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## **WORKING DOCUMENT**

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

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Subject: The impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility on R&I policies and EU priorities -Lessons learned from the national perspective

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ERAC delegations will find in the Annex the document "The impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility on R&I policies and EU priorities -Lessons learned from the national perspective", proposed by the ES Delegation, with a view to the ERAC meeting on 14 February 2023.

**Debate on the Impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility on R&I policies and EU priorities. Lessons learned from a national perspective.**

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) aims to mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic and make European economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions.

The RRF is a temporary recovery instrument. It allowed the Union to raise funds to help Member States implement reforms and investments that align with the EU's priorities and that address the challenges identified in country-specific recommendations under the European Semester framework of economic and social policy coordination. It makes available €723.8 billion (in current prices) in loans (€385.8 billion) and grants (€338 billion) for that purpose. The RRF helps the EU achieve its climate neutrality target by 2050 and sets Europe on a digital transition path, creating jobs, facilitating adaptation of the labour market, and spurring growth in the process.

Past experiences have shown that public and private investment is often drastically cut during crises. However, supporting investment in key strategic areas in this situation is essential to speed up the recovery, boost resilience and strengthen long-term growth potential. A well-functioning internal market, fostering innovation and research, building on a knowledge-based economy, investing in green and digital technologies and reaching a clean energy transition is essential to achieve fair, inclusive and sustainable growth, helping create jobs and reaching EU climate neutrality by 2050.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRP) identify the strategic objectives that will give impulse to the economy and achieve the EU's climate neutrality target by 2050, and set Europe on a path of digital transition, creating jobs and spurring growth in the process. Science and innovation play a crucial role in the RRPs. Public information<sup>1</sup> on the RRPs shows that all EU countries included R&I-related measures in their components. It is expected that the RRF would then have a strengthening effect on the national R&I ecosystem with significant impact and long-lasting results. Beyond that, R&I will improve the role science plays in policy areas or sectors beyond the R&I ecosystem, creating market or policy value. For example, more substantial R&I investments can support Europe's open strategic autonomy in view of reinforcing key critical supply chains, as recalled in Recital 9 of the RRF Regulation<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, Member States considered that relevant reforms and investments financed by the RRF would help make the Union more resilient, particularly regarding critical value chains such as renewable energy technologies and energy storage.

In line with its mandate<sup>3</sup>, ERAC "shall advise on strategic policy orientation and future trends that require the refinement of Union and national, including regional, R&I policies, included on the current and the next Union R&I Framework Programme and other relevant R&I-driven Union initiatives". The Commission is currently mapping the R&I related investments and reforms

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_en#national-recovery-and-resilience-plans](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en#national-recovery-and-resilience-plans)

<sup>2</sup> [L 2021057EN.01001701.xml \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021L0571)

<sup>3</sup> [L 2021450EN.01014301.xml \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021L0450)

included in the national RRP s against a set of EU policy priorities and the development of a new EU R&I policy framework.

Against this backdrop, the Spanish Presidency would like to assess the role R&I programmes designed under the RRF can play in achieving Climate and Digital EU objectives, Health, Territorial Cohesion, and Gender Equality. Moreover, it seems very appropriate to analyse the convergence of the RRPs with the ERA policy agenda and the New European Innovation Agenda. To this end, for the Spanish Presidency, it would be helpful to receive possible inputs from the Member States at the highest administrative level, via ERAC, on their view of the national investments and reforms included in their RRPs.

This policy input would help define the main aspects and messages that would feed the first Presidency draft of the Council Conclusions covering aspects related to this topic. In addition, the Presidency expects to launch a debate at the Research Working party level where a set of political orientations can be given from the Council. These orientations could help design future EU and national investment tools against crises, identify gaps that need to be addressed at the EU level, and underline the importance of science and innovation as key pillars for EU objectives, including resilience.

ERAC and ERAC members are invited to express their views on the whole topic of discussion, it would be particularly interesting for the Spanish Presidency to receive contributions on three questions:

- 1- To what extent your national RRP will transform/strengthen your national R&I system? To what extent the R&I-related investments will not crowd out national investments, and how will your national system ensure the future sustainability of the increased investments in the national R&I system in the aftermath of the plan?
- 2- How will the R&I-related measures (investments and reforms) in your national RRP in policy areas or sectors beyond R&I contribute to (A) achieving broad societal goals (eg green and digital transformation, gender equality or stronger territorial cohesion) and (B) the implementation of a new EU R&I policy landscape (by implementing measures advancing the ERA policy agenda and the New European Innovation Agenda)?
- 3) How has the RRF instrument and the implementation mode of the national RRP (I.e. bottom-up approach and limited conditionality in specific fields) helped address structural weaknesses of your national R&I system that other EU or national sources could not have covered? Do you consider that this instrument would be helpful in facing other emerging crises?
- 4) To what extent, has the implementation of your national RRP improved the governance of your national R&D system, including aspects of Territorial cohesion and Smart Specialization Strategies? Did you encounter major obstacles during the implementation of your national RRP and how did you address them?