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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	ERAC Work Programme 2023-2024

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Delegations will find enclosed with this note the ERAC Work Programme 2023-2024, as adopted by the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) at its meeting on 14 February 2023.

The additions made at the meeting are indicated in **bold underlined**.

## ERAC WORK PROGRAMME 2023-2024

### INTRODUCTION

ERAC, in its renewed form, was established by the Council Conclusions of 26 November 2021 on the future governance of the European Research Area (ERA) and the subsequent Council Decision of 13 December 2021 on the composition and the mandate of ERAC<sup>1</sup>. On 13 April 2022, ERAC adopted its procedural arrangements.

On 24 January 2022, ERAC elected Ms Barbara Weitgruber (Austria) as its Member States co-Chair for a period of three years and, on 1 September 2022, Ms Signe Ratso took over as new Commission co-Chair of ERAC.

The first ERAC Work Programme for the years 2022 and 2023 was adopted on 31 May 2022.

This new Work Programme for 2023-2024 ensure a sound basis for its future strategic work and the necessary continuity and planning by setting out activities for the next 18 months.

### STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURE OF THE PROGRAMMING OF ERAC'S WORK

The update of the ERAC Work Programme is a regular agenda item in the ERAC plenary meetings. The Work Programme covers the oncoming three semesters (not counting the current one) and, when relevant, also addresses longer-term projects and work streams beyond the three-semester period.

Thus, ERAC plans ahead the meetings, topics, strategic discussions and work streams for the next three semesters. The incoming EU presidencies of these three semesters will have the possibility to propose topics in connection with their provisional presidency agendas. To this end, presidencies are encouraged to share their planning with ERAC at an early stage. The Commission Work Programme and other foreseeable developments are taken into account. Furthermore, ERAC members have the possibility to propose topics, including taking the lead in the preparation of those topics.

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<sup>1</sup> [Official Journal of the EU L 450 of 16.12.2021.](#)

For the preparation of strategic discussions, the following is foreseen:

- One or more volunteers (a Rapporteur, an ad-hoc Task Force) prepare a draft for a background document in collaboration with the Commission
- The document is put forward to the ERAC Steering Board for discussion/amendment/green light
- The document is then sent to the ERAC members at least two weeks before the ERAC meeting
- In the background document, the objective(s) and the concrete follow-up of the discussion must be clearly described. Each ERAC discussion should have a clear outcome, which could be an ERAC Opinion, supporting Presidencies with analysis for possible preparation of Council Conclusions, an initiative taken by the Commission, the setting up of an ERAC Task Force for further elaboration of the subject, etc.

In addition to the planning for the next 18 months, ERAC will briefly discuss the indicative agenda of the next ERAC meeting on the basis of a proposal from the ERAC Steering Board. The ERAC Steering Board will then further prepare the meeting taking into account the input from the ERAC members.

ERAC's work programmes will take a flexible and proactive approach to ensure that ERAC can contribute in a speedy and timely manner, as appropriate, to emerging and evolving issues.

It is important that ERAC considers carefully what outcomes and effects it aims to achieve. Every topic discussed in ERAC shall have a clear perspective on the pursued impact and the concrete follow-up.

## ERAC'S TASKS

The ERAC mandate describes the tasks of ERAC as follows:

1. to advise on strategic policy orientation and future trends that require the refinement of Union and national, including regional, R&I policies, including on the current and the next Union R&I Framework Programme and other relevant R&I-driven Union initiatives
2. to initiate updates of the ERA Policy Agenda, by providing early strategic advice informed, among other things, by consideration of the progress made in ongoing ERA actions

3. to reflect and provide advice on new policy demands which fulfil the ERA Policy Agenda criteria, throughout the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda
4. to interact with governance and coordination structures at a similar level in other relevant policy areas, such as higher education and industry.

These four points determine on one side a few mandatory tasks for ERAC and leave, on the other side, enough leeway and flexibility for ERAC to select topics that appear the most pertinent and topical.

#### *ERAC's role in the design, adaptation and implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda*

In the new ERA governance and the new policy coordination approach, the ERA Policy Agenda is the central document for the advancement of the ERA. It is therefore a very important subject for the work of ERAC. Based on the Pact for R&I in Europe and the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA, the following can be determined for the work of ERAC in the context of the ERA Policy Agenda:

1. The Council adopts an ERA Policy Agenda every three years with the possibility to amend it if this seems necessary.
2. For the first ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024, ERAC was invited by the Council to provide its views, which it did through the adoption of an ERAC Opinion adopted on 31 May 2022<sup>2</sup>.
3. ERAC considers the progress made in the implementation of the ERA actions. To this end, the co-Chairs of the ERA Forum inform ERAC regularly.
4. ERAC initiates the update of the ERA Policy Agenda that is due at the end of the three years period. To this end, ERAC starts a discussion process in time so that it can deliver its strategic advice at the latest one year before the end of the 3-year cycle. For its deliberations ERAC will, among other sources of information, take into account the mid-term review of the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda that the Commission prepares every 18 months.

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<sup>2</sup> 9735/22.

5. ERAC reflects on new policy demands that fulfil the criteria for the ERA Policy Agenda. To that end, all ERAC members can propose relevant topics to be discussed by ERAC in view of providing advice for possible new ERA Actions.
6. ERAC may provide advice on any relevant matter in the context of the ERA Policy Agenda in accordance with its mandate.

### *The preparation of the next R&I Framework Programme*

On 18 November 2022, ERAC adopted the mandate for the ERAC ad-hoc Task Force on “Guidance for the next Framework Programme for R&I”. The Task Force had its constitutive meeting on 16 December 2022 and elected the ERAC delegates Feite Hofman (NL) and Mateusz Gaczynski (PL) as its co-Chairs. According to its mandate, the mission of the Task Force is to deliver a draft ERAC Opinion on the next Framework Programme for R&I by June 2024 at the latest. The Task Force will report regularly to ERAC about the progress of its work. A standing agenda item for the ERAC plenary will therefore be foreseen until the ERAC Opinion is adopted.

### *R&I related measures in the context of the recovery of Ukraine*

**In the ERAC meeting on 14 February 2023, ERAC decided to have a standing agenda item in the future on R&I related measures in the context of the recovery of Ukraine. The Commission offered to give updates on the state of play and discussions will be held if necessary.**

### *Interaction with other policy areas*

Research policy is closely connected to education and industrial policies. R&I policy meets education policy especially when addressing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Since HEIs play such an important role for our knowledge societies, it is of great importance to have an integrated policy addressing HEIs and their four missions. Close interconnection between R&I and education policy is therefore a necessity. On the other side of the R&I spectrum, close interaction and creating synergies with industrial policy is also an obligation in order to maximise the impact of R&I on the EU’s competitiveness. Equally important is close collaboration with sectoral policies in the context of challenge- and mission-oriented R&I.

Due to its nature at the interface between European and national R&I policy, ERAC can play an important role in enabling and enhancing the interaction with other policies. It can do this through its strategic advice, the consideration of stakeholders' views, designating members of ERAC in charge of covering relevant sectoral policies or holding informal joint meetings with other fora.

### Other issues of strategic relevance

ERAC is mandated to give advice on strategic policy orientation and future trends. In essence, ERAC can select for discussion any other topic that appears pertinent and topical. Topics may be proposed by the ERAC members. Strategic topics can be addressed by ERAC via strategic debates or other oral or written formats.

### ERAC STRATEGIC TOPICS FOR 2023-2024

#### Proposed topics for the ERAC meeting in June 2023:

- ERAC task force on “Guidance for the next Framework Programme for R&I”
  - *Report from the rapporteurs*
- National implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024: State of play with regard to national policy vehicles”
  - *Presentation by the DE delegation*
  - *Strategic debate*
- International R&I cooperation in a geopolitical world: the Global Approach two years on
  - *Presentation by the Commission*
  - *Strategic debate*
- Towards a European Science for Policy ecosystem
  - *Presentation by the Commission and the Dutch ERAC delegation*
  - *Exchange of views*
- Advanced materials in the context of global developments (Critical Materials Act, technology sovereignty, supply chains) and with a view to overcoming fragmentation
  - *Presentation by the Commission*
  - *Exchange of views*

Proposed topics for the ERAC meeting in October 2023:

- ERAC task force on “Guidance for the next Framework Programme for R&I”
  - *Report from the Rapporteurs*
  - *Possible discussion on issues proposed by the Task Force*
- The next ERA Policy Agenda (2025-2027)
  - *Brainstorming to deliver early advice*
- Making it work: Advancing European missions through an efficient multilevel governance
  - *Strategic discussion on the basis of the missions’ review*
- The twin transitions and ERAC’s role in achieving it
  - **Presentation by the Finnish ERAC delegation**
  - **Exchange of views**

Further proposed topics:

- Orientation debate and advice on current and future R&D investments (Commission proposal)
- How to support a diverse and inclusive research and science community (Dutch proposal)
- The role of research and science in and for society as a whole (Dutch proposal)
- Big science for the future – Europe’s stance through research infrastructures (German proposal)

**Major events and milestones**

January 2023	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023
	ERAC Plenary (14 February, Brussels)  Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Research) (7-8 February, Stockholm)			Competitiveness Council (Research) (25 May)	ERAC Plenary (20-22 June, Lund)
July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023
Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Research) (27-28 July, Santander)		Competitiveness Council (Research) ( <i>tbc</i> )	ERAC Plenary ( <b><u>8-9 October</u></b> , Malaga)		<b><u>Competitiveness Council (Research) (8 December, Brussels)</u></b>
January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024
July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024