

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

– ERAC –
Secretariat

ERAC 1215/1/13
REV 1

NOTE

From: ERAC Secretariat

To: ERAC delegations

Subject: ERAC Opinion on Cross-border Cooperation among Research-performing Organisations for Achieving the European Research Area

Delegations will find attached a proposal for an ERAC Opinion on cross-border cooperation among research-performing organisations (in short: CBC-RPO) for achieving the European Research Area. This Opinion was drawn up by the ERAC Working Group on Cross-border Cooperation among Research-performing Organisations¹, as set up under Article 10 of ERAC's Rules of Procedure. It is hereby circulated for approval by written procedure.

¹ This Working Group includes representatives from Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, FYROM, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland (see Annex II for the names of delegates). It is chaired by Ms Lise-Lotte Toft (Denmark). See Annex I for the mandate of the Working Group.

The proposal takes into account the debate held during the 15th plenary meeting of ERAC on 13-14 June 2013 (under item 7.3 of the agenda) on the approach to be taken in the Opinion, in particular the comments made by a number of delegations (ES, DE, HU) on the need to better describe and qualify the proposed support measures and the opening-up of national programmes, as well as to refer to the need for additional forthcoming relevant EU instruments such as Teaming and Twinning, and ERA Chairs as a result of the discussions on widening participation in EU research programmes.

Compared to the document as discussed in the ERAC plenary, this Opinion contains further underpinning for the recommendations, as well as good practices and examples (as stipulated in the group's mandate).

Under three headings, which are directly related to the mandate of the Working Group, the Opinion highlights the following **six recommendations** (underpinned by a number of sub-recommendations) to the Member States² and/or the European Commission in the aim of facilitating CBC-RPO:

Creating the framework conditions for simple and smooth cross-border cooperation between research performing organisations in the context of achieving the ERA and with a wider impact on innovation

1. Give priority and support to existing policies and new initiatives towards simplifying and improving interoperability of national research funding programmes, in certain cases also allowing them to be opened up to cross border operations, as well as towards better conditions conducive to mobility of researchers and the cross-border use of research infrastructures.
2. Fully exploit the potential of CBC-RPO for the development of the Knowledge Triangle and the promotion of knowledge transfer.

² Except for Recommendation 5, the recommendations addressed to the Member States are *mutatis mutandis* also valid for Associated Countries.

Support for CBC-RPO by the EU and Member States

3. Structurally involve research performing organisations and other stakeholders, if this is not yet the case, in an early stage of the preparation of new research and innovation initiatives.
4. Fully exploit national and European policies, initiatives and measures to enhance the development of sustainable CBC-RPO, in particular for CBC-RPO partners to take part in a more programmatic approach to solving societal challenges.
5. To boost near-border cooperation between research performing organisations, new possibilities should be created to combine the EU instruments to support education and research and development with the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds, underpinned by Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). Twinning, Teaming and ERA Chairs will help address the innovation divide. Candidate countries for enlargement could use pre-accession support instruments.

Building of evidence on CBC-RPO and its socio-economic and scientific impact

6. Member States (national governments and national parliaments) should be better informed about the positive national scientific and socio-economic benefits of RPO investments abroad, on the basis of a better taxonomy of CBC-RPO and systemic evidence on the size of CBC-RPO and its impact, which could be underpinned by further studies by the European Commission, cooperation with the OECD and monitoring of Horizon 2020 and ERA.

As input to further evidence gathering, the Working Group has also formulated some areas for further study concerning possible Terms of Reference (see Annex III). In line with the recent ERAC review, this Opinion implies that ERAC itself should schedule a further exchange of experiences and policy measures supporting CBC-RPO, as well as an evaluation of the impact of its advice by the end of 2014, preferably again in dialogue with the relevant stakeholder organisations.

**ERAC OPINION ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION
AMONG RESEARCH-PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS FOR ACHIEVING
THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA**

I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Following repeated calls for an in-depth analysis of how to deal with cross-border cooperation between research performing organisations (CBC-RPO)³ – which holds an important potential for the European Research Area and for the strengthening of European research and innovation – a dialogue was initiated in 2012 between the Committee and representatives of European research performing organisations that operate across borders.

In 2012, representatives of European research stakeholder organisations and a number of other interested parties⁴ prepared a document about the challenges and needs which had been identified in developing CBC-RPO⁵. Despite the challenges encountered, most of the initiatives by RPOs towards cross-border cooperation should be perceived as “real” success stories. It is therefore highly recommended to read the present Opinion together with last year's more detailed description of these success stories.

³ ERAC Opinion on ERA-related instruments (doc. ERAC 1208/11 of 26 May 2011): "In this context, the broader issue how to support durable cross-border cooperation between universities, research institutions and enterprises to foster excellent environments should be dealt with" (p. 30-31). ERAC Opinion on the development of an ERA Framework (doc. ERAC 1215/11 of 9 December 2011): "The Committee concluded that "there is a need for deeper analysis of the processes, incentives and framework conditions to facilitate cross-border cooperation between research performing organisations in order to enable Europe to tap its major potential in this area" (p. 6).

⁴ League of European Research Universities (LERU), the German Rectors Conference (HRK), the European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO), and the European University Association (EUA). Other interested parties included the SE Ministry of Education, INSERM representing Science Europe, the Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF), the Commission (DG Education and Culture and DG Research and Innovation), and the RISE Research Institutes of Sweden Holding AB.

⁵ "Cross-border cooperation among research-performing organisations: Learning from difficult success stories for achieving the European Research Area" (doc. ERAC 1205/12 of 27 August 2012).

This dialogue on cross-border cooperation between RPOs and ERAC was timely, as on 17 July 2012 the European Commission had proposed to reinforce the ERA partnership by deepening the involvement of European research stakeholder organisations⁶, focussing on, inter alia, cross-border cooperation. A Joint Statement was agreed in this context between the Commission and a number of European research stakeholder organisations, and four organisations (EUA, EARTO, LERU and Nordforsk) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commission. The Council endorsed conclusions on the follow-up to this Communication on 11 December 2012⁷, and a first progress report about the implementation of the different measures is due by September 2013.

This Opinion takes into account the presentations of best practice examples during the 11th ERAC meeting on 6 and 7 September 2012 held in Limassol (CY) (see Summary Conclusions under item 6.2 in doc. ERAC 1205/12 of 27 August 2012), and the ensuing discussion at the meeting, which was attended by a number of research stakeholder organisations.

After this discussion, an ad hoc Working Group was set up under Article 10 of ERAC's Rules of Procedure. This Working Group has met two times: on 18 April 2013 and on 31 May 2013, and it has also had several exchanges of views via e-mail.

During the last meeting, representatives from research stakeholder organisations⁸ were invited to express their views on a preliminary Opinion. While these representatives fully supported the approach taken by the Working Group, they emphasised the need for ERAC to take into account the particular characteristics and needs of so-called *near-border* cooperation.

⁶ Communication from the Commission “A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth (doc. 12848/12 of 23 July 2012).

⁷ Doc. 17649/12 of 12 December 2012.

⁸ Representatives of the European University Association (EUA), Science Europe, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE) and Nordforsk participated.

In preparing the Opinion, the Working Group has closely followed its mandate (see doc. ERAC 1211/13, included in Annex I). In line with this mandate, this Opinion addresses the following issues:

- a. Based on examples of and best practices in cross-border cooperation between research-performing organisations, recommendations for establishing **framework conditions** enabling simple and smooth cross-border cooperation between research-performing organisations acting in the framework of programmes or implementing projects jointly, in the wider context of **achieving the European Research Area**.
- b. **Needs for EU support** for cross-border cooperation initiatives, making best use of future Horizon 2020 and Cohesion Policy instruments, and recommendations for support by **national authorities**.
- c. Input for terms of reference for **further study** concerning CBC-RPO.

In particular with regard to the **framework conditions**, this ERAC Opinion on CBC-RPO will be relevant for ERAC's response to the Commission's first ERA progress report, which ERAC is planning to prepare by October 2013, as well as the possible further (political) follow-up. CBC-RPO will both benefit from the implementation of the reinforced ERA partnership and at the same time contribute to its objectives. The Opinion starts with the two most relevant recommendations as regards the ERA.

II. DEFINITIONS AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

For the purposes of this advice, research-performing organisations (RPOs) include both **research-performing higher education institutions** (HEIs), including universities or any type of higher education institution which offers degrees and diplomas at masters or doctoral level, and **non-university research-performing organisations**⁹ (e.g. scientific research institutes, government laboratories and research and technology organisations such as Max Planck, CNRS, TNO, ENEA, CSIC, etc.), as well as those with a **private** status (e.g. philanthropic foundations) which fall under the legal definition of “research organisations”.

RPOs should be distinguished from **research funding organisations (RFOs)**, which include any public or private organisation that is responsible for funding the research of third parties.

While the concept of “cross-border cooperation” between RPOs is fairly straightforward, the notion of “**near-border**” cooperation may need some more elaboration. For the purposes of the present Opinion, we understand near-border cooperation as cooperation between neighbouring countries, where a researcher or student can take part in research or classes in another country, and is able to return to his home base on the same day on a regular basis (notwithstanding increased possibilities for on-line cooperation over longer distances). This form of cooperation is understood as one particular sub-group of many existing forms of cross-border cooperation between RPOs in Europe or world-wide¹⁰.

⁹ To avoid confusion, the acronym PROs often used for this group is not used in this Opinion.

¹⁰ A list of typical European “near-border” cooperation projects can be found on the site of the German Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK): www.hrk.de/activities/european-research-policy/university-cross-border-cooperation.

RPOs constitute a significant group of research bodies in the overall European research and innovation landscape, together also representing a significant share of R&I funding. Within the EU, 64.2% of public R&D funds are distributed to HEIs, and 35.8% to the non-university RPOs (2009), showing a slight increase of the relative funding of HEIs over the last five years¹¹. In the past few years, several studies and workshops have been organised by the European Commission's DG Research and Innovation, to better understand the RPO landscape and the challenges RPOs are confronted with¹².

A 2009 study¹³ resulted in an inventory of 150 **non-university** RPOs in 36 countries in Europe. Based on 2006 budget figures, the sample covered received basic institutional funding amounting to at least 50.3 % of total government R&D spending. Overall, the organisations had a total budget of EUR 31 000 million and a staff count of 292 500.

The 2007 ERA Green Paper¹⁴ stated that “most European research institutions **lack critical mass** and, within the confines of sub-optimal national systems, have difficulties meeting expectations with the resources available to them. While the average quality of European public research is good, in many institutions it is not up to leading world standards. Therefore, some **concentration and specialisation** is necessary to permit the emergence of universities and public research organisations across the entire EU which excel in addressing research and training needs at national, regional and sectoral levels”.

¹¹ Innovation Union Competitiveness Report 2011 (see: http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/competitiveness-report/2011/executive_summary.pdf).

¹² A wider list of relevant studies and publications can be found in Annex III of doc. ERAC 1205/12.

¹³ "Coordination and cooperation - *Non University Research Performing Organisations*" (2009), carried out by ECORYS (NL), COWI (DK) and IDEA (BE) (see <http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/docs/en/executive-summary-rpo-22-11-10.pdf> for a summary).

¹⁴ "The European Research Area: New Perspectives", 04.04.2007 (see: http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era_gp_final_en.pdf).

The 2009 study on non-university RPOs mentioned above illustrated that over 90% of such RPOs are involved in some form of cross-border cooperation. It also showed that some challenges were shared by all RPOs: **ensuring financial sustainability, availability of highly skilled human resources, and establishment of cross-border cooperation activities**, and that there was still a significant potential among RPOs for more structured and long-term cross-border co-operation.

A 2010 study¹⁵ analysed research institutes in the light of the ERA Vision 2020 as adopted by the Council in 2008¹⁶, divided into five major components¹⁷. To break down **barriers to cross-border cooperation** it recommended: "Perhaps most fundamentally, however, the Commission should tackle the fact that there is not really a functioning cross-border market for institute research and services in the EU. In particular, there is **no cross-border competition for 'competitive' government projects**, so that the degree of competition is nationally limited and the institutes do not receive adequate market signals or incentives to encourage specialisation or improved performance. At the detailed level, it is not clear what all the obstacles are to opening up such markets. The Commission should ensure that these obstacles are studied and then aim to institute a reform to overcome them".

III. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IDENTIFIED

Based on the document on the challenges and needs identified when establishing CBC-RPO (doc. ERAC 1205/12), and the ensuing discussions in the Working Group and the ERAC plenary, ERAC would like to give **six recommendations**. These are grouped under the **three headings** already listed in the Note preceding the Opinion. The **international dimension**, which is an important part of the ERA, should also be taken into account in these recommendations if and when appropriate.

¹⁵ Eric Arnold, Kate Barker and Stig Slipersaeter: "Research institutes in the ERA" (2010). See: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/docs/en/research-institutes-in-the-era.pdf>.

¹⁶ See: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st16/st16767.en08.pdf>.

¹⁷ 1. Knowledge activities: Volume and Quality; 2. Knowledge Triangle: Flows and dynamics; 3. Fifth Freedom: intra and extra-EU openness and circulation; 4. The Societal Dimension; 5. Sustainable development and Grand Challenges.

Heading I. Creating the framework conditions for simple and smooth cross-border cooperation between research performing organisations (RPOs) in the context of achieving the ERA and with a wider impact on innovation

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Give priority and support to existing policies and new initiatives towards simplifying and improving interoperability of national research funding programmes, in certain cases also allowing them to be opened up to cross-border operations, and towards better conditions conducive to mobility of researchers and the cross-border use of research infrastructures.

The 2012 report on CBC-RPO prepared with stakeholder organisations illustrates that even successful "ERA actions" between neighbouring countries conducted on a larger regional, cross-border scale could benefit from a more clear-cut policy fostering near-border cooperation by universities/RPOs. Put differently, even leading industrial and innovation areas need support from more flexible instruments, financial support for mobility, and simpler regionally-governed cross-border research funding pots.

A number of successful examples still face issues such as institutional complexity and diversity with coordination problems and budgetary fragmentation that need to be addressed (see the box below). Further incentives are needed to harness the full potential of this cross-border cooperation, such as optimised and transparent governance structures and procedures. Models for step-by-step and partial opening-up of national research funding could be explored, and inclusive cross-sectoral platforms could be established to identify joint priorities and common strategies and projects.

Further political goals and visions remain necessary, as do structured and systematic policy analysis and intelligence. Simplification of political and financial processes may be beneficial and should be discussed between EU partners. A well-organised regular exchange of experience as well as tailored support programmes for the initiatives could give CBR-RPO initiatives such as "ERA laboratories" the boost they need to overcome the challenges created by the border situation.

Examples of obstacles to achieving the ERA in the selected success stories

The experience of **NORDTEK** showed that in order to encourage effective cross border cooperation at national governmental level, decisions need be taken to open up possibilities for national funding agencies to support research undertaken in another country. Secondly, at the EU level there needs to be more focus on regional cross-border cooperation, including in Horizon 2020.

The **Collegium Polonicum**, a site of Polish-German university cooperation at the Oder river, showed that the overall number of different funding and administration systems and the number of different national and regional levels of decision-making could be reduced, and their accounting rules could be better aligned and cater better for the needs of economic and social partners.

The **Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Centre (BRIE)** found that more national and regional political support is needed for border regions developing the Knowledge Triangle, as well as EU scholarships and grants for international students and PhD candidates (“Erasmus for border areas”) and support for the development of interdisciplinary applied cross-border teaching and research.

Several analyses of **Nordic research collaboration** (Nord Forsk, Top-level Research Initiative) have pointed to the need for better incentives/mechanisms to realise its full potential, including:

- Harmonised and transparent governance structures and procedures at Nordic and national level;
- Development of models for step-by-step and partial opening-up of national research funding;
- Establishment of inclusive cross-sectoral platforms that identify joint priorities, strategies and measures;
- Clear political goals and visions to encourage national agencies to engage in more ambitious Nordic research and innovation collaboration;
- Structured and systematic policy analysis and intelligence to identify programs and initiatives with a demonstrated Nordic added value.

CBC-RPO is benefitting from the different Marie Curie Actions and will continue to benefit from the strengthened and simplified “Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions”. Some obstacles to CBC-RPO in terms of **researchers' mobility** are no different from the obstacles to the realisation of the ERA as a whole, such as a number of remaining obstacles to transparent, open and merit-based recruitment and obstacles to access for non-nationals/non-residents to national grants and possibilities, which occasionally result in uncertain career prospects. These issues were also addressed in the Commission's 2012 ERA Communication (see footnote 6). The SG HRM WG report “Access and portability of grants” (adopted on 23 May 2012) addressed the last two issues in more detail, with a view to learning from existent conditions in Europe, based on a survey of Member States and Associated Countries¹⁸.

CBC-RPO will potentially benefit from the improved conditions for mobility, careers and **cross-border access to large research infrastructures** based on the implementation of the ERA Communication, while RPOs *themselves* can also contribute to solving current and future challenges involved in achieving the ERA, e.g. by introducing open recruitment and improved human resources policies. A strong incentive for CBC-RPO is the (cross-border) accessibility of important research infrastructures, as this is a crucial aspect for successful research.

In this context ERAC:

1. **Calls on Member States to give priority and support to existing policies and new initiatives towards adjusting and improving interoperability of national research funding programmes, in certain cases allowing them to be opened up across borders, based on principles of open access and variable geometry, on models which have been proven to work effectively¹⁹ and on the non-legislative ERA measures as proposed by the European Commission²⁰.**

¹⁸ SG HRM WG report “Access and portability of grants” (adopted on 23 May 2012). See: http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/access_to_and_portability_of_grants_may_2012.pdf.

¹⁹ E.g. the Lead agency and Money Follows Researchers models as being developed by research funding organisations, existing models in the SG HRM WG report “Access and portability of grants” and instruments under the seventh framework programme.

²⁰ Communication “A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth” (doc. 12848/12 of 23 July 2012) and the subsequent Council Conclusions as adopted on 11 December 2012 (doc. 17649/12).

2. **Calls on Member States to consider creating conditions conducive to the mobility of researchers and cross-border use of research infrastructures, and to support the implementation of the relevant non-legislative ERA measures as proposed by the European Commission²¹.**
3. **Calls on the Commission to encourage and support initiatives in this area within the wider context of ERA policy.**

RECOMMENDATION TWO

Fully exploit the potential of CBC-RPO for the development of the Knowledge Triangle and the promotion of knowledge transfer.

Knowledge transfer is broadly defined as the process by which knowledge and ideas are shared and exchanged, both within the research base and between the research base and industry, for societal and economic benefit and scientific progress. The examples gathered in the framework of the work on this Opinion show that it may be easier to develop an integrated Knowledge Triangle approach in more focussed near-border cooperation initiatives, and in specific thematic areas, such as energy research, than is the case in generic research and innovation programmes at EU and national level. At national level, however, good examples do exist of programmes to support the development of the Knowledge Triangle, e.g. by universities (see box below), which could also support CBC-RPO.

²¹ Including by the work via the different ERA-related groups (ESFRI for research infrastructures, SFIC for international cooperation with third countries, SG HRM for mobility, KT WG for knowledge transfer, and GPC for Joint Programmes).

Example – Knowledge Triangle programme by VINNOVA (Sweden)

The Knowledge Triangle is one of VINNOVA's strategic areas. VINNOVA supports the development of universities' capacity to lead and prioritise in a way that helps ensure research results get utilised. An important part of this is increased mobility between universities and industry. Other programmes will increase the capacity for partnerships between universities and other participants in the Swedish innovation system. Another important element is incubators associated with universities and focusing on increased utilisation of research results to help companies grow. VINNOVA's programmes within K3 include:

1. Universities' strategic collaboration

The programme is in an initial phase where all Swedish universities, one by one or in groups, propose how collaboration with enterprises and the public sector will develop into an integrated strategic part of the institution's activities. Activities could be at either education or research level. The projects are supposed to be run at university management level to ensure results are fully integrated. The programme has two stages: planning and implementation. In the planning phase, universities are welcome to form consortia between themselves for an improved implementation phase. The programme is replacing the Key Actors programme as described below.

2. Criteria for collaboration

In 2016, universities' faculty grants will for the first time, to a minor extent, be allocated based on collaboration. Vinnova has the task of preparing this by proposing and testing allocation criteria. This is performed in close collaboration with the universities, in order to have realistic and effective ways of measuring the collaboration. Vinnova also works together with the universities to analyse what kind of collaboration should be valid and with whom. The long term aim is to incentivise universities to increase commercialisation as well as student and researcher mobility, in collaboration with enterprises and the public sector.

3. The Key Actors programme

The aim of the Key Actors programme is to develop expertise, methods, processes and structures that will make key players in the Swedish innovation system more professional in their roles with regard to collaboration between researchers, companies and members of society at large, as well as

to the utilisation of knowledge and the commercialisation of research results.

4. VINNMER

The long-term objective of the VINNMER programme is to help to increase the number of postgraduates that can become the leaders of the future at universities/colleges, centres, research institutes and companies.

5. Mobility for Growth

The overall objective of the Mobility for Growth programme is to support career development for individuals through mobility.

6. Verification for Growth

VINNOVA's programme for concept verification enables a research result with commercial potential to undergo a more comprehensive commercial and technical verification and validation. This is in order to reduce technical and commercial risks, identify the most appropriate commercialisation strategy and develop a concept that is assessable and appropriately protected in the ongoing commercialisation process.

7. EIT

VINNOVA offers support to consortia planning to submit proposals for the new Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) to be introduced in 2014.

At EU level, the European Commission will develop a comprehensive policy approach for **open innovation and knowledge transfer** going beyond issues related to intellectual property, through consultation of the relevant stakeholders²².

²² Communication from the Commission "A reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth" (reference in footnote 20).

The **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)**'s main mission is to bring together excellent research, education and innovation, and RPOs are actively participating in its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). As of 2014, the KICs will also implement a **Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)**, an outreach scheme targeted at partnerships between higher education institutions, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders in order to foster innovation across the EU.

Transfer of knowledge is also a key element of all **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, particularly in the schemes for staff exchange and doctoral training**. They will support trans-national knowledge exchange not only between academia and industry within Europe, but also with research and innovation-related partners in third countries.

In line with the Innovation Union commitment to strengthen knowledge transfer offices in European cross-border public research organisations (PROs), the Joint Research Centre established the **European TTO (Technology Transfer Office) CIRCLE Network** in 2011²³. It comprises 25 large PROs, whose prime mission is to perform research in Europe. The aim is to complement existing collaboration on R&D with technology transfer. In particular, the Network agreed to join forces through a set of initiatives including fostering the use of their knowledge; sharing best practices, knowledge and expertise; performing joint activities; establishing informal channels of communication with policymakers; organising training programmes; and developing a common approach towards international standards for the professionalisation of technology transfer. The network will also promote the design and implementation of a European Technology Transfer *Financial Facility* to increase the transfer of research results to the market.

In this context ERAC:

- 1. Calls on Member States to consider CBC-RPO within the context of national R&I policies as a means to develop integrated Knowledge Triangle policies and effective knowledge transfer.**

²³ The European TTO CIRCLE partner organisations are leading European public research organisations whose prime mission is to perform research. At present the network comprises the following 25 member organisations: CEA, INRIA (France); CNR, ENEA (Italy); Fraunhofer Society, Helmholtz Association, Max Planck Society (Germany); IMEC (Belgium); NERC representing the Research Councils UK (UK); RISE (Sweden); SINTEF (Norway); TECNALIA, CIEMAT (Spain); TNO (The Netherlands); VTT (Finland); CERN, ESA, ESRF, JRC, ILL (International), ETH Board (Switzerland); TUBITAK (Turkey); Yeda R&D representing the Weizmann Institute (Israel); DTI (Denmark); Teagasc (Ireland). The JRC of the European Commission coordinates the TTO CIRCLE and provides its secretarial services. In addition, European associations such as EARTO, ASTP, and Proton are invited to contribute to the activities of the Network. See also: <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=6480>.

2. **Calls on the Commission to encourage and to continue to support relevant initiatives to develop Knowledge Triangle policies, within the wider context of the Innovation Union and ERA policy, by a comprehensive policy approach for open innovation and knowledge transfer and by the implementation of the EIT, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and the TTO CIRCLE.**

Heading II. Support for CBC-RPO by the EU and Member States

RECOMMENDATION THREE

Structurally involve research performing organisations and other stakeholders, in so far as this is not yet the case, in an early stage of the preparation of new research and innovation initiatives.

It is crucial that when new initiatives in research and innovation are prepared, stakeholders, including RPOs, are involved in the preparatory work at an early stage in order to identify relevant issues, to formulate programmes and determine the governance/governing structure as well as to identify and develop more detailed instruments.

While at the ERAC plenary discussion on 14 June 2013 the question was raised as to whether such early involvement is not already current practice throughout Europe, the Working Group concluded that this is, somewhat surprisingly, not always the case everywhere in Europe. Implementation of this recommendation will therefore raise the strategic level of the R&I initiatives at **national level**, but will also require additional coordination and efforts in communication and dialogue by national and regional authorities during the different preparatory phases of any new R&I measure. Ways to involve and consult stakeholders are developing over time, e.g. by making use of IT-based crowd sourcing techniques, interactive policy-making tools and responsible research and innovation programmes where ethical and social aspects of new technologies are considered from the design phase²⁴. It is also important not to define the “research stakeholders” too narrowly, allowing for new entrants and for the “accidental” involvement of a wide range of people. Many national variations may continue to exist within national governance systems and administrative traditions.

²⁴ E.g. <http://www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/programmes/responsible+innovation>.

In the context of **good governance at EU level**, an impact assessment exercise is required for any new EU policy or legislative proposal, including consultation of stakeholders in the design of new policy measures²⁵. Despite this existing requirement at EU level, it seems that RPOs feel that systematic involvement of stakeholders can also be improved when new initiatives are set up at EU level. This will be important for example for new European Innovation Partnerships and other initiatives to address societal challenges. The 2012 initiatives towards achieving a fully functioning European Research Area have clearly also put more emphasis on increased stakeholder involvement, via federative organisations at European level, and this may lead to an intensified dialogue and increased trust.

In this context ERAC:

- 1. Recommends to the Commission and Member States that stakeholders, including RPOs, should be involved systematically in an early stage of the preparations for all new European and national research and innovation initiatives in order to identify their needs, relevant issues, to formulate programmes, to determine the governance/governing structure, and to identify and develop instruments.**
- 2. Observes that this involvement should take shape at different levels and stages during the development of new initiatives and with a good balance between bottom-up and top-down processes.**

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Fully exploit national and European policies, initiatives and measures to enhance the development of sustainable CBC-RPO, in particular for CBC-RPO partners to take part in a more programmatic approach to solving societal challenges.

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/index_en.htm

Sustainable cooperation is more than mere funding. Cross-border cooperation will normally develop in a bottom-up way based on autonomous decisions by RPOs. While needing money to cover the extra costs, it seems that initiatives towards CBC-RPO in the end are only sensitive to outside incentives in a limited way, and will mainly develop depending on the strategic advantage the cooperation will bring.

Cross-border cooperation will also develop gradually over time, based on increased experience and trust being built up. The seven step approach which was discussed in the 11th ERAC meeting in September 2012 is relevant in this context and could be considered as a good starting point for understanding the strategic considerations for cross-border cooperation at the level of (the management of) RPOs:

- 1) No cross-border cooperation is planned;
- 2) Learning phase concerning the own organisation as well as other RPOs to see if cooperation is possible;
- 3) Trust building with other RPOs;
- 4) Start of initial academic cooperation;
- 5) Start of (academia-driven) research projects;
- 6) Joint integrated and collaborative research;
- 7) Development of innovation clusters.

The 2009 study on non-university RPOs mentioned earlier²⁶ concluded that over 90% of RPOs are involved in some form of cross-border cooperation, but that it is difficult to influence the collaborative behaviour of RPOs, not least because co-operation is usually a bottom-up process in a research organisation. Many good examples of structured and long-term co-operation and co-ordination activities (as opposed to project-based co-operation) exist, such as joint programmes involving several RPOs or joint laboratories. Very often these activities consist of RPOs jointly pursuing research as well as education and training targets. The intensity of this bottom-up cooperation of universities is also exemplified by the data bank of German universities listing 20 000 international co-operation activities being conducted on a formal basis²⁷. The 2009 study concluded that there would be significant potential for **more structured and long-term co-operation** among RPOs, however. Among the future challenges, developing contacts and structured cooperation among RPOs and with other research performers was often mentioned.

There is therefore a need to fully exploit existing support policies, initiatives and measures to enhance the development of sustainable CBC-RPO, and to develop new measures when necessary. Examples of Finnish national support policies where CBC-RPO is encouraged in the wider context of internationalisation and international collaboration are given in the box below.

²⁶ "Coordination and cooperation - *Non University Research Performing Organisations*" (2009; referred to in footnote 13), carried out by ECORYS (NL), COWI (DK) and IDEA (BE).

²⁷ See: <http://www.hochschulkompass.de/internationale-kooperationen.html>.

Examples of national support policies: the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture has several approaches for promoting cross-border cooperation between Finnish universities and other research-performing organisations:

1. Performance agreements between the Ministry of Education and higher education institutes

- a) Objectives set for the higher education (and research) system as a whole: verbal goals formulated in dialogue between the MoE and HEIs, comprising: statutory duties, structural development (=diversification, concentration and profiling), quality, competitiveness, effectiveness, internationalisation and productivity.
- b) Monitoring of the universities' performance in achieving the objectives set out in the agreement.
 - Annual reporting from the universities and analysis by the MoE, pinpointing the main obstacles, weaknesses and strengths of each university in cross-border cooperation, among other things.

2. Performance-based funding formula

State budget funding for universities amounts to EUR 1.8 billion. It is allocated among the universities based on their performance in education and research. Impact, quality and internationalisation are the aspects considered. The criteria determining the **internationalisation** of research activities are:

- PhD degrees awarded to foreign nationals
- International staff
- Internationally competed research funding.

3. Internationalisation strategy for Finnish HEIs 2009-2015

The key objectives for universities' cooperation set out in the strategy are:

- To create a genuinely international community in the institution

- To increase the quality and attractiveness of the institution
- To export education and expertise
- To support a multicultural society
- To promote global responsibility.

In addition, 80 % of the funding from the research council, namely the Academy of Finland, goes to universities on a competitive basis. One of the most important criteria for research council funding is **international collaboration**.

Partnership programmes²⁸ are essential in order to achieve the ERA. At the same time, whereas Public-Private Partnership initiatives (PPPs) involve the performers (mainly industry) in their governance, Public-Public-Partnerships (P2Ps) do not involve the research performers in the same way. ERA-NET, ERA-NET +, article 185 and JPIs normally involve only research funding organisations (RFOs).

The 2011 ERAC Opinion on ERA-related instruments²⁹ concluded that there is a lack of instruments to support sustainable cooperation between RPOs. Horizon 2020 should encourage cross-border cooperation between RPOs, in particular in projects dealing with societal challenges. A crucial question is how a shift could be realised in Horizon 2020 from a project approach to a programme approach, and how RPOs could contribute to this.

²⁸ Communication from the Commission - Partnering in Research and Innovation (doc. 14555/11 of 22 September 2011) and Council conclusions on Partnering in Research and Innovation (doc. 18349/11 of 8 December 2012).

²⁹ ERAC 1208/2011.

In this regard, there have been some interesting pilot projects since then in the last calls of FP7, e.g. in the field of energy and ICT³⁰, to involve research performing organisations in the coordination of nationally funded programmes. The AERTOS project³¹ and the Article 185 metrology initiative³² are other exceptional examples of institutional programming and of funding being aligned in a specific area, as mentioned at the 11th ERAC meeting in 2012. The example of the European Platform of Universities engaged in Energy Research, Education and Training (EPUE) as part of the European Energy Research Area (EERA) under the SET Plan (see box below) shows another way of involving RPOs in joint programming of research and also clearly highlights the long preparatory period needed to set up a platform of RPOs to contribute to joint programming activities, as well as the considerable own resources needed.

³⁰ The ICT flagships and the Integrated Research Programmes within the energy theme have used a combination of Collaborative Projects (CP) and Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) to fund not only research but also different kinds of coordination activities such as mobility, use of infrastructures, international cooperation and coordination of national activities. They can be considered as “ERA-NETs without call requirements”.

³¹ The AERTOS project was an initiative to use the ERA-NET instrument to build critical mass between RTOs in the European Union. Initiated by several large RTOs within the European Association for RTOs (EARTO), it started operations in 2008 with funding from FP 7. The project differs from regular ERA-NETs in that it builds on cooperation between RTOs rather than collaboration between R&D programmes in the usual sense of the term. The objectives of the project were to identify new fields of joint strategic cooperation between RTOs and to test and implement the mechanisms and success factors of longer term cooperation.
<http://www.aertos.eu/>

³² The Article 185 initiative (European Metrology Research Programme (EMRP)) is implemented by EURAMET, organised by 23 national metrology institutes, and supported by the EU. It has a total value of EUR 400 M. The preceding project iMERA-Plus (an ERA-NET Plus implementing Metrology in the European Research Area) had a value of EUR 64.6 M. See: <http://www.euramet.org/index.php?id=emrp>

Example: EPUE in relation to the SET Plan

The **European Platform of Universities engaged in Energy Research, Education and Training** (EPUE), which was inaugurated in February 2012, brings together 168 universities from across Europe which have demonstrated research and training capacity in the energy field, ranging from science, engineering and technology to bio-sciences, medical/life sciences and economics, social sciences and the humanities. EPUE was developed by the European University Association (EUA) while involved in the European Energy Research Area (EERA) of the SET Plan. The aim was to demonstrate that university-based research and, importantly, postgraduate training programmes (Masters and doctoral levels) and the unique university interdisciplinary research environments were key in tackling the societal challenge of sustainable energy supply and usage. The development of the Knowledge Triangle in a thematic area is also clearly visible.

EPUE is also playing a major role in the SET Plan Education and Training initiative and successfully proposed a horizontal group on coordination of education and training systems in the energy field to the Commission. This initiative has led EUA/EPUE and EIT-KIC Inno-Energy to develop a Coordination and Support Action entitled UNI-SET to mobilise the research, innovation and educational capacities of Europe's universities in the SET-Plan.

A large part of national public funding goes to universities and institutes in direct block funding. A study by the European Commission³³ showed that about 70% of total university income comes from government allocations. Although there is a growing trend for block funding to be allocated on a competitive basis, this is normally not done through competitive calls via agencies/research councils. The same study showed that on average 20% of public funding from the government is assigned on a competitive basis. It is clear that a good balance is needed between initiatives governed by research funding organisations and those governed by research performing organisations, as the basis for the contribution by RPOs to tackle societal challenges.

³³ As quoted in the Innovation Union Competitiveness Report 2011 (referred to in footnote 11), I-177-178.

In this context ERAC:

1. Recommends the Commission and Member States fully exploit policies, initiatives and measures, at both EU and national level, including by project funding allocated under appropriate conditions, to facilitate sustainable cooperation and ensure a level playing field between different categories of RPOs, taking into account the different phases in which such cooperation normally develops.
2. Recommends the Commission make use in the future of the new proposed programme co-fund scheme³⁴ in Horizon 2020 in a more flexible way than was the case under FP7, in order to directly involve Research Performing Organisations in the governance and implementation of Public-Public-Partnerships, and make best use of relevant experiences in the last calls under FP7.
3. Encourages Member States to facilitate the engagement of Research Performing Organisations in partnerships programmes addressing societal challenges and in activities to implement the ERA priority of optimal transnational co-operation and competition.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

To stimulate near-border cooperation between research performing organisations, new possibilities should be created to combine the EU instruments to support education and research and development with the use of European structural and investment funds, underpinned by Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). Twinning, teaming and ERA Chairs will help address the innovation divide. Candidate countries for enlargement could use pre-accession support instruments.

³⁴ The co-fund scheme is proposed to fund e.g. the previous ERA-NET+.

Near-border cooperation is seen as easier due to proximity and trust, but it is not always easy to acquire financial support for this type of cross-border cooperation at EU level. It is relevant to note that the former *regional* support activities in FP7 will not be part any more of Horizon 2020, but part of the cohesion policies. Structural Funds - or national funding - should be used instead. This means that other procedures will apply and a shift of responsibility will be seen. Because the Structural Funds and Horizon 2020 will work in very different ways, early coordination will be necessary.

In September 2011, the Commission published a practical guide on how universities can connect to regional growth³⁵ and in October 2011 it published its legislative proposals for Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. Cohesion policy will focus on the Europe 2020 objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, based on a list of thematic objectives developed around the Europe 2020 headline targets – including strengthening research, technological development and innovation - and Flagship Initiatives. The Commission also adopted "Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020" for cohesion. R&I investment priorities for ERDF will include enhancing R&I infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promoting centres of competence, and supporting technological and applied research.

The European Commission proposals to strengthen synergies between research and innovation policy and cohesion policy and better align those policies, with their complementary objectives, have the following new features:

- **ex-ante conditionality** by existence of RIS3 strategies (see below);
- **combined funding**, i.e. making it possible for the same project to be supported by different funds for different project components;

³⁵ See:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/universities2011/universities2011_en.pdf

- support can be given **outside of the programme area**, provided the operation is for the benefit of the programme area and up to a specific percentage which is still to be defined under the current trilogue;
- **simplified cost** options have been proposed under Horizon 2020 and Cohesion Policy;
- an **enhanced territorial cooperation** Cohesion Policy budget share, allowing trans-national linkages to be built between bodies involved in regional innovation.

A new element in Cohesion Policy will be **Research & Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)**. Smart specialisation is the process of setting priorities in national and regional innovation strategies in order to achieve place-based economic transformation by building on and developing competitive advantage. This implies fostering one's own strengths in research and innovation, identifying other unique characteristics and assets of a territory, and matching these with business needs so as to effectively seize emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner.

The existence of a national and/or regional research and innovation strategic policy framework for smart specialisation (RIS3) will be the **ex-ante conditionality for investments under thematic objective 1**. Such strategies are based on evidence and developed through an entrepreneurial discovery process with relevant stakeholders (national or regional authorities from the different departments in charge of innovation issues, research and educational establishments, business, authorities directly concerned by Horizon 2020, civil society, etc.). Such a RIS3 defines indicators, a monitoring system and policy measures on how to attain them, in particular measures that are fit to incentivise private R&I investments. A Smart Specialisation Platform was launched in June 2012 for assisting Member States and regions in developing RIS3.

Stakeholder organisations like the European University Association are already preparing for their potential role in RIS3 (see box). ERAC itself held a mutual learning seminar on 20 March 2013 on **"Synergies between Horizon 2020 and Cohesion Policy: the Challenge and Opportunities of Smart Specialisation"**³⁶. It showed that EU Member States and regions face a variety of challenges in order to increase the benefit they can derive from the excellence-based system of funding that will continue under Horizon 2020. This is where Cohesion policy plays a key role. Already, informal discussions are taking place between the Commission and the Member States and regions on the outline of the future Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes, while DG RTD and the other DGs in the Research family are actively planning the first draft Work Programmes under Horizon 2020. All of these will have to be formalised as soon as the regulatory framework is in place. The current period is crucial for all key officials in the Member States dealing on the one hand with Horizon 2020 and on the other with Cohesion policy planning linked to research and innovation. They must organise this process in such a way as to ensure that the necessary synergies are established 'on the ground'.

³⁶ See: http://consilium.europa.eu/media/1916265/summary_record_erac_mls.pdf.

Good practice: EUA-IPTS workshop on “Smart Specialisation Strategies” (RIS3)

On 21 and 22 February 2013, a joint European University Association (EUA) and Joint Research Centre (IPTS) workshop in Seville (Spain) brought together a group of experts on regional-university cooperation in research and innovation to debate the potential roles that universities could play to enhance their contribution in developing and implementing national or regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3).

The report of the workshop identified a core set of issues and recommendations that demonstrated how universities and regional authorities have a unique opportunity to form close partnerships, together with industry and other stakeholders, which can maximise the use of EU structural funds for research and innovation to deliver economic and social development.

This initiative was undertaken within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 17 July 2012 between the EUA and the Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation in the context of achieving the European Research Area.

Similar to the use by EU Member States of structural and cohesion funds for the benefit of research and innovation, as well as for capacity building in this area, **candidate countries for enlargement**, who often do not have adequate absorption capacities for support from the EU Framework Programmes, could use **pre-accession support instruments**³⁷.

In the framework of Horizon 2020, the future initiatives designed to reduce the innovation divide in Europe will be **Teaming**, **Twinning** and **ERA Chairs**. These will be complemented by the establishment of a **Policy Support Facility** that will support national and regional authorities in the design and delivery of research and innovation policies, together with a substantial improvement of the services provided by the National Contact Points. In the context of the EIT, the **Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)** will further contribute to this goal.

³⁷ IPA II instruments for candidate countries and potential candidate countries (IPA II=Instruments of Pre-Accession Assistance) is an EU support programme for candidate countries and potential candidate countries for 2014-2020 and the successor of IPA 2007-2013.

Furthermore, in the framework of the Commission's proposal for a European Territorial Cooperation Regulation³⁸, **interregional cooperation** is expected to reinforce the effectiveness of cohesion policy by encouraging the exchange of experience between regions to enhance design and implementation of operational programmes under the investment for growth and jobs goal. It should, in particular, foster **cooperation between innovative research-intensive clusters and exchanges between researchers and research institutions**, based on "Regions of Knowledge" and "Research Potential in Convergence and Outermost Regions" under FP7. Regions of Knowledge focused on transnational cooperation of research-driven clusters, requiring the active cooperation of full triple-helix partners. It resulted in increased cooperation between clusters' stakeholders (regional authorities, universities, research organisations and businesses) and in increased cluster connectivity within Europe. Research Potential, on the other hand, tackled a variety of challenges such as 'brain gain'. It strengthened networking of Convergence region's clusters with other European world class research players and industry, and allowed the upgrading of relevant RTD equipment as well as the recruitment of experienced researchers.

In this context ERAC:

- 1. Calls on the Commission to step up efforts for more synergies between research and innovation policies on the one hand and cohesion policies on the other hand, in particular through the INTERREG 2020 Programme, which should build on the effective tools and practices implemented in the framework of Regions of Knowledge and Research Potential programmes.**
- 2. Calls on the Member States' planning and in particular their managing authorities to integrate their CBC-RPO activities in the overall framework of RIS3 (Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation) in the best possible way and to reflect this properly in the forthcoming Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes of the European Structural and Investment Funds.**

³⁸ See:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/etc/etc_proposal_en.pdf.

Heading III. Building of evidence on CBC-RPO and its socio-economic and scientific impact

RECOMMENDATION SIX

Member States (national governments and national parliaments) should be better informed about the positive national scientific and socio-economic benefits of RPO investments abroad, on the basis of a better taxonomy of CBC-RPO, systemic evidence on the size of CBC-RPO and its impact, which could be underpinned by further studies by the European Commission, cooperation with the OECD and monitoring of Horizon 2020 and ERA.

A broader issue is the “return-on-investment” logic as understood/used by politicians and civil servants on the return of investments (abroad). Historically, that logic has tended to be about bricks-and-mortar on national territory creating jobs within a country's own borders. It is increasingly meaningless in a globalising world of mobile, multi-national firms and global open innovation networks. RPOs use as counterarguments the need to engage with world-leading companies wherever they may be located, the contribution of international exposure to attracting and retaining the best scientific talent, access to new knowledge and technologies abroad that can be deployed at home and the support to national actors operating in the host country. From the perspective of national and regional authorities, the impact on regional economic development is crucial (see box below).

Example: economic impact in the Danish-Swedish Öresund region

A good example of the advantages which near-border cooperation can bring to Europe is the **Danish-Swedish Öresund region**. Over a period of 15 years, strong cooperation in research was created there from almost nothing, involving a very big project portfolio and future joint research facilities. This has contributed to changing an old industrial region into one of the leading high tech regions in Europe within life sciences, information technology, materials sciences and environmental sciences. Structural funds have helped but are not the only explanation.

At its 11th meeting in September 2012, ERAC concluded that the report prepared by RPOs had made clear that there is much more going on in the field of cross-border cooperation than was publicly known before. It also demonstrated that there was a **lack of quantitative and qualitative evidence** on CBC that needs to be addressed. The Commission was asked if it could assist in gathering more evidence.

One possibility for this would be a follow-up to the 2011-2012 study by the European Commission called “*Investments in joint and open R&D programmes and analysis of their economic impact*” (the so-called JOREP study³⁹), which could also take into account the impact of joint programmes on CBC-RPO⁴⁰. The planned JOREP-II study would be funded under the CDRP (Coherent Development of Research Policies) part of FP7's Capacities Work Programme 2013. As input for further evidence gathering, the Working Group has also formulated some **areas for further study concerning possible Terms of Reference** (see Annex III).

The **strengthened monitoring of ERA progress** as well as the future monitoring of the **implementation of the Horizon 2020 programme** could shed further light on the amount of CBC-RPO in the years to come.

It is also relevant to note that the on-going **OECD project "Cross-border regional innovation policies"**, which is supported by the European Commission (DG REGIO), seeks to provide recommendations to policy-makers on when and how to design and implement effective cross-border regional innovation policies that are developed and implemented jointly by neighbouring regions. A workshop is planned in the autumn of 2013 to bring together participating regions and other experts, and a final report and case studies should be available by early 2014.

³⁹ See: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/1894973/item_3_note_erac_sept2012.pdf.

⁴⁰ In the study, “joint programmes” are defined as research funding programmes for which at least one of the key programme functions – i.e. mission statement, call for proposals, evaluation and selection, funding and contract management – is shared between at least two countries. The study built the first comprehensive database of all joint programmes active in 2008 and 2009 in a representative set of 11 European countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). For each joint programme, a large set of qualitative and quantitative standardised descriptors was collected. The study also investigated what the drivers and the impacts of these programmes were. The JOREP dataset of joint programmes constitutes the reference dataset for one of the core indicators on future ERA monitoring, namely the indicator on the coordination of national funding to R&D.

In this context ERAC:

- 1. Recommends that the Commission and Member States gather data on cross-border cooperation between research performing organisations on the basis of the implementation of FP7 and Horizon 2020.**
- 2. Recommends that the Commission initiate further studies on the amount of CBC-RPO and its (economic) impact and on the impact of Joint Programmes on CBC-RPO, and that it consider the suggestions by ERAC for terms of reference for such study/studies in Annex III to this advice.**
- 3. Recommends that the Commission and Member States consider CBC-RPO in relation to achieving a fully functioning ERA, in the forthcoming ERA progress reports, in their follow-up and in the further development of the reinforced ERA partnership.**

EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 16 August 2013

**EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
COMMITTEE**

– Secretariat –

ERAC 1211/13

NOTE

From: ERAC Secretariat

To: ERAC delegations

Subject: Mandate of the Working Group on Cross-Border Cooperation of Research-performing Organisations of the European Research Area Committee (ERAC)

Delegations will find annexed to this Note the mandate of the Working Group on Cross-Border Cooperation between Research-Performing Organisations of the European Research Area Committee (ERAC).

**MANDATE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION
BETWEEN RESEARCH-PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS
OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA COMMITTEE (ERAC)**

1. The Working Group on Cross-Border Cooperation between Research-Performing Organisations will (1) support the involvement of the European Research Area Committee (hereafter: the Committee) in the creation of conditions for strengthened cross-border cooperation between research-performing organisations in all Member States and Associated Countries, bearing in mind the ongoing implementation of Joint Programming initiatives and the implementation of the relevant ERA priorities as defined in the Commission's ERA Communication⁴¹, and it will (2) give policy advice on these conditions to the Committee.
2. The Working Group will in particular:
 - a. prepare the Committee's advice to Member States and the Council on successful examples of and best practices in cross-border cooperation between research-performing organisations and the conclusions and recommendations to be drawn from these examples and practices for establishing the necessary framework conditions⁴²;

⁴¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Region - A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth (doc. 12848/12 of 23 July 2012), in particular the key priority Optimal transnational cooperation and competition (p. 7).

⁴² Cf. ERAC's paper "Cross-border cooperation among research-performing organisations: Learning from difficult success stories for achieving the European Research Area" (doc. ERAC 1205/12 of 27 August 2012), as well as the results of the Committee's discussion of this paper as reflected in the Summary conclusions of the 11th meeting of ERAC, held in Limassol (CY) on 6-7 September 2012 (doc. ERAC 1208/12 of 12 December 2012, pp. 9-12)).

- b. prepare the Committee's advice to the Commission, the Member States and the Council on the conditions enabling simple and smooth cross-border cooperation between research-performing organisations acting in the framework of programmes or implementing projects jointly;
 - c. discuss with research stakeholder organisations ways to make national research programmes compatible, interoperable (cross-border) and simpler for researchers, and prepare the Committee's advice to the Council, the Commission and Member States — as appropriate — on these issues;
 - d. prepare the Committee's advice to the Commission on the terms of reference for further study on cross-border cooperation between research-performing organisations, taking into account already existing studies and action in other frameworks;
 - e. prepare the Committee's advice to the Council, Member States and the Commission on the needs of research-performing organisations for EU support to cross-border cooperation initiatives, making the best use of future Horizon 2020 and Cohesion Policy instruments.
3. For the purposes of carrying out its advisory work and as far as appropriate in its own judgment, the Working Group will work together and exchange information with the High-Level Group on Joint Programming (GPC).
4. The Working Group is set up for a period of 12 months, commencing in April 2013. This period can be changed following a review of the work of the Working Group by the Committee.
5. Membership of the Working Group is open to all ERAC delegations. The Working Group may invite outside experts if appropriate.

6. The Working Group shall meet at the invitation of the Chair.
 7. The Working Group is chaired by a representative from a Member State or from a country with observer status in the Committee. The Chair will report to the Committee on the results of the work carried out at her/his own initiative or at the request of the Committee. The Chair can appoint rapporteurs for specific purposes following approval by all members of the Working Group.
 8. The secretarial services of the Working Group shall be provided by the General Secretariat of the Council. The Working Group shall be supported by the Commission services.
-

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP

Albania	Edmond Agolli
Austria	Brigitte Weiss
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Alma Hasanovic
Denmark	Lise Lotte Toft (Chair) Mette Malleby (18 May) Frej Sorento (31 May)
Council Secretariat	Frits Smulders
Czech Republic	Jan Hrusak Dalibor Stys
European Commission	Anne Mallaband Herman van der Plas Gergana Toshkina
Finland	Eeva Kaunismaa
FYROM	Atanas Kochov
Germany	Gerhard Duda
Hungary	Antal Nikodémus
Israel	Marcel Shaton
Montenegro	Darko Petrusic
Netherlands	Francien Heijs
Norway	Yngve Foss
Sweden	Dan Andrée
Switzerland	Müfit Sabo

On 31 May 2013, the following stakeholder organisations were represented:

European University Association (EUA)	John Smith
Science Europe	Sebastian Huber (on behalf of Amanda Crawford)
German Rectors' Conference (HRK)	Gerhard Duda
RISE	Olof Sandberg
Nordforsk	Gunnel Gustafsson

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY CONCERNING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AMONG RESEARCH-PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS WITHIN THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Objective: to assess transnational cooperation between RPOs at programme level in ERA, to quantify the main patterns and developments and to identify remaining obstacles

The available studies on RPOs did not fully address the cross-border cooperation issue, and recent data are lacking. Based on what has been done since, and taking account of the ERA Communication of 17 July 2012, a new study – or new studies - could therefore have added value. Such studies could look at the following issues, relating to better statistical evidence and strategic knowledge, which could be used for underpinning new policies and measures to enhance and initiate sustainable programmatic cross-border cooperation between RPOs.

Work package I (statistical part)

- Survey a representative sample of RPOs and categorise the main forms of transnational cooperation between RPOs at programme-level, taking into account types of RPOs, distances, fields of activities (training, technological development, basic research, etc.).
- Analyse the sample to identify the main patterns and developments, based in particular on the types of RPOs, place of establishment and S&T specialisation.
- Survey RPOs on the obstacles or incentives for transnational cooperation with other RPOs, checking factors such as proximity and S&T field.

Work package 2 (content and strategic part)

- Define different forms of cross-border cooperation between RPOs (typology/taxonomy, including parameters for near-border cooperation).
- Define the conditions for long term, programme-level cooperation between research institutions (RPOs, RTOs, and universities included; European industrial research organisation (EIROs) being excluded) taking account of previous studies and the report of the Horvat panel on Networks of Excellence.
- Estimate socio-economic and scientific benefits of long term cross-border cooperation and, as a special case, near-border cooperation between research institutions (project level excluded).
- Identify hurdles (systemic, legal, budgetary, cultural, linguistic, etc.) and identify "low hanging fruit" by ranking them based on the degree of complexity (also indicating links to the 2012 ERA Communication, where these exist, and potential benefits of proposed ERA measures, as well as commitments made by relevant stakeholder organisations).
- Identify points that would need financial support at EU, national and/or regional levels (e.g. networking) and indicate the potential of instruments available in the future (during the budget period 2014-2020).
- Define how near-border support should be used, starting with NUTS2 regions. Use the results of relevant available studies, such as JOREP (see p. 29), where possible and identify any budget points that would need to be taken into account by a follow-up JOREP study.
- Relate to other on-going work and evidence available at national level, at EU level and at the OECD on cross-border regional innovation policies.