

## POLICY WORKING GROUP

### ANNUAL PLAN 2022

#### WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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#### OBJECTIVES

The Policy Working Group works closely with the Management Board and the leaders of the other WGs to position ERRIN on cross-cutting policy issues. The WG follows closely overall research and innovation policy, in particular the Horizon Europe framework programme, from an overarching perspective and ensuring coordination of horizontal programme aspects. The WG also focuses on the implementation of the European Research Area (ERA) as the renewed policy framework and agenda for research and innovation.

#### CONTEXT

Key EU level priorities, strategies, and events that the Working Group aims to follow in 2022

- Governance and practical implementation of the European Research Area (ERA)
  - Understand the regional perspective of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 and the next steps of the ERA Forum for Transition
  - ERA Hubs implementation
  - Synergies between ERA and the European Education Area (work led by SEFS WG)
  - Exploring the potential development of a ‘European Innovation agenda’
- Horizontal aspects of Horizon Europe
  - European Partnerships (overview and governance)
  - Missions: implementation plans/governance/portfolio approach (in collaboration with Health, Energy & Climate, Bioeconomy, Blue Growth and Smart Cities WG)
  - Understanding evaluations and impact: What does it take to be successful in Horizon Europe?
  - Begin to explore the strategic foresight process and understand its impact on the Horizon Europe strategic plan process for 2025-2027
- Funding synergies – R&I and cohesion, recovery (in collaboration with S3 WG)
- Future of European Universities (in collaboration with SEFS WG)
  - Exploring the regional/local dimension of the European Universities initiative/strategy
  - Follow-up of the French Council Presidency event on this topic

## Key funding programmes for the Working Group

- Horizon Europe
  - E.g. Widening call on Excellence Hubs (HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-04-01)
  - E.g. European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) CONNECT calls
- Erasmus+
  - European Universities calls
- Overall understanding of the R&I funding landscape

How does the group support partnership building and collaborate with other European organisations or networks?

- Potential collaboration with EARTO on technology infrastructures
- The WG will identify key networks & organisations relevant for collaboration related to ERA and Horizon Europe novelties

## ACTIVITIES

### Monthly meetings

The Policy Working Group organises regular internal meetings that are designed to exchange information and intelligence and further define the issues to be tackled in the group. The WG also serves as a place where members, and in particular Working Group leaders, can inform the group about on-going policy related activities within other WGs as well as or encourage collaboration with other organisations.

### Widening and Excellence Hubs

#### 17 January

ERRIN has been advocating for integrating an ecosystem approach in the ERA since the start of its renewal process. The Policy WG has organised several discussions on the regional dimension of the ERA and the ERA Hubs concept. The 2021 November adopted ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 features a specific action on “building-up regional and national R&I ecosystems to improve regional/national excellence and competitiveness”. At the same time, a call has been opened under the widening part of the Horizon Europe programme on the ERA Hubs (HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ACCESS-04-01). The call focuses on the collaboration of place-based innovation ecosystems in widening countries and beyond. It can be understood as a widening projection of ERA Hubs and the ERA policy actions. This meeting will discuss this call together with DG RTD.

### European Strategy for Universities: how to reinforce links with regions

#### 24 February

The European Commission started 2022 by presenting its Strategy for European Universities. The strategy is rooted in the ERA and the EEA and builds on the results of the Erasmus+ pilot calls on European Universities, with ambitions to expand to 60 European Universities with over 500 higher education institutions by mid-2024. To reach its four objectives, including to empower universities as key actors in the twin transitions, the strategy makes more than 50 proposals and sets out four flagship

initiatives to further reinforce transnational cooperation between universities and leverage the strength of universities across Europe.

In this meeting, DG EAC and DG R&I will be invited to present the main features of this new strategy, its links with existing initiatives and synergies between Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and other national instruments, as outlined in the strategy. Following the Forum on the Future of universities held on 25-26 January, ERRIN wishes to continue discussing the importance of an ecosystem approach in transnational cooperation involving all stakeholders from the quadruple helix, and to explore how European Universities remain rooted in their local ecosystems while contributing to and benefitting from the alliance structure.

### **EU Missions – coordination meeting**

**24 March**

This meeting aims to bring together the five Working Group co-leads that are driving forward ERRIN's work on the EU Missions. The aim is to discuss joint issues related to the EU Missions (governance, portfolio approach...) as well as lessons learned so far from the activities organised on the missions.

As a main outcome of the meeting, recommendations related to the EU Missions will be collected and shared with the Commission with the aim of influencing the Horizon Europe Mission Work Programmes 2023-2024.

### **EU Missions – meeting with the European Commission**

**28 April**

This meeting follows the meeting in March and can serve as an opportunity to exchange with the European Commission on the latest developments on the EU Missions as well as further discuss key messages collected from the internal meeting.

There is also an opportunity to feed into the Council Conclusions to be adopted during the Competitiveness Council on 10 June 2022.

### **ERA Policy Agenda/Next steps of the ERA Forum for Transition**

**June 2022**

The [Council Conclusions on the future governance on the ERA](#), adopted on 26 November 2021 includes an annex on the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024. This agenda includes a number of policy actions that will be discussed further within the ERA Forum with the Member States starting from February/March 2022. This meeting will take a look at the state of play of the ERA Policy Agenda, including the policy agenda point on "Building-up regional and national R&I ecosystems to improve regional/national excellence and competitiveness".

EC and MS representatives can be invited.

### **Other important topics on the agenda (timing pending)**

#### **Towards a European 'innovation agenda'**

In the event of relevant developments having taken place, the meeting would feature a presentation from the Commission, be it pre- or post-publication of the Communication.

### **Regional dimension of ERA/ERA Hubs**

Presentation of the results of the EC study on the ERA Hubs, as a follow-up to the meeting on ERA Hubs held by the Policy WG in late 2021. Could also be a way to further define the policy action on “Building-up regional and national R&I ecosystems to improve regional/national excellence and competitiveness”.

### **Upcoming meetings and themes (Autumn 2022)**

Topics to keep a general monitoring eye on:

- European Partnerships: internal coordination to understand key horizontal questions coming from thematic WGs working with partnerships, and if relevant, meeting with European Commission and representatives from several partnerships?
- Synergies between Horizon Europe and Structural Funds – How to make synergies operational?
- Practical side of Horizon Europe: evaluation and impact => which actors are successful in project development and why?
- Follow-up of the strategic foresight process. How will that impact the Horizon Europe strategic plan process?