



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Council Conclusions on the development of the European Research Area (ERA)
through ERA-related Groups

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on the development of the European Research Area (ERA) through ERA-related Groups, as adopted by the Council ("Competitiveness") at its meeting on 31 May 2011.

**Council Conclusions on the development of the European Research Area (ERA) through
ERA-related Groups**

THE COUNCIL

RECALLS

- the general framework of the Europe 2020 strategy¹, and notably the Council conclusions of 26 November 2010 on Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Innovation Union": Accelerating the transformation of Europe through innovation in a fast changing world² and in particular the roadmap for actions included therein;
- the Council conclusions of 2 December 2008 on the definition of a "2020 Vision for the European Research Area"³;
- the Council Resolution of 3 December 2009 on the enhanced governance of the European Research Area (ERA)⁴, which asked for a review of ERA-related Groups;
- the Council Resolution of 26 May 2010 on the developments in the governance of the European Research Area (ERA)⁵, establishing the mandate of the European Research Area Committee (ERAC);

¹ Conclusions of the European Council of 17 June 2010 (EUCO 13/1/10).

² Doc. 17165/10.

³ Doc. 16767/08.

⁴ OJ C 323 of 2009, p. 1.

⁵ Doc. 9067/10.

- the Council conclusions of 26 May and 12 October 2010 on simplification of EU research and innovation programmes⁶;
- the conclusions of the European Council of 4 February 2011 regarding innovation, calling for the European Research Area to be completed by 2014⁷;
- the Council conclusions of 9 March 2011 on Interim evaluation of the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) including the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF)⁸;
- the ERAC advice on the review of ERA-related Groups of 5 May 2011⁹.

NOTES

- the considerable progress achieved in implementing ERA, notably since 2007 through the impact of i.a. ERANET, ERANET+, article 185, Joint Technology Initiatives and Joint Programming Initiatives;
- the Commission's intention to present a proposal for an ERA Framework as soon as possible in 2012, taking into account the ongoing discussion process;
- and stresses that it should result in a continuation of the comprehensive and strategic approach to implement the Ljubljana process of realizing ERA in line with ERA 2020 vision and take full advantage of Europe's intellectual capital;
- that societal challenges should be addressed, while encouraging the competitiveness of Europe's industries and the excellence of its scientific and technological base.

⁶ Doc. 10268/10 and 14980/10.

⁷ Doc. EUCO 2/11.

⁸ Doc. 7585/11

⁹ Doc. ERAC 1206/11.

WELCOMES the Commission's Green Paper launching a public debate on the key issues to be taken into account for future EU research and innovation funding programmes, as well as its intention to present proposals for this purpose by the end of 2011.

NOTES that the quality, performance, efficiency and integration of the Europe's research and innovation must increase rapidly if it is to pave the way for Europe's aspirations for global S&T leadership, excellence and knowledge-based competitiveness as well as to satisfy the socio-economic needs of its citizens, as set out in the Europe 2020 strategy.

UNDERLINES

- that ERA already is the fundamental concept underpinning the research and development policies of the European Union and links to innovation and education policy should be strengthened, therefore a fully functioning ERA is of central importance to the Innovation Union, one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- that the creation of a Common Strategic Framework (CSF) for research and innovation, built upon the positive experiences of the former programmes, could bring important benefits through increasing impact of the European efforts, better coordination and harmonisation of the European programmes and through simplification.

INVITES the Member States to continue to participate proactively in the above process.

CALLS on ERAC, its Working Group on Knowledge Transfer (KT) and its dedicated configurations High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC) and Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) to contribute towards supporting the implementation and monitoring of progress of the Innovation Union initiative, in line with the Council conclusions of 26 November 2010, and, in particular in the short term, to provide input, as appropriate, to the development of a proposal on the ERA Framework. In the same context, INVITES the Steering Group for Human Resources and Mobility (SGHRM) to reorient its work to the same end in line with ERAC advice on the review of ERA-related Groups.

INVITES the European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) to also contribute towards supporting the implementation and monitoring of progress of the Innovation Union initiative, and provide input, as appropriate, to the development of a proposal on the ERA Framework.

INVITES the Commission to provide more detailed information rapidly regarding the aspects of the Innovation Union implementation process on which the advisory work of the ERA-related groups could focus, to enable them to organise their work.

AGREES that, on the basis of this additional information, ERAC is prepared to return, in dialogue with the groups concerned, to the question if revision of mandates will be necessary and if so, what changes are necessary.

RECONFIRMS the need for strengthened coordination between ERAC and the ERA-related groups in line with the 2010 Council Resolution on the developments in the governance of the ERA establishing the mandate of ERAC and STRESSES the need to pursue all relevant improvements in this cooperation in line with the outcomes of the ERAC advice on the review of ERA-related Groups.

In line with the ERAC advice, AGREES that:

- the ERA groups should function at a strategic level, when preparing their work programmes and their reports;
 - the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the groups should be elected Member State representatives;
 - reporting from the groups should be preferably coordinated in advance.
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