

INFORMAL VIDEO CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESEARCH 26 February 2021

Ministers responsible for research will hold a policy debate on how to make the best of national recovery and resilience plans to strengthen the European Research Area. The video conference will take place between 10.00-13.30 a.m. and will be hosted from Brussels by Mr. Manuel Heitor, Portuguese Minister for Science and Technology and Higher Education.

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Press briefing: Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 09.45

Virtual press conference:

Friday 26 February at +/- 14:00

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[Video conference of ministers of internal market and industry page](#)

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

Recovery and resilience plans and the ERA: Synergies in the context of investments and reforms

Ministers will exchange views on how the national recovery and resilience plans (RRPs) can contribute to the development of the European Research Area (ERA). The outcome of this debate will feed into the ongoing European Semester process.

To steer the debate, the Portuguese presidency has invited ministers to structure their interventions around the following questions :

- Which are the main lessons drawn up from the preparation of your national recovery plan to better interconnect the national and regional Research and Innovation (R&I) systems at European level? Which opportunities do you see for synergies between R&I actions in Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs) and EU funding programmes like Horizon Europe (especially Missions and European partnerships)? How could these synergies be best exploited and implemented?
- With regard to the thematic research and development investments in the RRP, how can we ensure that the potential for transnational coordination and cooperation is fully exploited and their transformative impact optimised taking into account the multi-country projects? Which are the main areas that you would highlight for such impactful projects or investments?
- How can the RRP be further strengthened to help innovative start-ups and SMEs to develop and bring their innovations to market and to scale up their businesses?

[New European Research Area: Council adopts conclusions \(press release\)](#)

[EU recovery package: Council adopts Recovery and Resilience Facility \(press release\)](#)

Any other business:

a) State of the play in the Council regulation on establishing the European high performance computing joint undertaking

Ministers will be informed by the Portuguese presidency of progress achieved so far in the examination of the proposed regulation within the Council's preparatory bodies.

The Commission proposal was submitted to the Council last September. It is being discussed in the Council's preparatory bodies since then. The proposed regulation aims to ensure the continuation of the activities of the existing EuroHPC Joint Undertaking. It streamlines the European Partnerships landscape with the principles and rules set out in Horizon Europe. It also provides that Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe Programme and the Connecting Europe Facility will be the financing sources for the various activities. The regulation also takes into account recent technology developments, such as quantum computing.

[Commission proposal for the EuroHPC regulation](#)

b) The ERA forum for transition and the pact for research and innovation in Europe

Ministers will be briefed by the Commission on the activities of the ERA's forum for transition. The forum, created by the Commission in January 2021 in the form of an informal expert group of member states representatives, will provide advice in view of the preparation of a pact for research and innovation, to be adopted in 2021. The pact had been proposed by the Commission in its communication on the New ERA and supported by the Council in its conclusions of 1 December 2020. It is intended as the centrepiece of the future ERA governance framework and will act as the reference document for research and innovation policymaking at EU and member states level.

c) Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and the Council on the participation of the Union in the European partnership on metrology jointly undertaken by several member states

Ministers will be informed (**in public session**) of the Commission proposal for a decision enabling the EU's participation in the European partnership on metrology, expected to be tabled by the Commission on 22 February. The partnership (based on art.185 of the Treaty) aims to develop European metrology research networks by providing infrastructures for emerging traceable measurement technologies, building on the work developed by the previous partnerships on metrology. It will integrate metrology research capacities in Europe and make strategic use of national funding and private investments in metrology.

Metrology is the science of measurements. It has become crucial for today's high-tech world. Increasingly precise, reliable measurements are essential to drive innovation and economic growth in the EU's knowledge-based economy. A reliable, traceable measurement system allows the wider scientific community to build better instruments and to do better science. It opens up new avenues for industry to innovate.

d) Proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe

Ministers will be informed of the Commission proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, also known as the "Single Basic Act" under art.187 of the Treaty, expected to be tabled by the Commission on 22 February.

The Single Basic Act is expected to set the horizontal provisions common to the European Partnerships and aiming to align rules and procedures and increasing openness and transparency. It should comprise provisions for 9 individual institutionalised partnerships : Circular Bio-based Europe, Clean Aviation, Clean Hydrogen, Europe's Rail, Global Health EDCTP3, Innovative Health Initiative, Key Digital Technologies, Single European Sky ATM Research 3 and Smart Networks and Services.

e) Information on the scientific opinion on biodegradability of plastics in the open environment

Ministers will be informed by the Commission of the scientific opinion of the Commission's group of chief scientific advisors (GCSA) on the biodegradability of plastics in the open environment. The opinion provides recommendations on the criteria to be used for maximising the environmental benefits of biodegradable plastics over conventional ones.

The GCSA contributes to the quality of EU legislation through the provision of independent scientific advice to the Commission. It consists of seven eminent scientists, appointed in their personal capacity and working closely with the Scientific Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA) consortium, which gathers interdisciplinary expertise from over 100 academies and societies across Europe.

f) Horizon Europe partnership on pandemic preparedness

Ministers will be informed by the Commission of the latest state of play in the preparation of a Commission proposal for a co-programmed European research & innovation partnership for pandemic preparedness under Horizon Europe.

The partnership, announced by the Commission in April 2020 as part of the actions established in the ERA vs. Corona Action plan, aims to enhance the potential of a coordinated European response to the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of research and innovation.
