

**EUROPEAN RESEARCH
AREA COMMITTEE
High Level Group for
Joint Programming**

Secretariat

ERAC-GPC 1308/10

NOTE

Subject : **Summary conclusions of the 12th meeting of the High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC), held in Brussels on 16 September 2010**

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Pieter DE PAUW, representative of the Belgian Presidency of the EU.

The High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC) drew the following conclusions:

1. Adoption of provisional agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in doc. CM 4090/10, as amended. Item 6 of the agenda, regarding the mandate of GPC, has been postponed to one of the future meetings.

2. Implementation of Joint Programming Initiatives (Alzheimer plus first wave)

The coordinators of the following four JPIs presented the state of play:

- Neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Alzheimer's (pilot JPI) (Prof. Philippe Amouyel)
- Agriculture, Food security and Climate Change (Prof. Marion Guillou)

- Cultural Heritage and Global Change – A new challenge for Europe (Prof. Cristina Sabbioni)
- A healthy diet for a healthy life (Prof. Wim H.M. Saris).

As regards the pilot JPI on neurodegenerative diseases, in particular Alzheimer's, the implementation of which is already in an advanced stage, the Group reiterated the importance of a continuous detailed presentation of the state of play with a view to being in a position to draw the necessary experience for future JPIs, in particular for those of the first wave for which the launch has been scheduled for during the Competitiveness Council on 11 and 12 October 2010 via the adoption of Council conclusions. In addition, delegations stressed the importance of this JPI to act also as a pilot for the establishment of the guidelines on framework conditions, which are to be endorsed by the Group by the end of 2010, in particular as regards the peer review and the type of funding which is currently being discussed (see point 4). The announcement of the identification of urgent scientific issues by the next management board was positively received by the Group. For these themes, waiting for a first call as foreseen by the Strategic Research Agenda in mid 2011 would not be indicated. The Presidency encouraged GPC members to actively participate in the implementation of (a) more rapid concrete action(s) in order to address these issues in timely manner.

Concerning more specific issues related to the pilot JPI, the following was raised:

- Given the fact that establishing and implementing a JPI provokes huge coordination costs which have been at present borne by the participants, a question has been raised as to what extent JPIs could be coordinated through FP7 and/or future framework programmes. A more extensive use of coordination action projects was mentioned as a possibility;
- One of the major difficulties encountered in the process of implementation have been delays within the management board in taking binding decisions as regards the commitments of funds at national level. This has been in particular the case with the participating countries where no national programmes on neurodegenerative diseases existed.

– Another obstacle has been the identification of stakeholders groups from the industry side, the problem being the difficulty to find groups which would not be willing to take part of the JPI solely with a view to defending a particular interest.

In relation to the three first wave JPIs, the Group welcomed the progress made and stressed the importance of this regular reporting in particular with regard to the possibility of more countries becoming interested in participating in these JPIs.

Ms. ANNELI PAULI (Deputy Director General, RTD) also emphasised that a significant progress has been made since the adoption of Commission recommendations. In addition, she underlined the they are currently all in the confidence building process during which it is very important to transmit positive signals on such progress to policymakers and stakeholders, with a view to getting a wider support.

Delegations also raised the problem of coordination costs which would need to be pinpointed as soon as possible. The Austrian delegation suggested that future presentations of the state of play could be accompanied by a statistical annex, stating which are the participating countries and what is their role in a given JPI, as well as providing information on the gender balance.

3. SET-Plan: Lessons to be learned

Mr. Raffaele Liberali (Director, RTD) presented the concept of the SET-Plan - in relation to the JP concept-, its governance as well as the modalities on the basis of which the European Industrial Initiatives (EII) and research alliances work. Among other things, he emphasised that the SET-Plan is not considered as an instrument but rather a process in which different stakeholders first set common objectives and then look for a toolbox of instruments to implement these objectives. The Commission acts only as a facilitator in the Steering Board.

Mr. Massimo Busuoli (EERA, head of Brussels Office) presented the governance and the work of the European Energy Research Alliance (EERA).

The Group took note of the progress made and emphasised the need for further close monitoring of the developments in the SET-Plan with a view to getting valuable input for the implementation of JPIs, in particular as regards possible complementarities and synergies or avoidance of unnecessary duplications.

4. Guidelines for Framework Conditions (FC)

The Chair presented the outcome of the Workshop on the FC guidelines, held on 15 September, and presented the timetable for their endorsement by the Competitiveness Council on 26 November. According to this timetable, the conclusions of the Workshop will be integrated in the new version which will serve as the basis for the discussion during the JP conference in La Hulpe on 18 and 19 October, following which a final version will be established and sent to the GPC delegations for eventual additional comments with a view to the final endorsement by the GPC on 4 November.

The Chair emphasised that the aim is to establish an open and living document which is to be further developed as JPIs take shape in the future, therefore the first guidelines will be established as "Joint programming Framework Conditions 2010". Future updates will change the year in the title.

During the discussion, in particular the following issues were raised:

- The voluntary nature and the flexibility of the use of the guidelines should be further accentuated;
- The nature of the forward-looking activities as regards the identification of possible societal challenges was questioned by some Member States; these should only inform the debates and decisions by the GPC, since JP is a Member States driven process;
- Guidelines should be more detailed but should remain enough general to target better the JPIs needs;
- Some Member States requested that the text on the cross-border funding could be more neutral between options provided;
- Additional options as regards the peer review could be given.

5. Biennial report to the Council on Joint programming

On the basis of the Presidency initiative, the Group agreed on the Terms of Reference of the Drafting Group for the first biennial report on Joint Programming, as set out in document GPC 1307/10, which is to be presented to the Council by the end of 2010 in accordance with the GPC mandate. The first report's canvas version was presented for debate; no remark was expressed.

In accordance with the time table for the adoption, the Drafting Group will continue with the drafting in line with the Terms of Reference with a view to presenting the revised version in advance of the JP Conference on 18 and 19 October (see point 6). Final discussion by the GPC is scheduled for the meeting of 4 November following which the adoption could be carried out via the written procedure.

The Dutch delegation underlined the importance of distinguishing this report from the reporting of the Commission on the overall progress and results of JPIs.

6. Conference on Joint Programming to be held in La Hulpe on 18 and 19 October 2010

The Presidency informed the Group on the organisation of the conference the aim of which is to take stock of the achievements and lessons learnt to date in view of contributing to the 2010 Joint Programming Report (see point 5) and further developing the JP process.