Conclusions on the implementation of the roadmap for the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures

COMPETITIVENESS Council meeting
Brussels, 26 May 2014

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING its Conclusions of 11 December 2012[1], endorsing the Commission Communication on 'A reinforced European research area partnership for excellence and growth'[2], and emphasising the need for renewing and adapting the mandate of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) to adequately address the existing challenges and also to ensure the follow-up of implementation of already on-going ESFRI projects after a comprehensive assessment, as well as the prioritisation of the infrastructure projects listed in the ESFRI roadmap;

TAKING NOTE of the ESFRI report of 7 April 2014 entitled the prioritisation of support to ESFRI projects for implementation;

1. WELCOMES the contribution of ESFRI to the objectives of the European Research Area and to achieving the Innovation Union commitment on research infrastructures.

2. ACKNOWLEDGES the work done by ESFRI to identify priority projects which are mature enough to be under implementation 2015-2016 and whose timely implementation is considered essential to extend the frontiers of knowledge in the fields concerned.

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[1]   Doc. 17649/12
[2]   Doc. 12848/12

P R E S S

3. NOTES that ESFRI has identified three projects from the ESFRI roadmap as priorities[3] in that they are pushing the boundaries of scientific excellence, are strategically relevant for Europe, and are ready for immediate action (part 1 of the Annex).

4. NOTES that ESFRI has identified nine additional projects that could reach implementation phase by 2015-2016 (part 2 of the Annex).

5. NOTES that ESFRI has presented an analysis of the need to support some already implemented projects for sustainability and European coverage (part 3 of the Annex) , and a note on the potential for distributed infrastructures to deliver integrated services and hence greater scientific impact in biomedical research and in environmental research.

6. CONFIRMS the Member States' commitment to focus their available national resources on the respective prioritised projects they are financially participating in.

7. INVITES the Commission, under Horizon 2020, to complement the Member States' own financial commitments through a one-time financial contribution for the priority projects, and to financially support the other projects identified by ESFRI and listed in the Annex.

8. ENCOURAGES Member States to consider investing in the implementation and operation of ESFRI projects using also European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) by including research infrastructures in their Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation and by using the possibility of financing operations outside the ESIF programme areas[4]; INVITES the Commission and the Member States' authorities to enhance synergies between ESIF and Horizon 2020.

9. RECOGNISES the importance and progress of those further ESFRI projects that are already under implementation, or well on the way towards it.

10. WELCOMES the plans of ESFRI to update its roadmap in 2015/2016; CALLS on ESFRI to continue the prioritisation of all the research infrastructure projects of the ESFRI roadmap, and INVITES the Member States to consider putting forward further projects for possible inclusion in this roadmap update.

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[3] The European Plate Observing System (EPOS), the European Life-Science Infrastructure for Biological Information (ELIXIR) and the European Spallation Source (ESS).

[4] In accordance with Article 70(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, OJ L 347 of 20.12.2013, p.320-469.

Prioritisation of Support to ESFRI Projects for Implementation

1. **Three Priority Projects for implementation**

   - EPOS: European Plate Observing System

   - ELIXIR: The European Life-Science Infrastructure for Biological Information

   - ESS: The European Spallation Source

2. **Implementation Support**

   - ECCSEL: European Carbon dioxide Capture and Storage Laboratory Infrastructure

   - EISCAT-3D: The next generation incoherent scatter radar system

   - EMSO: European Multidisciplinary Seafloor & Water column Observatory

   - BBMRI: Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure

   - ELI: Extreme Light Infrastructure

   - CTA: Cherenkov Telescope Array

   - SKA: Square Kilometre Array

   - CLARIN: Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure

   - DARIAH: Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities

3. **Support for Sustainability and European Coverage**

   - CESSDA: Council of European Social Science Data Archives

   - SHARE: Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe

   - ESS ERIC: European Social Survey"