



Council of the European Union  
General Secretariat

**Brussels, 06 March 2023**

**WK 3177/2023 INIT**

**LIMITE**

**ERAC**

**RECH**

*This is a paper intended for a specific community of recipients. Handling and further distribution are under the sole responsibility of community members.*

**WORKING DOCUMENT**

---

From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee)

---

Subject: Post Meeting Flash

---

**EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA AND  
INNOVATION COMMITTEE  
(ERAC)**

-----  
**ERAC co-Chairs**

**ERAC meeting of 14 February 2023 (agenda CM 5871/1/22)**

**Post-meeting flash**

The meeting of ERAC on 14 February 2023 took place in Brussels and the agenda included debates on:

1. Guidance for the next Framework Programme for R&I
2. Ukraine's recovery – the role of R&I
3. Implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024
4. Research careers
5. Impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility on R&I policies

ERAC adopted its Work Programme for 2023-2024 (doc. 6625/23).

The audiovisual presentations are available in doc. WK 2314/2023.

The outcome of the meeting and the next steps can be summarised as follows:

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

An update from the Commission on the Enhanced Dialogue was added to the agenda which was then adopted with this change.

**2. Updates from the co-Chairs and the current and upcoming Presidencies**

- The **Swedish Presidency** presented its priorities for R&I which include, among other issues: preparation of Council Conclusions on high-quality, transparent, open, trustworthy and equitable scholarly publishing; a Declaration on research infrastructures in the digital transition for maximising the benefit of open research data; Council Conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' special report on synergies between H-2020 and structural funds, and the continuation of legislative work to amend the Single Basic Act for the inclusion of the Chips Joint Undertaking. The Swedish delegation also informed ERAC members about Presidency events, including the ERAC meeting on 21-22 June 2023, to be hosted in Lund (SE).
  
- The draft programme of the **incoming Spanish Presidency** for the second half of 2023 includes work on the impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility on R&I systems and related sectorial policies, benefits of innovation ecosystems and "Science for policy"; a renewed

Partnership in the Mediterranean Area (“PRIMA-2”), and a political debate at the informal meeting of Research Ministers about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategic Plan (2025-2027) of Horizon Europe. The Spanish Presidency also reminded ERAC about the envisaged ERAC meeting to be held on 8-9 October 2023 in Malaga (ES).

- The **future Belgian Presidency** outlined general main axes that might be developed under its Presidency term in the first half of 2024 related to open strategic autonomy, valorisation of research results and the role of R&I in addressing key challenges for the EU.

- The Commission updated on the ongoing work on “**Foreign Interference**”, including the organisation of Mutual Learning Exercises (11 Member States have declared interest up to now, and other interested Member States are still invited to join); the development of a digital one-stop-shop and an open-source intelligence system.

- The Commission provided updated information on the process of “**Enhanced dialogues with Member States**”, which is aimed at supporting the design and implementation of the R&I policy agendas and investments in the Member States. Recent enhanced dialogues with EE, CZ, LT and HR triggered interesting follow-up actions. The next enhanced dialogues will take place with LV, SI and ES.

- ERAC took note of ongoing **work at the ERA Forum**, notably on developments to take forward ERA Actions related to 1) Research careers, 2) Hydrogen valleys, 3) access to excellence, and 4) the ERA monitoring mechanism. Discussions on the next ERA Policy Agenda will start later this year in the context of the ERA Forum and an exchange of views in ERAC was agreed for the plenary debate in October 2023. The Commission is considering to organise an ERA Conference to support this exercise.

### 3. Adoption of the ERAC Work Programme 2023-2024

ERAC adopted its new Work Programme after introducing slight modifications, in particular the systematic inclusion of a standing agenda item in upcoming ERAC meetings on R&I-related measures for the recovery of Ukraine.

[ERAC Work Programme 2023-2024](#)

#### **4. ERAC task force on “Guidance for the next Framework Programme for R&I”**

The Rapporteurs of the ERAC Task Force on “Guidance for the next FP for R&I” debriefed on the meeting of the Task Force on 13 February, which started with a presentation by the OECD, analysing global trends in R&I collaborations and policies.

With regard to the ERAC Opinion to be drafted until mid-2024, Task Force members welcomed the three building blocks suggested by the co-chairs of the Task Force (Block 1: Ambitions, vision and context for FP 10; Block 2: Guiding Principles; Block 3: Management, Structure and Instruments).

A more detailed report on the meeting of the Task Force is included in the Annex.

#### **5. Ukraine’s Recovery – the role of research and innovation**

The Commission updated on R&I measures in support to Ukraine and recalled the target to have the Horizon Europe Office in Kyiv operating by June 2023.

This office could, among other activities, provide targeted support to Ukrainian researchers in terms of preparing applications and finding partners, while operating as a contact point for the Member States.

As of January 2023, Ukrainian research and innovation actors participate in 49 Horizon Europe grants with a net EU funding of €13 million. The agreement with Ukraine associating it to Horizon Europe and Euratom Research and Training Programmes is in force since 9 June 2022 and supports Ukrainian researchers and innovators in the context of the ongoing military aggression by Russia. In line with the Association Agreement, Ukrainian entities can participate in the programmes on equal terms with entities from EU Member States.

The launch of the MSCA4Ukraine scheme on 10 May 2022 enables researchers from Ukraine to continue their work in EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, while maintaining their connections to R&I communities in Ukraine. The scheme may also facilitate researchers’ reintegration in Ukraine if conditions for safe return are met and contribute to strengthening the Ukrainian universities and research sector and its collaboration and exchange with the international research community.

The Ukrainian representative portrayed the devastating damages caused by Russian bombings on higher education institutions and research infrastructures. More than 2,500 educational institutions have been damaged and more than 400 wiped off the map. The impact on research infrastructure is increasing quickly: in November 2022, it was 15%, now it is close to 35%. This data excludes occupied territories as well as impact on the EU innovative start-ups and SMEs. The Ukrainian representative also alluded to limited national budget for R&I, which inter alia has an impact on the creation of the NCPs’ network for Horizon Europe.

In relation to recovery, the Ukrainian representative listed several key objectives to be pursued and asked to continue keeping a particular focus on those researchers who are still trying to exercise their activities in the country.

Furthermore, a plea was made for further integration of Ukraine in the ERA.

ERAC delegations stressed the following:

- ERAC members acknowledged and appreciated the Commission’s R&I support for Ukraine and emphasized the need to maximise the benefits under Ukraine’s association to Horizon Europe.
- ERAC members are interested to exchange information on best practices in supporting UA researchers through national programmes/initiatives, with regard to UA researchers now working abroad as well as to those remaining in Ukraine. Strong emphasis is put on twinning initiatives with individual UA institutions and targeting priority areas of work, e.g. agro-biological research, energy, nuclear safety and security.
- For Ukraine’s recovery, ERAC members confirmed the importance of including R&I in the key political and operational frameworks. Furthermore, Ukraine’s R&I talents need to be preserved both within and outside the country while the war is ongoing, followed by a focus on reversing the brain drain once the war is over.
- Ukraine’s National Reconstruction and Development Plan should well reflect the needs of R&I; ERAC members welcomed the Ukrainian interest in working with ERAC to make this happen.

ERAC decided to include the point “Ukraine’s Recovery – the role of research and innovation” as a standing agenda item in its Work Programme.

The COM announced a proposal for a possible ERAC Opinion.

## **6. National implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024: State of play with regard to national policy vehicles**

Over the working lunch, ERAC held an informal exchange of views on the basis of a presentation by the DE delegation. ERAC welcomed the proposal of the DE delegation to conduct a survey amongst Member States on the issue and to present and discuss the outcomes of this survey at the ERAC meeting in June 2023<sup>1</sup>.

## **7. Promoting diverse and attractive research careers; towards a European Framework for Research Careers**

Following a presentation by the COM and based on the technical document on a European framework for research careers provided in advance of the meeting by the Commission, delegations exchanged views on the work ongoing in the context of promoting attractive research careers, which is specifically taken forward within the context of ERA Action 4 of the current ERA Policy Agenda.

Main points brought forward during the discussion were the following:

- A majority of ERAC delegates expressed overall support for the technical document, indicating that it is in line with the political and technical guidance provided by the Council

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on the positive feedback from ERAC members, the DE delegation developed a questionnaire to conduct the survey. The questionnaire was circulated to ERAC members on 6 March with a deadline for responses by 31 March 2023.

(Council Conclusions on research careers, June 2022 COMPET debate) and ERAC (Triangle Task Force for the review of the Charter & Code).

- They pointed out to the need to have a careful approach in addressing research careers issues which are at the interface of research competence with other national competences such as employment law, and to the fact that implementation of the provisions will have to take into consideration the different national contexts and specificities, ensuring a degree of flexibility. The Commission will therefore further fine-tune the text of the technical document, in close coordination with the ERA Forum.
- There was also broad consensus on the need to address early-career researchers with specific measures. The political partnership announced could go into the right direction, but MS asked for additional information before being able to express a reasoned view.
- Overall, ERAC delegates also supported the idea of a national mapping of implementation of tools in support of research careers, to be able to exchange best practices and make the necessary improvements.

## **8. The impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility on R&I policies and EU priorities - Lessons learned from the national perspective**

ERAC held a discussion on the impact of the RRF on R&I policies based on the analysis made by the COM and a preliminary analysis of written contributions provided by ERAC delegations for the debate. This subject will be taken up by the ES delegation under its Presidency term, and delegations were invited to send their written contributions if not done yet.

Based on the input received by the time of the ERAC plenary, ES underlined the usefulness of the RRF and the fact that it helped many Member States to increase their R&I investments and to steer them into specific directions (e.g. the green and digital transitions). In the upcoming discussions under ES Presidency, ES wants to look further into the issues of e.g. synergies, knowledge circulation and technology transfer.

While several Member States echoed the usefulness of the RRF (e.g. for contracting young researchers and mobilizing resources), they also underlined that it was too early to analyse its impact and draw lessons learned, with the exception of difficulties encountered during the implementation process, given the short deadlines. As the full impacts will require time to accrue, Member States considered premature to call it a game-changer, although the level of investments and scope of reforms in some Member States is deep. The sustainability of these investments and reform processes is an important area of shared concern and Member States were interested in further examining its possible impact on the directionality towards ERA and innovation actions during the discussions steered by the ES Presidency.

## **9. Any Other Businesses**

### **- *New COM Director General for R&I***

Marc Lemaitre took the function as new COM Director-General for R&I on 16 February 2023, thus becoming the new ERAC COM co-Chair from that date. ERAC thanked the outgoing co-Chair DDG Signe Ratso and acknowledged the great thrust given to the ERAC files under her mandate.

- ***Earthquake in Turkey***

ERAC delegations expressed solidarity with Turkey following the tragic earthquake across southern Turkey and northwest Syria.

- ***Next ERAC meeting***

The next meeting of ERAC is scheduled in Lund, Sweden, on 20-21 June 2023. Based on the ERAC Work Programme, the ERAC Steering Board will hold a meeting on 31 March with a view to setting out the agenda for the June ERAC meeting.

---

**ANNEX**

**ERAC task force on “Guidance for the next Framework Programme for R&I”**

**Summary of meeting on 13 February 2023**

**Opening**

Italy, France and Spain were welcomed as new members of the TF. Norway and the OECD were also welcomed. Both Julien Guerrier and Anna Panagopoulou on behalf of the Commission made their opening remarks and presented their high expectations of the work of the TF at the same time favouring regular interactions. The Commission wanted to think outside the box and see the FP as the instrument for the implementation of EU policies and the ERA.

**Presentation OECD**

Alessandra Colecchia of the OECD gave a presentation on the STI outlook for 2023, that will be publicly available on 16 March (*the presentation will be distributed to the TF thereafter*).

Main messages: more directionality is necessary in STI policy and international cooperation in the context of their use for transitions such as the climate transition; existing instead of break-through technologies are funded; and there is need for a more anticipating and systematic policy aiming at long-term investments.

The OECD also addressed the current geopolitical situation, as well as the balance between technological sovereignty, strategic autonomy, openness and the benefits of knowledge exchange. The discussion covered several aspects of the presentation.

**Discussion of scoping paper**

In the discussion on the mandate and the scope it was emphasised that the efforts of the Commission should not be duplicated and the work conducted in the context of the public consultation on the current and previous FPs can be of use.

In the discussion on the building blocks it became clear that the majority of the TF members agreed on the set-up of the building blocks as well as on the structure for organising the TF meetings according to the building blocks. Building block 1 was generally considered as the most important one and the best point to start the process with.

Clarity was asked on the process, including a timeline and the foreseen number of meetings per building blocks (one meeting per block is not considered sufficient). It must also be decided whether a specific building block needs to be finalised before the start of the next one.

Emphasised were many elements including: the connection to the ERA, synergies with other programmes (if better placed in building block 3), simplification (guiding principles), positioning of the FP in the ecosystem, broader context (beyond R&I), role of science for policy and diplomacy, potential subthemes per building blocks, and prioritisation of specific areas.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

The structure consisting of the 3 building blocks is supported by the vast majority of the members with more than one meeting per building block foreseen and the building blocks feeding into each other.

The Opinion should be visionary, taking into account the lessons learned from the previous FPs, the geopolitical situation as well as sufficient flexibility and stability.

The deadline for comments on the scoping paper is set for the end of the week, 3 March (*NB: slightly extended due to the late distribution of the Word version of the scoping paper*). The co-chairs will work on a more detailed work programme in the coming weeks which will be send to the TF members in due time.

Next to the foreseen physical meeting in June (ideally back-to-back with the ERAC in Lund), an extra meeting will be organised (most likely in April/May and potentially digital). TF members will be informed soon.