

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Presidency with a view to AOB items at the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 28 September 2021.

ANNEX

**Gender Equality in Research and Innovation**

**Introduction**

Over the past 20 years, the European Research Area (ERA) has contributed to major achievements in the area of gender equality in Research and Innovation (R&I).

In the September 2020 Commission Communication "A new ERA for Research and Innovation" (COM/2020/628 final) the Commission introducesa new concept for the ERA, which for gender equality includes most notably the development of inclusive gender equality plans with Member States and stakeholders. Additionally, the Communication noted *“Despite the continuous policy attention to gender equality in R&I, progress has been slow and remains insufficient.”*

Similarly, the December 2020 Council Conclusions on the New European Research Area (13567/20) recalled *“with great concern that there continues to be a major gender imbalance preventing Europe from using the full potential of its R&I system aiming for excellence”* and calls “*on the Commission and Member States for a renewed focus on gender equality and mainstreaming, including through the instrument of gender equality plans and the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content”.*

In these Conclusions, the Council highlighted gender equality as a domain requiring priority actions to be developed and implemented through the ERA Policy Agenda and the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe (Pact for R&I). The Pact for R&I underscores gender equality as a core Union value, and identifies gender equality and equal opportunities as an important element of the common principles and values that act as the foundation for research and innovation in the Union.

In view of the reaffirmed policy focus on gender equality by the Commission and the Council, we must continue and expand these efforts for research and innovation to contribute to the resilience and quality of our democratic institutions, but also sustainability and competitiveness in the EU. This is why we are calling for the prioritisation of gender equality in the New ERA through the Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation.

**Deepening the ERA through Gender Equality Conference – 8-9 July 2021**

The Slovenian Presidency co-hosted the Conference “Deepening the ERA through Gender Equality”, with the Horizon 2020 GENDERACTION project.

The Conference provided a platform for Member States, Research Funders, ERA stakeholders and experts to reflect on the recent advances in gender equality at the national and European levels, and emerging needs to be addressed in the new ERA. Discussion centred on key lessons and opportunities for EU policy coordination in gender equality, with a focus on gender equality plans as the main instrument to promote institutional changes.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Minister Kustec and Commissioner Gabriel**,** followed by panel discussions:

* **New opportunities for equality and inclusion in the ERA** - with Member States representatives
* **Making** Gender **Equality Plans a reality: ERA Stakeholder perspective** -with stakeholders representatives
* **The role of research funders in promoting gender equality: Achievements and next steps** – with Research Funding Organisation representatives
* **Enabling a** just **transition – the importance of gender equality in the New ERA** – with current and upcoming TRIO Presidency representatives and the Commission

The Conference concluded with the presentation of the draft Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation.

**Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation**

The Ljubljana Declaration was a collaborative effort of the current and upcoming Trio Presidencies, building on the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. It was developed through a bottom-up process, harnessing experts' views.The Ljubljana Declaration underlines the importance of upholding the value of gender equality, and being proactive in mainstreaming gender equality across research and innovation, to ensure a just twin transition, triggering new inclusive ways of life for all and new opportunities for jobs and research.

The Declaration presents the following six key priorities and activities for the new ERA:

* Ensure fair, open, inclusive and gender equal career paths in research, and consider intersectional perspectives on gender inequalities;
* Facilitate mutual learning opportunities through form-follows-function robust governance;
* Employ existing and newly developed tools, such as Gender Equality Plans, to facilitate systemic institutional change and remove institutional barriers.
* Address and counteract gender-based violence; including root causes and tackling obsolete power dynamics within research and academia.
* Support active and participative monitoring and evaluation to ensure continuous improvement; and
* Leverage synergies to enhance gender equality achievements within the European Research Area, but also within complementary fields such as the European Higher Education Area, structural funds, innovation, as well as in international cooperation.

At the informal meeting of ministers for research in July 2021, Member States were invited to provide comments on the draft Declaration. A final text was produced through consideration of the received comments and is annexed to this note.

ANNEX to the ANNEX





