

**NOTE**

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Subject: Summary conclusions of the 26th meeting of the Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC), held in Brussels on 29 September 2015

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The meeting was chaired by Mr. Dan ANDRÉE (SFIC Chair, SE). Agenda point 4 was chaired by Ms. Iulia Mihail (SFIC Vice-Chair, RO).

The Forum drew the following conclusions:

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda (CM 3792/15) was adopted. The following AOBs were added to the agenda: input on activities and work of the SFIC China working group (requested by FR) and an update on the preparations for the second research marketing workshop (requested by DE).

The Chair recalled that the **summary conclusions** of the SFIC meeting of 9 June 2015 had been approved by written procedure as set out in doc. 1359/15.

## 2. SFIC-GPC cooperation

Mr. Fulvio ESPOSITO (GPC Chair, IT) made a presentation focusing on examples of ongoing internationalisation activities of Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) and on how and where SFIC could support JPIs in its internationalisation efforts. Mr. ESPOSITO stressed that all JPIs have an international dimension but such dimension can be either (1) elementary (basic level, with some contacts with third countries) or (2) based on a well-developed cooperation (level in which third countries are full JPI members). A suggestion was made on GPC and SFIC having a framework for cooperation based on a two-way interaction: SFIC sharing its experiences and expertise with third countries with the GPC as well as the JPIs sharing their experiences (and difficulties encountered) with third countries.

Delegations welcomed Mr. ESPOSITO's presentation and showed interest in looking at the international cooperation component of JPIs as well as in further deepen SFIC-GPC cooperation.

Ms. Cristina RUSSO (Commission) mentioned that there is still some room for improvement for cooperation between GPC and SFIC but welcomed any type of enhanced cooperation. Moreover, Commission is reflecting on how to involve third countries even more in the joint programming process.

The Chair concluded by stressing the importance of a two-way interaction between SFIC and GPC with, for instance, the following cooperation elements:

- JPIs being invited to future SFIC plenaries;
- The SFIC Chair attending one of the forthcoming GPC plenaries;
- SFIC working groups interacting with JPIs;
- Interaction between SFIC and GPC in the framework of the ERAC Steering Board.

### 3. European Research Area - Governance

The Chair gave an update to SFIC members on progress achieved and ongoing discussions on ERA governance at ERAC, with ERAC to deliver its input to Council by 15 October in view of the Council conclusions on the new ERA advisory structure foreseen for December 2015. The Chair highlighted the fact that all Chairs of ERA groups will be invited to the ERAC Steering Board as well as the requirement of the ERA groups to present their respective Work Programmes (in this case, SFIC was praised as having an elaborated Work Programme, which already includes SFIC's work on contributing to the ERA Roadmap). ERAC's input will also include some standard clauses that would eventually also be applicable to the SFIC and GPC mandates.

The Chair also informed delegations about his participation to the ERAC ad-hoc group on monitoring the ERA Roadmap on 28 September as well as taking part in a workshop on 12 October on ERA Roadmap.

The Chair concluded by inviting delegations to submit their questions, comments or remarks on ERA governance and related issues before the ERAC Steering Board meeting on 6 October in order to pass any relevant message on behalf of SFIC. Delegations were also invited to send input for the ERA Roadmap workshop by Friday 9 October at the latest.

### 4. State of play of Working Groups

#### a) USA

Mr. Alexander GRABLOWITZ (DE) gave an update on the work of the USA working group, in particular its focus on the preparatory work for a workshop on marine litter and ocean literacy at the end of 2015. The workshop will address European and international initiatives with the aim to elaborate on an international campaign or touring exhibition in this thematic field.

Delegations were informed about the Destination Europe event in Chicago on 16 October 2015 (the SFIC Chair will attend the event) and requested more information about it. SFIC delegates also reported on the BILAT USA 2.0 conference on Science Diplomacy in Washington D.C. on 28 September.

**b) SFIC toolbox on international cooperation**

Mr. Christian HANSEN (SE) explained the work carried out so far on the SFIC toolbox for international cooperation, including various preparatory meetings (last one having taken place on 11 September) as well as the drafting of a draft mandate for the future working group. Mr. HANSEN presented the draft mandate of the Toolbox working group to SFIC delegates. Delegations welcomed the mandate and stressed the need to also refer to the innovation dimension. FI requested that already the title of the mandate should include a limitation to concentrate on international STI cooperation, not just any international cooperation. An amendment to the mandate replacing "S&T" by "STI" to cater for the aforesaid concerns was agreed. In addition Mr. Christopher GAUCI (Commission) welcomed the formation of this working group at this point in time, as the results of the working group might become of interest to the Service Facility.

The Vice-Chair concluded by adopting the mandate for a SFIC working group on a Toolbox on international cooperation (as amended, including the STI dimension).

The newly created working group was asked to propose a rapporteur amongst its members to be formally appointed at a future meeting.

**5. Structured policy coordination - Strand 2 - Support of policy dialogues**

Ms. Anca GHINESCU (Strand 2 - Support of policy dialogues rapporteur, RO) presented a summary of SFIC delegations' contributions / written comments to the summary paper and discussion of the working lunch on the Service Facility on 9 June 2015, giving her insights on the ideas and comments received.

Ms. GHINESCU stressed that there is wide support to the various types of services to be covered by the Service Facility but no real feedback had been received on the size and duration of activities. She also put emphasis on the remaining open issues, such as the eligibility of organisations, the template to be used for proposals, the criteria used for evaluation, the role of SFIC in prioritising, etc.

The Chair recalled that the Service Facility set up is an ongoing process with different phases ((1) before the tender is published, (2) when the tender is out/selection, and (3) operation and implementation of activities) and encouraged SFIC to be active in contributing to the process. Mr. Konstantinos GLINOS (Commission) highlighted the fact that the Commission is looking for a specialist service provision and they will aim at publishing the tender (of an amount of €25mio) soon after the H2020 Work Programme 2016-17 publication.

The Chair concluded by requesting the SFIC Steering Board to act as a core group for preparing input to this process (with additional meetings, if needed, also open to other SFIC delegates) and discuss it further at the next Steering Board meeting on 10 November. A potential SFIC input should be discussed at the March/June 2016 plenary and be delivered to Commission before next summer.

## 6. "Lund Revisited" High-Level Conference (4 December 2015)

The Chair informed SFIC delegations about the "Lund Revisited" High Level Conference on 4 December 2015, aiming at moving further on alignment with a stronger focus on impact and delivery on tackling grand/societal challenges. Based on the background documents distributed before the meeting, SFIC delegates provided input to the background paper as well as to the Conference declaration, which includes a section on "Global mobilisation".

Delegations welcomed the paper and the organisation of the conference and made some remarks on strengthening industrial participation and the role of businesses, increased SFIC-GPC cooperation as well as the complementarity with the ERA Roadmap exercise.

The Chair invited delegations to submit comments to the "Lund Revisited " background paper by 9 October.

## 7. Standing information points

The Chair indicated that the following Standing Information Point had been sent to delegations:

- Conclusions of the SFIC Steering Board on 27 August 2015, in view of the preparation of the plenary.

No comments from delegations were received.

## 8. Any Other Business

- **China:** Mr. Olivier STEFFEN (China WG rapporteur, FR) gave a short update on the activities of the SFIC China working group, as well as the JPI Urban Europe. He also highlighted the workshop on sustainable urbanisation that DragonStar+ is organising in cooperation with the JPI Urban Europe on 28 October, to which all SFIC delegates were invited and kindly asked to distribute the information to their national networks.
- **India:** The Commission requested SFIC's input on the current status of the GSO process and its planned meeting foreseen for mid-November. SFIC delegates provided input on potential options on how to best approach the organisation of the GSO meeting, emphasising the need to have substantive meetings with a specific purpose. The Chair highlighted that such input and advice is at the core of SFIC's work.

SFIC delegates will provide input directly to the Commission and will get in touch with their GSO colleagues.

- **CELAC:** The Commission requested SFIC support in disseminating the information about the fifth EU-CELAC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) for the Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI), scheduled to take place in Brussels on 25 and 26 November 2015, in order to guarantee the appropriate participation to the meeting.

SFIC delegates will disseminate the information to their national networks.

- **South Africa - Meeting with SKA Director:** The Chair debriefed delegations on his meeting with Mr. Fanaroff (Director of the Square Kilometer Array infrastructure in South Africa) on 15 September 2015, also informing delegations about the upcoming African Big Data Research Cloud.

SE is currently exploring various ways to move forward on the South Africa initiative, such as a potential workshop in the future.

- **Ukraine:** The Chair informed that Ukraine formally completed all procedures to be associated to Horizon 2020 and, therefore, the standard procedure to invite them as Associated Country to ERAC, GPC and SFIC has been put in motion.
- **SFIC input to future potential Commission initiatives:** The Chair informed delegations that SFIC should be attentive to any new Commission initiative emerging from the "Open to the world" agenda by the Commission, as a window of opportunity for the future. The SFIC plenary could appoint a rapporteur at a future meeting with the task to prepare a draft SFIC opinion on this topic (when relevant or when any or various Commission initiatives are launched).

SFIC will explore the possibility to prepare a 1 or 2 -page document containing relevant past and future SFIC priorities as well as achievements, as an input to Commissioner Moedas for his "Open to the world" agenda.

- ***Distribution of SFIC delegates details to Commission science counsellors in third countries:*** The Chair asked SFIC delegates whether they agree to share some of their contact details with EU/national science counsellors in third countries to increase networking possibilities. Delegations agreed to it and also requested the list for their own purposes.

The SFIC Secretariat will prepare a list with SFIC delegates' contact details to be distributed to EU/national science counsellors as well as to SFIC delegates.

- ***Research marketing workshop:*** DE informed about the follow-up of the Research marketing workshop held in December 2014, with a new workshop being planned for 2 December 2015, which will focus on practical examples of research marketing in the frame of social media. A save-the-date e-mail has already been sent and further information will be soon distributed.
- ***Next meetings:*** the Chair informed delegations that the next SFIC plenary will take place on **3 December 2015**. The next SFIC Steering Board to prepare such plenary is tentatively foreseen for **10 November 2015**.

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