



Brussels, 17 September 2021  
(OR. en)

11699/21

RECH 394

**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
No. prev. doc.:	11590/21 RECH 391
Subject:	<i>Preparation of the Competitiveness Council on 28 September 2021</i> Conclusions on the Global approach to Research and Innovation - Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world - Approval

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1. On 1 December 2020<sup>1</sup>, the Council adopted conclusions on the New European Research Area (ERA), identifying international cooperation as one of the ERA priority actions in 2021 to strengthen collaboration with third countries and regions in the field of research and innovation (R&I).
2. On 18 May 2021, the Commission published the Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation: Europe's strategy for international cooperation in a changing world<sup>2</sup>, in which it reaffirmed the Union's commitment to openness and fundamental values in international R&I cooperation. The Communication was presented at the Competitiveness Council of 28 May 2021. On 7 June 2021, the Research Working Party held an exchange of views on this Communication under Portuguese Presidency.

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<sup>1</sup> 13567/20

<sup>2</sup> 8979/21

3. In response to the Commission Communication, the Slovene Presidency tabled a first draft of Council Conclusions on the Global Approach to R&I, distributed on 22 June 2021 and discussed at the Research Working Party of 1 July 2021.
  4. Revised drafts were examined at the informal videoconferences of the members of the Research Working Party of 15 July 2021 and of 6 September 2021. Following a written consultation that ended on 10 September 2021 and subsequent changes discussed at its meeting of 16 September 2021, the Research Working Party reached a broad consensus on the text of the draft Council Conclusions as set out in the Annex to this Note.
  5. The Polish delegation indicated the intention to enter a Statement to the minutes of Coreper and of the Council adopting the Council conclusions as regards references in the text to "gender equality" (doc. 11699/21 ADD1).
  6. The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to confirm the consensus reached at Working Party level on the text set out in the Annex and to submit the draft conclusions for adoption by the Competitiveness Council (Research) at its meeting of 28 September 2021.
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**Draft Council Conclusions on the Global approach to Research and Innovation – Europe’s strategy for international cooperation in a changing world**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

- the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on strengthening the Union’s contribution to rules-based multilateralism, which describes the Union’s strategic priorities, values and the Team Europe approach in order to advance the Union’s role in promoting a rules-based global multilateral system that is ‘fit for purpose’<sup>3</sup>;
- the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which presents a blueprint for addressing the key social, educational and healthcare challenges in a global partnership, while tackling climate change, preserving our natural environment, including oceans and seas, as a basis for life, and which is strongly reflected within the political priorities of the Union, including the European Green Deal, digital transition and the European way of life;
- the Paris Agreement, adopted on 12 December 2015 as the leading legally binding international treaty on climate change and the ambitious plans within the European Green Deal that the Union has set in committing to it, which in turn represents a significant part of the Union’s efforts in international research and innovation (R&I) cooperation;

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<sup>3</sup> JOIN (2021)3 final of 17 February 2021.

- the Council conclusions on the new European Research Area (ERA)<sup>4</sup> calling on the Commission and Member States to consider international cooperation as one of the main priority areas for joint action;
- the Union strategic approach on international cooperation in R&I and its subsequent reports<sup>5</sup>;

## **PART 1: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

1. WELCOMES the Commission’s Communication on the Global Approach to Research and Innovation ‘Europe’s strategy for international cooperation in a changing world’ as timely and appropriate, as a policy framework to help shape the Union’s future engagement with international partners in R&I and the geopolitical dimension of the ERA; WELCOMES the work of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC) on this Communication as part of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC); and REAFFIRMS the Union’s commitment to maintain openness in international R&I cooperation to further strengthen the quality of research in the Union, while pursuing a level playing field and balanced reciprocal openness in R&I, in cooperation with partner countries, based on shared fundamental values and principles;
2. UNDERLINES the need for a permanent, close and constructive engagement between the Commission, the Council, the Member States and the European External Action Service (EEAS) as appropriate, including through early advice from the ERA-related advisory structure, in designing, implementing and evaluating approaches and actions of international R&I cooperation;

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<sup>4</sup> 13567/20.

<sup>5</sup> COM (2012) 497, COM(2014) 567, COM(2016) 657, SWD(2018) 307

3. INVITES the Commission, the Council, the Member States and the EEAS to maximise the impact of the external action of the Union, achieve a more consolidated engagement with third countries, enhance established relationships, avoid duplication of efforts, including with the Programme Committee for the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe, and exchange information on policies and ideas to prevent undesirable transfer of knowledge and foreign interference in R&I;
4. STRESSES the indispensable role of the stakeholders of the ERA, including research performing organisations and individuals, research funding organisations, higher education institutions and businesses and their European and international alliances, research and technology infrastructures and industry in practising and fostering international R&I cooperation at Union and Member State level; and ACKNOWLEDGES the need for the Union and the Member States to provide a supportive international environment (i.e. policy and legal framework and support instruments), where such cooperation will flourish freely and in line with the core values and interests of the Union;
5. EMPHASISES the need for the Union to maintain and develop rules-based multilateral cooperation and dialogue in addressing the key global social, environmental, health, digital and economic challenges, as well as gender balance and inclusiveness, where R&I should play a pivotal role; RECALLS the Valletta Declaration on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation of 4 May 2017 and the Azores Declaration on All-Atlantic R&I for a Sustainable Ocean of 4 June 2021, as examples of a global approach to international scientific R&I cooperation; and RECOGNISES the respective bilateral, multilateral and international efforts and activities of the Member States;

6. UNDERLINES the importance of reinforcing the position of the Union as an attractive, inclusive, supportive and gender-balanced environment for researchers, academics, entrepreneurs and students around the world; ACKNOWLEDGES creation, sharing and wide dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of society, and autonomous research institutions, as indispensable elements contributing to an environment of trust in the global R&I arena;
7. NOTES that the new global approach should also feed into the international dimension of the Union's framework programme for R&I - Horizon Europe - as the central framework of the Union for nurturing and facilitating international R&I cooperation, which includes an extended association policy that offers third countries a chance for the closest possible R&I partnership with the Union;

## **PART 2: KEY PRINCIPLES and VALUES**

8. WELCOMES the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research, adopted on 20 October 2020, in which the freedom of scientific research was recognised as a visible common value informing the Union and its Member States in their R&I policy dialogue with international partner countries, as well as the Statement on Academic Freedom annexed to the Rome Ministerial Communiqué of 19 November 2020 and the Magna Charta Universitatum, approved on 12 March 2020;
9. UNDERLINES that the Union's global approach to R&I must be built on the principles of openness, rules-based multilateralism, shared values and priorities, facilitation of knowledge circulation and exchange of ideas; HIGHLIGHTS that it must also respect Union values and interests and, as far as possible, the principle of reciprocity, and uphold the global standards in the field of intellectual property; to this end, CALLS ON the Commission and the Member States to follow the guiding principle 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary' in future relations and negotiations with global partners;

10. RECOGNISES freedom of scientific research; pursuit of scientific excellence; impact of R&I; research ethics and integrity; societal and environmental responsibility; gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness; openness, including open data and open science; the free circulation of researchers and knowledge; sustainable research careers; standards and evidence-informed policy making as key principles and values of the Union in international R&I cooperation;
11. EMPHASISES the Union's commitment to uphold openness in international R&I cooperation, to promote the Union's shared values, to secure the Union's interests, including building R&I leadership and competitiveness, to strengthen measures for countering foreign interference, and to reinforce the Union's strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy, including by creating a level playing field with international partner countries;
12. SUPPORTS that the global approach is to be implemented through:
  - mobilising science, technology and innovation to accelerate sustainable and inclusive development, and the transition to resilient, knowledge-based societies and economies, including in low and middle-income countries;
  - tailoring Union bilateral cooperation in R&I in an open manner, underpinned by foresight studies, to align it with Union values and interests and to strengthen the Union's strategic autonomy while preserving an open economy; and
  - initiatives developed together with the Member States modelled on a Team Europe approach, which combine actions by the Union, financial institutions and Member States, on a voluntary basis, to maximise the effectiveness and impact of the actions;

### **PART 3: KEY ACTIONS**

13. **ACKNOWLEDGES** the need to further develop the Union's key principles and values for international R&I cooperation; and **CALLS ON** the Commission and the Member States to engage in a co-design process to this end and for the Council to examine the results by the beginning of 2022; and **CALLS ON** the Commission and the Member States to promote these principles and values in a multilateral dialogue involving key international partners, in order to establish the Union as a key player in developing a global R&I policy dialogue;
14. **RECALLS**, when implementing Article 22(5) of Horizon Europe for actions related to the Union's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security during the examination of the work programmes, the need to fully involve the Member States in a timely manner in accordance with the comitology procedure or in accordance with the governance provisions of the legal acts setting up the institutionalised European partnerships; **ENCOURAGES** the Commission to engage proactively with countries associated to Horizon Europe in obtaining assurances of meeting the eligibility conditions for participation in future Horizon Europe calls before they are made public; and **STRESSES** the benefits of long-standing R&I cooperation with countries associated under the previous Union framework programmes in facilitating this process;
15. **ENCOURAGES** the Commission to further strengthen international R&I cooperation with non-EU countries, paying due attention to countries with a long-standing relation with the Union; **ENCOURAGES** the Commission to finalise the agreements associating third countries to Horizon Europe with a view to presenting them to the Council in due time;



16. CALLS ON the Commission to ensure the greatest involvement of the Council in accordance with Article 218 TFEU in the process of negotiating agreements associating third countries to Horizon Europe; and RECALLS in this context the statement made by the Council upon the adoption of the Horizon Europe Regulation<sup>6</sup>;
17. INVITES the Member States and the Commission to consider setting up or fostering actions or tools available to researchers whose freedom of scientific research is under threat in third countries, respecting fully the excellence principle; and ENCOURAGES the Commission to integrate a reference about respecting freedom of scientific research in the agreements associating third countries to Horizon Europe;
18. RECALLS that interpersonal relations and networks, as well as investment in researchers' skills and careers and supporting brain circulation, including addressing brain drain, are fundamental to enhancing the Union's attractiveness to research talent and its role in international R&I cooperation; and CALLS ON the Commission to further utilise the potential of relevant Union actions and programmes including the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions, the European Research Council, the European Innovation Council, the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), the European Cooperation in Science & Technology (COST) programme, ERASMUS+ and the EURAXESS network;
19. INVITES the Commission and the Member States to apply the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource Poor Settings;

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<sup>6</sup> 6692/21 ADD1

20. UNDERLINES the importance of openness and international cooperation in research infrastructures for the advancement of science, science diplomacy, tackling global challenges and increasing access to excellence; RECOGNISES the need for further development and implementation of the Global Research Infrastructure framework; ENCOURAGES the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and the Commission to support activities of research infrastructures to this end; and WELCOMES the efforts of the Commission's Joint Research Centre to open access to their laboratories as a good example in this respect;
21. CONSIDERS that international R&I cooperation is an integral part of the renewed ERA, but also a significant part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Education Area (EEA), and that reasonable synergies in their external dimensions need to be achieved in order to fully harness the potential of knowledge within the Union; STRESSES in this regard the international potential of the European Universities Initiative and the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT); and INVITES the current and future Presidencies of the Council to advance such synergies together with the Member States and the Commission;
22. STRESSES the importance of seeking synergies with the Union's external action programmes, such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), especially in terms of capacity building activities in partner countries in the field of higher education, research and innovation;

23. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to continue developing guidelines on dealing with foreign interference in close consultation with Member States and research and higher education stakeholders; following their completion, INVITES the Commission and the Member States to support the voluntary application of these guidelines by their research funding and performing organisations and higher education institutions, including by targeted training, provision of information on the state of play of freedom of scientific research or raising awareness of potential risks; and INVITES the Commission to facilitate mutual policy learning among Member States, taking account of Union research results in the area of countering foreign interference in research and higher education;
24. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to prepare the targeted roadmaps for international R&I cooperation with key non-associated third countries with a strong R&I base; and CALLS FOR continuous involvement of the Council in the preparation and follow-up of these roadmaps, which should reflect shared values and principles, balanced reciprocity and a level playing field as a prerequisite for closer cooperation, with a view to approving them as non-binding instruments;
25. SUPPORTS the Commission's intention to develop a voluntary code of practice on smart use of intellectual property by 2022, which should help higher education institutions, research performing and funding organisations, businesses and all other R&I actors to recognise the risks and identify mitigation measures in international R&I cooperation and manage knowledge assets in open and global R&I systems, ensuring that the Union and Member States' interests are pursued;

26. RECOGNISES the need to further strengthen the Union's role in existing multilateral R&I partnerships and alliances<sup>7</sup> as a key instrument for building on the cooperation with likeminded international partners; and INVITES the Commission to consult with the Member States and seize the Council in accordance with the relevant procedures in establishing such partnerships, including beyond the areas of the green transition, digital transformation and health, in particular to tackle common societal challenges faced by the Union, as well as to pursue the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
27. INVITES the Commission to continue to pursue cooperation with the Americas, notably by implementing the commitments undertaken at the EU-Canada and EU-US summits of 14 and 15 June 2021 respectively, and by stepping up cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean, taking full advantage of the new EU-CELAC strategic roadmap 2021-2023 for the implementation of the Action Plan on Science, Technology and Innovation;
28. INVITES the Commission to implement relevant R&I actions from the Joint Communications regarding the Eastern Partnership, the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood and the strategy with Africa<sup>8</sup> such as joint innovation agendas; and RECALLS its conclusions of 16 April 2021 on an EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific<sup>9</sup>, where cooperation in the field of research, innovation and digitalisation should be advanced;

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<sup>7</sup> The Commission's Communication examines the following as an appropriate, non-exhaustive list of alliances in the field of Green transition: the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance, Mission Innovation, Group on Earth Observations (GEO), the International Bioeconomy Forum, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the International Resource Panel (IRP).

<sup>8</sup> JOIN(2020) 7 final, JOIN(2021) 2 final and JOIN (2020) 4 final.

<sup>9</sup> 7914/21.

29. INVITES the Commission, together with the African Union Commission and Member States on both sides, to develop a joint EU-AU Research and Innovation Agenda to support the building of research capacities and the translation of research output, including from the Horizon Europe ‘Africa Initiative’, into socio-economic and environmental benefits in line with the agreement reached at the 2020 EU-AU Ministerial meeting; EMPHASISES the need in this context for synergy with NDICI-Global Europe, following the example of the African Research Initiative for Scientific Excellence (ARISE) pilot project; CALLS FOR synergies between EU-AU and EU-Southern Neighbourhood cooperation to produce a stronger impact on economic development, job creation and environmental preservation; and LOOKS FORWARD to the development of joint R&I roadmaps in view of a ministerial meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2022;
30. INVITES the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States, to also continue pursuing multilateral cooperation within initiatives such as the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA), the Baltic and North Sea Coordination and Support Action (BANOS), BlueMed, Arctic and Black Sea Cooperation, and taking stock of the lessons learnt to adapt and expand as necessary their possible future scope and activities; and RECOGNISES their significance in the context of science diplomacy;
31. INVITES the Commission to develop, together with the Member States and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, a joint EU-EaP innovation agenda supporting the dissemination and use of R&I results;
32. CALLS FOR a common regional approach to relations with the Western Balkans; and VIEWS further developments in international R&I cooperation as an important step towards their integration in the Union; in this light, CALLS ON all parties concerned to advance towards the signature of the Joint Declaration on a Western Balkans agenda on innovation, research, education, culture, youth and sport, as a key contribution on innovation in the context of the Economic and Investment Plan;

33. CALLS ON the Commission to cooperate closely with the Member States in continuing the negotiations on a joint roadmap with China to establish agreed framework conditions and guiding principles for cooperation to reach a level playing field and reciprocity, while respecting fundamental values, high standards of ethics, scientific integrity and intellectual property rights; and, in this respect, RECOGNISES the indispensable efforts and the activities of the R&I Knowledge Network on China (EU-KNoC) and the importance of continuing this work, safeguarding the principle of Union strategic autonomy;
34. CALLS ON the Commission and the European External Action Service to develop a European Science Diplomacy Agenda and to present it to the Council, to explore designating science focal points in order to ensure adequate capacities for science in Union delegations, to foster cooperation with Member States' science counsellors in third countries, to consider involving representatives of the rotating Presidency in joint steering committee meetings, based on bilateral agreements between the Union and third countries, and to report to the Council on their progress by 2023; INVITES the Commission and the Member States to explore setting-up appropriate mechanisms for cooperation in the fields of science, innovation and cultural diplomacy in line with the recommendation of SFIC<sup>10</sup> and other relevant expert organisations<sup>11</sup>; HIGHLIGHTS the importance of integrating the Global Approach in R&I in the Union's external action;
35. TAKES NOTE that the governance and monitoring procedures in the area of international R&I cooperation should be articulated in the Council conclusions on ERA governance by the end of 2021; and LOOKS FORWARD to the international conference in early 2022, where, following a first review of progress and strengthened coordination between the Commission and the Member States in implementing the global approach, a multilateral dialogue involving key international partners on shared fundamental principles and values in international R&I cooperation will be launched.

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<sup>10</sup> See ERAC-SFIC 1357/20

<sup>11</sup> e.g. Tools for an EU Science Diplomacy (2017) or 'Using science for/in diplomacy for addressing global challenges' (S4D4C), JOIN (2016) 29 final.