impact indicators and qualitative analyses that accommodate the different circumstances of Member States and that relate to the ERA priorities”* should be established.
- (21) The dashboard will be based on quantitative and qualitative indicators and information. It will be a key source of information when preparing the country reports.
- (22) The dashboard will provide information at national level on:
- performance and progress of the Member States and the Commission regarding the ERA priority areas, based on the corresponding ERA actions that the Member States commit to;
 - performance and progress of the Member States towards the ERA priorities in relation to other investments, reforms and activities (other than ERA actions) that they consider as ERA-relevant and find appropriate to have included in the monitoring mechanism;
 - national contexts and policies in relation to research and innovation relevant for the ERA (e.g., documented by ERA Roadmaps and Action Plans, associated strategies (regarding open science, international collaboration, gender, etc.).
- (23) Progress will be measured through process and result indicators linked to the ERA actions corresponding to the respective priority area for joint action:
- a) The process indicators monitor the level of achievement of the respective milestones set for each ERA action.
 - b) The result indicators monitor inputs, outputs, or outcomes of the specific ERA actions and thus the performance of the Member States towards the corresponding ERA priority.
- (24) Information on national R&I contexts and policies should be covered by making available all relevant R&I policy and strategy documents via the policy platform.

Regular reporting

- (25) The reporting will build on the information provided by the Member States and the Commission on the policy platform as well as the information generated via the scoreboard and dashboard.
- (26) The Commission will prepare annual reports on each Member State's progress in the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda (country reports), and which will serve to support the regular policy dialogues between Member States and the Commission.
- (27) In line with paragraph 10 of the Pact on R&I the Commission will prepare *a report for consideration by the Council* on the state of play of the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda at the level of the Union every 18 months (18-month-report), which will underpin steering the ongoing ERA Policy Agenda and preparing its reviews and updates that will be discussed and approved by the Council. The report will be based on the information and data provided under the scoreboard, the dashboard, and the Member States', associated countries' and Commission's information placed on the ERA policy platform.

Timeline (tentative)

Mid-2022	<i>The Commission will present to the Council a monitoring and evaluation framework for the implementation of the ERA.</i>
2nd half 2022:	<i>The ERA Forum will provide further advice to the Commission on the development and implementation of the future monitoring mechanism.</i>
Early 2023	<i>The first version of the monitoring mechanism should be launched, after which “the Commission and the Member States should share information through the ERA policy online platform on their current and planned policies and programmes that contribute to implementing the actions defined in the ERA Policy Agenda, and more broadly contribute to the principles and priorities set out by this Pact”.</i>
Mid-2023	<i>First 18-month report by the Commission</i>
End 2023	<i>First country reports by the Commission</i>
