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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Making it work: Establish missions in the Framework Programme through an efficient multilevel governance

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European Research and Innovation Area Committee (ERAC) delegations will find attached a Background Note on the discussion “Making it work: Establish missions in the Framework Programme through an efficient multilevel governance”, prepared by the Commission, with a view to the ERAC meeting on 11-12 April 2024.

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## **Agenda point for the ERAC Plenary on 11-12 April 2024, Namur**

### **Making it work: Establish missions in the Framework Programme through an efficient multilevel governance**

In July 2023, the Commission adopted the Communication on “EU Missions two years on: assessment of progress and way forward”<sup>1</sup>, fulfilling the legal obligation to review the five EU Missions and assess the five mission areas before the end of 2023.

The Communication and its accompanying Staff Working Document<sup>2</sup> conclude that EU Missions have so far demonstrated their potential to accelerate change and support the necessary societal transitions across multiple domains. They have connected and supported different EU policies and programmes with local action and have resulted in the active engagement of broad and important stakeholder groups. EU Missions are experimenting with innovative instruments such as climate city contracts, living labs and lighthouses, including with the financial support of yearly Mission Work Programmes under Horizon Europe. They are working closely with the Member States and their regions to accelerate implementation. This has been facilitated through the creation by several Member States of inter-ministerial taskforces and national mirror groups to liaise with the Commission on the implementation of EU Missions.

The Communication also identifies a number of challenges that EU Missions are facing. While there is a broad agreement that EU Missions are useful tools to address key societal challenges, are overall progressing in line with their implementation plans and appear to be on track to achieve their 2030 targets, more will need to be done to allow Missions to fulfil their potential. This is particularly the case when it comes to access to funding by EU Missions beyond Horizon Europe. At present, Horizon Europe remains the main source of funding for EU Missions, although promising examples of synergetic funding notably with other EU instruments have already emerged and have been documented in the SWD.

Yet, the calls under Horizon Europe are intended to be a seed of funding, rather than the main sponsor of the deployment of EU Missions, where funding will necessarily need to come from other sources, in particular from the Member States, but also from the private sector. Given their level of ambition, EU Missions require large scale investments that cannot be made by the EU alone and scale up activities well beyond R&I.

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<sup>1</sup> [EUR-Lex - 52023DC0457 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [EUR-Lex - 52023SC0260 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

In this regard, the Member States' role is critical. If Missions are to succeed, significant resources will need to be mobilised by national and local authorities. The same is valid for the private sector. Yet the path to achieving this goal is not straightforward. While the Communication on EU Missions points to a few possible directions, such as making more systematic use of cohesion policy for EU Missions, increasing cooperation with the EIB, mobilising public-private partnerships and the public procurement of innovation, strengthening political leadership, a consistent strategy to enhance the funding of EU Missions can only be articulated with the direct involvement of the Member States.

In the upcoming years of EU Missions implementation success hinges greatly on the dedication of national and local authorities, as well as stakeholders. In view of this, to construct jointly the next phase of EU Missions, policy guidance from ERAC is sought on the following questions:

*EU Missions result in a specific layer of design, co-ordination and implementation of policymaking with various interfaces between EU, national, regional and local level, involving many stakeholders and citizens within and beyond the R&I arena.*

- *What actions do you plan as Member States and Associated Countries to roll out EU missions in your country and set up adequate governance structures?*
- *How can the Commission and the Member States/Associated Countries work together to reduce the complexity of mission governance, and to empower those who embark on this multi-level, cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary policy approach?*

## **Annex. Outcomes of the Mutual Learning Exercise on EU Missions**

The Mutual Learning Exercises (MLE) on EU Missions are focused on EU Missions implementation at the national level. ERAC delegates were consulted to gather Member States interest. Following four topics were selected. First report was published in January 2024, rest of the reports and dedicated dissemination event will follow (*time tbc*).

- [Creating national governance structures to coordinate the implementation of EU Missions](#)
- Mission portfolios
- Securing funding and creating synergies
- Citizen engagement

### **Member States experiences in establishing governance for EU Missions, based on the MLE on EU Missions report “Creating national governance structures for the implementation of EU missions”**

The PSF MLE on EU Missions governance was hold on 28-29 September 2023 in Vienna. Participants highlighted:

- the importance of building the governance on existing structures and culture;
- the need for strong governance and individual leaders or ambassadors for each EU mission;
- the importance of education and training to develop new ways of conceiving public actions;
- the need to rebuild public capacities;
- the persistent challenge of engaging sectorial ministries avoiding a STI policy trap;
- the importance of continuous support for evolving governance structures;
- the need for different tailored approaches to missions, with clear next steps and key performance indicators to measure impact.

The report states that the governance challenges in mission-oriented policies vary across the policy life cycle, requiring dedicated strategic, programming and operational governance bodies. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to mission governance and the need for strategies that are adaptable to the specific demands of different missions, the unique institutional contexts, and various stages of the mission cycle.

In September 2023 18 countries participating in the MLE survey with the objective to: (1) assess the progress of individual countries in establishing governance structures for EU missions, (2) discern the salient elements of these structures and the differences across missions, (3) identify perceived challenges in the multi-level governance for missions, and finally, (4) to gather insights on effective practices in EU mission governance, along with the factors contributing to their success.

The survey revealed that most countries are in the process of implementing or developing governance structures, and that only a few countries currently lack both a structure and plans for one. While there is a shared objective of aligning with the EU missions, it is evident that countries have customised their governance structures to best fit their national contexts and administrative frameworks. Specifically, countries fall into a few categories in terms of progress in setting up a governance structure:

- **In place, partly implemented:** AT, DE, FI, IE, NO, SE, LT, RO, FR<sup>3</sup> have governance structures in place, such as working groups and committees, but they are still in the process of fully implementing them.
- **In place, not implemented:** PL, core elements such as a coordinating ministry are in place, but implementation through establishing hubs not yet.
- **Building block under development:** DK, PT, SK, BE (fl), CZ do not yet have formalised governance structures, but they are working to develop the building blocks, through stakeholder consultation platforms and other activities.
- **Not in place:** GR, MT, BU reported not yet having a governance structure in place or concrete plans to develop one.

Responses also indicated that different European countries have adopted varying governance structures and processes, including distinctive mechanisms for vertical and horizontal coordination. While there is a shared objective of aligning with the EU missions, it is evident that countries have customised their governance structures to best fit their national contexts and administrative frameworks.

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<sup>3</sup> Based on Enhanced Dialogues, Spain and Estonia fall within this category, each having Mission's Mirror Groups in place for EU Mission

Table below illustrates some cross-sectoral and multi-level mechanisms adopted in different countries:

Type of coordination	Modes	Examples
<i>Horizontal (cross-sectoral)</i>	Inter-ministerial working groups/meetings between national ministries (Germany, Portugal, Lithuania, France, Austria)	Lithuania's Strategic Configuration Group for Horizon Europe includes representatives from various sectoral ministries
	Inter-agency collaboration platforms (Sweden, Czechia)	Sweden's mission working groups have initiated some horizontal collaborations in areas such as food systems.
	Stakeholder consultation across sectors (Slovakia, Belgium)	Slovakia engages a broad array of R&I stakeholders from various sectors
<i>Vertical (multi-level)</i>	Federal-state working groups (Austria)	Austria has started discussions between national and regional partners through platforms such as the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning
	Alignment with regional smart specialisation strategies (Czechia, Slovakia)	Czechia's national RIS3 strategy ensures resources from regional levels support priority areas
	Emergent bottom-up regional mission activities (Sweden, Ireland)	In Sweden, the Blekinge region independently initiated work on climate change adaptation which now links with EU-level platforms

Further, governance structures and processes vary strongly across EU missions. While central coordination bodies are often responsible across missions, coordination mechanisms, responsible authorities, geographic coordination levels, and alignment with national priorities tend to differ from one mission to another. The Cancer and Climate Adaptation Missions seem to leverage more mature national structures. In Norway the Cancer Mission has the most comprehensive national coordination group and in Germany more advanced links to national initiatives for health/cancer and climate adaptation. In terms of vertical coordination, Germany, Ireland and Belgium reported that efforts to build regional links are particularly salient in the Cities and Climate Adaptation Missions. In Austria, the EU Cities mission builds on several years of coordinated interventions in the area of smart and sustainable cities.

When asked about the main issues associated with governing EU missions, a number of key common challenges emerged as well as examples of good practices and enabling factors.

**Key challenges:**

- Ensuring coordination and buy-in across different national ministries, agencies and governance levels;
- Limited resources and capacity for establishing governance structures;
- Integrating input from wider groups of stakeholders beyond traditional R&I actors;
- Aligning timeframes and priorities across EU, national and regional policies and funding programmes;
- Adapting traditional linear governance with more agile, experimental and iterative approaches needed for missions;
- Monitoring progress and assessing impact with longer-term broad goals of missions;
- Communicating and keeping the visibility of missions high among national stakeholders not familiar with them;
- Securing political commitment and public buy-in for prioritising missions on the ground.

**Good practices and enabling conditions:**

- ✓ Strategically embedding missions in national research and innovation plans to formally engage stakeholders;
  - ✓ Pursuing pragmatic learning-by-doing in governance through ongoing revision rather than overplanning upfront;
  - ✓ Bottom-up initiatives by cities, regions and researchers to complement central structures;
  - ✓ Using existing bilateral coordination platforms between national and sub-national partners;
  - ✓ Drawing governance approaches from prior experience with cross-sectoral coordination and stakeholder engagement;
  - ✓ Tailoring coordination to variable geometry – composition and format based on local priorities;
  - ✓ Allowing for ambiguity and tensions during structural changes in complex systems;
  - ✓ Independent advisory mechanisms aiding strategy design without getting entrenched in system inertia.
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