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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	ERAC (European Research Area and Innovation Committee)
Subject:	Informal videoconference of ERAC (16/03) - Item 4.1 Updates from the Commission Expert Group on the 'ERA Forum for Transition'

Dear ERAC delegates,

Please find enclosed the document from the European Commission on above mentioned subject, with a view to the ERAC videoconference on Tuesday 16 March (agenda item 4.1).

Best regards,

ERAC Secretariat

Informal Videoconference of the ERAC – 16.03.2021

Point 4.1 - Update from the Commission Expert Group on the 'ERA Forum for Transition'

The Commission established the expert group in January 2021. This written update complements the information provided by the Commission at the COMPET Council on 26 February (annex). It summarises the state of play of its work and highlights the main steps until end of July.

- Following its first meeting on 4/02, the expert group adopted its work plan and working modalities. It will meet from February to December 2021 (more than 10 meetings).
- At its second meeting on 3/03, the expert group held its first discussions on the principles for R&I in Europe and the priority areas for ERA (in view of the Pact). It also addressed the possible steps and functions in the future governance of ERA including their interactions, and agreed on the approach with regard to the four ERA pilots identified in the Council conclusions of last December (in view of the ERA governance framework). Finally, the Commission presented the situation and plans for improving 'knowledge valorisation' (action 7 of the ERA communication). Short input papers circulated in advance supported these discussions.
- Discussions in the expert group were fruitful and largely convergent, and helped identify points for clarifications or improvements. In particular, the key importance of engaging with stakeholders in 2021 and to ensure their appropriate involvement in the future governance framework, as well as the need to set out the future roles of the ERAC and of the ERA Forum. Further suggestions received from member States after the meeting will help elaborate the elements of the Pact and ERA governance in view of the next meetings of the expert group. The Commission suggested creating a sub-group dedicated to 'knowledge valorisation' and will put forward an outcome-oriented proposal before the next meeting.
- The next meetings scheduled on 26/03 and 21/04 will focus on the Pact, and will review the first ERA pilot (green hydrogen). The Commission will also present the situation and plans for developing Industrial technology Roadmaps and a Higher Education Transformation Agenda (resp. actions 5 and 11 of the ERA communication) 12 /05. A workshop with stakeholders will also be organised on 21/04, on the Pact for R&I, back to back with the meeting of the expert group. The expert group aims to deliver its first structured advice on the Pact by end of April in view of the adoption of a Commission proposal by mid-July.
- At its meetings on 12/05 and 4/06, the expert group will further elaborate its advice on the Pact, review two other ERA pilots (Plastic Pirates and EURAXESS) and prepare a first draft of the ERA Policy Agenda, in time for feeding the European R&I days on 23-24 June.
- At its meetings on 28/06 and 16/07, the expert group will complete its analysis of the four ERA pilots to draw lessons for the future ERA governance (*learning from them*) and provide policy guidance in the broader context (*guiding them*). The expert group will also provide its advice on the future ERA governance framework and modalities.

Annex: Information from the Commission at the COMPET Council of 26.02.2021 on 'the ERA Forum for Transition and the Pact for research and innovation in Europe'

AOB – The ERA Forum for Transition and the Pact for research and innovation in Europe

Information from the Commission

Following the adoption of the Commission communication on a New ERA for Research and Innovation (September 2020) and the Council Conclusions on the New ERA (December 2020), the implementation of the new ERA and its roll out was discussed in the ERAC plenary meeting on 16 December 2020. Broad support was obtained on the establishment of an Expert Group for the ERA Forum for Transition ('the Forum').

The ERA Forum for Transition

In January, the Commission established the ERA Forum for Transition in the form of an informal **expert group of Member States representatives** - to help finalise the new ERA governance framework and jointly prepare an ERA policy agenda setting out our priority actions to achieve the new ERA.

The Commission (DG R&I) will chair and steer the work of the Forum, which will act as the platform to discuss and support the implementation of the various initiatives starting from the ERA Roadmap proposed in the ERA communication.

The Forum first convened on 4 February in view of agreeing on its work plan and key deliverables in 2021. It will notably help provide advice and expertise in view of the development of the future ERA governance framework, in particular on a Pact for R&I. The Forum will also kick-start the work on the new ERA priorities, including the four ERA pilot actions identified in the Council conclusions and provide input for a new yearly ERA scoreboard to monitor ERA progress.

This is a very ambitious work plan and the way forward to meet our expectations and those of stakeholders in Europe for a new ERA for research and innovation. We will engage with stakeholders at all stages, notably through dedicated workshops and during the next R&I Days in June. The Forum will focus its next three meetings on preparing the Pact for research and innovation.

The Pact for research and innovation in Europe

The Forum should provide advice in view of the preparation of a Pact for research and innovation to be adopted in 2021. The Pact 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.

The Pact will set out:

- The **shared “values and principles”** that underpin R&I in Europe, drawing notably but not exclusively on existing policy guidelines, charters and codes of practice developed over the last 20 years (on, e.g. open access, gender equality, career conditions).
- The **jointly agreed “areas for priority actions”** to achieve ERA where Member States agree to coordinate and join up efforts and prioritise national investments and reforms. This will guide the elaboration of the future ERA policy agenda.

With the Pact, the governance process should be made more effective and impactful with regular political dialogue with Member States addressing priorities, implementation strategies and progress monitoring towards the realisation of the set objectives.

The Commission intends to make in June or July a proposal for a non-binding act, in view of its adoption by end of 2021. The Commission will ensure adequate consultation of the European Parliament and other EU institutions.