

EU-LIFE feedback on the document on the future of ERA

EU-LIFE hereby presents its feedback to the document “Future of ERA_Executive Summary_Conclusions”, as requested during the ERAC Ad-hoc Working Group on the future of the ERA 29 July 2019 and according to the format suggested.

What does your organization like in the draft report?

- EU-LIFE welcomes the initiative **to re-design ERA narrative** - the current draft generally as a starting point.
- **We welcome the clear reinforcement that knowledge is at the centre of ERA.** Innovation is about delivering solutions based on new knowledge. We strongly support the notion that directionality is important but focus on the research ecosystem is the critical basis for directionality itself. In other words, to achieve innovation and address correctly the grand challenges, we need to have the right ecosystem set in place. ERA should be about nurturing this ecosystem.
- **Knowledge as culture:** ERA should speak to the heart of citizens and be at the centre of the EU ideal. We support the narrative of „knowledge as culture“, given the current context of post-truth and alternative facts. How to push this narrative forward? This would be a major, impactful achievement for Europe and citizens in the long run.
- We support special attention to: **inclusiveness and de-agglomeration** as they are the basis to a sustainable ERA.

What does your organization not like in the report?

We identify challenges encountered in the report, rather than dislikes:

- The leverage of ERA depends on a **renewed strategy at European level**, beyond monitoring national implementation. Implementation of ERA requires a clear **framework and reasonable resources also at European level – in Horizon Europe and beyond.**
- It is key to address what **needs to change to ensure political ownership and commitment.** Namely, a more federated approach regarding coordination of policies such as taxes, pensions, circulation of people.
- **It is key to include institutional level as driver of ERA since institutions** are the ultimate provider of the right context for ERA to become a full reality.
- **We support the flexibility regarding the national approaches (or any other level) providing it comes attached to clear commitment** (political level and long standing, ie, not subject to ever changing governing cycles) and **to clear milestones of implementation** (including resources, investment).

- At the implementation level, measures should go beyond „**launching change**“ and include **monitoring of “change in practice”** (not on paper, not only measuring indicators), i.e., to plan for long-term chaperoning of change where change /should be happening with several approaches.

What are 3 main issues that your organization misses in the draft report?

- **A key issue missing is attention to the INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL**, where change and implementation of ERA actually occurs.
- **More Elaboration on FUNDING and RESOURCES** to accommodate ERA implementation (e.g. across all, pillar 4, etc.)
- **Articulation with open science narrative is paramount.** As discussed in many ERA stakeholder platform meetings, we believe ERA is the overarching policy and open science a (very important) means of achieving it.
- **Avoid „failure feeling“** regarding the past. Instead, show that the renewed ERA narrative does not start from zero - it is an intermediate step to take ERA to higher level based on foundations already achieved.
- We propose to **build on case studies and existing examples** that can inspire countries, regions, locals, institutions. Showcase role models to inspire how ERA can look like at each different level. There are several initiatives - EU-LIFE as an example - how ERA looks like in practice.
- **Stakeholders are confused and disappointed with ERA’s unmet goals.** How will this be addressed?
- Include **international organisations in the dialogue** more and sooner. We recommend to ensure continuity of contributions and expertise that have been built along these years, for example the ERA stakeholders platform (with a revised format).
- It should be clear what is **exactly meant by „single market“**. Which are the priorities, the milestones, the future look.

“How can we best involve your organization in the further design and implementation of ERA?”

EU-LIFE has shown commitment in the past to contribute to ERA both conceptually and implementation wise, including as member of the ERA stakeholders platform and the OSPP platform. We are committed to continue contributing by participating in working groups, committees, reports with the EC and MS, ERAC. We have done it in the past and we are ready to continue to be a reliable partner.

EU-LIFE is an organization focused on institutional level whose core values are shared with the values of ERA. We already promote and develop initiatives towards ERA, making our internal community of practice a real ERA-at-work. We promote projects that make ERA a reality: sharing practices, building common commitment



e.g. in gender equality in science; research evaluation; promotion of research careers at all levels; pushing further institutional commitment of our institutes to professional technology transfer, ethics standards, open science.

Barcelona, 7th August 2019

For more information contact

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About EU-LIFE

EU-LIFE is an alliance of research centres whose mission is to support and strengthen European research excellence (www.eu-life.eu). EU-LIFE members are leading research institutes in their countries and internationally renowned for producing excellent research, widely transferring knowledge and nurturing talent. The basis for the foundation of EU-LIFE was the perception that there was a gap in the science policy landscape regarding the representation of independent research centres. Since its foundation in 2013, EU-LIFE has become a stakeholder in European policy participating regularly in the EC policy dialogue.

EU-LIFE Partners

Center for Genomic Regulation (CRG, Spain) | Central European Institute of Technology (CEITEC, Czech Republic) | European Institute of Oncology (IEO, Italy) | Flanders Institute For Biotechnology (VIB, Belgium) | Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research (FMI, Switzerland) | Institut Curie (France) | Institute for Molecular Medicine Finland (FIMM, Finland) | Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência (IGC, Portugal) | Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association (MDC, Germany) | Research Center for Molecular Medicine of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (CeMM, Austria) | The Babraham Institute (Babraham, United Kingdom) | The Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI, The Netherlands) | The University of Copenhagen Biotech Research & Innovation Centre (BRIC, Denmark)