



Press release

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German Research Minister Karliczek: We are going to strengthen and facilitate European research cooperation. Green light for joint initiatives.

At their last meeting under the German Presidency of the EU Council, European research ministers set the course for research and innovation to support Europe's economic recovery.

Today, EU research ministers met in an informal video conference to agree on the future direction of European research and innovation policy. After discussions on the renewed focus of the European Research Area, German Federal Research Minister Anja Karliczek looked back on the activities of the German Presidency in the domain of research and innovation. Ms Karliczek said about the meeting:

“I am very pleased about the adoption of Council Conclusions in the Permanent Representatives Committee as an important step towards an ambitious refocusing of the European Research Area. Today's debate on possible new investment targets as proposed by the European Commission in its Communication on the European Research Area underlined the dynamic nature of recent developments and the will to breathe life into the European Research Area.

I am committed to ensuring that we will be able to reach a political agreement with the European Parliament on the EU's spending programmes, including Horizon Europe, before the end of the German Council Presidency. We have made good progress in the sectoral negotiations with the European Parliament. We, the European Council of member states, and the European Parliament share the joint responsibility to do our very best to ensure the timely start of Horizon Europe at the beginning of 2021.

The conclusion of the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework is, however, an essential precondition for reaching an agreement on Horizon Europe. We, the research ministers, expressly welcome the plans to boost Horizon Europe as part of the preliminary agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework. This is setting the right course for maintaining our international competitiveness in science, research and development and strengthening Europe's technological sovereignty.

Today, we also presented a declaration on the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) aimed at facilitating the access, analysis and re-use of research data

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and findings. The European Commission and the member states support the EOSC strategic partnership within the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 'Horizon Europe'.

The past months under the German Council Presidency have drawn a positive picture. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to launch promising initiatives in cooperation with our European partners. Green hydrogen is one such initiative, for which the member states are now drafting a joint research agenda. What great success! The 'Plastic Pirates – Go Europe!' campaign is another good example. This project aimed at protecting our water bodies has been the first-ever citizen science initiative of a Trio Presidency, implemented together with Portugal and Slovenia. Together with the European Commission, we want to continue this work and take the campaign to the European level in a next step."

Background:

On 1 July 2020, Germany took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In this role, the German delegation chairs the negotiations on EU legislative proposals and other initiatives and can set its own priority topics. The programme of the German Council Presidency is part of the expansive programme of the Trio Presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia. Portugal will assume the Presidency on 1 January 2021.

In addition to presiding the Competitiveness Council (Research) and numerous expert conferences, Germany's Presidency programme features informal meetings of relevant ministers, including meetings of the ministers of education and of research. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Informal Meeting of Research Ministers on 21 July was held as a video conference featuring new interactive elements. The ministerial conference on the European Research Area on 20 October was organised in a hybrid format involving international partners with an in-person event in the city of Bonn that was combined with a video conference. On this occasion, nine member states represented on site signed the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research. The other member states are currently signing the Declaration individually.

The informal video conference of research ministers on 27 November replaced a formal meeting of the Competitiveness Council (Research) that could not be held as a face-to-face event due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Decisions, including the adoption of Council Conclusions on the European Research Area, were therefore taken by the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER).



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Further information:

<https://www.bmbf.de/en/germany-s-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-european-union-2020-11935.html>

https://www.bmbf.de/upload_filestore/pub/Programme_of_Germanys_Presidency_of_the_Council_of_the_European_Union_in_the_Fields_of_Education_Research_and_Innovation.pdf

<https://www.bmbf.de/de/forschen-in-europa-278.html> (in German only)

<https://www.eu2020.de/eu2020-en>