

**STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP ON EUROPEAN RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES CONSORTIA**  
**Draft assessment by the Expert Group on the implementation of the ERIC Regulation<sup>1</sup>**  
**13 – 14 September 2021 (virtual event)**

Since the entry into force of the Regulation on European Research Infrastructures Consortia (ERICs) in 2009, the Commission granted the ERIC legal status to 22 research infrastructures. The Commission tasked an Expert Group (EGERIC<sup>2</sup>) to assess the implementation of the ERIC Regulation. This included identifying best practices and bottlenecks as well as providing recommendations.

Under the auspices of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, the Commission invites ERA stakeholders to discuss the findings of the Expert Group, based on presentations by the EGERIC experts, along four lines:

- **Governance** of the ERIC system
- The ERICs as **instruments to integrate and interconnect** national and multidisciplinary resources
- The ERICs in **operation: key issues**
- ERIC **sustainability**: towards an innovative funding model supporting demand

**Session 1 – Governance of the ERIC system /Duration: 1h10 tbc/**

The recently adopted Commission proposal for a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe, which defines shared priority areas for joint action in support of the **European Research Area (ERA)**, sets out the ambition for investments and reforms, and constitutes the basis for a simplified policy coordination and monitoring process at EU and Member States' level, identifies research infrastructures as a major success of ERA but also as a shared priority area for joint action given their potential to help European science compete globally, contribute to narrow the research and innovation gap and foster inclusiveness in the ERA.

The EGERIC assessment provides insights on the current and potential contribution of the ERICs to strengthening and structuring the ERA. It highlights the need for a multi-level **governance of the ERICs system** to overcome issues of the implementation of the ERIC Regulation and allow fully its role towards the strategic objectives of the renewed ERA<sup>3</sup>.

The session aims at presenting and discussing the key findings, ideas and way forward for a **governance** that would further engage the ERICs in the main European priorities: **green and digital transition, health, economic recovery**.

**Session 2 – The ERICs as instruments to integrate and interconnect national and multidisciplinary resources /Duration: 1h10 tbc/**

The ERICs landscape does not develop in isolation but builds on the **ESFRI roadmap** process providing an overarching vision connected to national roadmaps; and on **national and EU support** stimulating joint or coordinated development.

The EGERIC assessment suggests that a **more effective, performant and impactful ERIC system** is possible by further integrating and interconnecting the national research capacities through the ERICs, as well as the ERICs among themselves and with other RIs to better address multidisciplinary and large challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 723/2009 of 25 June 2009 on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) (OJ L 206, 8.8.2009, p. 1) amended by Council Regulation (EU) No 1261/2013 of 2 December 2013: [consolidated text](#)

<sup>2</sup> Commission [Expert Group](#) on the implementation of the ERIC Regulation 'EGERIC' (Chair: Carlo RIZZUTO)

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/era\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/era_en)

The session aims at discussing these aspects and possible ways towards creating **strategic synergies** (including challenge-driven ones) as well as **management and operational synergies** (including mutualisation of training, administrative/legal/accounting resources...).

### **Session 3 – The ERICs in operation: key issues /Duration 1h10 tbc/**

Compared to other international entities and organisations established in Europe, the implementation of the ERIC legal framework has led to a diversified landscape of ERICs with important implications for the distributed ERICs. The direct involvement of Universities and Research performing organisations, alongside governments, has induced a paradigm shift in the commitment of a multitude of research groups not possible before. This is still a new development that could evolve into a stronger alignment of national resources if well guided. Last, the recent Commission proposal for a Council Regulation establishing joint undertakings under Horizon Europe, addresses similar issues.

The EGERIC assessment points to specific and recurrent key issues, which impede individual implementation or early and longer-term operation. Among them are the implementation of tax **exemptions**, **personnel** careers, **legal** capacity equal to national research institutions, **communication** to mention a few, which call on Member States and the Commission for action to address them.

The session aims at discussing the ERICs in their operational practice, finding possible solutions to address the key issues and guide ERICs with regard to the relevant legal, administrative and financial features.

### **Session 4 – ERIC sustainability: towards an innovative funding model supporting demand: /Duration: 1h10 tbc/**

Most of the ERICs received initial EU support, followed later by national support to develop their own **funding models**, validated by their members committing to the ERIC. However the funding models are often geared only to the central functions in the distributed ERICs. Moreover, their distributed nature can easily lead to a competition between an ERIC node and its contributing entities, further impairing the funding models.

The EGERIC assessment highlights difficulties in the basic funding of operations and in the longer term. The HLEG<sup>4</sup> presented similar findings on the **sustainability** of the ESFRI RIs in general.

The session aims at discussing the interplay and synergies of the different funding streams, in particular between coordinating Member States and the EU. Recommendations are presented on costing and long-term budget planning, on a wider outreach of the distributed ERICs and on the potential and limitations of existing and possible funding models, including the effects of tax exemptions and possible economic returns and IPR.

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<sup>4</sup> Supporting the transformative impact of research infrastructures on European research - Report of the High-Level Expert Group to assess the progress of ESFRI and other world class research infrastructures towards implementation and long-term sustainability ([Published: 2020-12-15](#)).