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RECH 77

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	6214/16 RECH 21
Subject:	Revised mandate for GPC

Delegations will find in annex the revised mandate for GPC (the High Level Group on Joint Programming), as approved by the Council at its 3459th meeting held on 11 April 2016.

REVISED MANDATE FOR GPC
(HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON JOINT PROGRAMMING)

Objective

The High Level Group on Joint Programming (GPC) is a dedicated configuration of ERAC. Its mission, as the ERA-related Group responsible for the European Research Area (ERA) Priority 2a “Optimal transnational cooperation and competition: jointly tackling grand challenges”, is to address issues related to the Joint Programming Process (JPP) of European research.

Main activities

1. The GPC will focus its activities on:
 - (a) delivering strategic and timely advice on the ERA Priority area 2a and on the whole progress towards the implementation of the ERA and its Roadmap.
 - (b) with the aim of contributing to the consolidation and advancement of the ERA, being responsible for
 - promoting alignment of national, regional and European strategies, programmes and activities for research and innovation with the strategic research and innovation agendas developed as the results of the JPP;

- improving the interoperability among European, national and regional research and innovation programmes/activities, thus facilitating transnational cooperation and also the sharing of information about activities in priority areas for societal challenges;
- (c) contributing to the preparation of the debates and decisions of the Competitiveness Council on the JPP;
- (d) monitoring and assessing whether the initiatives resulting from the JPP (hereafter "the initiatives") maintain coherence with their mission and perform adequately, within the frame of their rights and obligations, including the adoption and implementation of the Framework Conditions (FC) and Voluntary Guidelines mentioned under (g) below;
- (e) without prejudice to the responsibilities of the European Commission, promoting access to funding instruments for the initiatives aimed at enhancing integration and EU added value, such as those currently known as "Coordination and Support Actions" for the set-up phase of the initiatives, "ERA-NET Cofund" for conducting the research and innovation projects foreseen in the strategic research agendas of the initiatives and, when an adequate level of integration is achieved at scientific, managerial and financial level, the "European Joint Programmes" and the public-public or public-private partnerships, as per articles 185 or 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, respectively, monitoring the impact of the JPP on addressing the relevant societal challenges;
- (f) representing the forum where the initiatives are invited to present on their plans and progress in relation to the funding instruments indicated under (e) above;
- (g) updating, whenever needed, the FC outlined in paragraph 8 of the Council Conclusions of 2 December 2008 and the set of Voluntary Guidelines aimed at implementing the FC and at establishing an enabling environment for the JPP, in the light of new developments in the fields of the challenges covered by the ongoing and possible future initiatives;
- (h) developing and promoting governance guidelines for the initiatives, complementary to and coherent with the above-mentioned FC;

- (i) further, when considered appropriate with respect to the progress of the ongoing JPP and identified societal challenges, identifying, upon proposal of its members and following broad consultation of the different regional, national and European scientific communities as well as, where appropriate, other public and private stakeholders, potential new themes for initiatives where joint programming of research and innovation activities appears beneficial for the solution of new or (re-)emerging major challenges facing Europe and beyond;
- (j) within this framework, evaluating each proposal submitted to it, on the basis of the criteria outlined in paragraph 9 of the Council Conclusions of 2 December 2008;

Organisation

- 2. The GPC shall meet regularly, as a rule 4 times per year. The meetings will normally be held in Brussels.
- 3. The GPC shall be attended by high-level representatives of the Member States, and of the Commission.
- 4. The GPC shall be open, as appropriate, to the Countries Associated to the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.
- 5. Delegates of Member States and Associated Countries are present in the Group as formal representatives of their country, not as individual experts, and should ensure appropriate co-ordination with national representatives in other ERA-related groups.
- 6. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the GPC shall be elected from among the representatives of Member States in the Group by a majority of its component Members for a period of three years, which is renewable once. In so doing, they shall have due regard to gender balance and other aspects of diversity.
- 7. The Secretariat for the GPC is provided by the General Secretariat of the Council. The primary role of the Secretariat is to assist the Group in its operation. In particular, it assists the Chair in the preparation, conduct and follow-up of meetings, including the circulation of provisional agendas and of related documents, and the drafting of summary conclusions of meetings.

8. The Commission shall support the work of this Group within the remit of its competence, acting as a facilitator and promoting proactively the JPP and the initiatives.
9. The GPC may set up sub-groups to deal with questions relevant to its mandate. These must have a clear purpose and mandate and be of limited duration.

Streamlining the ERA advisory structure

10. In agreement with the ERAC Steering Board, the GPC shall draw up rules of procedure that are coherent with those of the other ERA-related Groups. The requirement for coherence in rules of procedure does not include any voting rules, which are solely a matter for the GPC.
11. The GPC like other ERA-related Groups shall develop their own work programmes, draw up their own agendas, carry out their activities and produce their deliverables according to their mandates and the ERA Roadmap. The relevant aspects of the draft work programmes, including the timing of work, the scheduling of meetings and the planning of communication with the Council, shall be discussed within the ERAC Steering Board and comments by the ERAC Steering Board shall be taken into account. The Chairs of the ERA-related Groups shall ensure the substance of these discussions is systematically reported back to their Groups.
12. To ensure overall coherence among the ERA-related Groups and to avoid gaps or duplication in the coverage of ERA priorities, the work programmes shall be discussed within the ERAC Steering Board and a report of these discussions presented to ERAC before the adoption of the work programmes by each Group. Within this framework, the GPC as well as other ERA-related Groups take sole responsibility for the content of the advice they provide.

13. The GPC regularly (and at least once a year) updates its work programme, to keep flexibility in dealing with issues of concern to the actors in the field.
 14. The Chair of the GPC will serve on the ERAC Steering Board along with the Chairs of the other ERA-related Groups.
 15. The GPC shall submit a concise annual report to ERAC, providing a timely strategic and operational overview of research and innovation issues that are relevant to the development of the specific ERA Priority for which it is responsible and on the impact of its activities on the achievement of that Priority. This shall be provided in good time for ERAC to prepare its own annual report to the Council. It shall also ensure more generally, through the Steering Board or otherwise, that other ERA-related groups are aware of developments in its area that are relevant to the wider work of ERA.
 16. The GPC's mandate shall be assessed when necessary, but at least every three years, by ERAC in line with ERAC's agreed procedure for this exercise, and recommendations shall be made to the Council on whether the mandate needs to be revised or repealed in order to reflect progress in the implementation or updates of ERA Priorities.
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