Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

WORKING PAPER

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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	ERAC Secretariat
To:	ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee)
Subject:	ERAC Action Plan to support implementation of the Council conclusions of 30 November 2018 on the governance of the ERA (14989/18) and the Recommendations of the ERAC Opinion on the 2018 review of the ERA advisory structure (1209/18)

Delegations will find attached to this note, for information, the Draft Action Plan on the follow-up on the Council conclusions of 30 November 2018 on the ERA and on the Review of the ERA advisory structure, with a view to the agenda item 4.1 of the next ERAC plenary to take place on 21-22 March 2019.

ERAC Action Plan to support implementation of the Council conclusions of 30 November 2018 on the governance of the ERA (14989/18) and the Recommendations of the ERAC Opinion on the 2018 review of the ERA advisory structure (1209/18)

Draft version, February 2018

Introductory / explanatory remarks:

- The Action Plan follows the thematic structure of the ERAC Opinion on the ERA review (1209/18). To give further emphasis to its full legitimacy, it makes primary reference (first column) to the Council conclusions of 30 November on the governance of the ERA (14989/18).

- Where applicable, each Council conclusion is complemented by the related Recommendation(s) in the ERAC Opinion (second column). ERAC recommendations without a strict and direct correspondence with the Council conclusions are included into the Action Plan as well.

- Different colours are used to distinguish between more strategic or policy-oriented actions and more operational or process-oriented actions.

- As to the timeframe of the Action Plan, the column with deadlines indicates by when the relevant action is expected to be completed. Unless indicated otherwise, the actions are expected to be undertaken with an appropriate timing to guarantee their completion within the indicated deadline.

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS

A. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE ERA

ERA Priorities

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
CC 4. HIGHLIGHTS that some progress towards an improved ERA has been achieved in all ERA-related groups implementing the ERA Priorities, representing important milestones for the European Research Area; CC 11. WELCOMES the efforts made by ERAC in 2018 to review and adapt the ERA advisory structure as outlined in the ERAC Opinion of 18 September 2018 CC 16. WELCOMES the ERAC Opinion on the Review of the ERA Advisory Structure, and CALLS on ERAC and the other ERA-related groups to implement swiftly its recommendations through an Action Plan in 2019, including the revision of their Mandates as appropriate.	-	Action Plan	ERAC	2019 (the Action Plan is adopted) / 2019-21 (the Action Plan is implemented according to the deadlines of each action)	Timely implementation of the Council conclusions and of the review Recommendations
CC 17. ACKNOWLEDGES that the current ERA Priorities should continue to be the basis for collaboration between Member States, Associated Countries, the European Commission and public and private stakeholder organisations within a strengthened ERA partnership; NOTES that the ERA Roadmap 2015-2020 will continue to apply, fully respecting the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality while at the same time drawing on the diversity and strengths of	ERAC Rec. 1. Keep the current ERA Priorities at this time. However, expand the scope of ERA Priority 2a (jointly addressing grand challenges) to include the new approach on partnerships, which should also take into account the missions of Horizon Europe. For the time being, embed emerging needs for new activities into existing ERA Priorities.	Depending on outcome of CC 22-26 (see below); if applicable, reorient or expand the scope of ERA Priority 2a	ERAC (proposal / opinion); to be endorsed by the Council	End of 2020 (in line with action d) for CC 22-26, see below)	

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the national research and innovation systems; CC 19. CONSIDERS that emerging needs for new ERA activities can be embedded into existing ERA Priorities; RECOGNISES the horizontal nature of some ERA activities, which calls for further collaboration across ERA Priorities;					
CC 5. HIGHLIGHTS the new approach to European Research & Innovation (R&I) partnership policy informed by the ERAC ad-hoc Working Group on Partnerships and the introduction in the Horizon Europe proposal of a new mechanism for the selection, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and phasing out of EU R&I partnerships;		Strategic coordinating process for the life-cycle of R&I partnerships;	EC	May 2019	Transitional Forum for European R&I Partnerships created
REITERATES that while the strategic coordinating process should be fully operational by May 2019, an early and structured consultation of Member States and Associated Countries on any R&I partnership initiative to be funded under the Horizon Europe should take place on the basis of their Inception Impact Assessment in case their preparation is expected to start before the strategic coordinating process is formally established;		Strategic planning for the selection of R&I partnerships in Horizon Europe;	EC	Depending on the progress of Horizon Europe negotiations	Consultation with (shadow) strategic configuration of Programme Committee

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CC 22. INVITES the Commission, to publish by mid-2020 a new ERA Communication for the period beyond 2020, based on sound evidence, which may propose revised ERA policy priorities and ERA governance and monitoring mechanisms at national and EU level. CC 23. INVITES the Presidencies of the Council to consider organising regular ERA ministerial conferences, starting in 2020 with the new ERA Communication as a basis for setting ERA priorities by the Council. CC 25. Furthermore, in view of the expiration of the "ERA Roadmap 2015-2020", SUGGESTS that the Commission, in close collaboration with Member States, undertakes a careful evaluation of this kind of ERA policy-making tool; CC 26. LOOKS FORWARD to the next review process of the ERA advisory structure no later than 2021, taking into account the possible new ERA Communication and the potential outcome of the first ERA ministerial conference.	ERAC Rec. 2. ERAC advises the European Commission to publish in due time a new ERA communication for the period beyond 2020, which should revise the priorities and their actions included in the 2012 ERA Communication and examine possible new priorities, against the background of the changes in the R&I landscape since 2012. Such a new Communication could be complemented by a Ministerial ERA Conference in 2020 as an opportunity for priority-setting.	a) ERAC starts a debate on strategic questions about the future of ERA	ERAC-SB and ERAC	1st semester 2019	Establishment of an ERAC ad-hoc Working Group on the future of ERA
		b) Consultation with the ERA-related groups and other relevant stakeholders for specific input on existing and possible future ERA Priorities.	ERAC ad-hoc Working Group on the future of ERA	2nd semester 2019	Preparation of an ERAC Opinion on the future of ERA
		c) Final integrated advice by ERAC for the Communication on the future of ERA.	ERAC	End of 2019	ERAC Opinion on the future of ERA
		d) EC, in close collaboration with Member States, undertakes a careful evaluation of the "ERA Roadmap 2015-2020" (refer to CC 25)	EC; MS	Early 2020	Assessment of the usefulness of an ERA Roadmap as an ERA policy-making tool
		e) Council Presidency launches political consultations (e.g. workshops prior to Compet council, debates at Compet Council) to feed into the preparation of the Communication in the appropriate form	HR Presidency	1st semester 2020	ERAC Opinion fertilises political exchange of views

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		f) The EC publishes a new ERA Communication for the period beyond 2020 on the basis of an open consultation process and with reference to Horizon Europe priorities (pending the priorities and confirmation of the new Commission)	EC	By mid-2020	New EC Communication enables political decision-making on the future of ERA.
		g) Council Presidency organises first ERA Ministerial Conference	DE Presidency	2nd semester 2020	Political debate and selection of future ERA Priorities
		h) The ERA Communication is translated into new/revisited ERA priorities, resulting in Council conclusions as the final step of the 2021 review process on the ERA advisory structure (refer to CC 26)	Council	2021	Council Conclusions on the new ERA Communication are approved and lay the ground for the revised ERA advisory structure

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ERA Advisory Structure					
CC 21 (first indent). ERAC's guiding role in the ERA Advisory Structure should be maintained and strengthened. In doing so, ERAC should assist the other ERA-related groups under its responsibility to have optimal working conditions for their efforts to realise the goals set in the ERA Roadmap.	ERAC Rec. 3. Keep and strengthen ERAC's superordinate role in the ERA advisory structure ERAC Rec. 9. Make sure that all ERA-related groups have optimal conditions in their efforts to realise the goals set in the ERA roadmap. This includes resources to strengthen their activities, increased visibility (including web visibility), resources for secretariat and expert assistance. In particular, find a long-term solution regarding meeting venues for SWG HRM, SWG GRI and SWG OS	a) Interactions between ERAC and other ERA-related groups are intensified, mainly (but not only) through the ERAC-SB whilst maintaining active engagement in ERAC from delegations.	ERAC, other ERA-related Groups, ERAC-SB	To be evaluated by the end of 2019	More discussion and interaction in the 'update section' during ERAC plenaries. Occasional common workshops/events on topics of common interest to foster better cooperation and increase impact and relevance.
		b) When requested, ERAC provides timely feedback to opinions/recommendations of the other ERA-related groups. As part of its work plan, ERAC could indicate which opinions /recommendations are to be prioritised for consideration by ERAC.	ERAC	To be evaluated by the end of 2019	Increased relevance of advice from the ERA-related groups
		c) Coordination between ERAC and other ERA-related groups Work Programmes is improved, particularly with respect to timelines	ERAC-SB	To be evaluated by the end of 2019	Improved streamlining of ERAC and other ERA-related Groups Work Programmes
		d) ERAC co-chairs should assist the other ERA-related groups to have optimal	ERAC co-chairs	2019	ERA-related groups work under stable conditions, respecting the (limited) services that can be

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		working procedures and conditions			provided by the EC and the Council Secretariat
		e) The Council Secretariat will evaluate the possibility to upload more information onto the Council's ERAC website, notably, for each of the ERA-related Groups: i) up-to-date mandates and work programmes; ii) their publications, reports, policy briefs and other outputs; iii) list of names and contact details of all delegates iv) explore other sources of visibility	Council Secretariat (and MS/AC to approve publication of contact details) SWG HRM will study the offer of the European Commission to use EURAXESS web page to provide visibility.	1st semester 2019	The ERAC and ERA-related Groups' website is much more informative and up-to-date
		f) In order to insure a smooth functioning of all ERA-related groups, by 2021 resources to cover their costs have to be identified by the Strategic Configuration of the Programme Committee within the work programmes of Horizon Europe.	EC; HEU Programme Committee	1st semester 2021	Resources are made available for all the working groups.

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CC 20 (first indent). ERAC shall explore options to relaunch the existing GPC to prepare Member States' and Associated Countries' participation in the strategic coordinating process for partnerships, once its design and the design of missions is decided in the appropriate forum. CC 5, last part: HIGHLIGHTS the continued relevance of coordination and networking activities between Member States within and beyond EU priorities as part of ERA related efforts; CC 6, last part: REITERATES the continued relevance of jointly addressing global challenges, especially within the JPIs, and CALLS ON the Commission to continue the support for the joint programming process and the JPIs, in line with policy objectives at national and EU level CC 14. WELCOMES the 2018 Report of the European Commission on "Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU" as valuable evidence of the state of play of the EU research and innovation ecosystem; RECOGNISES the increase in innovation performance of the EU since 2010 as reported by the "European Innovation Scoreboard 2018"; however, NOTES with concern the unequal development across the	ERAC Recs. 4 and 27. Explore options to relaunch the existing GPC to prepare Member States' and Associated Countries' participation in the strategic coordinating process for partnerships, once its design and the design of missions is decided in the appropriate forum. ERAC Rec. 28. Seek the best organisational form for this new 'GPC 2.0', either as a configuration of ERAC or in closer cooperation and co-ownership with the Commission.	a) Based on input from a GPC taskforce and after consultation with the ERAC SB, GPC will update its work programme in the following aspects: - Finalising the work on Joint Programming Process and JPIs - Openness & transparency of networks (as new priority topic) - Relations with other groups and initiatives, e.g. ERAC, Transitional Forum for European R&I Partnerships	GPC	March 2019	The GPC Work Programme is modified according to its new focus
		b) Since the Council asks ERAC to advice on this issue, ERAC discussed the topic at the ERAC plenary in December 2018, and will put this item on the agenda again at the ERAC plenary in spring 2019.	ERAC (based on a revised work programme of GPC)	March 2019	Start of transition phase of GPC

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European Research Area and in this context UNDERLINES the need for making ERA better equipped to address the above challenges;					
CC 20 (second indent). ERA-related groups shall organise back-to-back or joint meetings where many synergies with regard to content and target groups exist. In the medium term, examine options to optimise the number of groups while ensuring adequate coverage of all aspects of ERA Priorities.	ERAC Recs. 5, 33 and 35. Consider back-to-back or even joint meetings of ERA-related groups where many synergies with regard to content and target groups exist (such as SWG HRM and SWG GRI, or GPC and SFIC). In the medium term, examine options to reduce the number of groups while ensuring adequate coverage of all aspects of ERA Priorities.	[1]Make better use of ERAC SB, exploit synergies and increase exchanges between groups by: - sending rapporteurs from one group to meetings of others. - making "interactions with other groups" a regular agenda item of all meetings of ERA-related Groups. - Possibly forming joint task forces or subgroups to address issues of concerns to relevant groups in line with their Work Programmes (see CC 21, first indent, action c above)	ERAC SB and all ERA-related Groups	Start process immediately, evaluate impact by the end of 2019	Work Programmes and agendas of all ERA-related Groups are better coordinated

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[1] According to Chairs concerned, implementation of the relevant ERAC Recommendations (5, 33, 35) and of this part of the CC is not feasible in the form it is presented, i.e. back-to-back meetings. Therefore, an alternative action is proposed here.

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CC 21, third indent: In case of emerging topics not covered by existing groups, ERA-related groups could continue to set up ad-hoc Working Groups with clearly defined objectives for a limited period of time. Member States, Associated Countries and the European Commission should ensure that the participants in all types of groups have the appropriate profile at the right level and also consider the use of PSF in achieving the objectives.	ERAC Rec. 6. Consider the possibility of organising future work within the ERA Advisory Structure to be carried out more often in ad-hoc Working Groups of ERAC rather than in permanent ERA-related groups. This applies notably for newly emerging topics, whose longer-lasting relevance needs to be clarified, addressing the fact that certain ERA Priorities arise but then lose focus.	ERAC considers addressing upcoming topics in ad hoc groups (examples could be the links/synergies between ERA and EHEA, or the link between ERA and Horizon Europe, see CC. 3 / 8). In general, if new ERA priorities are defined post-2020 (following from the process specified in CC. 22-26), they should be initially dealt with by an ERAC ad hoc working group in a trial period limited to one year. A new standing working group of ERAC should only be established after a successful trial period. The number of parallel ad-hoc groups must remain limited, however.	ERAC and ERAC SB	As of 2021 (or immediately whenever new topics come up)	New SWGs of ERAC need to have completed successful trial period as ad hoc WG. Existing SWGs are dissolved if not relevant anymore.
-	ERAC Rec 7. Keep the Research Policy Group (RPG) separate from the ERA advisory structure, as an informal and independent brainstorming platform with ad-hoc topics of particular interest to participants.	Strategic debates in ERAC and in RPG will be based on mutual information to stimulate mutual reinforcement and to avoid redundant overlaps and duplications	ERAC co-chairs	continuous	Maximised impact of strategic debates for R&I directors general

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Relations with the EC, the Council and the Council Presidencies

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
CC 21 (last indent). The European Commission, including its Joint Research Centre, is encouraged to continue to foster cross-fertilisation with expert advisory groups of the Commission and the ERA-related groups, if appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of efforts, and to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall R&I advisory system, e.g. for the European RTD Evaluation Network, or in the area of open science and innovation.	ERAC Rec 8. Clarify the role of the European Commission in each ERA-related group to ensure efficient, constructive and consistent participation in all groups. Examine also whether a stronger involvement of the Joint Research Centre JRC (e.g. preparing background material) might be interesting and useful for the activities of the ERA-related groups.	a) A discussion is held in ERAC prepared by the ERAC SB on the current extent and nature of EC involvement within the different groups and how and who to involve from the EC participation in the various ERA-related groups in the future.	ERAC SB and ERAC	1st semester 2019	Representatives from the EC services with the relevant thematic expertise are present in all ERA-related groups' meetings to optimise the efficiency of the overall R&I system.
		b) EC evaluates possibility and ways to use JRC services more effectively for ERA activities.	EC	2nd semester 2019	EC presentation of evaluation in ERAC SB and its recommendation to ensure the JRC services are used effectively.
		c) EC informs ERAC regularly about cross-fertilisation between expert advisory groups of the Commission and the ERA-related groups.	EC	Twice per year	Increased mutual understanding of on-going activities between EC and MS/AC
CC 21 (fourth indent). Coordination between the Council Presidency priorities and the agendas of the ERA-related groups shall be increased, in particular by involvement of future	ERAC Rec. 10. Increase coordination between Council Presidency priorities and the agendas of the ERA-related groups, by earlier involvement of future Council	a) The Rules of Procedure of ERAC will be revised to invite the future three Presidencies to the ERAC SB – taking into account practical limitations	Council Secretariat	1st semester 2019	Better long-term planning of ERAC

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Council Presidencies in the ERAC Steering Board starting 18 months prior to their term.	Presidencies in the ERAC Steering Board	b) Presidencies introduce their priorities to the ERAC SB 18 months prior to their terms, so that the ERA-related groups can accommodate their agendas accordingly when appropriate.	Future Council Presidencies and ERAC SB	1st semester 2019	The ERA-related groups work programmes are defined well in advance and coordinated with the Presidencies' priorities, so that their work can contribute, when appropriate, to Council conclusions

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ERA Monitoring and Reporting System

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
-	ERAC Rec. 11. With a view to the next programming period starting in 2021, the indicators of the ERA Monitoring Mechanism (EMM) should be reviewed and improved. To do so, an ERA-wide study on the current relevance and future potential of the existing ERA indicators could be launched, ensuring alignment with other relevant processes such as in the OECD or work of the Joint Research Centre (JRC). This process could be steered by a reinstated ad-hoc ERAC Working Group on Monitoring. As a result, the EMM (with the current eight headline indicators) will be based on more adequate data than is the case now.	Establish a new ERAC ad-hoc working group on monitoring to evaluate the current EMM and other monitoring efforts, reports and studies relevant with respect to ERA. Consultation of experts in the field of R&I data could be considered.	ERAC SB and ERAC	1st semester 2021: set up of ad-hoc WG / 2nd semester 2021: report	Report from ad hoc WG on the value of the EMM in its current form and possible improvements
CC 24. CONSIDERS the "ERA National Action Plans" of Member States and Associated Countries to be important instruments to implement ERA. These plans require a coherent and lean monitoring tool to be used across all ERA Priorities and Groups that would accommodate the different national roadmaps and should be used on a voluntary basis; NOTES the need to explore options to better articulate the "ERA National Action Plans" with the European Semester;	ERAC Rec. 12 Set up a coherent and yet lean monitoring tool on national progress towards all ERA Priorities to be used across all ERA-related groups. The system should be very simple, to accommodate the different national systems and situations with minimal administrative burden. Given that nation-al progress towards ERA Priorities is a national responsibility, individual countries are allowed to opt out from using the tool without	As decided in the ERAC Plenary on 6 December 2018, all ERA-related groups select a rapporteur to conduct and present a stock-taking exercise of NAPs for their respective ERA Priority, using as a minimum standard the monitoring tool developed by GPC (possibly developed as a web-based tool, with a user-friendly interface and possibility of additional	ERAC rapporteur, ERA-related Groups and ERAC SB	1st semester 2019	Results of the stock-taking exercises are presented in the ERAC plenary in June with a recommendation on how the results can be used to ensure a well-functioning ERA.

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	hindering others to benefit from it. The tool developed by GPC to follow up the implementation of the countries' individual priorities could be investigated and possibly adapted for use by other ERA-related groups. ERAC Rec. 13. Explore options to better articulate the 'ERA National Action Plans' (NAPs) with the European Semester. Consider carefully if and how NAPs should continue to be a tool of ERA policy-making in the future.	utilities, as, e.g., summaries, analyses etc.), complementary to the ERA Monitoring Mechanism (EMM). Based on the results, the ERAC SB reflects on the further use and benefit of these exercises and on their relationship with the European Semester and will advise ERAC on this subject. In December 2018, ERAC appointed a rapporteur (Cecilia CABELLO) to coordinate this task.			
CC 18. EMPHASISES the relevance of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF) as a Framework Programme supported instrument to strengthen ERA policies; in this context, UNDERLINES that the results of PSF mutual learning exercises, peer reviews, and specific support activities and of other ERA-related evidence, such as the ERA Progress Report and the European Innovation Scoreboard, should be exploited by all parties, including by the ERA-related groups, as appropriate; AGREES that there should be a greater	ERAC Rec. 14. Strengthen the exploitation of results of Policy Support Facility (PSF) related activities and of other ERA-related evidence.	a) Outcomes of the PSF activities (esp. the MLEs) should be regularly presented in ERAC (at least once a year), not only as a SIP item but also as input to strategic policy debates (also see CC 15). To this end, MLE experts could be invited.	EC / ERAC SB	First strategic debate in June 2019	Information points on outcomes of PSF activities of ERAC interest are regularly present in ERAC agenda, when appropriate also as strategic debates on relevant policy issues, benefiting from the outcome of PSF activities. Once a new ERA agenda has been defined, a strategic debate takes place on how to further develop

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focus on improving the relevance and impact of the ERA-related groups;					and position the PSF for achieving ERA priorities
		b) Stimulate ERA-related groups to reflect on, propose and be actively involved in MLEs (best practice: GPC and the MLE on alignment). Ensure proper dissemination and communications channels between ERA-related and MLE groups.)	EC / ERA-related groups	2019	Better exploitation of insights stemming from PSF activities for the benefit of the ERA Priorities

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Links between ERA and Framework Programmes

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CC 1. ACKNOWLEDGES that making the European Research Area (ERA)[2] well-functioning will decisively contribute to increasing the effectiveness, consistency and overall performance of the European research and innovation ecosystem, and that ERA requires a systemic approach; WELCOMES, in this context, the efforts undertaken by Member States and the European Commission since the Council Resolution of June 2000[3] by which ERA was established following the European Council of March 2000[4]; CC 2. RECOGNISES the important strategic role that ERAC plays in advising the Council to ensure that Europe maximizes the economic and social impact of R&I investment at European and national level to increase Europe's global competitiveness, support employment growth, improve the standard of living for citizens and reducing the R&I divide within the European Union;	ERAC Rec. 15. Encourage the European Commission, Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) to look at ERA and the Framework Programme from a systemic point of view	ERAC regularly conducts strategic debates whereby it will advise on the systemic dimension of national and European research and innovation policies including the FPs, e.g. when discussing ways to approach the 3% target for R&I in Europe, or the development of an open labour market for researchers, or the cross-cutting nature of equal opportunities and open science. ERAC will explore areas and opportunities for better linkages between ERA and the FPs. As a basis for these debates, ERAC will seek advice from relevant ERA-related groups.	ERAC	Continuous	Strategic debates sharpen the understanding of the interconnection between ERA and the Framework Programme

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[2] ERA as defined in Article 179 of the TFEU
[3] OJ C 205, 17.7.2000, p.1.
[4] Doc. 100/00

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CC 3. REITERATES the importance of a close partnership between the Member States and the European Commission in jointly working towards strengthening of ERA, including through the 9th Framework Programme Horizon Europe, and cooperating with countries associated to the Research Framework Programme (Associated Countries) and to relevant stakeholders from science, business and society; CC 8. STRESSES the importance of concerted actions and good coordination between ERA and the Framework Programme, including the future Horizon Europe, for the development of a labour market for researchers in Europe, and for Open Science policy on improving recognition and reward mechanisms as well as skills development schemes for researchers; CALLS on all involved parties to acknowledge the cross-cutting nature of equal opportunities and open science in particular as regards early stage researchers and doctoral candidates	ERAC Rec. 16. Make more explicit the inter-linkages between the Horizon Europe pillars and activities on the one hand, and the ERA Priorities on the other hand. Outline this possibly as an ERAC Opinion be-fore the start of the new Framework Programme. This could also allow better alignment between Horizon Europe and national R&I investments, as recommended in the Lamy report. ERAC Rec. 17. Examine how specific support measures on ERA Priorities in the FP could be increased, in addition to the funding measures. This would further increase synergies between ERA Priorities and the FP.	Based on the final outcome of the Horizon Europe negotiations, ERAC outlines an Opinion on the interlinkages between the different pillars of Horizon Europe, in particular Part 4 on strengthening ERA, and the ERA priorities. The Opinion should also include reflections about measures and specific actions to improve the interlinkages between Horizon Europe and national activities for ERA.	ERAC SB and rapporteur (to prepare a draft) and ERAC plenary (to discuss and possibly approve the Opinion)	End of 2021	MS and AC as well as the EC (pending views and priorities of the new EC) are aware of the opportunities that Horizon Europe provides in strengthening the ERA and take appropriate measures to exploit these opportunities. Horizon Europe underpins, *inter alia*, the implementation of ERA Priorities

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Impact and Outreach of ERA-related Groups

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
-	ERAC Rec 18. Consider ways to improve the dissemination and valorisation of all ERA-related groups' outputs and to increase their impact and relevance for ERA Stakeholders, EU Presidencies and Member States / Associated Countries, e.g. through regular ERA-related events, as well as through enhanced visibility. In particular, consider updated websites for ERAC and the other ERA-related groups containing mandates, lists of delegates, reports etc. in a way compatible with Council regulations, or link the group's work to platforms such as OECD/EC's 'STIP Compass'. The Austrian ERA website can serve as a best practice example. All groups should develop an output, communication and impact strategy, in order to improve visibility and uptake of recommendations by different target groups.	a) The Presidencies websites contain a link to the websites of ERAC and other ERA-related groups; also see action b) for CC 21 (first indent))	MS Presidencies, Council Secretariat	2nd semester 2019	The websites of ERAC and other ERA-related groups are linked to the Presidencies websites
		b) Develop a flexible template for opinions and reports to be used by the ERA-related groups, including guidelines on how to formulate clear, substantial and operational recommendations	ERAC SB	2nd semester 2019	The template is produced and used. It will have a strong focus on increasing the impact and relevance of the outputs of ERA related groups.
		c) Develop a flexible template for a communication, outreach and impact strategy, to be used by all ERA-related groups to draft their own strategy, adapted to their individual needs	ERAC SB (develop template), ERA-related groups (draft strategies), ERAC SB (discussion of drafts), ERA-related groups (adopt strategies)	1st semester 2020	The template is produced and the strategies are adopted

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CC 20 (third indent). All ERA-related groups should explore ways to increase direct exchanges with relevant ERA stakeholder organisations and involve high quality experts in their work.	ERAC Rec. 19. Increase the use of the expertise present within ERA stakeholder organisations in the ERA-related groups. Explore options to increase direct exchanges between concerned ERA-related groups and e.g. the ERA Stakeholder Platform, such as inviting members of the ERA Stakeholder Platform to selected meetings of concerned ERA-related groups.	a) ERA stakeholder organisations provide information to ERAC and are invited to selected meetings of ERAC and/or other ERA-related groups, wherever relevant (e.g. EUA, LERU etc. to SWG HRM).	ERA-related groups	Immediately[5],	More regular exchanges, information and cross-fertilisation between ERA advisory structure and ERA stakeholder organisations
		b) An ERAC delegate is invited to meetings of the ERA Stakeholder Platform if appropriate, with modalities to be defined	ERAC (decides on a time to time basis)		
CC 9. CALLS on ERAC, including the Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility to strive for better synergies between ERA and the European Higher Education Area on issues related to higher education, training, research careers and the knowledge triangle; in this context, NOTES with interest the messages on promoting a better link between higher education and research in the "Paris Communiqué" of 25 May 2018[6]; CC 20 (last indent). To foster exchanges between ERA and European Higher	ERAC Rec. 20. To foster exchanges and discussions about common policy interests between ERA and the EHEA, examine the possibility of an annual back-to-back meeting between ERAC and the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and/or DG Higher Education.	Organise a back-to-back meeting of ERAC and/or the SWG HRM with the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and/or DG Higher Education and evaluate its impact for the achievement of a fully functional ERA. This collaboration between ERA and EHEA needs to be concrete and output-oriented, e.g. on topics such as the Network of European Universities	ERAC Steering Board, European Commission and ERAC Plenary, FI Presidency SWG HRM will contribute and provide input.	First meeting ERAC/DG Higher Education in October 2019	The meeting is organised and its impact evaluated. An assessment about the benefits of such meeting is prepared by the ERAC SB and discussed by the ERAC plenary before launching further meetings

[5] Note that the ERA Stakeholder Platform will only exist until November 2019. Continuation cannot be foreseen yet, pending new arrangements.
[6] *Paris Communiqué, Conférence ministérielle européenne pour l'enseignement supérieur*, 25 May 2018.
http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/77/1/EHEAParis2018_Communique_final_952771.pdf

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
Education Area (EHEA) policies, regular back-to-back meetings on relevant topics between ERAC and the Bologna Follow-Up Group and/or Directors General for Higher Education should be established.					

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS

Procedures and Working Conditions

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
CC 21 (third indent). (…) Member States, Associated Countries and the European Commission should ensure that the participants in all types of groups have the appropriate profile at the right level and also consider the use of PSF in achieving the objectives.	ERAC Rec. 21. Member States and Associated Countries need to make sure to be represented in the ERA-related groups (including their working groups) by competent representatives from national authorities and, if appropriate, additional national experts.	Sketch profiles and requirements for "ideal" delegates (and chairs) for each ERA-related group recognising that active engagement in ERAC from delegations is necessary (c.f. CC 21 (first indent), action a above).	ERAC SB	End of 2019	Set of loose guidelines for the selection of delegates and chairs is established for each ERA-related group.
CC 21, second indent: The mandates of all ERA-related groups should give each group clear objectives with concrete and tangible tasks.	ERAC Rec. 22. Ensure that the mandates of all ERA-related groups give each group a clear mission with concrete and tangible tasks, while allowing it to respond to newly emerging topics. ERAC Rec. 32. Make the responsibility for ERA Priority 3 more explicit in the mandate of SWG HRM. One the one hand, a direct reference to ERA Priority 3 needs to be included under the objectives. On the other hand, the top action priority according to the ERA Roadmap should be integrated. ERAC Rec. 36. Revisit the mandate of SWG OSI, in order to give the group a clear mission with concrete and tangible tasks, while allowing it to respond to newly emerging topics in a fast developing field. In its current version, the mandate	Each ERA-related group will inspect their given mandate, ensuring thatthe mandate can be well translated into meaningful tasks, and revise the mandate, if necessary. The mandate will also contain information on how and through which channels the group is supposed to advise/influence existing policies. The ERAC SB will be informed by the chairs of the other ERA-related groups about the outcome of this inspection.	All ERA-related groups, ERAC SB	2nd semester 2019	All SWGs have revised their mandate, if necessary

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
	appears too fragmented and too diffuse in certain areas.				
	ERAC Rec. 24. Introduce an explicit reference to ERA Priority 1 into the ERAC mandate	Depending on design of new ERA policy framework (see actions related to CC 22-26): if applicable, revise ERAC mandate.	Council	2021	Revised ERAC mandate (if appropriate)
-	ERAC Rec. 23. The work programmes of each ERA-related group need to be more concise, concrete and targeted. The competences expected from delegates should be clarified and properly communicated. Furthermore, meeting documents should be substantial and sent in due time. Drop the possibility of interpretation services given that also ERAC does not use interpretation any longer.	a) Review work programmes	ERA-related groups, ERAC SB	2nd semester 2019	ERA-related Groups' Work Programmes are updated to be compliant with the Recommendation
		b) Refer to actions under CC 21 (third indent) regarding competences of delegates.			
		c) ERA-related groups, especially Chairs, reflect on the proper volume and content of meeting documents and how to improve timely distribution thereof (if problematic).	ERA-related groups	1st semester 2019	Delegates are satisfied with preparation of meetings
		d) Revisit the rules of procedures of GPC and SFIC. Drop interpretation services for GPC and SFIC.	GPC and SFIC Secretariat	1st semester 2019	Interpretation services are dropped

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS

B. GROUP-SPECIFIC ISSUES

European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC)

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
CC 15. WELCOMES the new approach of ERAC to hold strategic policy debates on a regular basis to further develop the policy-mix for research and innovation for ERA; RECOGNISES the important role these strategic policy debates can play in providing a forum for Member States to better understand how effective the policies and tools at their disposal are at national and European level, to implement the ERA priorities and deliver on Europe's wider economic and social objectives; INVITES the Commission to collect the agreed evidence on the design and impact of R&D policies, including by continuing its cooperation with the OECD, that could inform national policy making;	ERAC Rec. 25. Increase the focus on substantial discussions around ERA Priority 1. The ERAC Steering Board should make sure to draft balanced plenary agendas in terms of strategic discussions and information items. In this sense, also make the interactions with the other ERA-related groups more strategic.	a) As discussed in the ERAC Plenary on 6 December 2018, ERAC holds strategic debates at least twice a year, with input by other groups (if appropriate), an appropriate mix of debate formats and a clear objective (outcome/impact orientation). The discussions focus on, amongst others, ERA Priority 1, the priorities of the coming presidencies, newly emerging topics in the remit of ERAC and the framework programme. A two-step approach should be considered: in a first round, a specific topic is discussed in a very open way, in order to identify central questions and challenges as well as possible outcomes to work towards. In second step, a more structured, goal-oriented debate takes place, enabled by background material and/or invited experts (also see CC 18).	ERAC Steering Board and ERAC plenary	Starting 1st semester 2019	Strategic and outcome-oriented debates take place regularly, at least twice a year

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
	ERAC Rec. 26. Where appropriate, adapt the organisation and working conditions of ERAC: In particular, explore new ways to stimulate debates during plenary meetings, such as e.g. the use of break-out sessions, or circulation beforehand of background papers that highlight central questions for debate.	b) Adapt the organisation and working methods of ERAC, where necessary.	ERAC Secretariat and EC (liaison)	1st semester 2019	New working methods are successfully implemented.
		c) For strategic debates, ERAC tests discussing in break-out sessions and inviting experts for input (see CC 15)	ERAC, EC (evidence aspect)	2019 (trial period)	New formats are tested and evaluated by ERAC

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC)					
See CC 20 (first indent), 5, 6 and 14 above		-	-	-	-

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS

European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
CC 7. WELCOMES the Strategy Report and the ESFRI Roadmap update of 2018 , and INVITES ESFRI to prepare the next ESFRI Roadmap update in 2021, strengthening its strategic role in the evolving research infrastructure landscape; equally WELCOMES the second Report on the implementation of the ERIC Regulation , and INVITES the Commission to present the next ERIC implementation Report by 2022; NOTES the need for appropriate measures to facilitate the use of the ERIC instrument, in particular as concerns an acceptable solution for the VAT exemption for in-kind contributions, to stimulate investments in ERICs and other ESFRI Roadmap Infrastructures, to increase transnational and open access to European Research Infrastructures and	ERAC Rec. 29. ESFRI functions in a very effective and efficient way, therefore no substantial changes in its organisation or procedures are needed.	No immediate action required but keep under review to reflect any new issues that may arise	-	-	-
	ERAC Rec. 30. Explore ways to further increase the transparency of the evaluation process of research infra-structures for the ESFRI roadmap, e.g. by enhancing the role of external experts in the evaluation and monitoring of projects.	New Roadmap 2021 Guide is prepared by summer 2019 with the aim to provide a complete description of the requirements, the procedure and the methodology of selection of proposals. Increased use of external expertise in evaluations is considered in this context.	ESFRI	Summer 2019	New Roadmap 2021 Guide is prepared with the aim to provide a complete description of the requirements, the procedure and the methodology of selection of proposals.

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
to enhance their financial sustainability; CALLS upon the Commission and Member States to implement these measures as soon as possible and upon the pan-European Research Infrastructures to promote their services at international level and to reach out, where appropriate, to new international members; INVITES ESFRI to prepare the next ESFRI Roadmap update in 2021, strengthening its strategic role in the evolving research infrastructure landscape equally CC 11, last part: CALLS upon all involved parties to implement EOSC fully in due time, and NOTES the important role of research infrastructures in this context; RECALLS the need for effective coordination between EOSC and ESFRI, including the governance level	ERAC Rec. 31. Explore ways to simplify processes and reduce the workload, e.g. by prolonging the roadmap up-date cycle	Simplification is a subject in the discussion on the Future Directions of ESFRI, which will continue throughout the year 2019 and will be completed by the release of a White Paper; the issues related to long-term sustainability of Research Infrastructures are also addressed in this context; dialogue between EOSC and ESFRI is reinforced and joint activities are explored.	ESFRI	End of 2019	White Paper published

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
SWG on Human Resources and Mobility (SWG)					
See CC 20 (2nd indent) and 21 (2nd indent) above		-	-	-	-

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS

SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation (GRI)

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
CC 10. NOTES with concern that this ERA Priority 4 on gender is unequally implemented across Member States, which affects the implementation of comparably fair and gender-balanced working conditions in research in Europe; WELCOMES the joint efforts made by SFIC and the ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in R&I as an example of good practice for the collaboration across different ERA Priorities;	ERAC Rec. 34. The interactions with other ERA-related groups should be intensified, given that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue.	Upon request, gender issues shall be discussed under a dedicated agenda item in all ERA-related groups, in relation to the specific mission and mandate of a group, with a view to identify appropriate measures to improve the situation, if needed (see also CC 20 (second indent)). External experts and/or members of the SWG GRI are invited to contribute.	ERA-related Groups (identify measures), ERAC (monitoring impact)	Starting 2019	Measures to address and overcome gender issues related to the mission/mandate of each ERA-related Group are identified and implemented, and their impact is regularly monitored

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
SWG on Open Science and Innovation (OSI)					
CC 12: In the light of new developments in the field of knowledge transfer, e.g. Open Innovation, INVITES the Commission to revisit its 2008 Recommendation on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities, and the Code of practice for universities and other public research organisations to further boost the impact of R&I through knowledge transfer	ERAC Rec. 37. Make more efforts to pay equal attention to Open Science and Open Innovation topics. One approach could be to work more often in focused sub-groups or meet in different configurations, to deal with the increasingly complex fields of Open Science and Open Innovation.	Establish a task force on open innovation (already done). The task force should focus on the delivery of Open Innovation issues at EU and at national level.	SWG OSI	Already done (set-up) / March 2019 (first report of the TF) / Ongoing (future activities)	Task force operational, first outputs of the task force discussed at the OSI meeting of 11 December
-	ERAC Rec. 38. Clarify the position of SWG OSI with regard to other working and expert groups active in Open Science.	a) For every activity, take stock of other groups active in the area and their work.	SWG OSI	Continuously (see for example the SWG OSI recommendations to ERAC)	No duplication of work exists, but synergy, complementarity and exchange of information between those groups and SWG OSI
		b) Invite rapporteur of EOSC governance board to regularly participate in OSI meetings.	SWG OSI + EOSC Governance Board	Ongoing	EOSC governance board is regularly represented in SWG OSI meetings, to promote timely exchange of information
		c) Set up a task force on mapping Open Science initiatives and Open Science related groups	SWG OSI	June 2019	Better complementarity, exchange of information and interactions between OS related groups and SWG OSI

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
-	ERAC Rec. 39. Improve the organisation of the group (more time for feedback and to prepare meetings, structure of meetings).	See ERAC Rec. 23, action c; Set-up of a task force for improving the internal and external communication of the group	SWG OSI	Ongoing	Taskforce operational First recommendations of the task force discussed at the OSI meeting of 11 December 2018

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS

Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC)

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS
CC 13. INVITES Member States, the European Commission, and, where appropriate, private actors as well as NGOs and citizens, to put more effort in the context of SFIC, into closer coordination in international cooperation, inter alia through joint meetings and possible science and technology agreements as well as further multilateral activities, including for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, whereby synergies and added value will be created at national and European level; in this context, activities under Horizon Europe should also be taken into account.	ERAC Rec. 40. The SFIC mandate should specify more clearly whom the group is supposed to advise. In relation to this, clarification of the group's main purpose is needed: dealing with the international cooperation dimension within the FPs or fostering exchanges between MS/AC about their international S&T cooperation policies. Such a clarification may also help defining more strategic and targeted activities and, in consequence, contribute to increase SFIC's impact.	Depending on design of new ERA policy framework (see actions related to CC 22-26): revise SFIC mandate and work programme in compliance with CC 21 (2nd indent) and ERAC Rec. 23.	ERAC SB (preparation), ERAC (discussion), Council (adoption)	2021	Revised SFIC mandate and work programme
-	ERAC Rec. 41. SFIC should improve its working dynamic. This includes more substantial meeting documents and a timely distribution thereof.	Measures to improve working dynamic are taken following a survey of SFIC delegates regarding the future of SFIC (discussed during the Plenary meeting of December 2018); Also see Rec. 23, action c	SFIC plenary (based on proposals from the Chair)	December 2018 (survey) / 1st semester 2019 (measures implemented)	More effective meetings that take a more strategic and, at the same time, more operational approach to international cooperation issues
-	ERAC Rec. 42. SFIC needs to consider ways to increase the quality and impact of its opinions and reports.	See ERAC Rec. 18, actions b and c. A possible structure for a communication and visibility plan for SFIC is:	SFIC SB (preparation), SFIC (discussion and adoption)	2nd semester 2019	Higher visibility of SFIC's actions (opinions and reports) A more focused mandate and a targeted, concise work

Council conclusions	Related ERAC Recommendations	WHAT (actions)	WHO (proposed responsibilities)	By WHEN (deadlines)	OUTCOMES/TARGETS

		1. **General communication strategy**:
		  o overall communication objectives;
		  o target groups;
		  o specific objectives for each target group.
		2. **Communication activities**:
		  o activities covered by the plan, including type and of activity and who will carry it out;
		  o communication tools chosen and motivation.
		3. **Indicators of achievement**:
		  o assign an indicator of achievement to each communication tool chosen;
		4.**Resources**:
		  o Human resources: description of the persons dedicated to communication activities and time frame.
					programme that ensures the quality and impact of SFIC's outputs are increased and adequately communicated

-	ERAC Rec. 43. Keep SFIC as a configuration of ERAC (including travel reimbursement and access to Council premises for plenary meetings).	Depending on the outcome of decisions about the new ERA priorities	Council	-	-