

ERAC-SFIC 1360/16

NOTE

Subject: Summary conclusions of the 30th meeting of the Strategic Forum for International S&T (SFIC), held in Brussels on 14 October 2016

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Dan ANDRÉE (SFIC Chair, SE). Agenda point 3 was chaired by Ms. Iulia MIHAIL (SFIC Vice-Chair, RO).

The Forum drew the following conclusions:

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with additional AOB (see below).

2. 2nd Commission Report on the strategy for EU international R&I cooperation

The Commission presented the report. In response all delegations welcomed the report and highlighted the following issues:

- A vision of a 'Global Research Area' and an 'ERA open to the world' are not the same and a debate is necessary to clarify the relationship of the two concepts. The Commission defined the vision and said that work on this was still in progress.
- The need to complement the rather quantitative focus of the 2nd report with more qualitative indicators, focussing on the impact of international research efforts. The Commission reminded that in 2014 there were complains that not enough data were included and that impact indicators were already used (e.g. co-publications and co-patents).
- The link between innovation and research and the role of industry in the international domain. The Commission responded that international cooperation more generally has been prevalent in basic research rather than market-ready domains. For example, among Joint Technology Initiatives it is only the Innovative Medicines Initiative that has significant international activities.
- Science diplomacy is not clear as a concept and needs to be further defined. The Commission responded that it could be science in diplomacy: e.g. IPCC: a political decision process supported by scientific insight; science for diplomacy: science as a bridge between parties/people/countries, e.g. Arctic research cooperation, or SESAME; and diplomacy for science, e.g. to support efforts necessary to develop international research infrastructure.

Delegations agreed that a dedicated SFIC opinion on the report will be useful.

The Chair invited delegations to express their interest to become rapporteurs. ES already volunteered.

The Chair invited delegations to submit written comments and interest to become rapporteurs by 28 October.

3. SFIC possible opinion(s)

– 2016 SFIC opinion/input on H2020 interim evaluation

Olivier Steffen (FR) was appointed rapporteur.

The Commission welcomed the initiative to provide an opinion and informed that the public consultation will be launched still in October. Pascal Lamy has been appointed as chair of the HLG and the selection of the other 11 team member is ongoing. Its first meeting will be held in December and a conference is planned in June to present the results to stakeholders.

International cooperation is among the top issues. The SFIC opinion should focus on programme related measures and on identifying ways for a step change from where we are now.

On the substance, DK (supported by SE) cautioned about the proposal for a dedicated International Cooperation programme committee and new indicators. ES supported the programme committee proposal and proposed to strengthen the encouragement of International Cooperation. The chair said it was useful to differentiate between H2020 and FP9 on the new horizontal programme committee.

The Chair invited delegations and the Commission to submit their written comments by 28 October.

– 2016 SFIC opinion on gender/international R&I cooperation (Representatives from Helsinki Group invited)

The pre-rapporteur presented the draft opinion. Josiane Entringer from the Helsinki group informed that a subcommittee of the Helsinki group had already had a first exchange of views on the draft and will discuss the draft in plenary in October.

The process for adoption has been set as follows:

- SFIC members invited to provide written comments to Martina Hartl and Josiane Entringer asap
- Finalisation of the opinion for the 2nd SFIC meeting 2017.

Martina Hartl (AT) is rapporteur. Additional SFIC members are encouraged to volunteer to form a 'virtual' sub group to support the process. Helsinki group will also appoint a rapporteur. Secretariat will keep the SFIC informed about the process.

– **2017 SFIC opinion to ERAC on coordination with other ERA-related groups**

The Chair informed that the opinion will be part of the next work programme and will also be discussed in the ERAC SB.

4. Administrative/Procedural issues

Rozenn Saunier (FR) has been elected new chair of SFIC as of 16 October 2016.

– **Discussion on Work Programme 2017-18**

The SFIC had an exchange of views and agreed that the next plenary will focus on the work programme and the role of international cooperation in FP9. The objective is to launch an online survey to collect elements of the WP in November, discuss a first draft at the Plenary on 14 December, then have a workshop in January and adopt the WP in the March SFIC plenary.

5. Exchange of views on ERA Roadmap Priority 6 implementation: Tour de table

The Chair set out the very specific role of SFIC as priority 6 implementation should depend on national priorities, which are defined in national roadmaps. SFIC is uniquely placed to bring this together. Commission has not made an assessment of the national roadmaps in this respect and would only do so if real added value. The Chair invited the Commission to comment on the paper and delegations on national priorities to be lifted to the European level.

AT argued for a stronger SFIC role in implementation of international cooperation. NO advanced more joint/coordinated activities from the missions abroad. DE informed about the upcoming revision of its internationalisation strategy in S&T. FR will publish its national research strategy in the course of 2017. Possible issues for the EU level are international openness of the framework programme, synergies between national and common cooperation and information exchange. PT presented its research priorities on marine research and collaboration with Portuguese speaking countries, and presented the flagship initiative on the Atlantic as an understudied area. The adoption of ES's national international cooperation strategy is being held up by the absence of government. Latin America and Mediterranean region are priority areas.

Commission indicated that it would be good to have common indicators across all countries to allow for comparative assessment. The call for better indicators was shared by the chair and AT.

6. Service Facility: update from the Commission

The Commission informed that it was still in the procurement process and expects to sign the contract in the second week of November. This would mean that the facility is available either in December 2016 or January 2017.

7. State of play of Working Groups

– SFIC Toolbox

The rapporteur informed that the WG is active and progressing well. More in depth presentation to be provided in December plenary.

– Brazil

The rapporteur informed that the next group meeting would be soon and asked for input on needs and expectation for the planned events. There will also be a preparatory meeting for the academic meeting of the EU-CELAC summit.

– China

The rapporteur informed that contacts have been established with research attaches and DragonStar+. Fewer SFIC members could attend the last meeting due to red tape and administrative problems. Next meeting to be organised soon to look ahead.

More generally, the proposal was discussed whether SFIC could organise a workshop bringing together the coordinators of all concluded bilateral projects to learn from their (ongoing) experience. The Commission responded that it could be looked into.

The Co-chair concluded that groups that have finished their work should provide a closing document. She also proposed to invite representatives of BILATs to present their work.

8. Standing information points

n/a

9. AOB

The Commission informed about the work on future internet, advanced wireless and advanced implementation as priority areas of research cooperation with the US. The objective is to find areas for common interest in research and organise workshops.

Delegations welcomed the information and expressed the interest of being informed of ongoing initiatives from other fora.

DE reported national ERA strategy in Berlin. One conference workshop dealt with “Open to the World and International Research Cooperation”. Main discussion points where the question how to measure (successful) international cooperation, the impact of infrastructures on international cooperation, the definition of a global research area and the issue of widening participation. The ERA Fellowship programme for science administrators from Central and Eastern Europe was also presented.

AT reported on its 1st stakeholder dialogue on FP9 and proposed a possible presentation of state of play in the next plenary. Also asked concerning the implementing arrangement to be signed with the US. The Commission proposed to invite the colleagues dealing with this to the next plenary.

The Commission informed about the activities of a platform bringing together the funding agencies of the Western Balkans. New working groups were established on open access to data and publications, and on mobility. Next week there is a workshop on helping Western Balkan countries to develop innovation measures within their ERP (Economic Reform Plans). Next meeting of the platform will be in early summer 2017 together with a similar platform from EAC.

The Chair informed about the next meeting on 14 December, NO invited to a pre-meeting on 13 December, late afternoon.