



**ERRIN** European Regions  
Research and  
Innovation Network

# 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW



# INTRODUCTION

We closed 2021 with the Autumn Annual General Meeting, which proved to be a great success! I could not be prouder of the hard work done by our Working Groups and the ERRIN Team in relation to the EU Missions that featured in our policy debate. We had an impressive line-up for this session with key EU policymakers, demonstrating the significant impact of [our work on the EU Missions](#) so far.

Looking back at 2021, a lot has been accomplished – almost 70 meetings and events were organised this year (some 25 more than last year). At the same time, we are not only looking at quantity but also quality - the Working Groups have been focusing on more strategic topics and long-term activities with continuous dialogues with the European Commission. More cross cutting issues have been tackled too, requiring further collaboration and coordination across different thematic areas.

I would also like to mention the Management Board task force on widening and deepening engagement. This has generated new discussions within the network on how to further increase diversity and encourage members and their stakeholders to take an active role in ERRIN and research and innovation more broadly. The task force provides us with an opportunity to broaden our scope but also position ERRIN towards EU institutions as a network that considers diversity as a priority in research and innovation.

Finally, returning to our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. In June, we brought together some of the key individuals who have contributed to the [ERRIN journey](#) so far. We would have liked to organise a big end-of-the-year party with you all but due to the current circumstances it was unfortunately not possible. However, we look forward to meeting all ERRIN enthusiasts soon again – hopefully in person.

Pirita Lindholm, Director



# ERRIN MEMBERS

The [ERRIN network](#) continued to grow in 2021 and was joined by five new members:

Full members: Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Häme EU Office (Finland), Regione Liguria (Italy), Stockholm Region EU Office (Sweden).

Associate members: Limerick City and County Council (Ireland).

ERRIN maintained a steady number of members in 2021. Additionally, 2021 saw:

- **13** ERRIN Working Groups were led by **47** engaged co-leaders representing **36** member regions
- In total **68** meetings and events were organised
- On average those meetings counted more than **50** participants
- **2** special ERRIN taskforces involving members were created



# 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY - ERRIN JOURNEY

The year 2021 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ERRIN network! We have been celebrating this landmark moment throughout the year. One such occasion was our Spring Annual General Meeting, where key actors, members, friends and former directors of ERRIN took us through ERRIN's timeline. Learn about the milestones and people that brought ERRIN from where it started in 2001 to where it is heading in the future.

## 2001 Sowing the seeds of ERRIN



ERRIN began as an informal network in 2001, which eventually led to the FP6 project 'Regions of Knowledge' in 2004.

## 2006 ERRIN early years



Under the guidance of ERRIN Director Charlotte Andersdotter, the network was officially established with its name, an organisational structure and paying members.

## 2007 Emergence of thematic working groups



The first ERRIN Working Groups were established and began to pave the way for ERRIN's bottom-up and member-driven approach – something that continues today.

'Over the years, ERRIN's working groups have made friends and these friends can be found everywhere in Brussels from the Commission to the Committee of the Regions to the Parliament' - Longstanding WG leader and Management Board member Martina Hilger (Free Hanseatic City of Bremen).

[Member profile](#)

## 2009 ERRIN starts engaging in projects



With Claus Schultz as the ERRIN Director, the network began to engage with European projects as a way to support members and further the network's reputation among the European institutions and beyond.

# 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY - ERRIN JOURNEY

## 2010 Onwards and upwards



Richard Tuffs became ERRIN director in 2010 and developed the network's reputation and increased its membership. He also further enhanced the network's project development activities through brokerage events and expanded ERRIN's policy work.

## 2015 Place-based R&I initiatives emerging



During the early 2010s, ERRIN began to increase its collaboration with DG Research and Innovation, through initiatives such as the Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE) and [Knowledge Exchange Platform](#) (KEP).

## 2018 Eyes on the Horizon



ERRIN began to significantly intensify its policy work relating to the then-upcoming R&I programme, Horizon Europe. Through this work, the perspective of place-based research and innovation ecosystems was anchored in the R&I policy discussions. The first ecosystem workshop organised with the European Commission kickstarted this effort.

[R&I ecosystems](#)

## 2011 ERRIN's 100th member: South Moravian Innovation Centre



The ERRIN community has been steadily growing and reached 100 in 2011.

'We very much value collaboration with other regions and the opportunity to interact with representatives of the European Commission because for single regions it might be complicated to achieve this on their own and raise their profile in Brussels' - Monika Vrbková, South Moravian Region, ERRIN's 100th member.

[Member profile](#)

## 2017 Reinvigoration of the network



Pirita Lindholm became ERRIN Director in 2017 and established a new Management Board taskforce in 2018 to work on ERRIN's strategic development. The ERRIN missions were revamped, the Working Groups were clustered according to the structure of the upcoming Horizon Europe programme and the Secretariat continued to enlarge and develop.

[ERRIN's missions](#)

# 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY - ERRIN JOURNEY

## 2019 Fostering project opportunities



In 2019, ERRIN updated its project facilitation process in order to increase project opportunities for members. The process also ensured that proposals ERRIN joined, seven of which were successful as a result, were strategically relevant to ERRIN's missions. In 2020 five of these projects, [RIPEET](#), [CHARTER](#), [RECIPROCITY](#), [Be.CULTOUR](#) and [MOSAIC](#) were approved.

[Project process](#)

## 2021 ERRIN today and tomorrow



ERRIN has taken an active role in shaping various EU level initiatives and ensuring that local and regional innovation ecosystems are at their centre. The Horizon Europe Missions provide a good example of that work.

[Horizon Europe Missions](#)

## Towards a more inclusive network



As ERRIN moves into its third decade, it's focusing more than ever on increasing diversity and deepening engagement in R&I. Looking within and beyond the network, we take steps to support the unlocking of full R&I potential of regional ecosystems across all geographic areas and stakeholder groups.

# PRIORITY WORK STREAMS IN 2021

Four priority work streams guided the activities of ERRIN in 2021.

- Taking full advantage of the new programmes, instruments and opportunities for regions and their ecosystems during the new financial period
- Continuing to be actively engaged in green recovery and seek further coordination between different governance levels and funding priorities
- Utilising the opportunities provided by Horizon Europe and continue to shape the new programme elements - Missions, European Innovation ecosystems (EIE) action
- Setting up a dedicated Management Board Task Force with an objective to increase diversity and explore tapping into the underutilised R&I potentials

Following the priority work streams the Working Groups have been focusing on more strategic topics and long-term activities with the aim of keeping the conversation going with the European Institutions and in particular the European Commission. The ERRIN Secretariat has supported this work through the organisation of policy dialogues involving a large number of ERRIN members. Those dialogues have also resulted in several recommendations, contributions and reports in areas such as the New European Bauhaus and the EU Missions, as well as transition pathways related to the industrial ecosystems for recovery.

To maximise funding opportunities, the ERRIN Secretariat reviewed all the draft Horizon Europe Work Programmes to look for synergies between future calls for proposals and the priorities of the different ERRIN Working Groups. A number of large-scale online partnering events were complemented by dedicated Information sessions on relevant calls and interactive Coffee Morning sessions, where members of the Working Groups were invited to informally discuss the priorities of their respective ecosystems.

# WORKING GROUPS

## STRATEGIC AND TRANSVERSAL



POLICY



SMART  
SPECIALISATION



SCIENCE & EDUCATION  
FOR SOCIETY



INNOVATION &  
INVESTMENT

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND FOOD



BIOECONOMY



BLUE GROWTH



SMART CITIES



TRANSPORT

## CROSS-CUTTING



ICT



ENERGY & CLIMATE  
CHANGE



TOURISM & CULTURAL  
HERITAGE



DESIGN & CREATIVITY



HEALTH

## CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

## HEALTH

# PROJECTS

## STRATEGIC AND TRANSVERSAL



### MOSAIC

Mission-Oriented SwafS to Advance Innovation through Co-creation



### RIPEET

Responsible Research and Innovation Policy Experimentations for Energy Transition



### CHARTER

Cultural Heritage Actions to Refine Education, Training and Roles



### BE.CULTOUR

Beyond Cultural Tourism



### RECIPROCITY

Replication of innovative concepts for peri-urban, rural or inner-city mobility



### CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION

Sharing solutions in European cities and regions

## LOW CARBON ECONOMY



### UNALAB

Urban Nature Labs



### GREEN GROWTH

Mediterranean Cooperation and Innovation for a Green Economy



### NET ZERO CITIES

Towards climate-neutral cities in Europe



### DT4REGIONS

Digital Transformation for Regions

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND FOOD

## CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

## HEALTH AND ICT

# PROJECTS' DEVELOPMENT

2021 saw the launch of the European Union's new Research and Innovation funding programme, Horizon Europe, and with it came new and exciting ways for ERRIN members to engage with project facilitation.

At the start of the year, the ERRIN Secretariat reviewed all the draft Horizon Europe Work Programmes and looked at synergies between future calls for proposals and the priorities of the different ERRIN Working Groups.

Having identified their upcoming priorities, a number of Working Groups organised both dedicated Information sessions on relevant calls and interactive Coffee Morning sessions, where members of the Working Groups were invited to informally discuss the priorities of their respective ecosystems. The Coffee Mornings, a new innovative approach, first introduced in the Transport Working Group, not only gave a space for members - both Brussels-based and ecosystem actors - to start thinking more concretely about the future calls but also acted as a space for informal matchmaking.

In addition to informal preparatory exercises, the ERRIN Network organised a number of large-scale online partnering events. The Erasmus+ Project Development Workshop, organised by a dedicated Task Force within the SEFS WG, was particularly successful format. The event brought together over 90 participants and resulted in the development of four Erasmus+ project proposals.

As is always the case, when a new Research & Innovation funding programme is launched, during 2021, ERRIN and its Working Groups offered members a chance to familiarise themselves with the new structure and approaches within the programme and to start working on new research and innovation projects. These exciting activities will continue into 2022 with a number of Work Groups already setting their eyes on specific calls and projects for the Working Groups to develop.

# POLICY WORK

ERRIN has been following with interest the reform of the European research Area (ERA) and actively contributed to this process over the last two years. During 2021 several discussions were organised to explore the regional dimension of the ERA, including how the multi-level governance dimension could be introduced in the renewed policy framework. In addition, we have advocated for the inclusion of the ecosystem thinking in the ERA, which have resulted in a dedicated Policy Agenda action on 'Building-up regional and national R&I ecosystems to improve regional/national excellence and competitiveness' as well as new elements in the Horizon Europe Programme such as the Call on Excellence Hubs under the widening part of the programme.

The EU Missions have been a priority for ERRIN and several Working Groups for the last few years. In 2021 several activities on all five of the EU Missions were carried out ranging for information sessions to joint workshops with the European Commission. To give an example, under the leadership of the Smart Cities Working Group, ERRIN has influenced the process and the delivery mechanism, the Climate City Contract, of the Cities Mission. With the two projects, NetZeroCities and MOSAIC, ERRIN can also support members in the implementation process of the mission and maximise synergies between policy and project work.



**MAGDA DE CARLI**  
**HEAD OF UNIT, ERA & COUNTRY**  
**INTELLIGENCE, DG R&I**

RENEWED EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA  
ROLE OF REGIONS AND REGIONAL  
STAKEHOLDERS



# FOCUSING ON GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

## EU MISSIONS

### **Mission on 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030**

In 2021, the Smart Cities Working Group continued to follow the Cities Mission and maintained a constant policy dialogue with the Mission Secretariat. The WG activities have focused on influencing the Implementation Plan – both by organising a discussion with the European Commission and developing an input paper – as well as addressing concerns regarding the first steps of the mission implementation process – the call for Expressions of Interest and the Climate City Contract. The WG will together with the wider ERRIN membership continue to provide input to the Climate City Contract process to ensure the successful implementation of the Cities Mission.

### **Mission: A Soil Deal for Europe**

The Bioeconomy Working Group has addressed the Soil Mission by organising two meetings on the mission in 2021. The first meeting offered an introduction to the Soil Mission and its objectives, whereas the second meeting focused on the Implementation Plan and the role of regions and their local ecosystems in the mission. In light of the recently launched EU Soil Strategy for 2030 and the Mission Work Programme, the WG will continue following the mission and its implementation progress in the new year.

### **Mission: Adaptation to Climate Change**

Continuing its work on the Mission's development and implementation, the Secretariat has focused on further engaging members in the European Commission's work. A workshop co-organised by the Commission, EIT KIC-Climate and ERRIN took place in March to discuss in practice the implementation of the Mission, and we have follow up later in the year with an event on the Mission's development organised by the Energy & Climate Change Working Group. This has resulted in an informal dialogue with DG CLIMA on possible involvement of ERRIN members in the Mission, which will be continued in 2022.

# FOCUSING ON GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

## EU MISSIONS

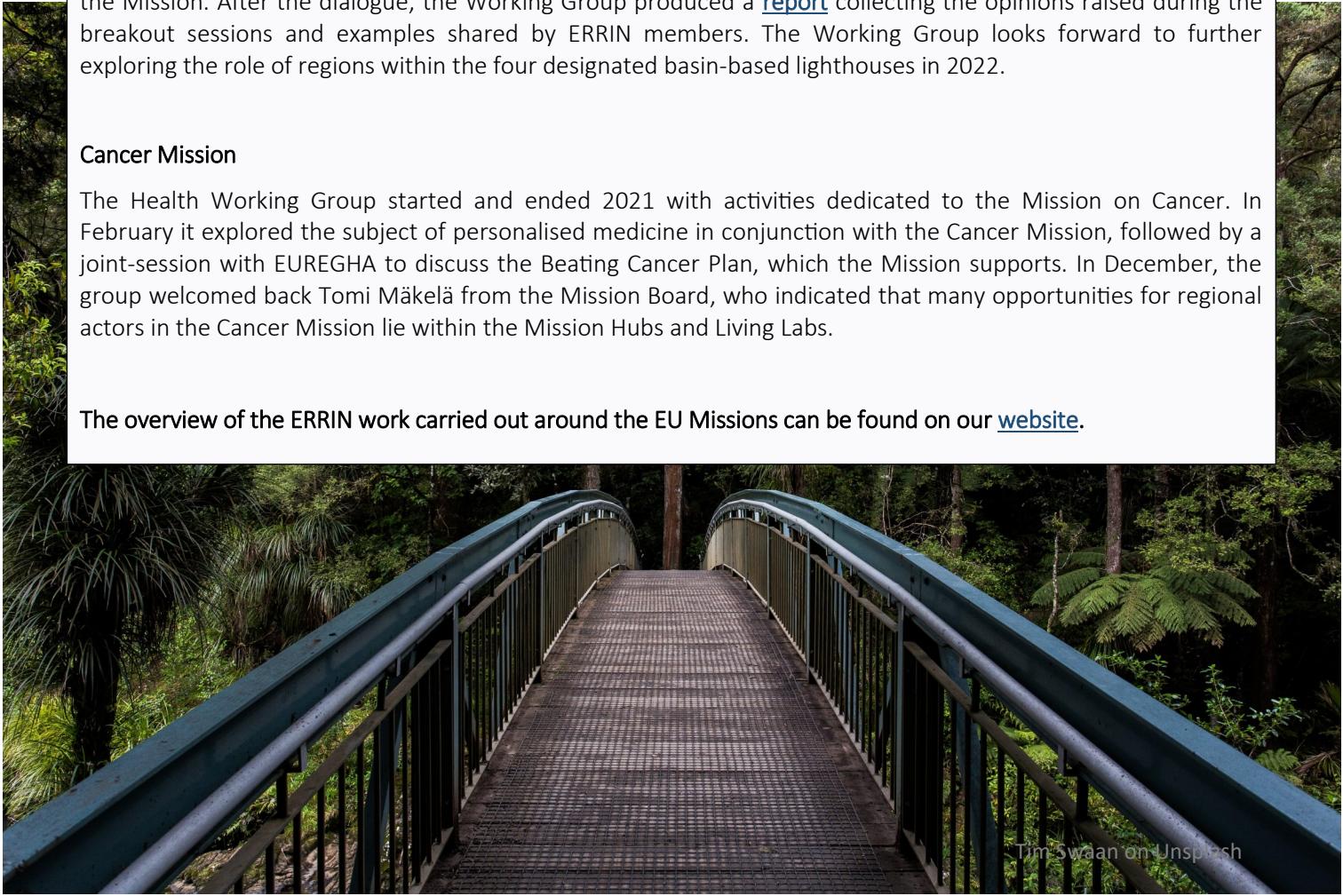
### Ocean & waters mission

In June, the Blue Economy Working Group co-organised a dialogue with the European Commission's Secretariat for Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters. Together regional local stakeholders and the Mission Secretariat explored existing and potential opportunities for regional actors in the area-based lighthouse demonstrators in the Mission. After the dialogue, the Working Group produced a [report](#) collecting the opinions raised during the breakout sessions and examples shared by ERRIN members. The Working Group looks forward to further exploring the role of regions within the four designated basin-based lighthouses in 2022.

### Cancer Mission

The Health Working Group started and ended 2021 with activities dedicated to the Mission on Cancer. In February it explored the subject of personalised medicine in conjunction with the Cancer Mission, followed by a joint-session with EUREGHA to discuss the Beating Cancer Plan, which the Mission supports. In December, the group welcomed back Tomi Mäkelä from the Mission Board, who indicated that many opportunities for regional actors in the Cancer Mission lie within the Mission Hubs and Living Labs.

The overview of the ERRIN work carried out around the EU Missions can be found on our [website](#).



# FOCUSING ON GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

## Transition Pathways

After the inclusion of Mobility among the 14 Industrial Ecosystems by the Annual Single Market Report 2021 the Transport Working Group started a dialogue with DG GROWTH on the role of regional ecosystems in the transition pathway on Mobility. After a first dedicated info session in November, the WG members agreed to keep addressing the topic in 2022 and participate in the consultation when open.

In 2021, DG GROW involved stakeholders in the co-creation of future scenarios for a resilient, innovative and sustainable tourism ecosystem. The Cultural Heritage & Tourism Working Group contributed with inputs and experiences from members, and took part with regional experts in the thematic stakeholder meetings on the way forward. The WG is looking to continue the dialogue with DG GROW in 2022, and to further engage members to take action within the transition pathway.

## The New Urban Mobility Framework

To support the transition to cleaner, greener and smarter mobility, in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal, in 2021 the European Commission developed a new Urban Mobility Framework. In order to contribute to its draft, in July the transport WG invited Isabelle Vandoorne, Deputy Head of Unit, Research and Innovation (and Urban Mobility) in DG MOVE to present its state of the art and to discuss with the ERRIN members on priorities and recommendations. In parallel, building on the work done in the previous years on the revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Guidelines, the transport WG produced an [opinion on the new European Freight and Logistic Roadmap](#).

# FOCUSING ON GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITION

## Data spaces

ERRIN has been putting a strong focus on green transition for some years now but 2021 allowed to dive into twin transition, highlighting digital aspects as well. The ICT Working Group concentrated on the challenge of greening the digital sector, which should ensure that digital transition does not hamper, but promotes the green transition. An event was organised in June on implementing the green ICT on the regional and local level, presenting regional examples and best practices as well as Commission's view on the role of regions in the process and how the digital policy can be integrated at the local and regional level.

Common European data spaces have been another topic of focus. Data space opportunities extend among other areas into health, via European Health Data Space. The Health and ICT WGs organised in September a joint event on the state of play of the EHDS and opportunities for regions. During the event, Helsinki's TEHDAS Joint Action was presented, which is working on developing and promoting concepts for secondary uses of data for citizen's health, public health and research and innovation across Europe, as a preparatory body for the EHDS. ERRIN's DigitalHealthEurope [project](#), which came to an end in 2021, was also showcased.

## The New European Bauhaus

In June 2021 ERRIN became a New European Bauhaus (NEB) partner. Within this framework, ERRIN organised a Bauhaus conversation at the end of June with the participation of Xavier Troussard, which was followed by a [written contribution](#) with inputs on the development and functioning of the NEB initiative.

So far, ERRIN has been following the latest NEB developments through the partners meetings organised by the JRC. Following this, we organised internal discussions within a dedicated ERRIN Bauhaus taskforce, which consists of our Working Groups leaders interested in this initiative. Going forward, ERRIN wants to involve the wider membership in the NEB activities planned for 2022.

# LOOKING TOWARDS 2022

The new year kicked off with the French Council Presidency, which ERRIN will follow closely, continuing exchanges with the Presidency team that started in early autumn last year. The first major event during the presidency will be the Forum of Universities for the Future of Europe in which ERRIN will participate to discuss how the collaboration between universities and regions, and other quadruple helix actors, can be further intensified. During the French Council Presidency several other important events will be organised on our priority areas, such as the EU Missions. Also, the next edition of the WIRE – Week of Innovative Regions in Europe - conference will be organised.

Throughout the last year, ERRIN's Working Groups have carried out impressive work related to the five EU Missions. This work will be intensified in 2022, also working with the Policy Working Group, to coordinate our activities and pull together inputs on the missions. The objective of this work is two-fold: influencing the next steps of the mission process and the upcoming Mission Work Programmes 2023-2024, as well as supporting members as they take active roles in the EU Missions.

The ERRIN Management Board Task Force will continue to further explore aspects of widening and deepening engagement in research and innovation. In 2022 a number of dedicated activities will be organised with an aim of also engaging a more diverse group of members in research and innovation projects in the new programmes, targeting ecosystem building and connecting place-based innovation ecosystems. The Task Force will also continue the process of positioning ERRIN towards EU institutions as a network that considers diversity as a priority in research and innovation.

Following the yearly planning process of ERRIN's Working Groups, the priority work streams for the next two years are currently being discussed by the ERRIN Management Board. Key issues under discussion include: the education and skills agenda, and what type of activities should ERRIN offer in these areas; industrial ecosystems for recovery, and activities in the intersection of research and innovation and industrial policy; and further deepening ecosystem thinking through strategic partnerships with other organisations with the aim of bringing ecosystem stakeholders closer together.





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