



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 06.05.2021
C(2021)3337 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on A new ERA for research and innovation {COM(2020) 628 final}.

The Commission thanks the Bundesrat for its overall support and for sharing its views on the priority areas of action for the realisation of a revitalised European Research Area (ERA). In particular, the Commission is in full alignment with the Bundesrat on the need to focus our efforts on youth, citizens and synergies for strengthening the education, research and innovation systems in Europe. Our ambition is to equip Europe with the capacity to remain globally competitive and innovative, building on its common values and its commitment to spearhead a more equitable and sustainable world.

Concerning universities, the new European Research Area and the European Education Area will ensure synergies to be developed together with national governments including cooperation and investment aspects. The aim is to stimulate the higher education sector in Europe to work on common strategies and optimise the use and access to resources, capacities, and practices. These will ultimately influence the availability in the EU of attractive research careers, the implementation of Open Science, ensuring equal opportunities, reinforcing transfer of knowledge and talents to other sectors and society.

The Commission will monitor the progress by the European Universities, which will act as testbeds for the foreseeable transformations. Already now, we see that this type of integrated networking between higher education institutions helps building solid interactions not only between universities, but also within and between local ecosystems, enabling stronger cooperation and the flow of talent and knowledge.

In the context of the new European Research Area, the Commission will deliver, by end of 2024, in partnership with Member States and research organisations, a toolbox of support for research careers. This will include:

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- *A Researchers Competence Framework, in order to identify and define the researchers' skills and competences, and to make the full recognition of the researcher's profession a reality.*
- *A mobility scheme to support exchange between industry and academia and to encourage researchers towards entrepreneurship, business creation and citizen science. The ERA4You initiative will introduce measures to reinforce inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility, strengthen academic-business cooperation and the involvement of the private sector in training and skills development of researchers.*
- *A one-stop-shop market place for researchers, based on the current EURAXESS services, network and portal, but with enhanced governance, portfolio and tools to make it more usable, more interactive (also with EURES) and better fit to manage talents and connect them locally with fellow professionals and research and innovation employers and funders: the ERA Talent Platform.*

With the renewed European Research Area, we aim to further increase the research infrastructure capacity in Europe, as the backbone of our competitiveness in research and innovation. We will also work closely with Member States and the scientific community within the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) to increase the relevance and impact of research infrastructures, and the services and data they offer, on broader societal objectives. The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures' White Paper 'Making Science Happen' sketches the vision of an integrated research infrastructures ecosystem in Europe, where different types of facilities, of various sizes, across all scientific fields, work together to address the complex challenges we are facing

In its Conclusions of December 2020¹, the Council endorsed the vision of the Commission and broadly supported the roadmap of actions proposed. This led to the establishment of an ERA Forum for Transition where the Member States and the Commission will jointly develop the governance framework and policy agenda for the new European Research Area, starting from the ERA roadmap proposed in the communication. The Forum is intended to become the main platform for discussing, co-designing and supporting joint research and innovation initiatives in Europe. It will notably help provide advice and expertise in view of the development of the future European Research Area governance framework, The Forum will also kick-start the work on the new European Research Area priorities, including the four pilot actions identified in the Council conclusions and provide input for a new yearly scoreboard to monitor progress in the European Research Area.

The Forum already started working on a voluntary Pact for Research & Innovation in Europe, which will set out our shared principles for research and innovation and define our common priorities for action. This ambitious task will require an active engagement of all stakeholders in Europe. The first results will be discussed through dedicated workshops and at the 2021 European R&I Days organised in June of this year. The Committee of the Regions will participate to the Forum as an observer, to ensure the timely information and early engagement of European regions.

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13567-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Bundesrat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Mariya Gabriel
Member of the Commission*